

Thailand's National Capacity Self-Assessment: Cross-cutting Capacity for the Rio Conventions



2009



Edited by
Walker Young



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Thailand's National Capacity Self-Assessment: Cross-cutting Capacity for the Rio Conventions

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I. Executive summary

The National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) is a country driven process for enabling integration of capacity development recommendations in the broader context of sustainable development. The primary goal of the NCSA process is to identify national priorities for development of capacity for meeting global environmental challenges. The priorities for development focus on national implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), known together as the Rio Conventions, as well as other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) of relevance. Furthermore, the NCSA process would substantially highlight areas of cross-cutting capacity and assess mutual supportiveness in implementing these MEAs.

Thailand's implementing agency for the NCSA process is the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP). Having consulted with partners and stakeholders regarding the NCSA process, ONEP decided to conduct a capacity assessment on synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions in parallel with the thematic studies for each of the conventions. This aimed not only to complement and consolidate related findings made by the thematic assessments—which might be overlapping or cross-cutting in nature—but also to address issues associated with capacity development for enhancing cooperation in implementing the conventions beyond the scope of the thematic assessments.

The Rio Conventions were adopted by the international community at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) as driving mechanisms for realization of Agenda 21, the first global policy on the environment. Since then, sustainable development—the principle goal the Agenda 21—has become the common platform for implementation of the three conventions. This correlation was reaffirmed by a number of international policies such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000, and the Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the international conference which notably occurred one decade after UNCED. In addition, several efforts were made at the convention level to enable more focused cooperation in addressing selected thematic areas of common interest, including development of joint technical advisory bodies and joint work programs.

The most notable of these efforts was the establishment of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) as an informal forum for exchanging news and information, identifying opportunities for synergy, and enhancing coordination. Since its inception in August 2001, the JLG has issued recommendations which are regularly adopted as formal decisions by the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Rio Conventions. It is recognized by the Parties that the JLG recommendations serve as the guidance for enhancing cooperation between the Conventions. The latest of these recommendations were endorsed at the Ninth meeting of the COP to the CBD in May 2008, and were thereafter adopted by the NCSA project team to give an assessment on synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions. This assessment sought to provide a comparative analysis of capacity for enabling mutual support for implementation of the Conventions.

The synergy assessment was conducted with participation by a considerable range of stakeholders from 66 organizations, including thirty-six public agencies, twelve university

faculties and institutes, three private firms, nine community organizations, three NGOs, two embassies and a media organization. From these organizations, a total of 112 respondents contributed to delivery of the assessment's results through their participation in one or more of the fact-finding activities which took place between February and April of 2009. These activities mostly consisted of interviews with high-ranking administrators and executives from public and private sectors, as well as three consultative workshops seeking the participation of middle- to local-level Government officials, NGOs and community representatives. The preliminary findings of the NCSA synergy assessment were reviewed and discussed by a select group of participants at a stakeholder participatory workshop in early May, 2009. After gathering feedback, the revised outcomes of the assessment were presented for further review at the joint NCSA consultant workshop which took place later that same month.

Consolidated results from the fact-finding activities indicated that the CBD was the most recognizable of the three Rio Conventions while the UNCCD was least known among participating stakeholders. The assessment also found that very few stakeholders had recognized the interconnection between the Conventions prior to their participation in the activities. Once becoming aware of the synergy, a majority of stakeholders pointed out the possibility of adding value to their existing works of relevance as the most visible advantage in realizing mutually supportive implementation of the Rio Conventions. Indeed, some participants were able to identify relevant cross-cutting elements in their activities, especially those at project level. Furthermore, the findings highlight gaps in stakeholders' knowledge on components, national policies and strategies for implementation of the Rio Conventions, evidenced by an apparent lack of awareness on the synergistic components. These outcomes were then used in comparative analysis with 31 JLG recommendations,¹ resulting in identification of challenges in enabling the synergy. The most notable of these challenges include:

- The lack of consultation between national focal points and the absence of an inter-ministerial oversight body for the UNCCD and CBD;
- The lack of regular reviews of the relevant national policies (except in the case of the CBD) and the ineffective communication of these policies;
- The lack of exploration of relevant technologies' potential applications beyond their original purposes and the absence of a common hub for transfer of the technologies;
- The lack of recognition of the synergies in several priority areas such as impact monitoring and evaluation, climate change adaptation, forest conservation and wetland management; and
- The general lack of integrated information management, consolidated efforts on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) and harmonization of national reporting.

On the goal of building capacity for enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, recommendations were drawn from the outcomes of the comparative analysis and revised with inputs from the above-mentioned review workshops. The summary of these recommendations includes:

- i. Promoting recognition of the synergies of the Rio Conventions, both as a means towards implementation and as an end result in itself;
- ii. Ensuring regular consultations between Rio Conventions' focal points;

¹ See Annex XIII for the complete list of the 31 JLG recommendations.

- iii. Establishing an appropriate inter-ministerial oversight body for the UNCCD and CBD;
- iv. Exploring the possibility of developing a national policy for enabling the synergistic and cross-cutting actions and strategies;
- v. Reviewing and/or reassessing relevant national policies which could enable the synergy and developing guidance for enhancing implementation of their synergy-related components, if needed;
- vi. Enabling wider application of national reports on the implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- vii. Exploring capacity for integrated studies of high priority, such as sub-global ecosystem assessments for the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA);
- viii. Taking into account and building on intentional and unintentional local achievements and efforts related to implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- ix. Establishing and/or reaffirming CEPA as the priority area for implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- x. Ensuring more regular reporting from the Rio Conventions' focal points to public administrators and parliamentarians;
- xi. Exploring the possibility of integrated information systems for various aspects of implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- xii. Re-approaching and re-strategizing efforts to involve the mass media in communicating and promoting the implementation of the Rio Conventions to the general public; and
- xiii. Developing and/or training environmental educators, interpreters and specialists for re-evaluating activities based on their synergy potential and enhancing coordination and pairing of relevant resources for implementation of the Rio Conventions.

The above findings and recommendations were used as complementary information in the analysis of cross-cutting capacity needs for implementation of the Rio Conventions. The analysis itself was a consolidated synthesis of common capacity issues addressed by the three thematic assessments as well as those issues of relevance to all three conventions despite only being pointed out by one or more assessments. Findings from the analysis are grouped in accordance to the samples listed in the NCSA Resource Kit and can be summarized as follows.

- ***Legal and institutional capacity:*** Further review of relevant legal mechanisms for the Rio Conventions might be required, particularly in regard to their enforcement. Furthermore, the national focal points were found to be without substantive official recognition, thus preventing adequate allocation of resources for implementation.
- ***Financial capacity:*** No prior assessment was conducted to evaluate resources used by activities that had been implemented outside the framework of the national strategies (i.e., the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, or NBSAP, of the CBD) or those activities implemented without recognition by the national focal points, even if such activities made intentional or unintentional contributions to implementation of the Rio Conventions. This assessment was found to be crucial in enabling effective strategic resource mobilization.
- ***Capacity associated with policy formulation and implementation:*** With the exception of the CBD, reviews of the national strategies and policies for implementation of the Rio Conventions remain lacking and previous efforts on the reviews had not taken into account the above-mentioned unrecognized activities, particularly at the local level.

- ***Capacity for communication, education and public awareness (CEPA):*** Stakeholders at all levels were found to be without adequate knowledge and understanding on the Rio Conventions. They also lack understanding of the technically sound steps for developing and executing CEPA strategies for all Rio Conventions.
- ***Capacity for cooperation and participation:*** There is a lack of communication between the oversight bodies of the Rio Conventions and the national focal points. Public participation in their implementation was found to marginalize the involvement of certain groups in society and remains ineffective in harmonizing the divergent priorities of different groups of stakeholders.
- ***Technical capacity:*** Interdisciplinary and integrated scientific research studies on priority areas commonly addressed by the three conventions were found to be inadequate due to the lack of effective systems for information management and for technical communication and collaboration.
- ***Capacity for addressing climate change impacts:*** Common capacities, such as those for undertaking integrated research, were also required for climate change mitigation and adaptation in various thematic areas including forest conservation, adaptive farming, wetlands management and combating the impacts from invasive alien species. Strengthening several of these types of capacities, however, could be built on existing relevant actions, including implementation of other MEAs such as the Ramsar Convention.

Based on these findings, an action plan for building cross-cutting capacity for implementation of the Rio Conventions was developed. The following components of the action plan were reviewed and revised by the consultants for Thailand's NCSA, the Rio Conventions' national focal points as well as stakeholders who participated in the closing workshop for the NCSA.

I. Legal and institutional capacity

- Conducting comprehensive reviews of existing legal mechanisms related to implementation of the Rio Conventions
- Enabling autonomous evaluation of enforcement of the legal mechanisms
- Establishing and enhancing official profiles of the national focal points
- Organizing annual dialogue with parliamentarians on implementation of the Rio Conventions

II. Financial capacity

- Conducting comprehensive reassessment of resource availability and requirements for the implementation of Rio Conventions
- Developing plans for strategic mobilization of new and additional resources

III. Policy formulation and implementation

- Conducting reviews of national strategies for implementation of the Rio Conventions
- Promoting recognition of the synergies of the Rio Conventions, both as a means towards implementation and as an end result in itself

- Building on both intentional and unintentional local achievements and efforts related to implementation of the Rio Conventions in reviewing and revising the national policies
- Providing clear directives for public sector and clear direction for private sector for implementation of the Rio Conventions
- Enabling effective communication of the national policies to each of stakeholder groups
- Appointing a relevant point-of-contact for the Rio Conventions and other associated multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

IV. CEPA

- Adopting the Rio Conventions' tools and guidance on CEPA in developing national CEPA strategies
- Identifying priority issues for communication, developing messages and materials and planning effective strategies for delivering these messages to each target group
- Renewing efforts by the Rio Conventions' focal points in promoting their respective conventions
- Ensuring regular reporting from the Rio Conventions' focal points to administrators and legislators
- Integrating implementation of the Rio Conventions in training programs for school teachers and in university curricula
- Adopting synergism and integrated ecosystem relationships as the basic theme for the building of awareness on the Rio Conventions
- Re-approaching and re-strategizing efforts to involve the mass media in promoting the Rio Conventions and their synergy

V. Cooperation and participation

- Enabling wider application of national reports on implementation of the Rio Conventions
- Enabling effective communication between national oversight committees for the Rio Conventions
- Maintaining regular meetings between the Rio Conventions' focal points after the completion of the NCSA process
- Enabling dialogue with wider stakeholders through effective use of CEPA strategies
- Encouraging autonomous adoption of the conventions' provisions and COP decisions by a wider group of stakeholders as well as the adoption of the synergy concept for learning about the conventions

VI. Technical capacity

- Encouraging interdisciplinary and integrated research studies on priority issues of common interest among the Rio Conventions

- Enabling development of technical networks
- Exploring capacity for sub-global ecosystem assessments and seeking out funding for such initiatives
- Developing strategies for enhancing relevant technical capacity

VII. Climate Change Impacts

- *Forest conservation*: integrating climate change, biodiversity and land degradation in the development and implementation of forest, protected areas, and wildlife conservation policies and strategies, particularly those associated with deforestation and reforestation
- *Agriculture*:
 - Assessing impacts of climate change on agricultural biodiversity, fisheries resources and land degradation
 - Assessing best possible options for adaptive farming practices
 - Enhancing technical capacity in evaluating and adopting the most appropriate biofuel conversion technologies
- *Inland water*: Collaborating and building upon national responses to the Ramsar Convention to enable climate change adaptation and mitigation measures for management of both surface and ground water
- *Invasive alien species (IAS)*: Assessing impacts of climate change on exacerbation of IAS problems

II. Introduction

Thailand's cross-cutting capacity assessment of the national implementation of the Rio Conventions is the final report for the synergy assessment module under Thailand's National Capacity Self-assessment (NCSA) project. The report itself is a compilation of three technical reports and thematic assessments as well as the outcomes of a series of consultations on the cross-cutting capacity of the conventions. The background of the NCSA process and the inclusion of the synergy assessment in the process are described in sections III and IV, respectively, with a view to further elaborate on the correlations shared between the Rio Conventions. Section V explains the synergies between the three Rio Conventions and also includes a summary of institutional structures for implementation of the conventions in order to identify the existing potential for enabling synergistic actions.

As for the synergy assessment, the participating stakeholders are described in section VI while the process and methodology of the assessments (i.e., stocktaking study, development of tools, organizing interviews and workshops, data analysis, and participatory reviews of findings) and the development of a synthesis on cross-cutting capacity are elaborated in section VII. Consolidated outcomes of the interviews and workshops are graphically presented in section VIII² and then paired with outcomes from each fact-finding activity³ in order to conduct a comparative analysis on capacity for implementing synergistic actions of the Rio Conventions. The overall assessment and cross-cutting report was developed such that recommended actions

² Section VIII also includes additional contribution by an academic expert

³ See Annexes IV, VII, IX, and XI

(described in section X) would be in accordance to the JLG's recommendations (listed in Annex XIII). The recommendations themselves were instrumental in facilitating compilation of the NCSA thematic assessments' findings, developing a synthesis on cross-cutting capacity needs and formulating an action plan for cross-cutting capacity as described in section XI.

It should be noted that both the synthesis and the action plan were outcomes of a series of consultations with all parties involved in Thailand's NCSA process including the participating stakeholders, although the synergy assessment team made significant contribution in facilitating the consultations by drafting the synthesis on cross-cutting capacity and making it available in timely manner. The report concludes (section XII) with observations made by the consultant for the synergy assessment on synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions and lessons learned from the assessment process.

III. Background on National Capacity Self-Assessment

During the 1990s, efforts by the international community for more committed actions on environmental protection and management were signified by the advent of major multilateral agreements (MEAs) such as the Rio Conventions.⁴ Although most countries around the world ratified and/or adopted these MEAs, many nations lacked adequate capacity to effectively implement the agreements. Recognizing this as a significant problem, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) made resources available for capacity building through several "enabling activities" related to the issues addressed by the Rio Conventions, particularly biodiversity conservation, responses to climate change and reducing the expansion of land degradation.

In the later part of the decade, the GEF Council also launched the Capacity Development Initiative (CDI), a partnership program between the GEF Secretariat and UNDP to assess and to strategically address common capacity needs among countries in meeting their obligations under these and other international agreements. The first step of implementing recommendations of the CDI was the GEF Council's approval of funding for countries' nationally driven capacity self-assessments (NCSA). This aimed to support and enable consultative processes which, through stocktaking and assessment, would determine national priorities and needs for development of capacity for implementation of international agreements and broader protection of the environment.

IV. National Capacity Self-Assessment and Synergy of the Rio Conventions

The principle goal of a National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA) is identification of national priorities for development of capacity for meeting global environmental challenges. To this end, the NCSA is expected to reveal the capacity strengths, shortcomings and requirements and to recommend appropriate actions for addressing them with focus on the national implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)—known together as the Rio Conventions—as well as other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) of relevance. Furthermore, the NCSA process would substantially point out cross-cutting capacity and assess mutual supportiveness in implementing these MEAs.

⁴ See section V, heading 5.1, for additional details on the Rio Conventions

The NCSA is a country driven process for enabling integration of capacity development recommendations in the broader context of sustainable development. With participation by principal stakeholders, the country would autonomously define ways and means for carrying out the NCSA, including processes for thematic assessment on each of the Rio Conventions, culminating in a synergy (cross-cutting) assessment. Thailand's NCSA implementing agency, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP), consulted with partners and stakeholders on the establishment of a logical process and framework, and ultimately decided to conduct an assessment on synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions in parallel with the thematic studies for each of the conventions. This aimed not only to complement and consolidate cross-cutting related findings made by the thematic assessments but also to address issues associated with capacity development for enhancing cooperation in implementing the conventions beyond the scope of the thematic assessments. As with the thematic assessment, a local consultant (Dr. Phanna Waikakul) was recruited for the synergy assessment.

The synergy assessment consisted of the following tasks:

- Assessing structural and operational capacity for administrative authorities of the Rio Conventions, including focal points and inter-agency committees;
- Evaluating policy and technical coordination and cooperation between the administrative authorities and identifying gaps and opportunities in harmonizing actions taken by these bodies on thematic areas of common interests (i.e., deforestation, wetlands and agriculture);
- Identifying bodies and forums that can potentially contribute toward development of synergy in implementation of the Rio Conventions, and developing means to enable their involvement in the most effective ways possible; and
- Consolidating findings from the above assessments with the collective output from other consultants (i.e., the thematic assessments for each of the Rio Conventions) to produce a strategic overview of mutual supportiveness in implementation of the Rio Conventions, and taking a leading role in developing policy and operational recommendations on enhancing capacity for enabling synergy in the implementation.

In accordance with the above-mentioned process, this report consists of recommendations and outcomes from the autonomous assessment on potential synergies to be found in implementing the Rio Conventions in Thailand, followed by a consolidated analysis of the outcomes and other findings from the thematic assessments of the UNFCCC, CBD and UNCCD. The report concludes with a comprehensive set of recommendations on cross-cutting (synergistic) capacity development and critical observations on the country's NCSA process.

V. Background on synergy between the Rio Conventions

5.1 Correlations between the Rio Conventions

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) were adopted by the international community at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environmental and Development (UNCED) as driving mechanisms for realization of Agenda 21, the first multilateral policy on the environment. Since then, sustainable development—the principal goal of Agenda 21—has become the common platform for implementation of the three Rio Conventions.

This correlation was reaffirmed in 2000 with the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a set of eight goals which respond to the major global development challenges; elements of Agenda 21 in general, and of the Rio Conventions in particular, can be seen in Goal 7 (“ensure environmental sustainability”), Target 7a (integrating sustainable development and reversing environmental loss) and Target 7b (significant reduction of the rate of biodiversity loss). Furthermore, the three conventions were explicitly identified in the Plan of Implementation of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD)⁵; their importance in the area of global environmental governance and sustainable development is clearly paramount.

Sustainability was included in each of the Rio Conventions as the main objective, as a means for their implementation, or as a desirable outcome for their specific thematic areas. The following description of the Rio Conventions clearly identifies the role of sustainability in the conventions.

- ***The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)*** aims to conserve biodiversity, to enable the *sustainable use* of its components and to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.⁶ Under the convention, sustainability dictates the appropriate utilization of biodiversity components (given that the conservation of such components are ensured) and acts as the prerequisite for access and benefit sharing of genetic resources.
- ***The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)*** provides an international framework for stabilizing greenhouse gas (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere, thereby preventing any threat from climate change to food production and enabling *sustainable economic development*.⁷ Sustainability was identified in the convention as the key for reducing GHG emissions, increasing carbon sequestration as well as enabling climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- ***The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)*** was created to combat desertification and reduce the effects of drought in order *to contribute to the realization of sustainable development* in affected areas.⁸ The definition of desertification under the convention includes areas with land degradation and those classified as dry and sub-humid lands under the CBD.

⁵ The WSSD Plan of Implementation contains numerous references to the Rio Conventions. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and desertification in general are mentioned in paragraphs 6, 24, 39, 57 and 72. The Convention on Biological Diversity and biodiversity in general are mentioned in paragraphs 31, 40, 42, 43, 64, 67, and 70. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and climate change in general are mentioned in paragraphs 29, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 52, 56, 70 and 103.

⁶ See Article 1 of the CBD

⁷ See Article 2 of the UNFCCC

⁸ See Article 2 of the UNCCD

In addition to sharing a common platform (sustainable development) for their implementation, the Rio Conventions—through the Conference of the Parties, the Joint Liaison Group and the Secretariats—sought to enable more focused cooperation in selected thematic areas of common interest. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the CBD established the Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Biodiversity and Climate Change, comprising nominated experts from their contracting parties and scientists involved in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and UNFCCC process. AHTEG output such as reports—including a report⁹ titled “Interlinkages between Biological Diversity and Climate Change”—are regularly submitted to and endorsed by the COP and scientific bodies (ex: SBSTTA) to the conventions.

The CBD and the UNCCD developed the joint work programme on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands.¹⁰ The habitats under the joint work programme include drylands as well as Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland and savannah ecosystems, which were noted as vulnerable to impacts from biodiversity loss, climate change and land degradation/desertification. The secretariats of the Rio Conventions also started a discussion in 2004 at a workshop in Viterbo, Italy, to develop forest plans and programs which addressed the provisions of all three conventions.¹¹

5.2 Joint Liaison Group and its recommendations

The most notable action to enable cooperation, ensure synergy and reduce duplicability in implementing the Rio Conventions was the establishment of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) as an informal forum for the exchanging news and information, identifying opportunities for synergy and enhancing coordination. The JLG is presently composed of the officers of the Rio Conventions’ scientific subsidiary bodies, the executive secretaries to the Rio Conventions, and members of the secretariats.

Since its inception in August 2001, the JLG has met on seven occasions and the outcomes of those meetings have regularly been adopted by the COP to the three Rio Conventions as guidance for enhancing their cooperation. The latest of these recommendations was endorsed at the ninth meeting of the COP to the CBD, held in Bonn, Germany, on May 19-30, 2008. The JLG recommendations were explicitly included in section B (“Options for mutually supportive actions addressing climate change within the three Rio conventions”) and in Annex II of COP 9 Decision IX/16. In paragraph 8 of Decision IX/16, Parties and other Governments were invited to implement activities as listed in the annex of Decision IX/16, which included 31 JLG recommendations in ten different areas.¹² The 31 JLG recommendations are reprinted in Annex XIII of this report.

These JLG recommendations¹³ were developed based on submissions from approximately 30 countries on guiding principles for and potential areas for adoption of the JLG recommendations. There are general principles found in the guidance of the JLG recommendations which should be considered in the national implementations of the Rio Conventions. These principles include:

⁹ See CBD Technical Series No. 10, available at <http://www.cbd.int/doc/publications/cbd-ts-10.pdf>

¹⁰ See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/28

¹¹ Secretariats of the CBD, UNCCD & UNFCCC. (2004). Promoting synergy in the implementation of the three Rio conventions. *Workshop on Forests and Forest Ecosystems*, (p. 34). Viterbo.

¹² See UNEP/CBD/COP/DEC/IX/16

¹³ See Annex XIII for the complete list of the 31 JLG recommendations mentioned herein.

- Reducing duplication and improving effectiveness;
- Ensuring added value;
- Delivering savings or ensuring no additional costs are incurred;
- Respecting the mandates and legal status of each convention;
- Acknowledging similar needs among the conventions with regard to mainstreaming; and
- Avoiding additional obstacles or delays in the implementation of the provisions of each convention.

The synergy assessment of Thailand's NCSA noted that selected principles such as cost saving, value adding and mainstreaming could also be potential benefits from enabling the identified synergies at a national level. These principles were therefore integrated in the development of a standard questionnaire for stocktaking activities with the intent of better understanding all stakeholders' perceptions on the benefits of enabling the synergy.¹⁴

5.3 Institutional structure for synergy at the national level

Thailand became a Contracting Party to the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD in March 1995, July 2001 and January 2004, respectively. The Biodiversity Office was designated as the national focal point agency for the CBD while the UNFCCC national focal point serves under the Office of Climate Change Coordination (OCCC). Both of these offices are hosted by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) which is also the executing agency for the NCSA project under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. The UNCCD national focal point was placed at the Land Development Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

Actions on fulfilling the CBD obligations are supervised by the National Committee on the CBD, an inter-agency forum under the principal committee for the environment, the National Environment Board. The National Committee on Climate Change Policy, an inter-ministerial body, was established as an oversight committee for national implementation of the UNFCCC. Activities for meeting national commitments under the UNCCD are supervised by the Land Development Board, an inter-agency body under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC). The capacities of these oversight forums are further explored under section XI on cross-cutting assessment.

It should be noted that Thailand's NCSA process was the first opportunity for the Rio Conventions' national focal points to meet on a regular basis. Representatives of the focal points attended almost every monthly meeting throughout the NCSA consultation process. The potential benefits to be gained from these kinds of monthly meetings in enabling the synergistic implementation of the conventions is explored in greater depth in section IX and recommendations are given in section X.¹⁵

VI. Stakeholders in the synergy assessment

In developing a work plan and strategy, the consulting team for the synergy assessment originally identified 62 organizations for potential stocktaking participation. In the end, a total of

¹⁴ See section III for more detail

¹⁵ See section IX for a comparative analysis of findings, and section X for the development of recommendations

66 stakeholder organizations participated in the synergy assessment; that this number is higher than the original plan does not imply that the stocktaking was “more successful” than anticipated. Indeed, the final listing of stakeholders did not significantly correlate with the original list as several of those organizations did not participate while several over groups not initially listed were able to participate.

A case in point is the lack of participation by the media organizations: none of the media organizations identified in the original list attended the workshop. The only media participant was a journalist from Radio Thailand who was not among those in the original list of stakeholders. In addition, the consultants discovered that using direct contact channels between the consultant and the stakeholders was more successful in ensuring the stakeholders’ involvement than using the official channels of participation requests from ONEP.

Based on the list of stakeholders,¹⁶ the synergy assessment was able to garner the participation of a considerable range of stakeholders. The stakeholder organizations in the assessment consisted of thirty-six public organizations, twelve university faculties and institutes, three private firms, nine community organizations, three NGOs, two foreign embassies and one media organization. The thirty-six public organizations in the assessment can be further classified as:

- Twelve central governmental agencies (i.e., ministries and departments);
- Five regional offices (all under ONEP or LDD);
- Ten local offices (all under ONEP or LDD);
- Four local administrations (ex: municipalities);
- Four state enterprises; and
- One legislative body (Senate Committee on the Environment).

The notables among stakeholders in the assessment included the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Environment.

VII. Methodology

The methodology employed by the consultant in undertaking the synergy assessment work included desk study, data gathering and analysis and other processes, all of which were largely based on the contractual terms of reference (ToR). The ToR noted the synergy areas identified by the JLG as the principle reference for undertaking the assessment, with additional focus to be placed on the interlinkages between the JLG recommendations and the articles and COP decisions which guide the implementation of the Rio Conventions.

This was consistent with suggestions found in the NCSA Resource Kit,¹⁷ where the JLG recommendations had been noted as a possible source of guidance for conducting a capacity assessment on enabling synergistic implementation. To this end, the JLG recommendations and other associated information were studied and used extensively in the formulation of a synergy assessment methodology and formal process.

¹⁶ See Annex I

¹⁷ GEF Global Support Programme. (2005). *Resource Kit for National Capacity Self-Assessment*. United Nations Development Programme.

7.1 Stocktaking study

The synergy assessment team, under leadership of synergy consultant Dr. Phanna Waikakul, conducted extensive reviews of the JLG recommendations as well as those COP decisions of the Rio Conventions which related to the adoption and/or integration of JLG recommendations. The study identified the JLG recommendations¹⁸ in Annex II of CBD COP 9 Decision IX/16 as the most suitable reference for developing methodology framework for synergy assessment as well as for conducting comparative analysis of the findings. Synthesis outcomes of the reviews themselves are summarized in section II.

7.2 Development of fact-finding tools and methodology

Identification of tools and methods for data gathering was carried out during development of the work plan for synergy assessment. The assessment team identified interviews and consultative workshops as effective methods for gathering stakeholders' input for the assessment and noted the need for a standard questionnaire to ensure compatibility of information derived from both types of activities. Preparation of this questionnaire and other associated tools are described below.

7.2.1 Development of the questionnaire

The questionnaire¹⁹ was designed to evaluate stakeholders' level of awareness of the Rio Conventions and the synergies across the conventions; to measure their perceptions regarding potential benefits derived from synergy-related activities; and to seek their knowledgeable feedback on existing or past national actions which address the areas of biodiversity, climate change, and land degradation/desertification in an integrated manner. Lastly, the questionnaire was designed to take account of stakeholders' opinions on capacity needs and associated factors in realizing synergistic implementation of the conventions.

Because the NCSA is a country driven process and the national stakeholders are Thai people, the questionnaire was developed in Thai language. Additionally, the design aimed to ensure responses which could numerically tabulated for statistical analysis on the stakeholders' awareness and perception on the synergy of the conventions while also accommodating the need to document stakeholders' observations and sentiments. This framework allows for comparative assessment and also ensures adequate levels of detailed feedback for the development of recommendations.

The format of the questionnaire also reflected the need to adapt the questions for use in more impromptu settings such as during interviews with executives and administrators. In several cases, observations from these stakeholders provided more accurate insights on capacity needs for enabling synergies – more so than analysis of numerical findings could offer. These types of responses from participants sometimes provided validation of underlining reasons for some findings.

7.2.2 Testing of the questionnaire

¹⁸ See Annex XIII of this report for the JLG recommendations from Annex II of CBD COP 9 Decision IX/16

¹⁹ See Annex II for sample questions from the questionnaire. Note that these sample questions were translated into English for the sake of this report; the original questionnaire was distributed in Thai language.

To assess the technical viability of the standard questionnaire, the lead consultant used the questionnaire to interview selected stakeholders in northeastern and northern regions of Thailand in the early part of January 2009. In addition to the data garnered from the interviews, the questionnaire was distributed to additional stakeholders whom the consultant as not able to arrange interviews with.

At the end of the third week of January 2009, the synergy assessment team acquired data from fourteen respondents from five organizations.²⁰ The pre-test indicated that the format of the questionnaire was relatively effective for both interviews and individual response and was adequately comprehensible for stakeholders to complete without additional guidance. However, the pre-test also found that participants lacked sufficient understanding of the Rio Conventions, particularly in recognizing the major issues addressed by the conventions.

This issue had the potential to be a major obstacle for stakeholders in providing information about their level of awareness and perceptions of the synergies of the conventions. To overcome this problem, the assessment team decided that provision of suitable reference material was needed to accompany further fact-finding activities for the assessment.

7.2.3 Development of a pamphlet on synergy of the Rio Conventions

After conducting reviews of both local and international documents related to the Rio Conventions, the assessment team could not find any suitable material to use as an introductory reference on the nature of and the options for synergistic implementation of the conventions. To this end, the lead consultant for synergy assessment (Dr. Phanna Waikakul) requested Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the NCSA documentation consultant, to develop a pamphlet on the synergy of the Rio Conventions based on his previous experience in drafting the ToR for the synergy consultant and in preparation of the inception report for the NCSA project. Mr. Pookpakdi then developed a draft of the pamphlet; after some revisions, copies of the pamphlet were produced in Thai language using green-colored paper (hence, the pamphlet is hereafter referred to as the “green-paper”) and were utilized extensively in both interviews and consultative workshops. Mr. Pookpakdi’s contribution in development of the material made him a vital resource in conducting introductions on the synergy between the Rio Conventions at every consultative workshop.

7.3 Fact-finding activities

As mentioned earlier, interviews and consultative workshops were the methods used for gathering stakeholders’ inputs for the synergy assessment. These activities are summarized below.

7.3.1 Interviews

The consultant for the synergy assessment visited nineteen public and private organizations to interview their high-ranking administrators and executives. These visits were arranged either through ONEP’s official requests to the organizations or by the consultant’s direct contact with the interviewees. As described in section VII under heading 7.2.1, the standard questionnaire was used only as a loose guide in directing the flow of dialogue; all interviews were carried out

²⁰ See the Pt. 1 of Annex I for a complete listing of the stakeholders that participated in reviewing the questionnaire

in a flexible manner so that interviewees could comment on areas they were most acquainted with in a relaxed and comfortable style. The “green-paper” pamphlet was also used as the primary reference material in every interview.

The interviews’ focus on politicians, policy makers, executives and senior officials was to accommodate an assumption that these target groups were less inclined or less willing to personally attend the other type of fact-finding activity, the consultative workshops. This assumption was validated by the obvious lack of representatives from these target groups in the workshops (i.e., only one university executive participated in the third workshop). Furthermore, the interviews were aimed to investigate both potential and actual capacity needs as perceived by those at the policy-making and administrative level and would require a substantial amount of time for each interviewee to respond in a meaningful way.

The interviews covered stakeholders from public organizations, including legislative and administrative groups, a specialized state enterprise, a think-tank institute, private firms which had taken substantive action on environmental issues, and offices of foreign donors. The notable interviewees among these included the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Environment.²¹ Details of the minister’s interview were summarized as seen in Annex III while the summary of the interview findings is included as Annex IV.

7.3.2 Consultative workshops

The process of selecting the participants for the consultative workshops began well before the stocktaking. The consultants were required to submit a list of potential participants to ONEP and the NCSA project manager as part of their Work Plans for the NCSA. All persons or organizations on the list were then sent invitations. The participation for each of the consultative workshops was iterative and based on the initial invitations that were sent out. For instance, the invitations for the second consultative workshop were distributed based on the invitations for the first consultative workshop plus any new participants that attended the first workshop outside of the list.

Four consultative workshops were originally planned for the assessment. However, the workshop for the media organizations, hosted by ONEP on March 18, 2009, was attended by only one participant from Radio Thailand. Therefore, the assessment team decided to exclude that workshop from the rest of the fact-finding activities. Nevertheless, inputs from the representative of Radio Thailand, particularly his observations on means and ways to enable greater involvement of the media in promoting the Rio Conventions, were taken into account in the analysis of findings and the development of recommendations. A summary of the interview was included as Annex V.

Two consultative workshops were held in major provinces in Northeastern and Northern Thailand in order to enable participation of local authorities, officials, NGOs and persons from the local communities. Another workshop organized at the Asian Institute of Technology in Pathum Thani Province was, on the other hand, aimed to ensure the involvement of academics

²¹ See Pt. 2 of Annex I for a complete listing of the interviewees

and officials in the province and from the nearby northern districts of Bangkok. Details of these workshops are summarized below.

- *The first consultative workshop* was held at Charoen Thani Princess Hotel, Khon Kaen Province, on February 26, 2009. Although the workshop was attended by 54 participants from twenty organizations, only 26 attendees provided input for the assessment by filling in the standard questionnaires.²² In the morning sessions, the participants to the workshop were presented with an introduction of the inherent synergies among the Rio Conventions in order to assist them in identifying their activities and interests which are relevant for enabling synergistic implementation of the conventions. This was followed by afternoon discussions where participants were separated into two small groups with 21 participants in each group. The groups elaborated on means and ways in which to achieve synergistic integration of actions related to the Rio Conventions in their own activities and functions. A summary of the workshop is included as Annex VI to this assessment, while the findings from the workshop can be seen in Annex VII.
- *The second consultative workshop* was held on March 5, 2009, at Botanic Resort Hotel, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province. The workshop was hosted by Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden and was attended by 57 participants from eighteen organizations.²³ However, only 35 attendees contributed to the synergy assessment by completing the standard questionnaire while the rest of the attendees were either the organizers or participant observers. The workshop used the same method as previously employed in carrying out the consultation, with an introductory session followed by two small discussion groups of around 20 participants each. Details of the second consultative workshop are summarized in Annex VIII and the findings from contributing participants can be found in Annex IX.
- *The third consultative workshop* was organized on April 1, 2009 at Conference Center, Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Pathum Thani Province. The workshop was attended by 30 participants from eleven organizations.²⁴ Of these, 16 participants eventually made direct contributions to the synergy assessment by completing the standard questionnaire. As with the first two workshops (see above), the third workshop was organized with an introductory presentation on the synergies of the Rio Conventions followed by group discussion. Due to the fewer number of participants in the afternoon session as compared to the first two workshops, the discussion was held in the plenary instead of breaking into two small groups. A summary of the workshop is found in Annex X while the findings from the consultation process can be seen in Annex XI.

7.4 Comparative analysis and development of preliminary recommendations

Outcomes from the above mentioned activities were compiled into consolidated findings for comparative analysis based on JLG recommendations. These findings were derived from the aggregation of responses from all 112 respondents but also included inputs from the testing of the questionnaires, the single stakeholder from the media and an additional submission from

²² See Pt. 3 of Annex I for a complete listing of participants in the first consultative workshop

²³ See Pt. 4 of Annex I for a complete listing of participants in the second consultative workshop

²⁴ See Pt. 6 of Annex I for a complete listing of participants in the third consultative workshop

Prince of Songkla University.²⁵ Based on these findings, an analysis was conducted to describe strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions across the ten areas identified by the JLG.

The synergy assessment team was also able to recommend actions to overcome the identified weaknesses by making use of the strengths and opportunities. Components of the analysis were either based on or derived directly from the consolidated findings and are presented in detail under section IX. In order to facilitate a participatory review of the results from the analysis, the recommended actions were further compiled and developed into preliminary recommendations which are included in section X. These recommendations were categorized into three groups (system, institutional and individual levels) in accordance with the framework presented in the NCSA Resource Kit.

7.5 Participatory review of the findings and finalization of recommendations

Selected stakeholders who previously participated in the fact-finding activities were invited to contribute their views and comments on the findings and recommendations of the synergy assessment. Some provided their input by attending a stakeholder workshop for participatory review of the NCSA's synergy assessment on May 13, 2009, while others participated in the joint workshop of NCSA consultants on May 28, 2009.

To facilitate the review, all findings and recommendations from the second technical report were translated into the local (Thai) language and distributed as handouts in these meetings. Further details of the May 13 workshop for participatory review are available in Annex XII of this report. In addition to the workshops, a number of academics who were involved in one or more fact-finding actions offered to conduct peer reviews of the assessment as well as to provide additional input on issues closely related to their fields of expertise.

The outcomes of the above mentioned reviews were utilized in revising the preliminary recommendations. The details of this revision are presented under section X and form the basis for development of the overall action plan on addressing cross-cutting capacity needs for Thailand's NCSA.

7.6 Comparative analysis on capacity for synergistic implementation and consolidated assessment on cross-cutting capacity

Under the NCSA process, capacity assessments were generated for each of the Rio Conventions by the respective consultant. After submission of draft final reports for each of the three NCSA thematic assessments, the synergy consultant, with assistance from the NCSA documentation consultant, compiled a synthesis on common capacity challenges identified by the thematic assessments and the synergy assessment. Subsequently, a draft action plan was developed based on the synthesis.²⁶

The synthesis and the action plan were first discussed at the eighth meeting of the NCSA consultants on August 18, 2009, after a preliminary review of the document by the UNDP's NCSA Technical Advisor, Mr. Kevin Hill. Thereafter, the synthesis and action plan were

²⁵ See section VI for more details on the respondents

²⁶ See section IX for more details

examined by selected experts at an ad hoc commentator review of the NCSA findings on August 25, 2009. More substantive revision of the synthesis and the action plan took place at the ninth meeting of the NCSA consultants on September 19, 2009. At the meeting, all parties involved in Thailand's NCSA process—the project unit, the national focal points to the Rio Conventions, the consultants and the UNDP country office representative—worked together to refine the context of the cross-cutting capacity document.

The final product of this group effort was later presented at the closing workshop of the NCSA on October 16, 2009, and participating stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment. Based on the commentary from the closing workshop, further revisions were made to the synthesis and the action plan; they were eventually finalized after a discussion on this revised text at the tenth meeting of the NCSA consultants on October 20, 2009. The finalized synthesis on cross-cutting capacity and the accompanying action plan are described in section XI below.

VIII. Consolidated results from the fact-finding activities

From the above mentioned interviews and consultative workshops, a total of 112 respondents contributed to the assessment of national capacity for enabling synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions. This number takes into account input from providers in testing of the standard questionnaires,²⁷ input from the one participating media representative, as well as input from an interview with lecturers from Prince of Songkla University.

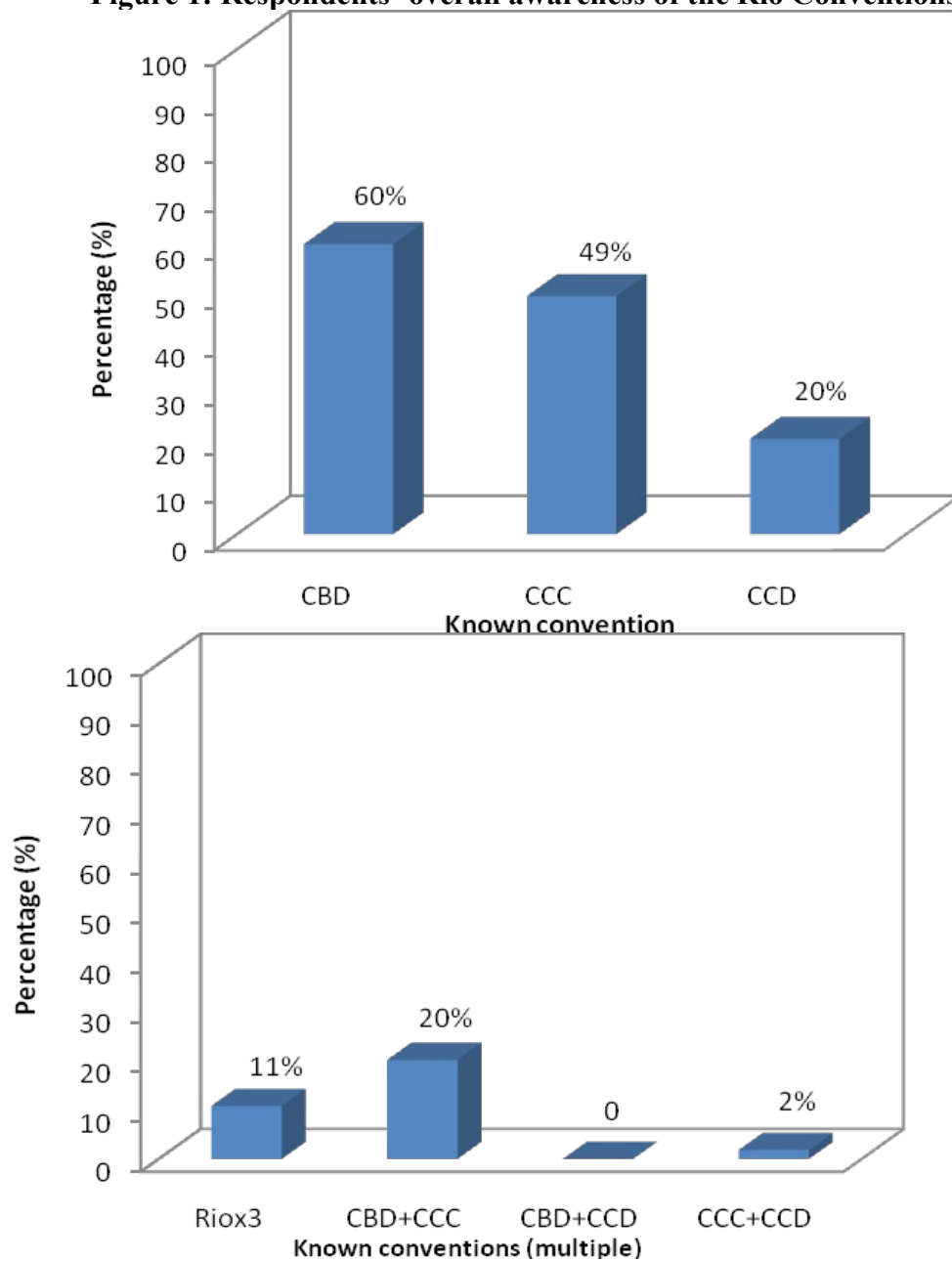
A. Awareness of the Rio Conventions

Based on consolidated responses from all participants, the CBD was found to be the most recognizable of the Rio Conventions with 60% of respondents indicating their awareness. Conversely, 49% of the respondents were previously aware of the UNFCCC and 20% admitted having an awareness of the UNCCD. Respondents with an awareness of all three conventions tallied 11% while a greater number (20%) could identify both the CBD and the UNFCCC but not the UNCCD. Only 2% of the respondents were found to be aware of both the UNFCCC and UNCCD but not the CBD; and no respondents indicated awareness of both the CBD and the UNCCD but not the UNFCCC. These responses are compared as shown in Figure 1 below.

It is important to note that these figures do not give the full picture regarding participants' level of awareness of the conventions. After speaking with respondents in more detail, it became clear that a greater number of them were, in fact, aware of the conventions; however, some respondents replied on the questionnaire that they were not familiar with the conventions because they were not familiar with the specific COP decisions and frameworks. Further, some respondents were intimidated by the Rio Conventions because they mistakenly believed that they were forms of binding international law – a subject matter to which they were largely unfamiliar. Thus, a great percentage of respondents actually are aware of the conventions if these misconceptions were corrected for.

²⁷ The testing of the standard questionnaires was elaborated upon in the first technical reports

Figure 1: Respondents' overall awareness of the Rio Conventions



B. Awareness of synergies in implementing the Rio Conventions

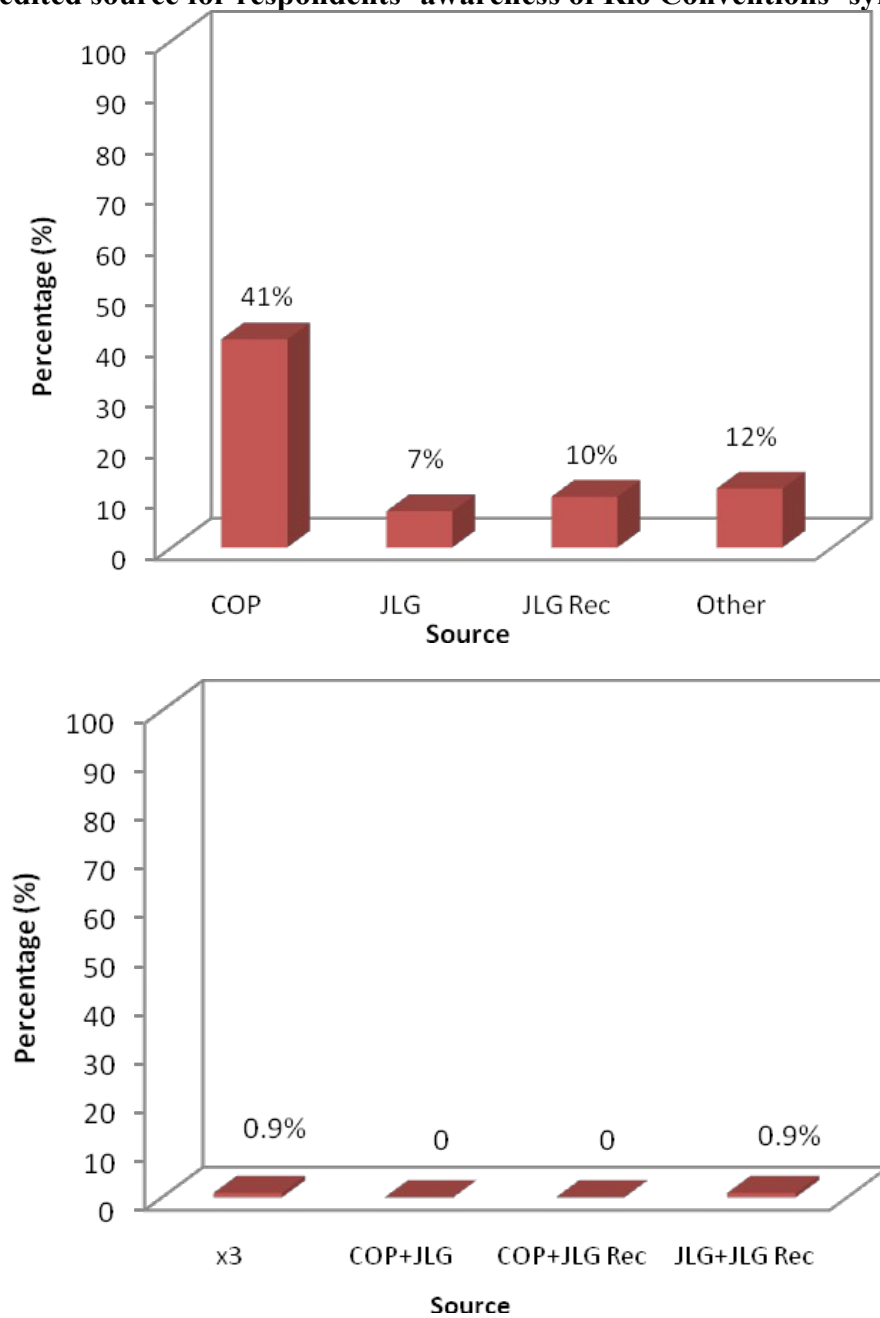
Participants were given a brief introduction to the synergies to be found across the Rio Conventions. Thereafter, they were asked if they had known of such synergies across the conventions, and if so, to indicate what source they had learned from. The three answer choices included (1) the COP, (2) the existence of the JLG,²⁸ and (3) the JLG recommendations.

Most of the respondents (41%) recognized the synergy of the Rio Conventions from relevant COP decisions. This was followed by 12% of respondents who were aware of correlations present in the different Rio Conventions through sources other than the COP decisions, JLG, or JLG recommendations. Only 9% of respondents acknowledged the JLG recommendations as the source of their awareness of the synergies of the conventions; moreover, 7% were found to know about the synergistic elements of the conventions from the very existence of the JLG itself. One respondent (0.9%) acknowledged being aware of the synergies inherent in the Rio Conventions through all three sources: the COP decisions, the existence of the JLG and the JLG recommendations. Another respondent (0.9%) credited both the JLG and its recommendations for understanding the synergies to be found within the conventions. See Figure 2 below for a comparison of the responses.

Again, it must be pointed out that these figures appear on their face to contradict the percentages in Figure 1 regarding participants' awareness of the Rio Conventions. Compare Figure 1 to Figure 2 and one can see that more respondents appeared to know of the synergies of the conventions than know the actual conventions! This is not an accurate picture, however. Having introduced the synergy concept to the respondents, the synergy assessment team realized that a larger number of participants admitted to actually knowing of the conventions (though not the formal details) than were tallied in the questionnaire responses. If they had responded more appropriately to their true awareness of the conventions, the discrepancy would not exist.

²⁸ The very existence of the JLG is evidence enough of the synergy of the Rio Conventions. The JLG was created in order to find and discuss such synergies and to recommend ways that cross-cutting actions could benefit all three conventions, thereby saving financial, human and technical resources.

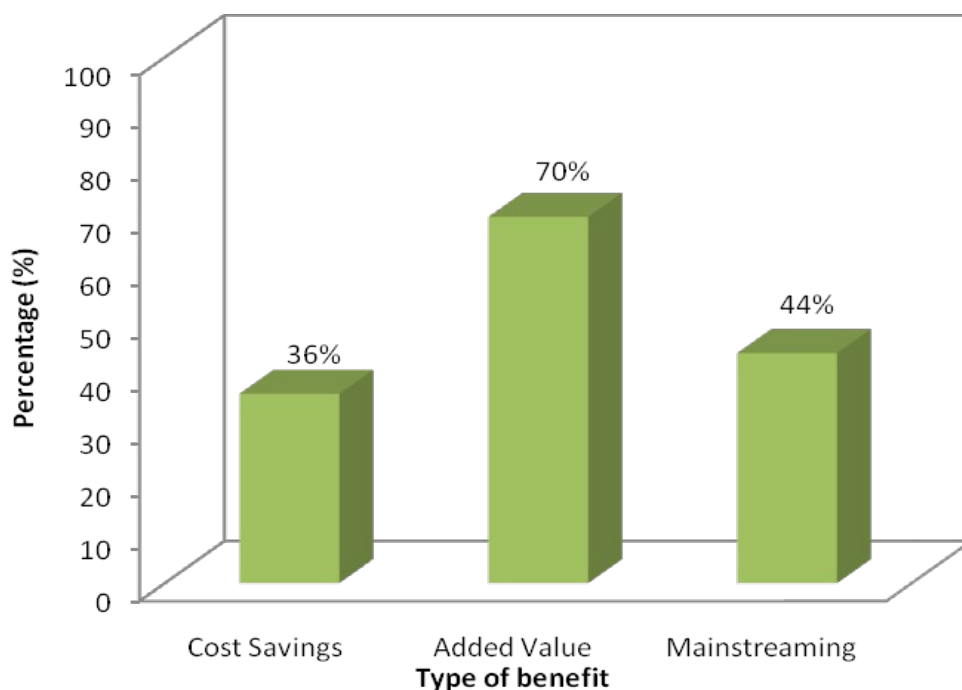
Figure 2: Credited source for respondents' awareness of Rio Conventions' synergies

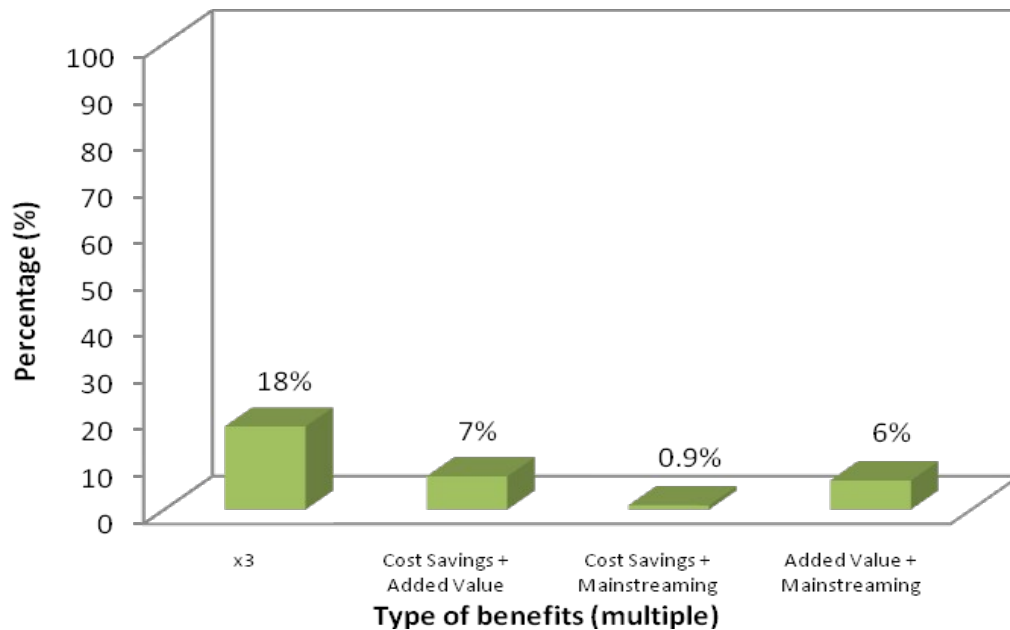


C. Perceived benefits from synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions

A total of 70% of the respondents saw added value as the main advantage of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions. Other benefits widely perceived by respondents were cost savings (36%) and mainstreaming (44%). Only 18% of the respondents felt that all three benefits (cost savings, mainstreaming and added value) could be realized with synergistic implementation; meanwhile, 7% found that synergistic implementation of activities could lead to cost savings and added value but would not benefit the mainstreaming of the conventions. Furthermore, 6% of the respondents believed added values and the mainstreaming as the benefit from enabling the synergy and. One respondent (0.9%) felt that potential benefits of cost savings and mainstreaming—but not added value—could be achieved through synergistic implementation of the conventions. These responses are displayed in chart format in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Perceived benefits from synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions



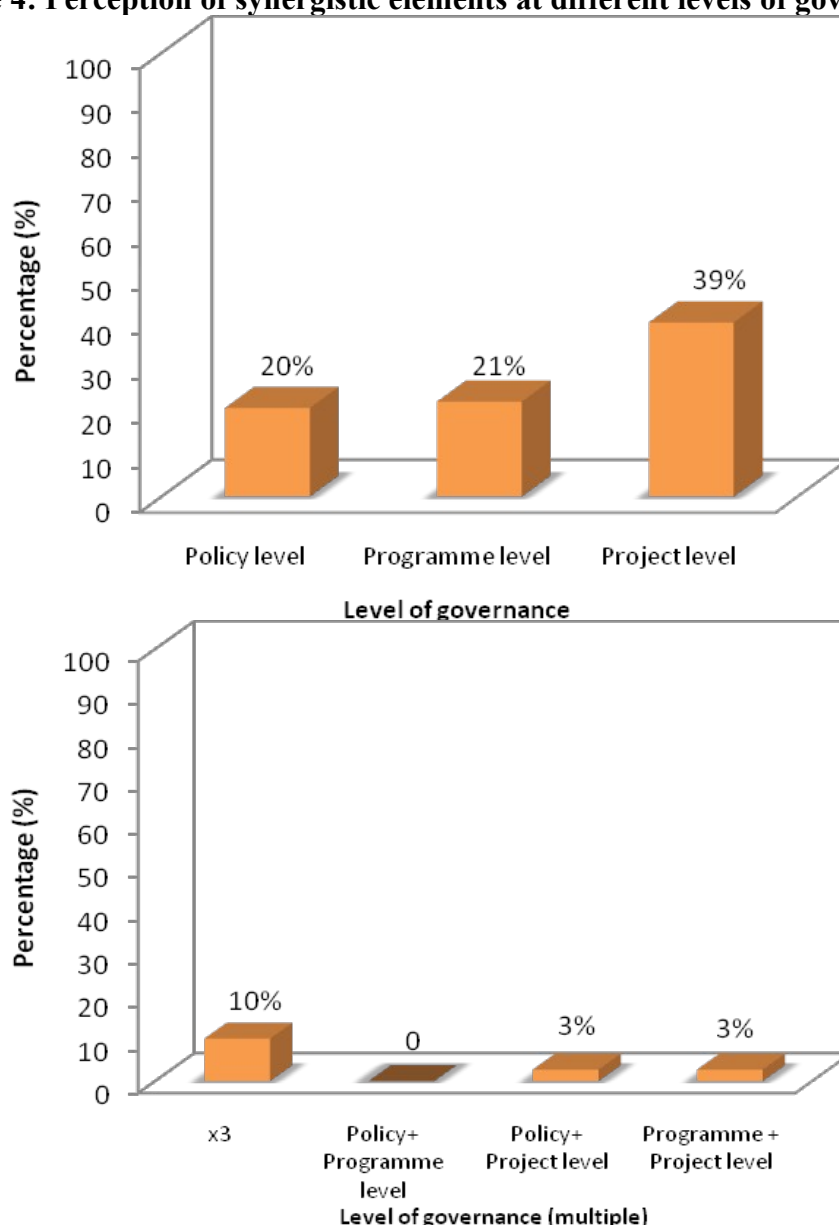


D. Perceived synergies of policies, programmes and projects with the Rio Conventions

Having learned of the Rio Conventions and the concept of taking synergistic actions in response to the conventions (i.e., reforestation activities which improve soil, sequester carbon dioxide and enhance plant diversity), the respondents were asked if they noticed existing elements within Thailand's policies, programmes and projects which embody synergistic implementation of the conventions.

Approximately 39% of the respondents noticed elements of synergistic action in their projects, while 21% and 20% found such elements in their programmes and policies, respectively. Some participants described synergistic elements, as embodied across the Rio Convention, in multiple levels of governance; around 10% felt that synergies were apparent in the policy, programme and project levels, while 3% recognized only the programme and project level and 3% acknowledged only the project and policy level. Figure 4 depicts the perceived synergies of policies, programmes and projects with the Rio Conventions.

Figure 4: Perception of synergistic elements at different levels of governance



The above findings clearly indicate the need for national administrative authorities of the UNFCCC and particularly the UNCCD to enhance awareness on the conventions to the level of recognition enjoyed by the CBD. This building of awareness should reflect greater emphasis on CEPA in reaching out to the public sector as well as other sections of society. A number of stakeholders from academic and public relation sectors expressed interest in exploring ways of applying the concept of synergism and cross-cutting activity to enhance environmental interpretations of issues addressed by the Rio Conventions; more efforts to promote the Rio Conventions would eventually advance opportunities and actions for their synergistic implementation.

As mentioned earlier, participants in the stocktaking activities and consultative workshops were presented with a brief introductory on the “synergy” concept within the context of the Rio Conventions. It should be noted that after hearing about the synergy, a significant number of

respondents stated that they had actually learned about the synergistic actions which cut across the Rio Conventions from relevant COP decisions (but relatively few had been aware of the JLG and its recommendations prior to their involvement in the assessment). This may indicate a more substantive exposure to the COP decisions and could be used in enhancing more autonomous adoption of the decisions within Thailand's implementing agencies. For instance, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2010 Biodiversity Target both support autonomous adoption of their proposed strategies; many of the participants had learned of these two mechanisms through relevant COP decisions – so the possibility exists that this relationship across mechanisms could enhance implementation at the national level.

A lack of adequate financial resources was frequently singled out as the major constraint in undertaking any activities related to the Rio Conventions, including implementation of synergistic actions across the three conventions. On the positive side, a large proportion of the respondents believed that taking a synergistic approach towards implementation could be beneficial in adding value to their respective activities, particularly through the reassessment of the activities' impacts on issues addressed by all three Rio Conventions. Several administrators were of a common opinion that the concept of "synergy"—the cooperative interaction among groups that creates an enhanced combined effect—should serve as the means for enhancing appreciation of their respective activities by identifying the integrated relationship of the Rio Conventions. Garnering this appreciation and support for the conventions is crucial, especially in relation to the legislators who are the decisive factor in mobilization of public funding for most of the activities necessary for implementation.

Finally, the results of the assessment noted the lack of stakeholders' recognition of policies for enabling the synergy of the conventions' implementation. This implies that relevant national policies, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), did not place adequate emphasis on the synergy despite inclusion of cross-cutting components (i.e., climate change adaptation in the case of the NBSAP). Fortunately, the synergy introduction provided by the assessment team to the participants proved how easy stakeholders could be made aware of the synergistic elements of the conventions' actions and be stimulated to take proactive steps for enabling such synergy.

IX. Capacity assessment on enabling synergy for implementation of the Rio Conventions

Given that the individual provisions of the Rio Conventions lack guidance on enabling their mutual synergy, the recommendations of the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) presented the most appropriate guidance for assessing Thailand's actual and potential capacity for synergistic implementation of the conventions. To this end, the 31 JLG recommendations across ten thematic areas²⁹ from Annex II of CBD COP 9 Decision IX/16 were used by the synergy assessment team in conducting a comparative assessment of findings derived from literature reviews and stocktaking activities (including the questionnaires, interviews and consultative workshops). The results of the comparative assessment are included below and are separated according to the ten thematic areas.

9.1 Collaboration amongst national focal points

Strength:

1. All focal points of the Rio Conventions maintain contact between each other and have engaged in consultations on an ad hoc basis.
2. The National Committee on Climate Change Policy provides a stable inter-ministerial platform for implementation of the UNFCCC.

Weakness:

1. Prior to the initiation of the NCSA process, the national focal points to the conventions had not met on a regular basis and had not been able to adequately exploit potential benefits from their collaborations, particularly those related to negotiations in their respective international forums (i.e., Conferences of the Parties).
2. The national implementations of the UNCCD and the CBD have inter-agency support and review by the Land Development Board and the National Committee on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity, respectively. However, both lack a higher level of oversight at the inter-ministerial level – oversight which the UNFCCC currently enjoys via the National Committee on Climate Change Policy. This means the CBD and UNCCD may lack outreach across different ministries, possibly hindering adoption of synergistic actions.

Opportunity:

1. The NCSA process allowed the focal points to meet on a monthly basis at the NCSA consultant meetings. Such meetings present a good opportunity to collaborate.
2. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, the apex administrator with authority over the UNCCD focal point's host organization (Land Development Department) was found to be supportive of inclusion of UNCCD implementation under the broader supervision of the NEB.
3. Under guidance of the Secretary General, the ONEP was taking steps to reform operational undertakings and was mindful of the status of the Rio Conventions and the need to enable their synergistic implementation.

²⁹ See Annex XIII of this report for the JLG recommendations from Annex II of CBD COP 9 Decision IX/16

4. The Office for NEB admitted having adequate resources to facilitate inclusion of the UNCCD in the NEB.

Recommendations:

1. The monthly meetings between the Rio Conventions' focal points should be maintained even after the NCSA project and the monthly consultations with the NCSA consultants are completed. The consultation meetings could provide a proper venue for the focal points to inform each other of the upcoming meetings under each convention and to allow the focal points to contribute in developing intervention strategies and proposals for Thai delegates to these meetings in a cohesive and collaborative manner.
2. The ONEP should explore feasibility of and take steps towards hosting regular meetings of the Rio Conventions' focal points.
3. Implementation of the UNCCD and the CBD should be reported to an inter-ministerial oversight body, similar to the oversight that UNFCCC implementation receives from the National Committee on Climate Change Policy.

9.2 Cooperation on national-level planning

Strength:

1. Substantive elements of the synergy between the Rio Conventions have been included in certain national policies for the conventions, particularly the second revision of the National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).
2. The synergy aspect is likely to represent one of the critical elements in current policy actions on climate change adaptation and mitigation, including through development of a master plan on the cross-cutting issues.
3. The UNCCD 10-Year Strategy and framework (2008 – 2018) provides clear objectives for planning and implementation to cover the cross-cutting issues with the other two Rio Conventions.

Weakness:

1. Most stakeholders were found to be unaware of the synergy elements in national policies and were unable to adopt such elements into practice.

Opportunity:

1. With respect to the synergistic elements inherent in the Rio Conventions, a substantial number of stakeholders were reportedly able to identify such elements in their employer's activities after being provided with a limited introduction on the synergy concept. Their collective potential capacity for enabling the synergistic implementation of the conventions could be used to expand such synergies into existing policies.
2. The Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Environment was found to be supportive of incorporating the synergy concept into the national agenda for implementation of the Rio Conventions.
3. Stakeholders from the private sector indicated willingness to support synergistic actions through their social responsibility programs provided that clear policies on the issues are formulated and/or publicized.

Recommendations:

1. Efforts to promote wider adoption of the NBSAPs should be renewed, particularly on actions of direct relevance to enabling the synergy.
2. Ensure adequate levels of guidance on enabling the synergistic actions, particularly those discussed by the JLG recommendations, in relevant policies, such as implementation of a master plan for climate change adaptation and mitigation and the national adoption of the UNCCD ten-year Strategy Plan (2008-2018).
3. Explore opportunities for embracing the synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions and incorporating such synergies into the national agenda.
4. Assess the feasibility of enacting additional policies which promote and ensure the synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, taking into account the need to provide clear directives for both public and private sectors.
5. Take proactive measures to increase the level of CEPA-related actions towards the Rio Conventions' implementation, including using the synergistic understanding of the conventions as a means to policy actions and as an achievable end result.

9.3 Collaboration at the level of convention bodies and secretariats

Strength: All Rio Conventions' focal points maintain regular contact with Secretariats of their respective conventions.

Weakness: The Rio Conventions' focal points did not adequately consolidate their views on how collaboration of the convention bodies and Secretariats could best serve national implementation of the Rio Conventions, including enabling synergistic implementation.

Opportunity: The focal points attended the monthly meetings of consultants throughout the NCSA process. The meetings could potentially serve as a regular forum in the future for consolidating focal points' submissions to their respective conventions' processes.

Recommendations: Ensure the continuation of focal points' meetings after the completion of the NCSA process and ensure that the focal points use such meetings to identify consolidated approaches for enabling synergies before submission to the Secretariats of their respective conventions.

9.4 Technology transfers

Strength:

1. Substantive technology transfers were conducted for realizing national obligations under each of the Rio Conventions, particularly for the UNFCCC and the UNCCD.
2. The Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (TISTR) has expertise and experience in transferring of technologies related to implementation of the Rio Conventions.

Weakness:

1. In realizing national obligations under the Rio Conventions, potential applications of transferred technologies, beyond their original objectives, were not explored.
2. The TISTR is a state enterprise yet is required to secure commercial returns for its actions, including those related to technology transfers. This can pose funding difficulties for technology transfer to occur.

Opportunity:

1. A number of stakeholders in the consultative workshops who had previously been involved in transfers of relevant technologies were aware of issues concerning synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, and some could identify how their technologies would facilitate enabling synergistic actions (i.e., in the integrated monitoring of climatic and biological changes in aquatic ecosystems).
2. Technology transfer for climate change adaptation and mitigation would likely be eligible for foreign aid or assistance in certain circumstances (i.e., via sub-regional/regional programs).

Recommendations:

1. Develop a policy on enabling the synergies in technology transfers, with primary emphasis on reassessing the potential application of existing technologies for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions.
2. Explore the feasibility of establishing a common hub for technology transfer with the view to ensure more comprehensive assessment of technologies' economic viability, social acceptability and environmental benefits as well as potential for enabling synergies.
3. Identify means and ways to mobilize adequate resources for TISTR to pursue a more active role in transfers of technologies for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions.
4. Consult with foreign donors (i.e., through the Royal Norwegian Embassy) about the possible provision of support for technology transfer to address climate change adaptation and mitigation.

9.5 Forests and climate change

Strength:

1. Forests have been the main focus of synergistic actions from a number of national policies, including the NBSAP.
2. National authorities responsible for forest management have either intentionally or unintentionally included synergy elements in their respective activities.

Weakness:

1. Many stakeholders were found to be unaware of the potential for enabling a synergistic approach within existing policies on forest management, including the NBSAP.
2. Activities on forest protection and management were not assessed for their potential for enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions.

Opportunity:

1. Forest management was identified by Minister of Natural Resources and Environment as well as other administrators as a primary area for enabling synergistic actions.
2. Forest conservation was one of the most recognizable issues among several stakeholders, including local NGOs and community representatives.
3. Reforestation was noted by some stakeholders as an action with potential conflicts in achieving objectives of the Rio Conventions. For example, the use of exotic fast-growing

trees such as eucalyptus, instead of tree species native to Thailand, is known to have profound effects on soil conditions and surrounding crop areas.³⁰

Recommendations:

1. Take steps to ensure greater awareness and realization of the potential for synergistic implementation of existing policies related to forest management (including the NBSAP).
2. Reassess activities on forest protection and management in order to identify their actual and potential contributions to enabling the synergy.
3. Develop policies, action plans and/or programmes to ensure synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions within forest sector, with particular emphasis on preventing and mitigating conflicts in the implementation (i.e., the positive and negative aspects of certain approaches to reforestation).
4. Employ synergistic approaches in implementing the Rio Conventions within the forest sector in order to promote wider participation, particularly among NGOs and local communities.

9.6 Climate-change adaptation

Strength:

1. Climate change adaptation has been included in the latest revision of the NBSAPs.
2. A master plan for UNFCCC implementation focuses on climate change adaptation.

Weakness:

1. The development process for alignment of the national action programme to the UNCCD Ten-Year Strategy has taken a long amount of time and has delayed the inclusion of climate change adaptation to combat desertification.
2. Climate change adaptation did not enjoy the same level of public recognition as the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and was given relatively less exposure through the media channels.
3. As with other synergy-related thematic areas, several stakeholders were found to be unaware of climate change adaptation in existing national policies and of potential ways for climate change adaptation to be addressed through synergistic actions.

Opportunity:

1. After participants were introduced to the concept of “synergy” in relation to the Rio Conventions, they noted that climate change adaptation was one of the most readily applicable areas for enabling synergistic and cross-cutting actions by stakeholder groups due to its correlation with natural resource and environmental conservation.
2. Climate change adaptation was found to be the most relevant area for enabling synergistic actions by NGOs and local communities, who would likely to be severely affected by impacts of climate changes.
3. Adoption of the master plan for climate change adaptation would likely provide an opportunity to promote the issue to a wider audience.

Recommendations:

³⁰ Usher, A.D. (2009). *Thai forestry: a critical history*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books.

1. Renew efforts to promote the implementation of measures and actions on climate change adaptation in relevant existing national policies, including the NBSAP.
2. Integrate climate change adaptation measures into development of new policies and/or revision of existing policies for the Rio Conventions, particularly the UNCCD.
3. Enhance public recognition of the need for action on climate change adaptation.
4. Employ a synergistic approach when initiating, undertaking or evaluating activities for climate change adaptation.

9.7 Capacity-building

Strength: All Rio Conventions' focal points continuously report to the Secretariats of their respective conventions on capacity-building needs.

Weakness: The Rio Conventions' focal points did not substantively consult with each other on their common needs for capacity building, including those for enabling synergistic actions across the conventions.

Opportunity: The synergy assessment under Thailand's NCSA process identified capacity-building needs for enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions; the assessment offers recommendations for building such capacity.

Recommendations: The Rio Conventions' focal points should address findings and recommendations from the synergy assessment and use them as the basis for reporting capacity-building needs to the Secretariat of their respective conventions.

9.8 Research and monitoring/systematic observation

Strength:

1. The Rio Conventions' national focal points, especially the CBD focal point, have well-maintained systematic compilations of information for implementation of their respective conventions.
2. Databases on wetlands—a thematic area for enabling the synergy—are accessible on the Internet.
3. Information from national inventories is available offline, particularly on species listings.

Weakness:

1. Some stakeholders were found to experience difficulty in accessing national inventory information.
2. Monitoring of climate change was found to lack linkages to that of biological change in several areas (i.e., inland water ecosystems).
3. Limited exposure to the synergy between the Rio Conventions prevented any significant identification and utilization of local and indigenous knowledge which may have been applicable for enabling synergistic actions.

Opportunity:

1. The NBSAP Project, implemented in parallel with the NCSA process, will likely improve accessibility to national inventories for the CBD and provide a model for focal points of other Rio Conventions to benefit from.

2. The actions on traditional knowledge under the NBSAP Project would also assist the CBD focal point and focal points of other Rio Conventions in identifying local and traditional knowledge which could benefit the implementation of the respective conventions..
3. Sharing and distributing basic information on the “synergy” concept to relevant stakeholders could provide a platform for ensuring linkages between the monitoring of climate change and that of biological change.

Recommendations:

1. Ensure that one of the outcomes of the NBSAP Project includes identification of local and indigenous knowledge applicable for enabling the synergy, including those related to organic farming.
2. Improve stakeholders’ ability to access national inventory information under the NBSAP Project, and use the outcome of the project as a model for enhancing accessibility to information related to the UNFCCC and the UNCCD.
3. Develop guidance to enable linkages between monitoring of climate change and biological change.
4. Exploring feasibility of wetlands as the priority areas for synergic implementation of the Rio Conventions, taking into account availability of accessible information on national wetland inventory and applicability of such information in monitoring change in climatic conditions, biodiversity components and land resources.
5. Ensure the wider recognition of the synergies between the Rio Conventions, particularly among local communities, in order to motivate self-initiation of synergistic actions that benefit the implementation of the conventions through the use of applicable local/traditional knowledge, innovations and practices (i.e., organic farming).

9.9 Information exchange and outreach

Strength:

1. Several stakeholder organizations such as the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), Royal Forest Department (RFD) and Land Development Department (LDD) were found to have comprehensive databases for implementation of the Rio Conventions, including those with detailed spatial information.
2. The CBD focal point actively compiled and disseminated information for implementation of the convention, particularly through species listings and inventories, while other focal points took actions to make materials available for their respective conventions.
3. The Rio Conventions’ focal points, particularly the CBD focal point, played a leading role in ensuring wider recognition on several issues advocated by the Rio Conventions.
4. Some issues addressed by the Rio Conventions, especially those related to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, enjoyed substantial public exposure.

Weakness:

1. Systematic integration of related databases in several stakeholder organizations remains lacking.
2. A number of stakeholders noted that the focal points’ efforts to promote better understanding on their respective conventions often lacked follow-ups and evaluation of their impacts.

3. Given that the host organization for the CBD and the UNFCCC focal points, the ONEP, is primarily responsible for policy making and not for outreach activities, the agency often had difficulty acquiring sufficient resources for communication, education and public awareness (CEPA). Furthermore, governmental bodies responsible for public relations and education, such as the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion and the Basic Education Commission, were found to be without adequate technical resources for promoting the Rio Conventions.
4. Despite being acquainted with several issues addressed by the Rio Conventions, many stakeholders were unaware of the conventions themselves, particularly the UNCCD.

Opportunity:

1. Many stakeholders were found to be supportive of renewing efforts to promote wider recognition of the Rio Conventions.
2. Introduction of the master plan for climate change adaptation in the near future could renew efforts to promote awareness of the Rio Conventions and their synergies.
3. Public organizations for outreach and education expressed interest in using the “synergy” concept as the means to enhance public understanding of the Rio Conventions, particularly among youths and other target groups.

Recommendations:

1. Explore the feasibility of systematic integration of relevant databases in order to ensure synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions.
2. Delegate the CEPA-related actions of the conventions to organizations most directly responsible for public outreach and education, and providing adequate technical resources for such actions. Focal points may act as advisors for these organizations and assist in the development of learning materials.
3. Ensure recognition of the “synergy” concept as an effective means for promoting the Rio Conventions.
4. Develop human resources capable of utilizing synergistic actions to promote broader and deeper recognition of the Rio Conventions.

9.10 Harmonized reporting

Strength: All Rio Conventions’ focal points regularly submitted national reports to their respective conventions.

Weakness: The Rio Conventions’ focal points did not adequately consult with each other when preparing the national reports.

Opportunity: The monthly meetings of the consultants were attended by the focal points throughout the NCSA process. Such meetings could potentially serve as the regular forum for undertaking more collaborative efforts in preparing the national reports.

Recommendations: Ensure the continuation of focal points’ meetings after the completion of the NCSA process with the view to provide a forum for collaborative preparation of national reports for the Rio Conventions.

X. Recommendations on building capacity for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions

The following recommendations were devised using input and feedback from the review process. Their format was designed to facilitate their integration with other assessments in the development of overall action plans for the NCSA project.

10.1 System level

- i. Promoting recognition of the “synergy” concept as a means for (but also as an end result of) implementation of the Rio Conventions so that the synergistic approach could be used in both reassessment of previous and existing activities as well as the development of new ones
- ii. Identifying an appropriate inter-ministerial oversight body for implementation of the UNCCD and CBD
- iii. Establish regular consultations between Rio Conventions’ focal points in order to inform each other of the up-coming meetings under each Convention and to allow the focal points to contribute in development of intervention for Thai delegates to these meetings in cohesive and collaborative manner. The ONEP could be appointed to undertake this task.
- iv. Exploring the possibility of developing national policy for enabling synergies in order to provide clear directives for the public and private sectors
- v. Reassessing the actual impacts of relevant policies (i.e., the NBSAP) on enabling the synergistic actions and developing guidance for enhancing application of their synergy-related measures, if needed
- vi. Enabling wider application of national reports on implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to facilitate harmonization of national reporting through consolidated feedback gathered from a wider group of stakeholders
- vii. Assess the capacity of existing regional and sub-regional forums and bodies in carrying out sub-global ecosystem assessments, similar to those under the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and seek out possible funding for such initiatives. These assessments might also present models for more synergistic research in some thematic areas of the Rio Conventions.
- viii. Further actions for implementation of the Rio Conventions should take into account and build on both intentional and unintentional local achievements and efforts of relevance by evaluating their impacts. These actions should also ensure greater and more effective involvement of marginalized and minority groups through better use of CEPA tools and strategies.
- ix. Bring forward CEPA as the priority for implementation of the Rio Conventions, both individually and collectively, with more focus placed on encouraging autonomous adoption of the conventions’ provisions and COP decisions through their exposure to wider stakeholders. In addition, the “synergy” concept should be adopted as the primary tool for consolidated learning about the conventions. These CEPA-related actions should also address the need to secure more supportive political will for the implementation of the Rio Conventions, including through the development of information products tailored to politicians and public administrators.

- x. Liaise with public education organizations regarding implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to enable the conventions' integration into training programs for school teachers and in university curricula. In developing the programmes and curricula, the Rio Conventions' focal points should be jointly consulted on delivery of common and interconnected issues under the three conventions so that potential applications of the synergistic approaches for education might be substantially realized.

10.2 Institutional level

- i. Introduce the “synergy” concept as an effective framework for implementation of the Rio Conventions in each relevant organization, with emphasis on the framework's potential for adding value to implementation activities.
- ii. Renew efforts by the Rio Conventions' focal points in promoting their respective conventions, particularly the UNFCCC and UNCCD, in order to enhance other stakeholders' capacity to take on meaningful roles in addressing specific issues of the conventions (i.e., addressing inland water issues or loss of wetlands). This action should also be consistent with the recommended focus on CEPA and take into account the potential advantages of the leveraging the “synergy” concept to enhance understanding of the conventions.
- iii. Ensuring regular reporting from the Rio Conventions' focal points to administrators and legislators in order to maintain and enhance their awareness of the conventions and how their support affects synergistic implementation
- iv. Identifying databases and other information sources of other organizations and exploring the possibility of integrating information systems in order to expand their applications, including those for enabling synergies
- v. Applying a synergistic approach to reassess existing and previous activities related to the Rio Conventions so that their potential and actual contributions to realization of national obligations under the conventions can be realized
- vi. Adopting the “synergy” concept as the basis for building awareness of the Rio Conventions in organizations and other audiences so that news and additional issues can be addressed within an umbrella of understanding on the correlation of the conventions. This action should take into account the need for participatory involvement of marginalized groups in public services, such as local officials and temporary employees
- vii. Develop new approaches and strategies to involve the mass media in the promotion of the Rio Conventions and their synergies, including through direct interaction with news organizations and individual journalists/reporters. Public outreach should also be enhanced through developing stronger relationships with mass media. Realizing the need to enable scientifically sound understanding of information, outreach officials might be assigned to liaison with media organizations in order to enable effective communication on the Rio Conventions and their synergies.

10.3 Individual level

- i. Identifying and/or developing educators and environmental interpreters for communicating on the interrelated issues of climate change, biodiversity and combating desertification/land degradation
- ii. Identifying and/or training specialists who could reassess impacts and advance applications of relevant activities based on their potential for understanding and conveying the “synergy” concept and the cross-cutting issues of the Rio Conventions
- iii. Making available effective coordinators capable of matching interests and resources for implementation of the Rio Conventions, especially at regional and local levels; such persons should also be capable of making full use of utilizing synergistic approaches as enabling tools

XI. Cross-cutting assessment

Reviews of findings made by the NCSA’s thematic capacity assessments of each Rio Convention revealed a number of common challenges in enabling effective implementation of the conventions in Thailand. These issues were also identified and highlighted by the assessment on synergy between the three conventions, thereby providing complementary evidence and information for identifying the actual causes of problems and shortcomings.

To this end, the following cross-cutting challenges were developed based on the outcomes and discussion of the thematic assessments, while findings from the synergy assessment were cited to reinforce conclusive statements and/or to offer practical resolutions to the problems.

11.1 Legal and institutional capacity

Legal capacity was one of several issues commonly identified by all of the thematic assessments, each with relatively divergent opinions on legal mechanisms associated with implementation of the respective convention. The CBD assessment found the inadequate capacity for effective law enforcement to be more important than the possible development of new legislation tailored to the convention’s implementation. A new legal framework (the revised Land Development Act) was recently adopted which would further the implementation of the UNCCD; it is too soon to tell what impact the newly adopted framework will have on UNCCD implementation. Enforcement of other relevant laws for national UNCCD implementation, specifically those under jurisdiction of other public agencies, had not been evaluated and no assessment had been conducted on that issue.

Given that future annexed instruments to any of the three conventions may require legal actions and that emerging issues under the conventions are likely to have greater implications to national implementation in the upcoming decades, reviews of existing legal mechanisms with the view to prepare for improvement of legal support measures might be required. The review should address critical shortcomings that prevent effective enforcement of the existing laws including problems associated with their interpretation, practicality, clarity of multiple stakeholders’ roles and responsibilities as well as securing financial support. Furthermore, both the review of existing laws and the development of new legislation may consider taking into account the synergistic approach in implementing the Rio Conventions; doing so would ensure the inclusion

of primary principles from each of the Rio Conventions as well as enable possible development of legal measures applicable for all three.

National focal points for all Rio Conventions were found to be without adequate financial and human resources. Under Thailand's NCSA process, the focal points noted the lack of official recognition, especially by the Budget Bureau and other bodies responsible for resources allocation, thus making it difficult to secure adequate resources through governmental procedures. To this end, actions need to be taken to establish and enhance the official recognition and the profile of national focal points of all Rio Conventions. While the host organizations for the focal points (ONEP and LDD) would be directly responsible for securing such recognition, the national focal points should provide their respective hosts with consolidated descriptions of their work and tasks, with emphasis on their roles in enabling a national response to international obligations, so that the executives of host organizations might be adequately equipped in pursuing the official recognitions through bureaucratic channels.

11.2 Financial capacity

Inadequate funding was a common problem identified by all three thematic assessments. The UNFCCC assessment called for greater commitment by the government to allocate financial resources for climate change actions, including for the focal point's operation, while the CBD assessment noted the lack of funding as a major obstacle in advancing actions in several of the CBD thematic areas such as biodiversity conservation. At the NCSA consultative workshop for participatory reviews, held on May 28, 2009, the UNCCD consultant pointed out the serious underestimation of budgetary requirements for addressing desertification in Thailand, where up to 8 trillion baht³¹ might be required to effectively tackle the issue.

Given that implementation of the Rio Conventions has been predominately carried out in the public sector, ensuring sufficient allocation of budgetary resources would need to be supported not only by the Government but also by the legislative agencies that review and approve official funding for the implementation of the Rio Conventions on an annual basis. Despite the important role of the lawmakers in securing financial resources, the national focal points and their host organizations hardly engaged in dialogue with parliamentarians except during the budgetary review period. This problem was recognized by the Project Steering committee (PSC) chairperson and the ONEP secretary general who asked the NCSA project to organize a workshop on the Rio Conventions for members of the parliament (MPs) and senate in September 2009. The focal points and their host organizations should therefore build on outcomes from this workshop and move toward establishing and maintaining regular dialogue with parliamentarians, including by pursuing inclusion of similar workshops in the parliamentary calendar.

Addressing the lack of financial resources for implementation of the Rio Conventions may also require a more comprehensive assessment of available resources and more target-oriented measures for resource mobilization. As indicated by the UNFCCC and the CBD assessments, implementation of these conventions was not restricted to actions taken under guidance of the national focal points, carried out in accordance to national policies and/or supported by government funding; indeed, implementation also included relevant activities of state enterprises and private sector companies. This may indicate possible sources for funding outside of traditional governmental channels.

³¹ Eight trillion baht is approximately equivalent to \$245 billion US dollars, at 32.64 baht to the dollar.

In addition, the synergy assessment further revealed that a large number of stakeholders had unintentionally contributed to national implementation of the conventions through conservation and sustainable development projects and programmes at the local level. However, the existing evaluation of available resources for the implementation, notably for revision of the NBSAP, had not adequately taken into account resources mobilized by the private sector or local actions of relevance, thereby resulting in an inaccurate estimation of actual funding for the implementation of the Rio Conventions.

A reassessment of resource availability and requirements for each of the Rio Conventions is therefore crucial for securing adequate funding for their implementation as well as for development of plans for strategic mobilization of new and additional resources. The reassessment should consider elements such as the provision of supportive funding to fiscally sustainable activities, start-up costs and needs for priority actions and incentives for the private sector.

11.3. Policy formulation and implementation

The thematic assessments identified formulation and implementation of national policies as a common challenge in the implementation of all Rio Conventions. The CBD was found to be the most advanced in policy activity, with two revisions of the NBSAP by the year 2008. As reported by the CBD assessment, the latest revision of the NBSAP remained without mechanisms to ensure commitment for its implementation and relied on “responsible agencies” to secure resources for execution of activities included under the NBSAP framework. The assessment also noted the lack of efforts to mainstream the NBSAP with other national strategies of relevance. The UNFCCC assessment pointed out the lack of policy adoption mechanisms before the finalization of the ten-year master plan on climate change (2010-2019). Effective implementation of the master plan was expected to adequately address this shortcoming.

As for the UNCCD, no substantive or critical review of the first national action plan has been made to assess its impact on the implementation of the convention.. Furthermore, the focal point indicated that no revision of the national strategy in accordance to the UNCCD’s ten-year strategic plan would be made until being provided with guidance by the convention’s Conference of the Parties and assistance for such revision. Given the dynamic nature of the Rio Conventions’ processes, and the inclusion of emerging issues as additional thematic areas for implementation, regular review and revision of national policies and strategies for the conventions is crucial and efforts should be made to monitor and evaluate the policies and strategies with the view to prevent reoccurrence of policy shortcomings and weaknesses.

In addition, the NCSA synergy assessment noted that a significant number of stakeholders were unaware of specific concepts within national policies for the Rio Conventions and were not able to effectively use the policies as guidance in planning for and execution of activities to complement national implementation of the respective conventions. In this regard, effective communication of the national policies following their adoption would be crucial in ensuring wider stakeholder involvement and aiding implementation, especially at local level. Communication of national policies is also important in establishing comprehensive monitoring mechanisms for timely review of the policies. Several tools were made available for policy reviews by the Rio Conventions. The most notable is the CBD guideline on biodiversity-inclusive strategic environmental assessment (SEA), which would not only be applicable for the review of NBSAP components but also for assessing implications and impacts of other relevant

policies and legal measures on meeting the CBD obligations and, in some cases, other Rio Conventions' obligations.

11.4 Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA)

Communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) were not only noted as a common challenge by all thematic assessments but were also the underlying causes of all capacity shortcomings in implementation of the Rio Conventions. The synergy assessment found that most stakeholders were aware of the CBD and the UNFCCC while relatively few respondents identified themselves as having prior knowledge of the UNCCD. A very small number of stakeholders were found to recognize all three Rio Conventions and less than 20% of the stakeholders were reportedly aware of both the CBD and the UNFCCC.

The assessment also pointed out that several stakeholders exhibited substantial knowledge on issues addressed by the Rio Conventions despite being unaware of the formal decisions, mechanisms and their provisions. The lack of recognition of the Conventions was indiscriminate; all levels of society, ranging from parliamentarians and public administrators to local officials and communities, displayed similar patterns in their level of awareness or lack thereof.

Inability to establish wider recognition of the Rio Conventions detrimentally impacts several aspects of their implementation. The absence of adequate awareness of the conventions among politicians resulted in the lack of supportive political will and in inadequate allocation of operational budget for focal points. Indeed, the lack of political will topped the CBD thematic assessment's ranking of national priorities for capacity development. Not being aware of the Rio Conventions also deprived the local administrators' and local development activists' of opportunities to make effective use of the conventions' guidance and decisions in their own work. Furthermore, without broader recognition of the conventions, stakeholders will not be able to report on their intentional or unintentional contributions from their activities toward meeting national obligations under the conventions, thus preventing their effective participation in national reporting.

Under Thailand's NCSA process, the thematic assessments offered several options for enhancing capacity for CEPA. The UNFCCC assessment was supportive of placing focus on improving the level of understanding of the potential impacts of climate change, including by making available relevant literature and education materials in the local language and tailoring their content to different target groups. The CBD assessment emphasized the need to raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge at all levels. Essentially, these assessments advocated for common efforts to identify priority issues for communication (i.e., climate change impacts, traditional knowledge, etc.), development of common messaging and materials, and planning effective strategies for delivering these messages to each target group.

Furthermore, the synergy assessments also pointed out the need to develop skilled communicators and educators in order to assist in strategic CEPA planning as well as in driving outreach efforts to specific audiences. It should be noted that CEPA tools and guidance were made available by all of the Rio Conventions' respective mechanisms and they could be utilized in developing and evaluating any national CEPA strategy.

11.5 Cooperation and participation

According to the thematic assessments, national implementation of each of the Rio Conventions has proceeded with relatively different mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation. Actions on meeting the CBD obligations were supervised by the Sub-Committee on the CBD, an inter-agency forum under the National Committee on Biodiversity Conservation. The National Committee on Climate Change Policy, an inter-ministerial body, was established as an oversight committee for national implementation of the UNFCCC while activities for meeting national commitments under the UNCCD have been supervised by the Land Development Board, an inter-agency body led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC).

Under these cooperation regimes, the CBD implementation has enjoyed more regular dialogue between agencies and organizations yet has lacked frequent exposure at the ministerial level due to the lack of an inter-ministerial body. The national efforts on the UNFCCC have constantly placed the convention in the focus of relevant ministers because of the inter-ministerial oversight of the National Committee on Climate Change Policy, but have left inter-agency coordination in the hands of lower level constituents, such as climate change officers and departmental sub-committees, for technical advisory and negotiation. As for the UNCCD, the mechanism for cooperation was limited to the jurisdiction of the MOAC and inter-agency cooperation through the Land Development Board.

It should be noted that no formal linkage exists between these committees despite the fact that their current and future discussions are likely to involve cross-cutting issues of common concerns to the implementation of all three conventions. Given that the National Environment Board remains the principle inter-agency oversight body on the environment, efforts should be made to enable the National Committee on Climate Change Policy and the Land Development Board to effectively communicate with the National Environment Board in order to prevent redundancy and mitigate overlapping in the deliberation of national issues related to implementation of the Rio Conventions.

As pointed out by the synergy assessment, Thailand's NCSA process provided, for the first time, an opportunity for the Rio Conventions' focal points to meet on a regular basis. These meetings should be maintained after the completion of the NCSA process in order to provide a venue for the focal points to inform each other of the upcoming meetings under each convention and to allow them to cohesively and collaboratively develop intervention strategies for Thai delegates that attend convention meetings (i.e., COP meetings or preparatory meetings). Continued joint consultation may also allow the focal points to share technical and operational resources such as the roster of experts developed under the CBD focal point's NBSAP project.

As the implementing agency for the NCSA project and the host of two of the three Rio Conventions' focal points (the CBD and the UNFCCC), the ONEP was probably the most capable organization for enabling regular meetings between the focal points. In addition, the current ONEP administrator (the Secretary General) was mindful of all Rio Conventions and their synergies and indicated a willingness to include enhancing mutual supportiveness of the CBD and the UNFCCC implementation in her efforts to reform operational undertaking of the office. The ONEP might also find that hosting a regular meeting of the focal points could be beneficial in pursuing several policy actions and applications in relevant thematic areas, including development of the climate change master plan and CEPA strategies.

Implementation of the Rio Conventions also requires cooperation with other sectors of society beyond the state administration. The CBD assessment indicated significant marginalization of indigenous and local communities as well as relevant civil societies under the existing process for multi-stakeholder participation. The assessment also noted the lack of efforts to harmonize divergent priorities of different groups of stakeholders as the major obstacle for broader stakeholder engagement in the CBD implementation. The UNFCCC assessment was of an opinion that most public campaigns and events for climate change actions were carried out for public relation purposes or to establish and strengthen “corporate social responsibilities” and had not offered any real opportunity for active engagement by a wider group of stakeholders.

In addition, both assessments pointed out the need to provide incentives to the private sector in order to enhance their cooperative efforts with public agencies in implementing priority actions for the CBD and the UNFCCC. Furthermore, the synergy assessment indicated that while private establishments and firms welcomed incentives for their contribution to national implementation of the conventions, they found clear guidance from the government on their engagement in environmental actions to be of higher priority. To this end, efforts should be made to enable more effective engagement with a wider group of stakeholders, particularly the marginalized groups, including by developing and employing CEPA strategies to deliver tailored messages for each group.

11.6 Technical capacity

The lack of technical capacity was identified by the thematic assessments as a common problem in implementing the Rio Conventions. Despite the different technical issues of each of the Rio Conventions, their implementation faced a similar problem concerning the inadequacy of interdisciplinary and integrated scientific research. The CBD assessment noted the absence of knowledge about biodiversity impacts from climate change while the UNFCCC assessment identified the need for climate change projection models, accompanied by scenarios on climate change impacts, as the most immediate technical requirements for mitigation and adaptation activities.

In addition, the synergy assessment pointed out that several academics realized the potential of their research to reveal climate change impacts on biodiversity components but were unable to acquire the necessary interdisciplinary expertise to make integrated research possible. The CBD assessment found (a) that the lack of technical networking and information management was the underlining cause of the technical shortcomings, and (b) that measures should be taken to better inform researchers and scientists of current developments in and outside their respective fields on a regular basis.

To this end, it is advisable to take into account and build upon outcomes of technical cooperation taken under the NBSAP project, where several integrated studies have been conducted on selected thematic areas. Strategies for development of technical capacity may also make use of rosters of experts and controlled vocabulary from the NBSAP project as available tools for enhancing communication and collaboration in relevant technical fields; this could encourage more multidisciplinary research in priority areas of common interests for the three conventions (i.e., climate change adaptation at the local level).

11.7. Climate change impacts

The thematic assessments identified a number of common areas for capacity building. In particular, the impacts from climate change were a principal thematic linkage between the conventions in each of the following areas.

11.7.1 Forest conservation

Forest ecosystems were identified by the CBD assessment as the area receiving the second highest amount of attention for national implementation while the UNFCCC assessment highlighted the roles of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, including their contribution to carbon sequestration. Both assessments also emphasized interconnections between conservation of available natural forests and the management of protected areas and concertedly pointed out the lack of clarity in delineation of protected area boundaries as a significant cause of the continuing loss of forests through encroachment. Climate change was reportedly responsible for accelerated loss of forest vegetation, resulting in exacerbation of desertification in dry and sub-humid ecosystems. Furthermore, the synergy assessment identified forest conservation as the most recognizable area for enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, particularly at local level. Therefore, efforts should be made to enable adequate integration of climate change, biodiversity and desertification concerns in the development and implementation of policies and strategies addressing forests and protected areas, especially in building capacity for maintaining forest ecosystem services associated with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

11.7.2 Agriculture

The common issues of the Rio Conventions in the agricultural sector include impacts of climate change on agricultural biodiversity components and land resources. This was highlighted by the call for assessment of best possible options for adaptive farming practices, including identification of measures for improvement of crop varieties. In recent years, however, biofuel production has become an emerging issue of common interest between the three conventions.

Although the UNFCCC assessment assessed biofuel production in the context of its impacts to forest ecosystems, the CBD assessment considered biofuel production under the CBD's thematic Programme of Work on agricultural biodiversity. Under the Programme of Work, the current debate on biofuels focused on its viability as a clean alternative to fossil fuels in light of impacts on biodiversity and land use from its production. Another concerned debate was the use the first generation feedstock (i.e., sugar cane, sweet sorghum, wheat and other applicable commercial crops) for production versus second generation feedstock (i.e., cellulosic materials); second generation feedstock prospectively produces a cleaner-burning fuel, but the conversion technology is under development and not in wide scale use nationally.

Therefore, it would be crucial to develop technical capacity not only to assess the impacts of climate change on agriculture but also to prepare for evaluation and adaptation of best possible biofuel conversion technologies for the country.

11.7.3 Inland waters

Inland water ecosystems were ranked in the top five thematic areas that were receiving the most national focus in terms of CBD implementation. The UNFCCC assessment provided several recommendations on building capacity for water resource management in light of future impacts from climate change. Efforts to prevent further expansion of desertification also required adequate protection of wetlands and their ecosystem services as loss of natural wetlands was regularly documented as a major contributor to land degradation.

It should be noted that Thailand was globally recognized as one of the most active and successful of the contracting parties to the Convention on Wetlands (the “Ramsar” Convention), as seen in the successive appointments of Thai representatives to the convention’s standing committee and in Thailand’s proactive efforts to enlist and maintain sites included under the list of Ramsar wetlands of international importance (also known as “Ramsar Sites”). Advancement has also been made on wetland policy actions with adoption of national policy on wetland conservation; efforts to strengthen the capacity for climate change mitigation and adaptation in wetland ecosystems should build on these policy actions and other existing activities of relevance.

11.7.4 Invasive alien species (IAS)

Actions to prevent entry and to mitigate the spread of invasive alien species were generally viewed as a specific concern of the CBD implementation. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), however, pointed out that impacts from climate change could significantly exacerbate IAS problems by accommodating wider IAS distribution and establishment of their populations in new habitats. Non-indigenous plant species may also contribute to land degradation through excessive uptake of soil nutrients and destabilizing soil structures with ecologically incompatible root systems.

By consolidating the above mentioned cross-cutting challenges in implementing the Rio Conventions with recommendations made by the synergy assessment, a compilation of actions for enhancing capacity for cross-cutting implementation of the conventions as developed and is shown below (“Action Plan for Building Cross-Cutting Capacity”). It should be noted that this action plan was revised in accordance with the views and suggestions of the participants at the NCSA closing workshop on October 16, 2009.

Action Plan for Building Cross-Cutting Capacity

Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.1 Legal and institutional capacity		
11.1.1 Legal capacity	Conducting comprehensive reviews of existing legal mechanisms currently used for implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to prepare for legal support measures with the participation of relevant enforcement agencies (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points and their host organizations <i>Supporting agencies :</i> enforcement agencies
	Enabling autonomous evaluation of enforcement of the above mentioned legal mechanisms (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> enforcement agencies <i>Supporting agencies :</i> focal points
11.1.2 Institutional capacity	Establishing and enhancing the official profiles of the national focal points including by enhancing acknowledgment of their responsibilities and evaluation of their performance (<i>long-term requirement</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP and LDD <i>Supporting agencies:</i> MONRE and MOAC
	Building on the NCSA workshop with parliamentarians by organizing annual dialogue with MPs and Senate members on the Rio Conventions' implementation, including through mainstreaming the conventions in a general environmental management context (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP <i>Supporting agencies:</i> The Parliament
11.2. Financial capacity	Conducting comprehensive reassessment of financial, technical and human resource availability and requirements for the implementation of Rio Conventions (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> universities and institutes specializing in economics <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points

Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.2. Financial capacity (continued)	Developing plans for strategic mobilization of new and additional resources (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> universities and institutes specializing in economics <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
11.3 Policy formulation and implementation	Conducting reviews of national strategies for implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to accommodate emerging issues and directives (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> national planning bodies (i.e., NESDB)
	Promoting recognition of the “synergy” concept as the means for, and the end result of, implementation of the Rio Conventions so that the synergistic approach can be used both in reassessment of previous and existing activities and in development of new ones (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> national planning bodies (i.e., NESDB)
	Building upon both intentional and unintentional local achievements and efforts related to implementation of the Rio Conventions by applying synergistic approaches in reviewing and revising policies (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> regional and local agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
	Providing clear directives for public sector and clear direction for private sector for implementation of the Rio Conventions including through exploring possibility of development of national policy for enabling the “synergy” approach, taking into account the need to address issues related to intellectually property rights (IPR), ethical benefit sharing and broader participation at all levels (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP and outreach agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> IPR Department
	Enabling effective communication of the national policies to each stakeholder group (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> outreach agencies

Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.3 Policy formulation and implementation (continued)	Appointing a focal unit for Rio Conventions and other associated multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) in MOAC in order to keep administrators informed of progress made by their implementing authorities (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> Office of Permanent Secretary, MOAC <i>Supporting agencies:</i> all concerned focal points
11.4 CEPA	Adopting the Rio Conventions' tools and guidance on CEPA in developing national CEPA strategies (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> outreach agencies, MOAC <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
11.4.1 Communication	Identifying priority issues for communication, developing messages and materials and planning effective strategies for delivering these messages to each target group (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP and LDD <i>Supporting agencies:</i> education agencies
	Renewing efforts by the Rio Conventions' focal points in promoting their respective conventions, particularly the UNFCCC and UNCCD, with the view to enhance other stakeholders' capacity to take leading roles in addressing specific issues of the conventions (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> relevant implementing agencies
	Ensuring regular reporting from the Rio Conventions' focal points to administrators and legislators in order to maintain their awareness of the conventions and the meaningfulness of their support for the effective implementation (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> MOAC, MONRE and the Office of Parliament
11.4.2 Education	Liaising with public education organizations in order to enhance implementation of the Rio Conventions and to enable relevant integration with training programs for school teachers and in university curricula (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP and LDD <i>Supporting agencies:</i> education agencies

Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.4.3 Public awareness	Adopting the “synergy” concept as the basis for building awareness of the Rio Conventions in organizations and other audiences so that news and additional issues can be addressed within an umbrella of understanding on the correlation of the conventions; this action should take into account the need for participatory involvement of marginalized groups in public services, such as local officials and temporary employees (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> outreach agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points and local agencies
	Developing new approaches and strategies to involve the mass media in the promotion of the Rio Conventions and their synergies, including through direct interaction with news organizations and individual journalists/reporters. Public outreach should also be enhanced through developing stronger relationships with mass media. Realizing the need to enable scientifically sound understanding of information, outreach officials might be assigned to liaison with media organizations in order to enable effective communication on the Rio Conventions and their synergies (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> outreach agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
11.5 Cooperation and participation	Enabling wider application of national reports on implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to facilitate harmonization of national reporting through consolidated feedback gathered from a wider group of stakeholders (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> focal points <i>Supporting agencies:</i> outreach and planning agencies
	Enabling effective communication between national oversight committees for the Rio Conventions, including through appointment of a coordinating body to facilitate and communicate between the committees (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> secretariats of the committees <i>Supporting agencies:</i> MOAC and MONRE
	Maintaining regular meetings between the Rio Conventions’ focal points after the completion of the NCSA process (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> ONEP <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
	Enabling dialogue with a wider range of stakeholders through effective use of CEPA strategies (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> outreach agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
	Based on the above CEPA efforts, encouraging autonomous adoption of the conventions’ provisions and COP decisions by a wider group of stakeholders as well as the adoption of the synergy concept for learning about the conventions. (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> planning and outreach agencies <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal

		points and NGOs
Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.6 Technical capacity	Encouraging interdisciplinary and integrated research on priority issues of common interests among the Rio Conventions (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> universities <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
	Enabling development of technical networking to ensure that relevant researchers are informed of technical developments in and outside their respective fields (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> universities and technical institutes <i>Supporting agencies:</i> MOAC, MONRE and MOSTE
	Exploring capacity of existing regional and sub-regional forums and bodies in carrying out sub-global ecosystem assessments and seeking out possible funding for such initiatives (<i>intermediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> CBD focal point <i>Supporting agencies:</i> universities, MOAC, MONRE and MOSTE
	Developing strategies for enhancing technical capacity, including through utilization of outputs from the NBSAP project (<i>immediate priority</i>)	<i>Core agencies:</i> universities and technical institutes <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points
11.7 Climate Change Impacts	11.7.1 Forest conservation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrating climate change, biodiversity and land degradation in development and implementation of policies and strategies which address the themes of forests, protected areas and wildlife conservation and particularly those associated with deforestation and reforestation (<i>intermediate priority</i>) 	<i>Core agencies:</i> DNP and RFD <i>Supporting agencies:</i> focal points

	11.7.2 Agriculture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing impacts of climate change on agricultural biodiversity, fisheries and land degradation (<i>immediate priority</i>) - Assessing best possible options for adaptive farming practices (<i>intermediate priority</i>) - Enhancing technical capacity for evaluating and adopting best possible biofuel conversion technologies (<i>immediate priority</i>) 	Core agencies: DOA, DOF, DMCR and LDD Supporting agencies: focal points, TMD, and research institutes
Cross-cutting challenges	Actions	Responsible agencies
11.7 Climate Change Impacts (continued)	11.7.3 Inland waters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building on national responses to the Ramsar Convention to enable climate change adaptation and mitigation measures for management of both surface and ground water (<i>immediate priority</i>) 	Core agencies: focal points Supporting agencies: Ramsar Convention's focal point
	11.7.4 Invasive alien species (IAS): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assessing impacts of climate change on exacerbation of IAS problems, including effects of non-indigenous plants and grazers on land degradation; this action may require more technical capacity as addressed in section VII (<i>immediate priority</i>) 	Core agencies: universities and research institutes Supporting agencies: CBD focal point

Note: **"Immediate priority"** indicates actions recommended for implementation in the immediate term following up to the NCSA

"Intermediate priority" indicates actions which might require completion after those with immediate priority, or which can be addressed by building certain capacities of responsible agencies

"Long-term priority" indicates actions which may rely on the broader involvement of stakeholders and thus take longer to address

From this list of recommended actions, a number of activities were found to be of significant importance and have the potential to be developed as concept papers for GEF supported projects. These include:

1. Comprehensive reviews of existing legal mechanisms currently used for implementation of the Rio Conventions in order to prepare for legal support measures;
2. Identification of priority issues for communication, developing messages and materials and planning effective strategies for delivering these messages to each target group;
3. Development of technical networking to ensure that relevant researchers are informed of development in and outside their respective fields;
4. Integrating climate change, biodiversity and land degradation in development and implementation of policies and strategies which address the themes of forests, protected

areas and wildlife conservation and particularly those associated with deforestation and reforestation;

5. Comprehensive assessment of climate change impacts on agricultural biodiversity and land degradation; and
6. Assessing impacts of climate change on exacerbation of problems associated with invasive alien species (IAS), including effects of non-indigenous plants and grazers on land degradation.

XII. Conclusion and lessons learned

The findings of the synergy assessment and the outcome of the analysis of cross-cutting capacity for implementation of the Rio Conventions identified broader awareness of the conventions as the key for enhancing mutual supportiveness in meeting their obligations. In fact, the above-mentioned recommendations were primarily designed to build capacity through widening knowledge on ranges of issues addressed by the conventions as well as on the instruments themselves. For example, the call for the reviewing of measures, for CEPA development and for multidisciplinary research could be facilitated by (and in some cases, might only be possible with) better understanding of the conventions among concerned stakeholders.

However, the outcomes of the fact-finding activities and consultative workshops under the synergy assessment suggested that overcoming the lack of broader recognition of the Rio Conventions would likely to encounter a number of serious obstacles. These obstacles are summarized below.

- The prevailing perception of the Rio Conventions as “international laws” is relatively prohibitive for autonomous adoption of their principles, provisions and even their guidance. With this perception, stakeholders without background knowledge on international laws were found to be relatively indifferent to the Rio Conventions and did not realize that the conventions were predominantly written in a common and accessible language which contained relatively limited legal jargons (i.e., in those provisions concerning rules of procedure, ratification and accession). In addition, the national focal points usually exercised absolute authority on how their respective conventions were interpreted based on their involvement at the convention level (i.e., Conferences of the Parties and their subsidiaries and affiliates) and often predetermined which stakeholders were given inclusive roles in implementing the conventions, rather than inviting more independent adoption of their provisions and guidance by the stakeholders. While these actions might have prevented misinterpretation of the instruments, they effectively narrowed the scope of stakeholders’ actions related to the conventions to those determined by the focal points. In some cases, principal stakeholders were virtually excluded from taking part in major issues (i.e., the lack of adequate involvement of “forest and protected areas” agencies in combating land degradation driven by vegetation loss) as well as in making contributions on issues yet to be addressed the focal points (but identified by the conventions). It should be noted that a more autonomous implementation of the Rio Conventions, while still under guidance and supervision of focal points, could actually lessen the focal points’ reporting burdens by allowing more stakeholders to identify how their actions contribute to national implementation.
- The lack of synergy in building awareness on the issues addressed by the Rio Conventions often led to fragmentation of the efforts. Without the requisite background knowledge, stakeholders newly exposed to the conventions experience less comprehension of the material as single, stand-alone issues whereas they could better understand the concepts through their interconnections and synergies across the conventions. This is due to the fact that each of the conventions, particularly the CBD, provides a common framework for a variety of interconnected issues and allowed them to be addressed in a holistic manner. The absence of broader awareness of the conventions, therefore, deprived stakeholders of a critical tool for weaving through the complexity of modern environmental issues.

- Most awareness-building efforts related to the Rio Conventions were without effective monitoring and evaluation. This problem in turn prevented the assessment of outcomes from previous activities, which could have improved upon previous strategies and avoided duplications of past efforts. The synergistic approach towards implementing the conventions offers an effective means for strategic evaluation of awareness-building actions and simultaneously enables more involvement of stakeholders with outreach expertise, including those with the skill and capacity to assess CEPA efforts, and could mitigate this problem to a certain extent.
- A series of consultative workshops organized for the synergy assessment pointed out effective participation as a significantly important driver in enabling broader awareness and understanding of the Rio Conventions. Despite relatively limited mainstream exposure, the CBD was found to be the most recognizable among the three conventions (despite the prevailing popularity of the UNFCCC's global warming issues). This recognition was found to be derived almost exclusively from extensive participation in the national implementation by a wide range of stakeholders, notably through the NBSAP and other relevant national programs. The UNCCD implementation has been mainly handled by the Land Development Department (LDD), the Royal Forest Department, and the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP); hence, the awareness among other partner organizations and stakeholders is relatively limited. This may likely contribute to the low level of UNCCD recognition among participating stakeholders in the synergy assessment, where only a few stakeholders outside the LDD were found to be aware of the convention.

A number of lessons were also learned from the capacity assessment on synergistic implementation and cross-cutting issues of the Rio Conventions. It is advisable to take into account the lessons listed below in developing and executing initiatives related to enabling mutual supportiveness in the implementation of the Rio Conventions.

- Thailand's NCSA process has found that the capacity assessment on synergy in implementing the Rio Conventions could be effectively carried out in parallel with similar assessments for individual conventions (i.e., the thematic assessments) and that the assessment could significantly complement efforts in addressing cross-cutting capacity. Contrary to the general perception of those who are directly affiliated with implementation of the Rio Conventions, the interconnection of issues addressed by the conventions is comprehensible by a large proportion of stakeholders when they have become aware of the broader range of issues therein (i.e., with aid from the concise introduction used in the synergy assessment's fact-finding actions). Furthermore, the stakeholders were found capable of offering views and opinions which were quite relevant on the matter of synergy as well as on possible options for enhancing mutual supportiveness between the conventions. Therefore, it is unwise for the authorities who are responsible for the implementation of the conventions to marginalize any stakeholders, particularly at local level, in future discussions and efforts to develop synergy in implementation of the Rio Conventions.
- Despite the call for thorough determination of priority opportunities for synergy in implementing the Rio Conventions, the NCSA Resource Kit does not provide adequate guidance on the actual process for conducting a synergy assessment. In addition, the existing Resource Kit has not been revised to take into account recent international efforts to foster synergy among the conventions by sources such as the

latest JLG recommendations, the Rio Conventions' joint work programmes and selected components of their strategies (i.e., the UNCCD ten-year strategic plan); the NCSA Resource Kit could also benefit from considering internationally recognized findings on priority cross-cutting issues such as those reported by the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. This lack of adequate and updated guidance posed a substantial challenge for executing any synergy assessment; it also made incorporating the above-mentioned references in the assessment, as is suggested in the Resource Kit, less meaningful to the present state of affairs.

- Although the national GEF coordinating office's funding assistance and the technical support and guidance from the UNDP country office were generally adequate services for carrying out the NCSA process, these offices were apparently unaware or indifferent to providing the consultants with up-to-date directives and decisions made by the relevant UN conventions (i.e., the Rio Conventions). For example, UNDP officials responsible for Thailand's NCSA had originally been less inclined to recognize the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) and its recommendations despite the references to the JLG in both the CBD's COP decisions and the NCSA Resource Kit. This demonstrated the lack of sufficient communication between the conventions' implementing agencies and the national GEF coordinating agencies and perhaps underlined the reason for ineffectiveness of the GEF in supporting certain activities advocated by the conventions. It is, therefore, advisable to organize consultation between the Rio Conventions' secretariats, the Rio Conventions' focal points and the GEF coordinating agencies on a regular basis (i.e., through online conferences) in order to discuss priority issues (i.e., the NCSA and other similar assessments) for the convention's implementation in light of decisions made at the convention level.

XIII. Acknowledgment

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XIV. Acronyms

AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
AHTEG	Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CDI	Capacity Development Initiative
COP	Conference of the Parties
CEPA	Communication, Education and Public Awareness
DANIDA	Denmark International Development Agency
DEQP	Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
DMCR	Department of Marine and Coastal Resources
DNP	Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOF	Department of Fisheries
DOLA	Department of Local Administration
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
JLG	Joint Liaison Group
LDD	Land Development Department
MA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement
MOAC	Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MOSTE	Ministry of Science and Technology
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
NCSA	National Capacity Self-Assessment
NEB	National Environment Board
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
OSCC	Office of Climate Change Coordination
ONEP	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
PCL	Public Company Limited
RFD	Royal Forest Department
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SBSTTA	Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice
TDRI	Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation
TISTR	Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research
TMD	The Meteorological Department of Thailand
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

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15.1 publications

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15.2 websites

www.cbd.int

www.ddd.go.th

www.onep.go.th/neb

www.unccd.int

www.unfccc.int

Annex I: The list of Contributing Stakeholder Organizations in the Synergy Assessment

1. Testing the standard questionnaire

1. Mahasarakham University*
2. Faculty of Science, Khon Kaen University*
3. Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University*
4. Maejo University*
5. Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden*

2. Interviews

1. Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden*
2. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
3. Department of Agriculture (DOA)
4. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)**
5. The Office of the National Environment Board (NEB)
6. Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP)*
7. Corporate Total Quality Promotion Center, The Siam Cement PCL
8. Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)**
9. Petroleum Authority of Thailand (ex-executive)
10. DANIDA, Royal Danish Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
11. Department of Local Administration (DOLA)
12. Royal Norwegian Embassy
13. Department of Agricultural Extension
14. Energy Technology Department, Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (TISTR)
15. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC)
16. Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC)
17. The Senate Committee on the Environment
18. Natural Resources and Environment Program, Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation (TDRI)
19. Royal Forest Department (RFD)

3. The first consultative workshop (February 26, 2009, Khon Kaen Province)

1. Faculty of Science, Khon Kaen University*
2. Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University*
3. Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University*
4. Faculty of Science, Mahasarakham University*
5. Walia Rukavetch Institute, Mahasarakham University*
6. Udon Thani Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
7. Nong Khai Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
8. The 9th Regional Environment, Udon Thani Province
9. The 10th Regional Environment, Khon Kaen Province

10. Khon Kaen City Municipality
11. The 5th Regional Land Development Office, Khon Kaen Province
12. Khon Kaen Provincial Land Development Office
13. Capacity development of community organizations for conservation and rehabilitation of Kang Lawa
14. Model communities for natural resource and environmental management of the Chi watershed, Khon Kaen Province
15. The Northeastern network on alternative agriculture
16. The Northeastern women network
17. The Northeastern subsistent labor network
18. Dong Lan Community Network, Khon Kaen Province
19. Natural resources management of the Sern watershed project
20. The Center for Participatory capacity building of community organizations

Note: participation of the above stakeholders # 13-20 was coordinated by NGOs

4. The second consultative workshop (March 5, 2009, Chiang Mai Province)

1. Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, Mahidol University
2. Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP)*
3. The 2nd Regional Environmental Office, Lampang Province
4. Lamphun City Municipality
5. Lamphun Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
6. Lamphun Provincial Land Development Office
7. Chiang Mai City Municipality
8. Chiang Mai Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
9. Chiang Mai Provincial Land Development Office
10. Lampang Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
11. Lampang Provincial Land Development Office
12. Chiang Rai Provincial Land Development Office
13. Chiang Mai University
14. Maejo University*
15. Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden (host)*
16. Ping River Basin Management Program
17. Association for Hill Tribe Study and Culture
18. The [Heinrich Boell Foundation; Southeast Asia Regional Office](#)

5. The consultative workshop with the media (March 18, 2009, ONEP, Bangkok)

1. Radio Thailand (Public Relations Department)

6. The third consultative workshop (April 1, 2009, Asian Institute of Technology, Pathum Thani Province)

1. Faculty of Economic, Kasetsart University
2. Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, Kasetsart University
3. Faculty of Forest, Kasetsart University
4. National Center for Metal and Material Technology

5. National Science Museum
6. Department of Fisheries
7. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)**
8. Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)**
9. WWF Thailand
10. The 1st Regional Land Development Office
11. Klong Luang Municipality, Pathum Thani Province

7. Other contributors

1. Prince of Songkla University

*Note: * = Organizations participated in more than one event with the same representatives.*

***= Organization participated in more than one event with different representatives.*

Total number of stakeholders = 66 organizations comprising twelve university faculties and institutes, thirty-six public organizations, nine community organizations, three private firms and institutes, three NGOs, two embassies and one media organization.

The complete list of all 66 organizations is shown as below.

The consolidated List of Participating Stakeholder Organizations

1. Faculty of Science, Khon Kaen University
2. Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University
3. Maejo University
4. Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden
5. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)
6. Department of Agriculture (DOA)
7. Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP)
8. The Office of the National Environment Board (NEB)
9. Department of Environmental Quality Promotion (DEQP)
10. Corporate Total Quality Promotion Center, The Siam Cement PCL
11. Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)
12. Petroleum Authority of Thailand (ex-executive)
13. Danida, Royal Danish Embassy/Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark
14. Department of Local Administration (DOLA)
15. Royal Norwegian Embassy
16. Department of Agricultural Extension
17. Energy Technology Department, Thailand Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (TISTR)
18. Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC)
19. Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC)
20. The Senate Committee on the Environment
21. Natural Resources and Environment Program, Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation (TDRI)

22. Royal Forest Department (RFD)
23. Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University*
24. Faculty of Science, Mahasarakam University*
25. Walia Rukavetch Institute, Mahasarakam University*
26. Udon Thani Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
27. Nong Khai Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
28. The 9th Regional Environment, Udon Thani Province
29. The 10th Regional Environment, Khon Kaen Province
30. Khon Kaen City Municipality
31. The 5th Regional Land Development Office, Khon Kaen Province
32. Khon Kaen Provincial Land Development Office
33. Capacity development of community organizations for conservation and rehabilitation of Kang Lawa
34. Model communities for natural resources and environmental management of the Chi watershed, Khon Kaen Province
35. The Northeastern network on alternative agriculture
36. The Northeastern women network
37. The Northeastern subsistent labor network
38. Dong Lan Community Network, Khon Kaen Province
39. Natural resources management of the Sern watershed project
40. The Center for Participatory capacity building of community organizations
41. Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, Mahidol University
42. The 2nd Regional Environmental Office, Lampang Province
43. Lamphun City Municipality
44. Lamphun Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
45. Lamphun Provincial Land Development Office
46. Chiang Mai City Municipality
47. Chiang Mai Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
48. Chiang Mai Provincial Land Development Office
49. Lampang Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
50. Lampang Provincial Land Development Office
51. Chiang Rai Provincial Land Development Office
52. Chiang Mai University
53. Ping River Basin Management Program
54. Association for Hill Tribe Study and Culture
55. The [Heinrich Boell Foundation](#): Southeast Asia Regional Office
56. Radio Thailand (Public Relations Department)
57. Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University
58. Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, Kasetsart University
59. Faculty of Forest, Kasetsart University
60. National Center for Metal and Material Technology
61. National Science Museum
62. Department of Fisheries
63. WWF Thailand
64. The 1st Regional Land Development Office

65. Klong Luang Municipality, Pathum Thani Province
66. Prince of Songkla University

Annex II: A Sample of the standard questionnaire for the synergy assessment

Name of the respondent:.....

Organization of the respondent:.....

1. Are you familiar with the following three international conventions?

1.1 Convention on Biological Diversity (yes) (no)

If your answer is “yes”, please provide brief elaboration on your understanding of the convention.....
.....

1.2 The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (yes) (no)

If your answer is “yes”, please provide brief elaboration on your understanding of the convention.....
.....

1.3 The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (yes) (no)

If your answer is “yes”, please provide brief elaboration on your understanding of the convention.....
.....

2. Are you aware of the interconnection between the above mentioned conventions? (yes) (no)

If your answer is “yes”, where did you learn about their linkage?

- () Decision of the conventions’ Conferences of the Parties
- () The Joint Liaison Group (JLG)
- () The JLG recommendations

3. Which of the following you believe to be the benefit derived from developing synergy in implementation of the three conventions?

- () Cost savings
- () Adding value to existing actions
- () Enhancing recognition of the conventions

4. Has your organization been promoting or planning to promote synergistic implementation of the three conventions? (yes) (no)

If your answer is “yes”, at which level have these actions taken place?

- () at policy level
- () at program level
- () at project level

5. What kinds of and what volume of resources are required by your organization to initiate or maintain the synergy-oriented actions for implementation of the three conventions in the immediate- and long-term?

.....
.....
.....

6. What assistance might your organization need in order to initiate and/or maintain synergy-oriented actions for implementation of the three conventions?

.....
.....
.....

Signature.....

Date.....

Annex III: Views and opinions of Minister of Natural Resources and Environment about the synergies of the Rio Conventions

As part of the stocktaking activities under the NCSA process, Dr. Phanna Waikakul and the synergy assessment team met with Mr. Suwit Khunkitti, the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, on January, 29, 2009. The objective of the meeting was to evaluate general awareness and capacity for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions and to investigate the understanding and willingness of the apex administrator on enabling such synergies.

After receiving a brief description of the NCSA project and the objectives of the project's synergy assessment, the Minister singled out biodiversity as one of the Ministry's principle focus on implementation of the Rio Conventions. He further noted that his administration had the authority over the national focal points for two of the three Rio Conventions (i.e., the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)). The Minister pointed out that the Land Development Department (LDD) is the administrative authority for another Rio Convention—the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)—and identified the department as an agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, not under his ministry.

While discussing synergies within the Rio Conventions and the steps needed to ensure their implementation in Thailand, the Minister noted actions to enable and enhance bilateral cooperation in meeting obligations of the CBD and the UNFCCC. He admitted that such actions had not extended to include elements related to implementation of the UNCCD since they were not under the authority of his ministry. The Minister, however, pointed out that efforts to motivate synergistic implementation of all three Rio Conventions, including with inter-ministerial cooperation, would require more explicit actions at the international level. He was of an opinion that the formulation of COP Decisions and the execution of the Rio Conventions' operations by the Secretariats should be handled in a more synergistic manner. One example of a synergistic action from the Secretariats could include organizing common international forums for all three conventions (i.e., joint meetings of the Conferences of the Parties in order to enhance collaboration and save time and cost). By providing frameworks for such synergies at the international level, Secretariats and Member Parties would provide a strong example for enabling mutual supportiveness in implementing the Rio Conventions and stimulate political will to support greater efforts on realizing the synergies.

As for the thematic areas and issues addressed by the Rio Conventions, the Minister identified desertification as the least visible and perhaps the most misleading. He pointed out that the public had not yet recognized desertification as the immediate and critical threat to the environment and that such lack of general awareness on the issue would create difficulty for the public in understanding its correlation with the other issues advocated by the rest of the Rio Conventions (namely, CBD and UNFCCC). The Minister also noted that the current perception of the integration of efforts to implement the Rio Conventions suggested that such collaboration and partnership would pose an additional cost rather than enabling cost effectiveness. Additionally, he believed that the international community had to set an example how the synergy between the Rio Conventions would bring about more effective use of resources. Again, the concept of organizing common forums or meetings for the Rio Conventions' Member Parties is an example of such integration which would be more cost-effective for delegates (including

Thailand's Minister of Natural Resources and Environment) and organizers as compared to having separate forums for each convention.

The Minister felt there was a need for the UNCCD to enhance the convention's profile and the level of public awareness regarding the directives of, the obligations under and the issues addressed by the convention at the international and national level. He identified such actions as the critical component for enabling synergistic activities related to the implementation of the Rio Conventions. The Minister pointed out that several of the ministry's policies had already addressed issues related to the CBD and UNFCCC (i.e., habitat protection, conservation of native species, enhancing carbon sequestration, mitigating impacts of climate change) and these policies could accommodate similar issues related to national obligations under the UNCCD (i.e., preventing and controlling land degradation and protecting against the loss of vegetation). He was of an opinion that each of the Rio Conventions, including their direct administrative authorities (i.e., the focal points) should place less focus on their particular issues within each convention and instead pay more attention the thematic areas and issues that could enable synergistic implementation of actions in accordance to national priorities. On a final note, the Minister suggested that more awareness of the Rio Conventions would be needed in order to enable integration of their implementation.

*Documented, summarized and edited by the NCSA project's synergy assessment team.
January 28, 2009*

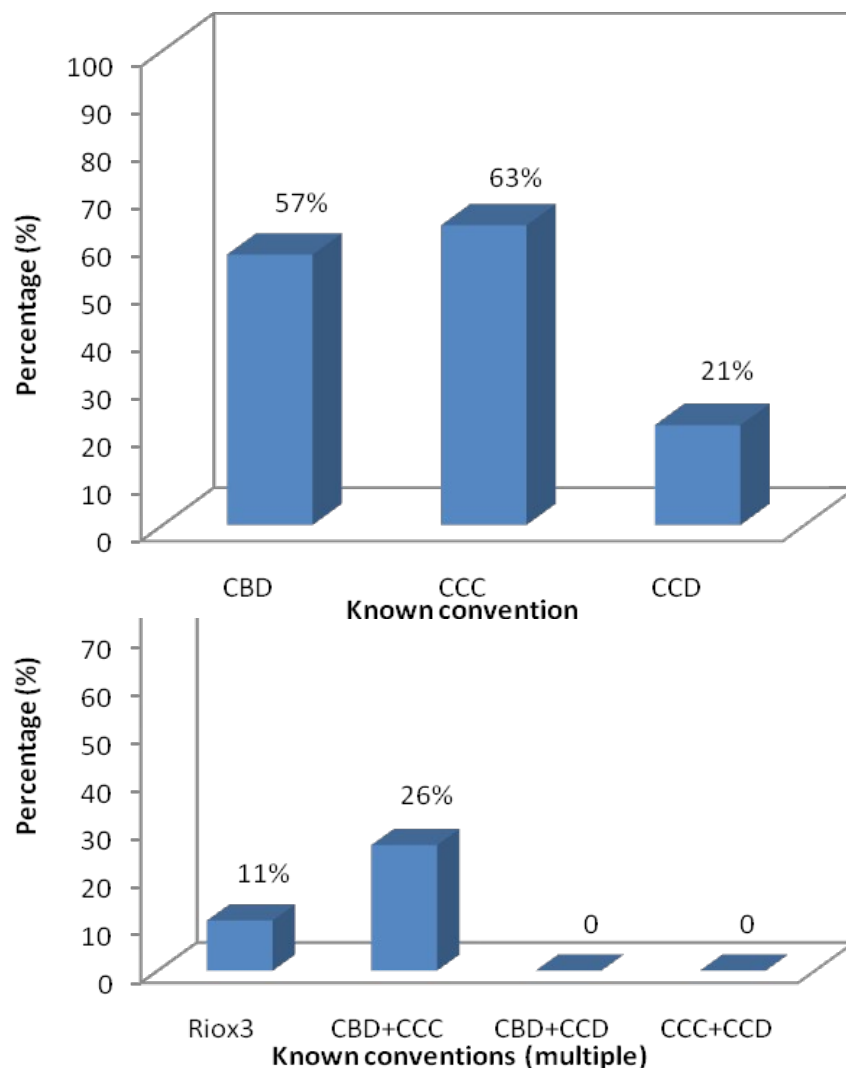
Annex IV: Results from the Interviews

The interviewees were posed with a series of questions which tested their knowledge on the Rio Conventions and the synergies which exist between the conventions. Annex IV describes the results from their responses to the questions.

The CBD and the UNFCCC were found to be the two most recognizable instruments of the Rio Conventions: 57% of interviewees were aware of the CBD and 63% were aware of the UNFCCC. Only 21% of interviewees knew of the UNCCD prior to the interviews. Figure 1 below depicts the interviewees' familiarity with the conventions.

Since relatively few people were found to be aware of the UNCCD, it was not surprising that only 11% of respondents had knowledge of all three Rio Conventions and that more respondents (26%) were aware of both the CBD and the UNFCCC but not the UNCCD.

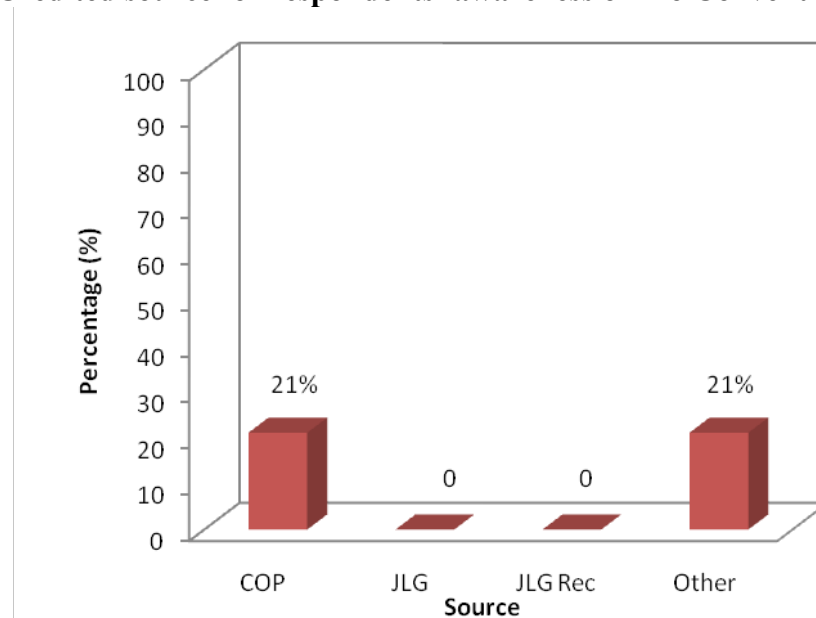
Figure 1: Interviewees' overall awareness of the Rio Conventions



Respondents were also asked to select the source which was most indicative of the synergies between the Rio Conventions. The choices included: (1) COP decisions, (2) the existence of the JLG, (3) JLG recommendations, and (4) the existence of the Rio Conventions themselves (“Other”).

The interviewees’ overall lack of awareness of the Rio Conventions might be the underlining reason why respondents displayed a relatively low level of understanding about the synergies between the conventions (see Figure 2 below). Only 21% acknowledged an awareness of the synergies of the three conventions based on information from relevant COP decisions, while another 21% were aware of the synergies due to the very existence of the conventions themselves. None of the interviewees learned about the “synergy” concept from the JLG or its recommendations.

Figure 2: Credited source for respondents’ awareness of Rio Conventions’ synergies



Interviewees were also asked about the perceived benefits of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions (see Figure 3 below). The potential benefits that respondents could choose from included (1) cost savings, (2) added value, (3) mainstreaming, or any combination of said benefits.

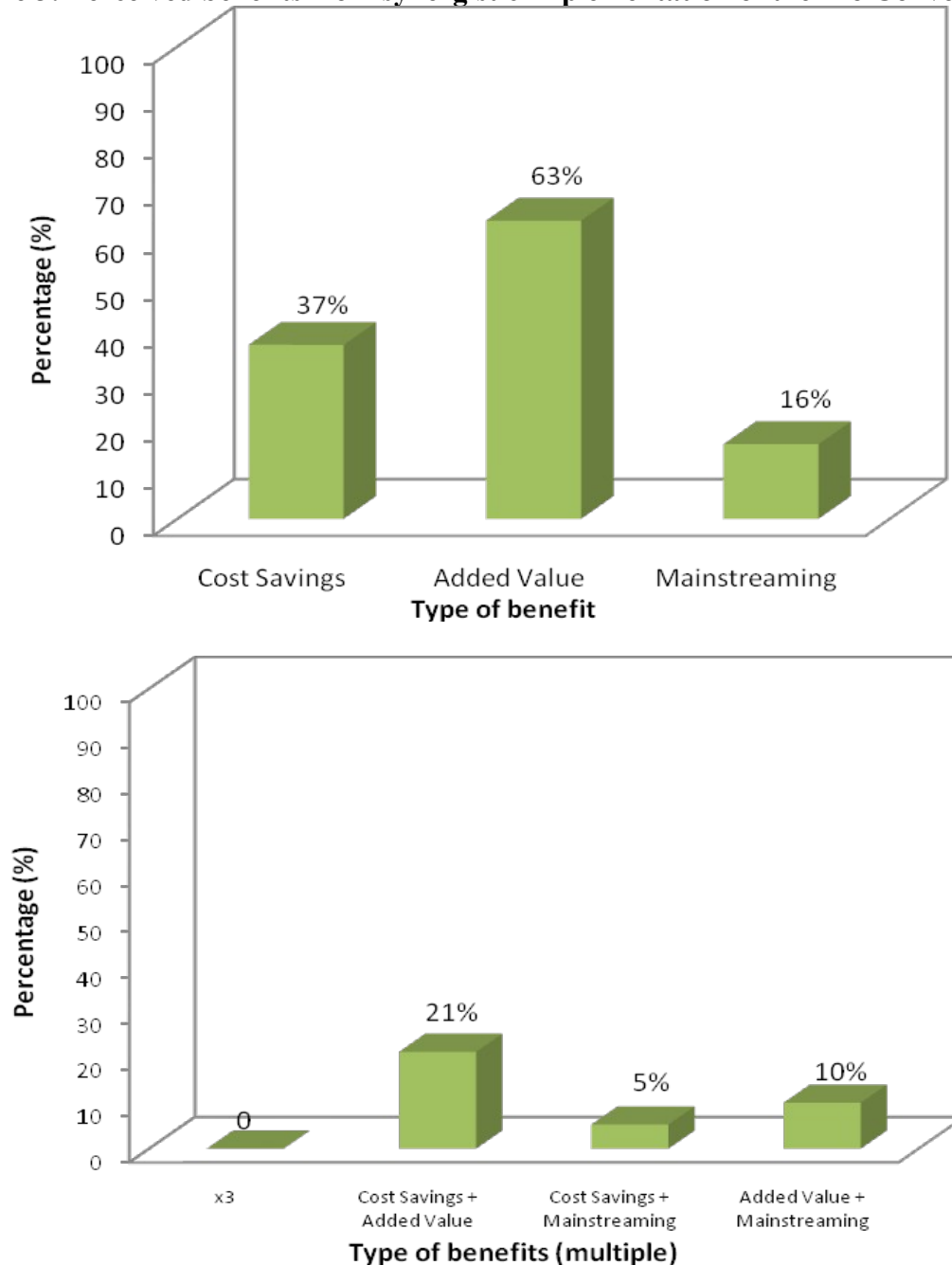
A total of 63% of the respondents felt that there was added value in choosing a synergistic approach in the implementation of the Rio Conventions; 37% believed that cost savings could be realized through such an approach. Only 16% believed that a synergistic approach would be useful in mainstreaming the Rio Conventions to wider audiences.

Some of the interviewees thought that employing synergistic implementation of the conventions would result in multiple benefits; 21% saw cost savings and added value in doing so, and 10% believed that added value and improved mainstreaming could be achieved.

According to a number of the interviewees, the lack of sufficient financial resources was not the priority problem in implementing the Rio Conventions, and taking a synergistic approach towards implementation was unlikely to contribute to greater mobilization of resources to any

significant extent. On the other hand, many respondents welcomed the “synergy” concept as a novel approach in reassessing previous and existing actions related to the Rio Conventions with the view to reveal additional benefits.

Figure 3: Perceived benefits from synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions

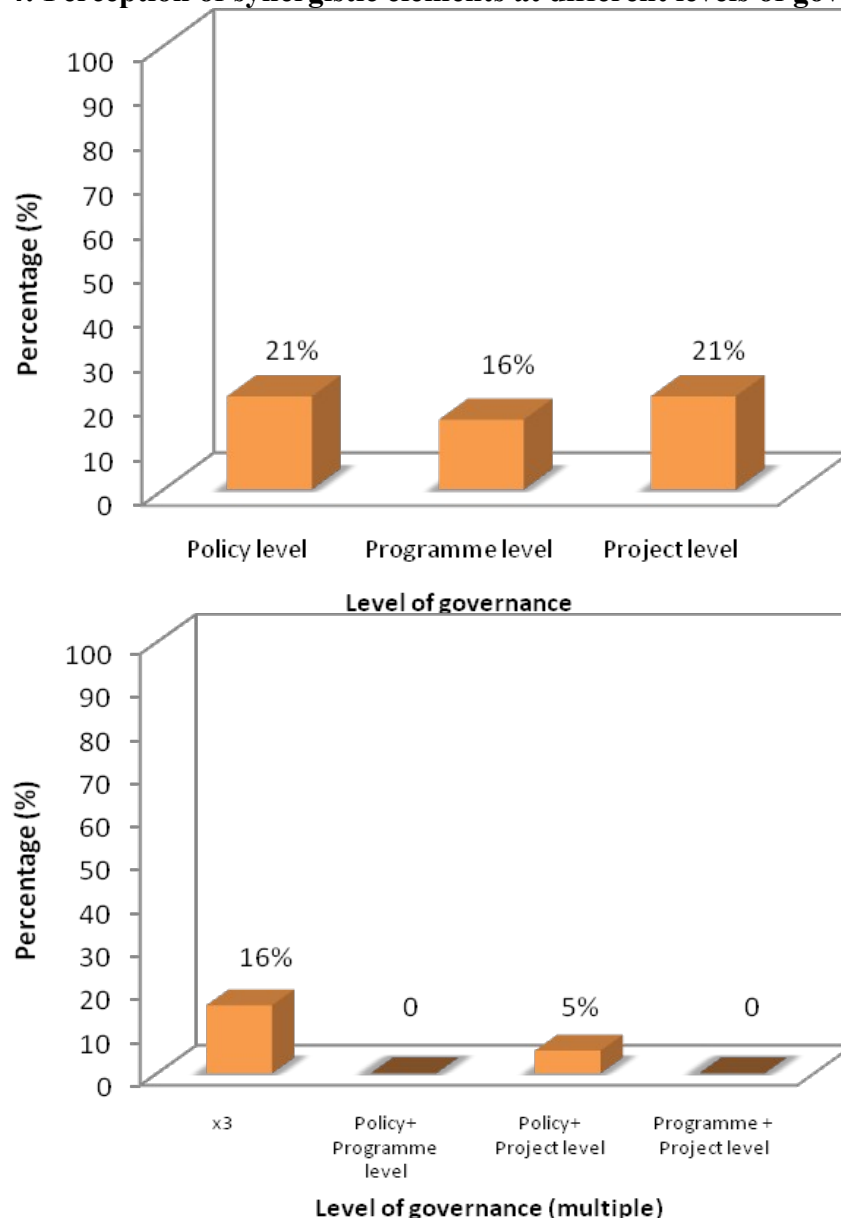


Next, interviewees were asked to consider their respective job responsibilities and their employer’s implementation of strategies at the policy, programme and project level – with policy level the highest in order/scope and project level as most local in scope. The synergy assessment team asked the participants to indicate the levels (i.e., policy, programme, and project) where their employers were already utilizing synergistic approaches or where the respondents themselves felt that synergies were apparent. Figure 4 depicts the results from this query.

Few respondents (21%) indicated synergistic elements within their policies or activities and fewer (16%) recognized such elements in their programmes. Additionally, 16% were able to identify synergistic elements at all levels of governance (policy, programme, and project levels).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment was among these respondents and was apparently supportive of adopting a synergistic approach in the execution of his environmental policies.

Figure 4: Perception of synergistic elements at different levels of governance



During the interviews, several respondents offered their opinions on ways to enable synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions. These comments were synthesized and compiled into the following list of actions for enabling the synergy and were also incorporated into the comparative analysis of findings and the development of recommendations (see section X).

- Improve the level of coordination—within agencies/ministries and across agencies/ministries—in implementing the Rio Conventions, including through modification and/or development of a joint committee.
- Develop national policies for enabling a synergistic approach towards the implementation of the Rio Conventions, focusing on simplification. These policies may include incentive measures and market mechanisms to encourage the private sector's involvement.
- Enhance communications in relation to the Rio Conventions, including better interpretation of the conventions for outreach activities and acquisition of human resources with adequate skills in CEPA related activities.
- Share in the responsibility for implementing the Rio Conventions (across multiple stakeholder groups), including by building local awareness and cooperation with respect to the conventions.
- Adopt advance planning approaches for implementation of the Rio Conventions with identification of long-term goals and the application of synergistic approaches in ensuring mutual supportiveness.
- As for the lack of adequate resources for the focal points, the Secretary General of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) noted the lack of official recognition, especially by the Budget Bureau and other bodies responsible for allocation of resources to the focal points, as the underlining obstacle in securing adequate resources through governmental procedures. She also noted that assistance from foreign donors and other sources was, in several cases, the actual driver for progress made towards the implementation of the CBD and UNFCCC.

Annex V: Interview with Radio Thailand

The synergy assessment team to the NCSA project organized a consultative workshop to assess the role of the mass media in promoting the Rio Conventions. The workshop took place in the morning of March 18, 2009, and was hosted by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)—the NCSA project's implementing agency. The aim of the workshop was to inform the media of the project, to provide an introduction of the Rio Conventions and their synergies, and to discuss the ways and means in which the media could contribute to a better understanding of the convention and the synergies.

Representatives from nineteen news organizations, broadcasters and publishers were invited to the workshop; six expressed interest in attending the event. On the day of the workshop, however, a journalist from the Public Relations Department of Radio Thailand, Mr. Pramote Thitiwongrit, was the only attendant at the workshop. Despite Mr. Thitiwongrit's efforts to invite journalists and reporters stationed nearby the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to attend the meeting, no other participants attended. Due to the poor attendance, the Project Manager to the NCSA project and the NBSAP project decided to utilize the workshop's venue and the presence of ONEP staff to consult with the national focal points to the Rio Conventions; doing so was in response to a request made at the Sixth Meeting of the Project Steering Committee (PSC).

Even though the day's agenda changed, the synergy assessment team was still able to make good use of Radio Thailand's presence. Mr. Thitiwongrit was interviewed to understand his views and opinions on enhancing the role of the media in promoting the Rio Conventions and their synergies. With assistance by Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the NCSA project's documentation consultant, the team presented a brief introduction on the context of and the issues addressed by the Rio Conventions as well as their synergistic relationship. The presentation also highlighted the advantage of adopting a synergistic approach and outlook in communicating both the context and issues of the conventions. After the introductory briefing, Mr. Thitiwongrit was questioned on several issues related to the role of the mass media with respect to the conventions. Notable observations from his response are summarized below.

- The media, including those reporting on environment issues, were relatively selective in acquiring information and other technical contributions from their sources. The preferred sources or informants were often those with effective skills in communicating with journalists and reporters and usually had previously established connections with them. A limited number of academics and scientists were identified as core sources or persons with knowledge, and the journalists/reporters rarely ventured out to find additional or news sources with complimentary or contrasting information.
- In general, the media still found the Rio Conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements difficult to understand, and were not confident in their ability to communicate the context of these instruments without additional assistance.

- Renewed efforts—including new strategic approaches—to involve the mass media were needed, particularly through direct interaction with news organizations and individual journalists/reporters.
- The Association of Environmental Reporters, and other organizations comprising journalists with science and technology backgrounds, should be directly contacted and consulted on how best to provide introductory information on the Rio Conventions to the public as well as the most effective means for communicating relevant synergistic issues.
- Public outreach through mass media should be conducted so as to enable a scientifically sound understanding of technical issues. Once such example: the provision of scientific information which would allow accurate comprehension of climate change challenges.

Mr. Thitiwongrit expressed his appreciation of the effort to involve the media in the NCSA project and offered to recommend other journalists/reporters to contact the synergy assessment team.

Annex VI: Summary of the First Consultative Workshop on Synergy of the Rio Conventions

February 26, 2009

Charoen Thani Princess Hotel, Khon Kaen Province

The first consultative workshop for the synergy assessment under the NCSA Project was held at Charoen Thani Princess Hotel, Khon Kaen Province, on February 26, 2009. The workshop was attended by 54 participants from 13 organizations, including representatives from selected local communities from the northeastern region of Thailand.³² The principle objectives of the meeting were to introduce the “synergy” concept in implementing the Rio Conventions, to enable participants to identify relevant synergistic areas in their respective lines of works and to discuss capacity needs for developing the synergistic implementation of the conventions, including by addressing individual requirements and matching expertise and resources between organizations. In addition to the 54 participants, the workshop was also attended by Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharern, the NCSA Project Manager, and facilitated by Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the documentation consultant, as requested by Dr. Phanna Waikakul, the lead consultant for the synergy assessment. In addition, Ms. Patcharapim Sethaputra, the lead consultant for the UNFCCC assessment, participated in the workshop as an observer.

The workshop commenced at 09:30 in the morning.

Morning session

Dr. Phanna Waikakul welcomed the participants to the workshop. In her opening address, she briefly elaborated on the documents and handouts which had been distributed to the participants, including a standard questionnaire and a half-page query form for the participants to provide a description of their job roles and interests related to issues addressed by the Rio Conventions. She stressed that the first two questions in the standard questionnaire (knowledge about the Rio Conventions and their synergistic correlations) were required their response prior to the morning coffee break (before the introductory presentation on the Rio Conventions) in order for the assessment team to evaluate the participants’ prior level of understanding on the conventions. Dr. Waikakul further requested the attendants to fill in the query forms and return them to the organizers before lunch so that the information from the query form could be used for the small group discussion during the afternoon session.

Dr. Waikakul then invited Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharern to present a brief description of the NCSA Project. Dr. Hutacharern introduced the objectives of the NCSA, focusing on the need to enhance awareness of the Rio Conventions as a prerequisite for assessing the capacity for their implementation in Thailand. She pointed out that the assessment of existing policies, laws, activities and frameworks – including those related to enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions – would eventually assist the country in addressing priority capacity needs. Dr. Hutacharern identified the synergy workshop as a complementary activity to the other capacity assessment activities on the individual Rio Conventions, which were conducted under the leadership of other consultants such as Ms. Sethaputra (who was present as an observer). She informed the participants that the outcomes of the NCSA Project – including those derived from the consultative workshop – would be shared with stakeholders in order to hear their feedback;

³² A list of the participating organizations is included at the end of Annex VI.

as such, the participants were invited to attend future meetings/workshops organized by the synergy assessment team for publicizing the NCSA Project's findings and recommendations.

Dr. Hutacharn noted that the series of consultative workshops for the synergy assessment was to include another regional workshop in Chiang Mai Province (March 5, 2009) and that meetings for other NCSA thematic assessments under the Rio Conventions were to be held throughout February and March, 2009. At the end of her address, she elaborated on the correlations between the NCSA Project and the NBSAP Project—another initiative implemented by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) with funding assistance from the Global Environment Facility (GEF)—and further noted her involvement as the manager for both projects.

After the brief address on the NCSA project, Dr. Hutacharn asked Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi to deliver an introductory presentation on the Rio Conventions and their synergy. She introduced Mr. Pookpakdi as the documentation consultant of the NCSA Project and the NBSAP Project and an experienced analyst on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – one of the Rio Conventions. Mr. Pookpakdi first reminded the participants to complete and return the questionnaires and the query forms in accordance to Dr. Waikakul's instruction. He pointed out that information provided by the participants was vital in facilitating dialogue in the small group discussion and in enabling them to collectively identify synergistic areas of action under the Rio Conventions which exist in their respective lines of work.

During the introduction on the Rio Conventions and their synergy, Mr. Pookpakdi stressed the existence of their correlations as driving mechanisms for realization of a global agenda on sustainable development; he pointed to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation under the WSSD, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as relevant examples of the growing international consensus for environmentally and socially concerned development approaches. He pointed out that the Rio Conventions (the CBD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)) were all based on the principles of conservation as well as minimization of anthropogenic impacts – aiming to minimize human-driven impacts on climate, to conserve biodiversity or to conserve land resources and minimize negative impacts to soil.

Mr. Pookpakdi noted that the public was generally “turned off” by, or indifferent to, the Rio Conventions, in spite of the fact that Thailand was a Contracting Party to all three conventions. Based on the preliminary findings of the synergy assessment, such lack of awareness of the Rio Conventions was due to the fact that most persons perceived the implementation of the conventions to be the sole responsibility of public organizations and not the common obligation of the country as a whole. In other words, people believed that the only stakeholders for implementation were the national or state agencies, not the local community or the private sector.

Mr. Pookpakdi further pointed out that the Rio Conventions had not been well received by the public because the conventions were perceived to be international laws. Since most Thai citizens already experienced difficulty in understanding domestic legal instruments, there was even less enthusiasm to take into account international instruments of law. The nuances of “soft” law versus “hard” law were irrelevant to this sentiment.

To overcome this problem, Mr. Pookpakdi recommended the participants treat the Rio Conventions as (i) tools for demanding the government's actions on issues addressed by the conventions, and (ii) as guidance for practical and effective execution of activities related to their provisions. He emphasized that making the conventions useful in the participants' respective lines of work would require a comprehensive understanding of all principle issues under the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD. These issues included more focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation; recognizing conservation as a preliminary requirement for biodiversity actions; and practical interpretation of desertification which encompasses relevant issues at the local level such as soil degradation, saline and alkaline soil, and the loss of soil cover. Mr. Pookpakdi then used several examples to illustrate how to identify correlations and synergistic issues under the Conventions, such as implications of organic fertilizers: on soil fertility (for preventing desertification); soil biodiversity; and for reducing emissions of nitrogen-based greenhouse gases (GHG) from inorganic fertilizers.

Following the presentation, Mr. Pookpakdi demonstrated how to identify synergistic relationships in implementing the Rio Conventions on issues raised by the participants. He noted that some issues, such as treating saline soil through reforestation, had relatively obvious synergistic elements while others, such as poverty reduction, would require establishing linkages with thematic areas related to sustainable use in order to define potential synergies. Mr. Pookpakdi also pointed out the need to "market" the conservation of natural ecosystems as a cost effective approach to disaster reduction and mitigation; doing so might encourage adoption of actions which address synergistic issues under the three Rio Conventions. One example of marketing the role of conservation in reducing the risk of disaster: by enhancing the recognition of wetlands' roles in mitigating impacts from severe climatic events (i.e., monsoons, floods, and droughts), conservation of wetlands ecosystems and their respective biodiversity components is given renewed status. Mr. Pookpakdi also stressed the possibility of taking synergistic actions on monitoring, such as using specific biodiversity components in given ecosystems as indicators for impacts of climate change and accompanying land use practices.

Afternoon session

After lunch, the participants were divided into two small groups of 21 persons each (the remaining attendees either left after lunch, acted as observers or facilitated the discussions as organizers). Each group was provided with a list of identifiable issues related to the Rio Conventions. The list itself was a compilation of issues written in the query forms by the participants of each group and was used as a template in the exercise on identifying synergistic elements of these issues.

The first group was given a list of 28 issues and was able to find possible synergies of the Rio Conventions' themes (climate change, biodiversity, and desertification) within 20 of those issues. The participants in the first group also identified the strengthening of technical capacity—such as capacity for assessing reductions in GHG emissions and for data management—as the priority need for enabling synergistic actions on these issues.

Participants in the second group found synergistic elements in 10 of the 14 issues from their list. They, too, noted a need to develop technical capacity in order to implement synergistic actions on the issues. With guidance from the moderators, both groups recognized the possibility of linking several of the issues from their respective lists in a congruent manner, particularly those

related to conservation and alternative energy. They pointed out communication, education, supportive policies and coordinating mechanisms as the critical factors in enhancing cooperative capacity for such activities and noted the existence of community networks as important enabling mechanisms for capacity building.

Mr. Pookpakdi moderated the last session of the workshop and took the opportunity to summarize the outcomes of the small group discussions. Both groups identified the following issues as having potential for synergistic actions between the Rio Conventions' implementation strategies:

- i. Wetland conservation;
- ii. Forest conservation;
- iii. Soil conservation / protection of soil cover;
- iv. Organic farming;
- v. Reduction of chemical usage in agriculture practices;
- vi. Expanding conservation networks; and
- vii. Conservation of rice varieties.

Mr. Pookpakdi noted that the most recognizable issues were conservation oriented, and commended the participants for considering conservation as a guiding principle in identifying synergistic elements. He further pointed out that synergies were more identifiable when they were linked with specific spatially oriented issues (i.e., ecosystems). Mr. Pookpakdi recommended using these principles in developing synergistic activities within their respective lines of environmental work, and stressed that proposals with such elements were usually more adaptive to the changing interests of donors and other funding sources as well as the public.

In discussing the ways to move from the thematic issues into specific actions, the workshop participants brainstormed and came up with two vital starting points. The group felt that (i) identifying local needs, and (ii) reassessing the potential of existing actions were necessary steps in order to develop synergistic activities and programs. Land use planning, with an emphasis on conservation and disaster mitigation, was pointed out as a possible issue to be addressed through synergistic actions at the provincial or regional level. More generic issues, such as networking and the appropriate use of traditional knowledge, were found to be applicable for taking such actions at any level.

In the closing address, Dr. Hutacharern thanked the attendants for their active participation at the workshop. She noted that the event had provided mutual benefits to both the organizers and the participants. Dr. Hutacharern also invited the participants to attend other consultative workshops under the NCSA project, including the closing workshop where the findings and recommendations were to be delivered for final comments.

The meeting closed at 16:30 in the afternoon.

List of participating organizations³³

- Faculty of Science, Khon Kaen University
- Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University
- Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University

³³ Note that 13 organizations/groups participated out of a total of 22 groups invited.

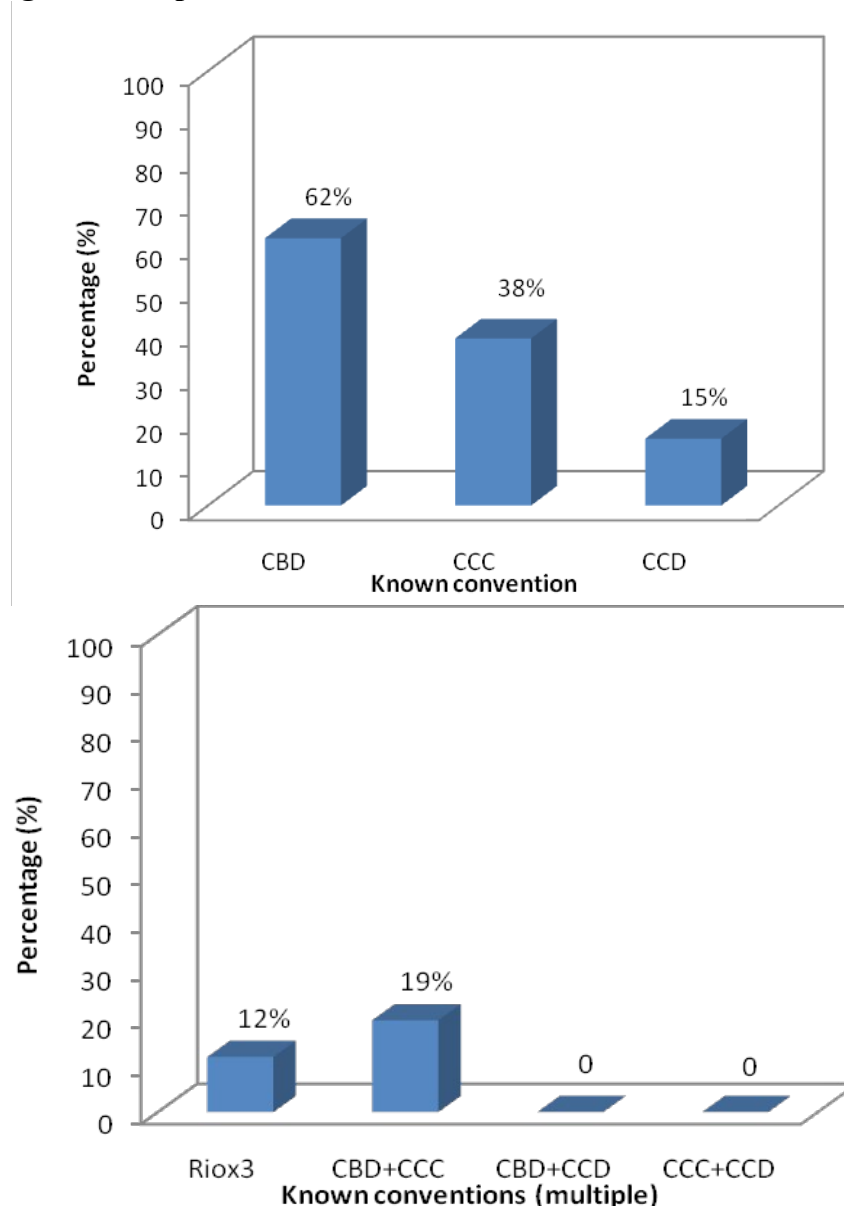
- Faculty of Science, Mahasarakam University
- Walia Rukavetch Institute, Mahasarakam University
- Udon Thani Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
- Nong Khai Provincial Natural Resources and Environment Office
- The 9th Regional Environment, Udon Thani Province
- The 10th Regional Environment, Khon Kaen Province
- Khon Kaen City Municipality
- The 5th Regional Land Development Office, Khon Kaen Province
- Khon Kaen Provincial Land Development Office
- Local community representatives from the following NGO-coordinated programs:
 - Capacity development of community organizations for conservation and rehabilitation of Kang Lawa
 - Model Communities for Natural Resources and Environmental Management of the Chi watershed, Khon Kaen Province
 - The Northeastern Network on Alternative Agriculture
 - The Northeastern Women Network
 - The Northeastern Subsistent Labor Network
 - Dong Lan Community Network, Khon Kaen Province
 - Natural resources management of the Sern watershed project
 - The Center for Participatory Capacity Building of Community Organizations

Annex VII: Polling results from the First Consultative Workshop

As summarized in Annex VI above, the synergy assessment team held the first consultative workshop in Khon Kaen Province on February 26, 2009. The participants in the workshop filled in a standard questionnaire which tested their knowledge on the Rio Conventions and the synergies which exist between the conventions. Annex VII describes the results from the responses to the questionnaire.

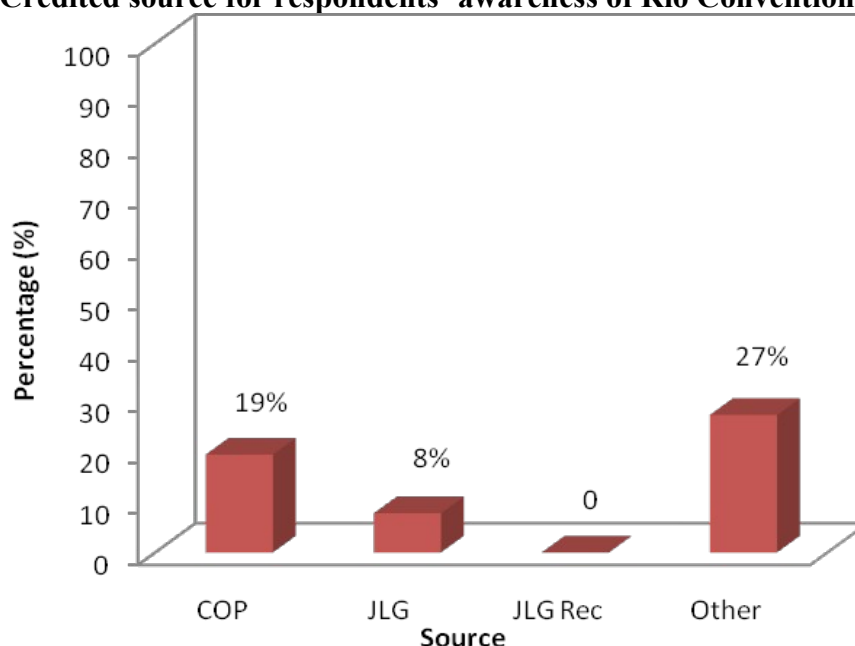
The CBD was found to be the most recognizable of the Rio Conventions with 62% of respondents indicating their awareness of the convention. A small percentage of the respondents were aware of the UNFCCC (38%) and the UNCCD (15%). Only 12% of the respondents were previously aware of all three Rio Conventions, while 19% noted prior knowledge of the CBD and the UNFCCC but not the UNCCD. These responses are compared in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Respondents' overall awareness of the Rio Conventions



Respondents were also asked to select the source which was most indicative of the synergies between the Rio Conventions. The choices included: (1) COP decisions, (2) the existence of the JLG, (3) JLG recommendations, and (4) the existence of the Rio Conventions themselves (“Other”). Approximately 27% of respondents felt that their awareness of synergies across the Rio Conventions stemmed from the very existence of the conventions and their environmental objectives. Contrarily, 19% of respondents noted that the relevant decisions of the Rio Conventions’ Conference of the Parties (COP) were the source most indicative of interlinkages and synergies. Only 8% indicated that they had learned about the “synergy” concept from the JLG’s existence. See Figure 2 below for a comparison of the responses.

Figure 2: Credited source for respondents’ awareness of Rio Conventions’ synergies

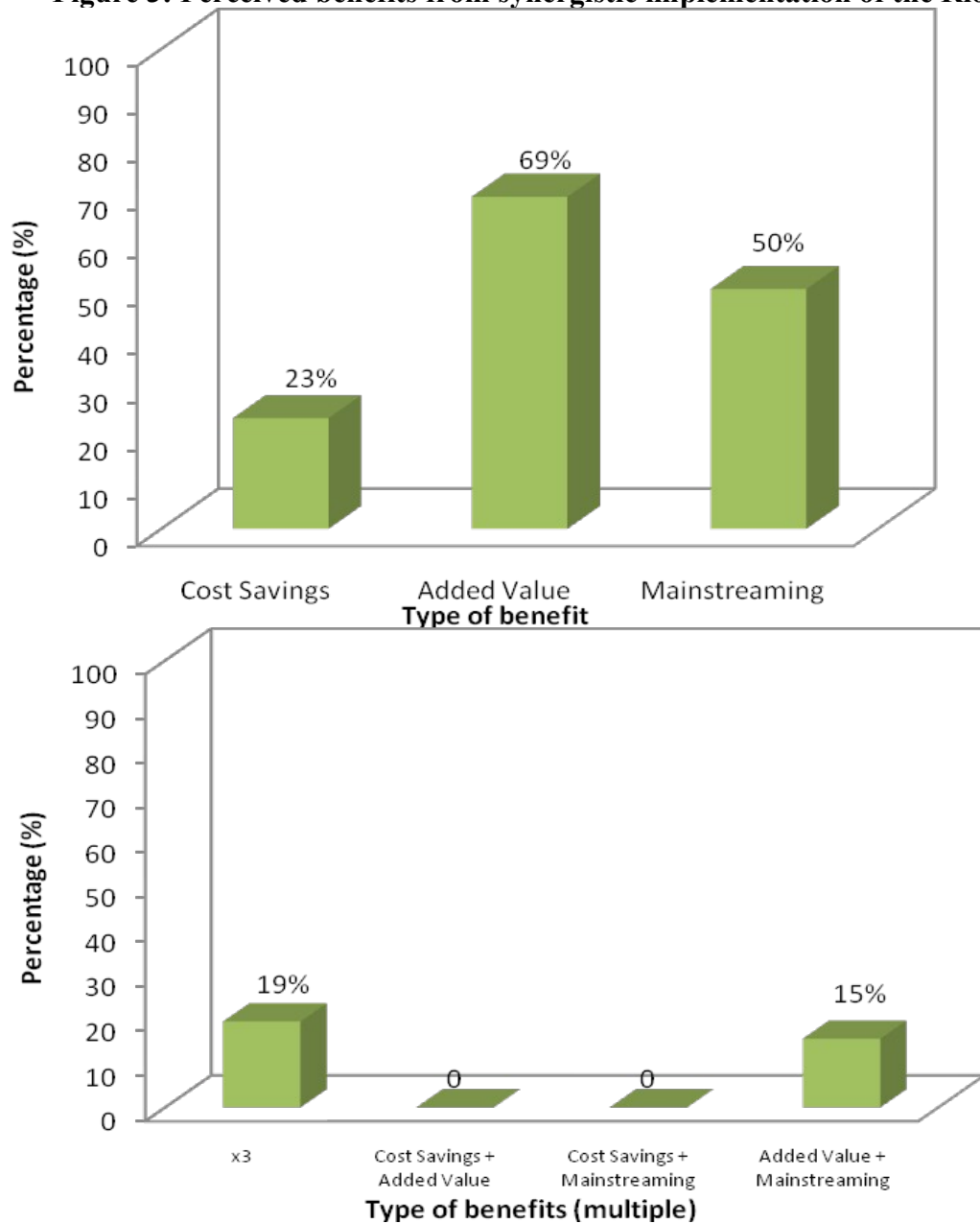


Participants were also asked about the perceived benefits of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions (see Figure 3 below). The potential benefits that respondents could choose from included (1) cost savings, (2) added value, (3) mainstreaming, or any combination of said benefits.

Added value was noted by most contributors (69%) as the main benefit to be realized from the synergistic implementation of the conventions. This followed by 50% of respondents believing that mainstreaming of the Rio Conventions could be achieved through a synergistic approach, while 23% felt that cost savings was the most likely benefit of the synergy.

In addition, 19% believed all three benefits (added value, cost savings and mainstreaming) could be realized through a synergy approach, and 15% responded that the synergistic implementation would add value and also improve the mainstreaming of the conventions to a wider audience.

Figure 3: Perceived benefits from synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions

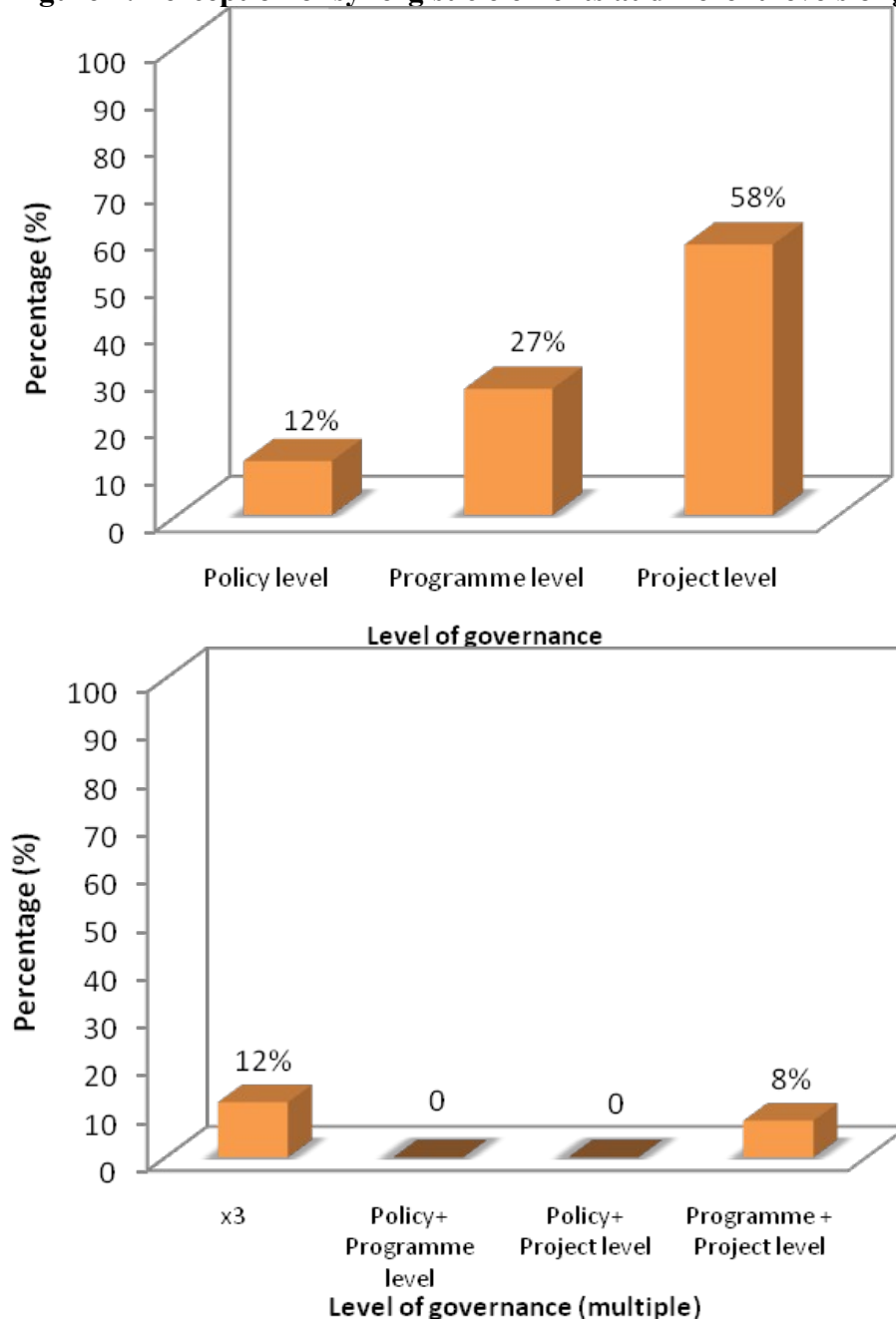


Next, participants were asked to consider their respective job responsibilities and their employer's implementation of strategies at the policy, programme and project level – with policy level the highest in order/scope and project level as most local in scope. The synergy assessment team asked the participants to indicate the levels (i.e., policy, programme, and project) where their employers were already utilizing synergistic approaches or where the respondents themselves felt that synergies were apparent. Figure 4 depicts the results from this query.

Naturally, the most common response was the level that was closest to the respondent's own line of work: 58% of the respondents indicated recognition of actual or potential synergies in their projects. Looking at the next level (programmatic), 27% believed that synergistic elements were being applied – or at least were identifiable – at the programme level of their jobs. Only 12% noted the existence of synergies in policies related to their organizations.

The respondents also considered synergies at multiple levels of governance; 12% of the respondents found synergistic elements within all three proposed levels (policy, programme and project) of organizational governance. Fewer respondents (8%) felt there were synergistic elements in their programmes and projects but not in the policies governing their work. The second chart in Figure 4 shows the responses affirming synergies within multiple forms of governance.

Figure 4: Perception of synergistic elements at different levels of governance



The contributors at the workshop noted several capacity needs. Specifically, they said that technical resources, communication, education and coordination all required capacity building efforts in order to enable synergies within their activities. The respondents also identified several capacity issues which are necessary for ensuring synergistic implementation strategies for the Rio Conventions, including financial resources (i.e., mobilization of adequate funding); human resources (i.e., availability of specialized staff and coordinators); technical integration (i.e., common platforms) and effective management (i.e., provision of information exchange).

Perhaps most importantly, the findings from the first consultative workshop indicate that communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) must be considered one of the priority areas for building capacity in order to enable synergistic approaches towards implementation of the Rio Conventions. CEPA strategies could enhance the implementation of the conventions through better public awareness, which would in turn enable more autonomous adoption of the Rio Conventions by a greater number of stakeholders. For instance, CEPA related actions might be developed to focus on policies due to the perceived lack of the synergies at that level. Additionally, greater emphasis could be placed on translating policies into direct actions at the programme and project levels as well as developing synergistic policy measures which are inclusive of lesser known or specific issues under the conventions (i.e., invasive alien species).

In addition to the above observations on capacity needs for enabling synergies, the participants at the consultative workshop noted the following thematic areas as the most recognizable issues which could be addressed synergistically and thereby benefit the implementation of all three Rio Conventions.³⁴

- i. Wetland conservation
- ii. Forest conservation
- iii. Soil conservation/ protection of soil cover
- iv. Organic farming
- v. Reduction of chemical use in agriculture
- vi. Expanding conservation networks
- vii. Conservation of rice varieties

³⁴ Note that the listed thematic areas were not exclusively identified by the participants; the NCSA team contributed to this list as well.

Annex VIII: Summary of the Second Consultative Workshop on Synergy of the Rio Conventions

March 5, 2009

Botanic Resort Hotel, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province

The second consultative workshop for the synergy assessment of the NCSA Project was held on March 5, 2009, at the Botanic Resort Hotel, located in the vicinity of Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden, Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai Province. The workshop was hosted by the Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden and was attended by 57 participants from 18 organizations, including representatives from local NGOs and universities.³⁵ Similar to the first workshop in Khon Kaen Province, the event aimed to introduce the “synergy” concept in implementing the Rio Conventions and to enable participants to identify synergistic elements in their respective lines of work. Further, the workshop would allow this diverse group of stakeholders to discuss capacity needs for enabling synergies by addressing individual requirements and matching expertise and resources between organizations.

The workshop was again attended by Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn, the NCSA Project Manager; Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the documentation consultant to the synergy assessment team; and Dr. Phanna Waikakul, the lead consultant for the synergy assessment. In addition, Dr. Sirikul Bunpapong, Thailand’s national focal point for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and Dr. Sittiporn Kajornnatiyudh, a consultant for the NBSAP Project, also participated in the workshop as observers.

The workshop commenced at 09:30 in the morning.

Morning session

Dr. Phanna Waikakul welcomed the participants to the workshop and introduced the three handouts which were distributed at the start of the session. She directed the participants to focus their attention on the standard questionnaire and the query form; the participants were asked to fill in a portion of these forms so that the synergy assessment team could better understand their respective lines of work and interests related to issues addressed by the Rio Conventions.

Specifically, the first two questions of the standard questionnaire (knowledge about the Rio Conventions and their synergistic correlations) needed to be answered by participants before the introductory presentation on the Rio Conventions so that the assessment team could evaluate the participants’ level of understanding of the conventions. Dr. Waikakul further urged the attendants to fill in the query forms and return them to the organizers before lunch so that the organizers could compile the necessary information for the small group discussions that would take place during the afternoon session. The participants were also asked to complete workshop evaluation forms and return them to the organizers at the end of the workshop.

Following the introduction of the documents, Dr. Waikakul made special note of the attendance by Dr. Bunpapong, the CBD’s national focal point – before asking Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn to present a brief description of the NCSA Project.

³⁵ A list of the participating organizations is included at the end of Annex VIII.

Regarding the project, Dr. Hutacharn briefly elaborated on Thailand's eligibility for project support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), including support in the NCSA process for the evaluation of capacity needs in implementing the Rio Conventions. She pointed out that the GEF funding was made available for building on actions stipulated by national policies (i.e., the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, or NBSAP) and their implementation. The funding support was also meant to be used for identifying capacity requirements necessary for meeting the country's obligations under the Rio Conventions.

Dr. Hutacharn noted that the workshop was part of a series of stakeholder consultations organized with the intent of garnering a broad array of contributions and opinions concerning the assessment of capacity for implementation of the three conventions. She further explained that the synergy assessment is complementary to the capacity assessments of the individual Rio Conventions under the NCSA Project. This is particularly evident in the thematic areas of the UNFCCC, the UNCCD and the CBD: synergistic issues can be found when assessing these areas collectively.

At the end of her presentation, Dr. Hutacharn invited the participants to attend the forthcoming meetings leading up to the delivery of findings and recommendations from the project, including the closing workshop to be held in the latter part of the third quarter of 2009.

After finishing her brief address on the NCSA Project, Dr. Hutacharn asked Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi to make an introductory presentation on the Rio Conventions and their synergy. She identified Mr. Pookpakdi as the documentation consultant of both the NCSA and NBSAP projects and an analyst with extensive experience on the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In the early part of his presentation, Mr. Pookpakdi elaborated on the background of the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA), emphasizing the focus on addressing capacity needs for implementing the Rio Conventions. He pointed out the role of the GEF as the sponsor of the NCSA Project and as the financial mechanism for all three Rio Conventions. Mr. Pookpakdi noted the need to ensure effective use of future GEF funding and other resources for implementation of the Rio Conventions as a critical objective of the NCSA Project.

After the morning coffee break, Mr. Pookpakdi stressed the existence of correlations within the conventions as driving mechanisms for realization of a global agenda on sustainable development; he pointed to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation under the WSSD, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as relevant examples of the growing international consensus for environmentally and socially concerned development approaches. He pointed out that the Rio Conventions were all based on the principles of conservation as well as minimization of anthropogenic impacts – aiming to minimize human-driven impacts on climate, to conserve biodiversity or to conserve land resources and minimize negative impacts to soil.

Mr. Pookpakdi noted that most persons perceived the implementation of the conventions to be the sole responsibility of public organizations and not the common obligation of the country as a whole. In other words, people believed that the only stakeholders for implementation were the national or state agencies, not the local community or the private sector. To overcome this problem, Mr. Pookpakdi recommended the participants treat the Rio Conventions as (i) tools for demanding the government's actions on issues addressed by the conventions, and (ii) as guidance for practical and effective execution of activities related to their provisions.

He emphasized that making the conventions useful in the participants' respective lines of work would require a comprehensive understanding of all principle issues under the UNFCCC, UNCCD and CBD. These issues included more focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation; recognizing conservation as a preliminary requirement for biodiversity actions; and practical interpretation of desertification which encompasses relevant issues at the local level such as soil degradation, saline and alkaline soil, and the loss of soil cover. Mr. Pookpakdi then used several examples to illustrate how to identify correlations and synergistic issues under the Conventions, such as implications of organic fertilizers: on soil fertility (for preventing desertification); soil biodiversity; and for reducing emissions of nitrogen-based greenhouse gases (GHG) from inorganic fertilizers.

Following the presentation, Mr. Pookpakdi demonstrated how to identify synergistic relationships in implementing the Rio Conventions on issues raised by the participants. He noted that activities on communication, education, and public awareness (CEPA) could both contribute to and benefit from the adoption of synergistic approaches in implementing the Rio Conventions. Mr. Pookpakdi pointed out that learning about the Rio Conventions through their synergistic relationships could be more easily understood by some because human brains are more receptive to understanding and memorizing issues which are correlated than learning them one at a time.

Mr. Pookpakdi also illustrated synergistic elements within the context of urban management. He identified solid waste treatment as a priority concern shared among most local administrations and illustrated how issues under the Rio Conventions can be integrated to guide the environmentally sound construction and management of landfills. He stressed that well managed landfills should not detrimentally affect soil quality in adjacent areas, should allow locals to benefit from emitted methane gas through emissions capturing technologies and should ultimately provide viable lands for reintroduction and/or plantation of native and threatened plant species.

At this point in the discussion, a number of representatives from NGOs raised their concerns regarding the implementation of the Rio Conventions by responsible public agencies, including conflicts between the agencies and local communities. In response, Mr. Pookpakdi reiterated the need for greater public awareness of Thailand's obligations under the Rio Conventions and for the NGOs and the media to assist local communities and other groups in making use of the convention's provisions, decisions and guidance. He recommended linking local concerns with issues addressed by the Rio Conventions before communicating them to relevant parliamentary representatives and related branches of the public sector, citing the government's obligations to address such concerns in accordance to national commitments under the conventions. To this end, Mr. Pookpakdi stressed that taking a synergistic approach towards learning about, and making use of, the conventions would benefit the stakeholders.

Afternoon session

After lunch, the meeting was divided into two small groups of around 20 participants each (the rest of the attendees either acted as observers or facilitated the discussions as organizers). Each group was provided with a list of issues related to the Rio Conventions. These issues were developed using the participants' written responses to the query forms from the morning session. The list was used by each group as a template for an exercise on identifying synergic elements of the issues.

The first group carried was given a list of 17 issues; of those, the group managed to identify 12 issues with possible synergies covering climate change, biodiversity and desertification. The participants in the first group also identified technical capacity—identifying critical habitats and assessing reductions in GHG emissions—and the capacity to enable local interaction as the priority needs for enabling synergistic actions on these issues.

Participants in the second group found synergistic elements within 9 of 14 issues on their list and highlighted communication, coordination and the facilitation of funding as the major requirements for enabling synergistic actions on these issues. With assistance from the moderators, both groups recognized the possibility of linking several issues from their respective lists in the development of activities – particularly those related to habitat conservation, protection of land resources and the development of alternative energy. They pointed out the need for clear and consistent policies, effective coordination with local communities, identification of common goals and appointment of lead authorities as important factors in enabling cooperative action.

Moderating the last session of the workshop, Mr. Pookpakdi compiled and presented the outcomes from the small focus group discussions. The following issues were noted by the participants as having the most discernable synergistic elements:

- i. Air pollution, particularly suspended particulate pollution from burning agricultural waste;
- ii. Soil conservation and rehabilitation;
- iii. Managing the impacts from transportation development; and
- iv. Education and public awareness.

Mr. Pookpakdi pointed out that finding synergistic elements in any particular area of interest would first require identification of the more fundamental elements of the Rio Conventions. He noted the recognition of such issues as a way to determine linkages between the other Rio Conventions. He emphasized that synergies were more identifiable when they could be tied to specific geographical or social contexts (i.e., habitats, ecosystems, communities, organizations, and networks). Mr. Pookpakdi recommended developing skill sets which would promote effective communication and education for identifying synergies, including by improving the delivery of information to target groups and by employing methodologies for the development of effective information products.

In the closing address, Dr. Hutacharn expressed her appreciation the attendees' active participation at the workshop. She noted that the workshop had proven that synergies did exist within the issues addressed by the Rio Conventions, and that such synergies could be identified with some guidance. Dr. Hutacharn reminded the participants that the findings from this workshop—and from the other workshops conducted under the synergy assessments—would be compiled with results from the capacity assessments of the individual Rio Conventions in order to develop a composite report for the NCSA. She also invited the participants to attend the other NCSA consultative workshops, including the closing workshop where the findings and recommendations were to be delivered for final comments.

The meeting closed at 16:30 in the afternoon.

List of participating organizations

- Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, Mahidol University
- Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Bangkok
- The 2nd Regional Environmental Office, Lampang Province
- Lamphun City Municipality
- Lamphun Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
- Lamphun Provincial Land Development Office
- Chiang Mai City Municipality
- Chiang Mai Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
- Chiang Mai Provincial Land Development Office
- Lampang Provincial Natural Resources and Environmental Office
- Lampang Provincial Land Development Office
- Chiang Rai Provincial Land Development Office
- Chiang Mai University
- Maejo University
- Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden
- Ping River Basin Management Program
- Association for Hill Tribe Study and Culture
- The [Heinrich Boell Foundation](#) (Southeast Asia Regional Office)

Annex IX: Polling results of the second consultative workshop

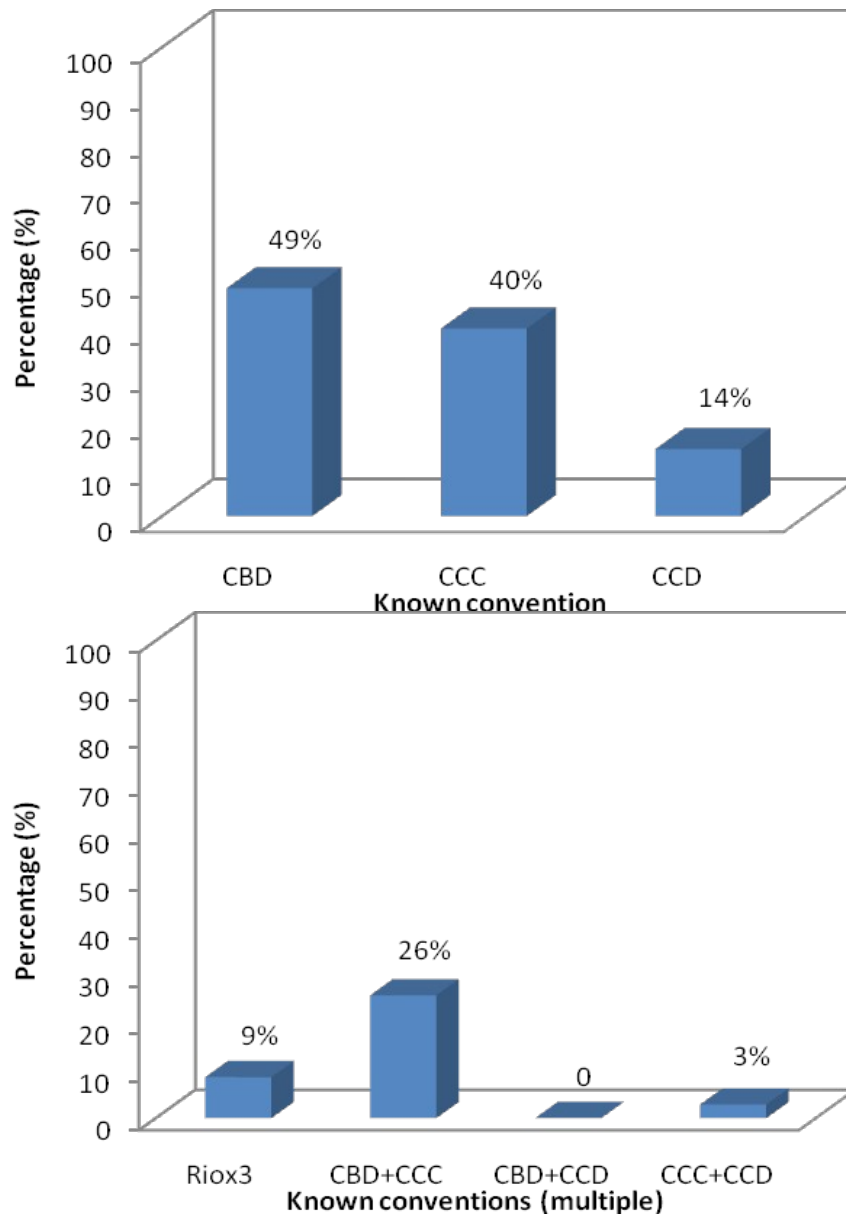
As summarized in Annex VIII above, the synergy assessment team held the second consultative workshop in Chiang Mai Province on March 5, 2009. The participants in the workshop filled in a standard questionnaire which tested their knowledge on the Rio Conventions and the synergies which exist between the conventions. Annex IX describes the results from the responses to the questionnaire.

Based on participants' responses, the CBD was found to be the most recognizable of the Rio Conventions with 49% indicating their awareness of the convention prior to the workshop. Awareness levels of the UNFCCC were not far behind; 40% of respondents were aware of the UNFCCC when they showed up at the workshop. Only 14% of the respondents indicated having awareness of the UNCCD.

Given that low number, it is not surprising that even fewer respondents (9%) indicated having knowledge of all three Rio Conventions. Additionally, one respondent indicated awareness of the UNFCCC and UNCCD but not the CBD, and 26% of respondents were aware of the CBD and UNFCCC but not the UNCCD.

Figure 1 depicts the results from this query of participants' awareness of the conventions.

Figure 1: Respondents' overall awareness of the Rio Conventions

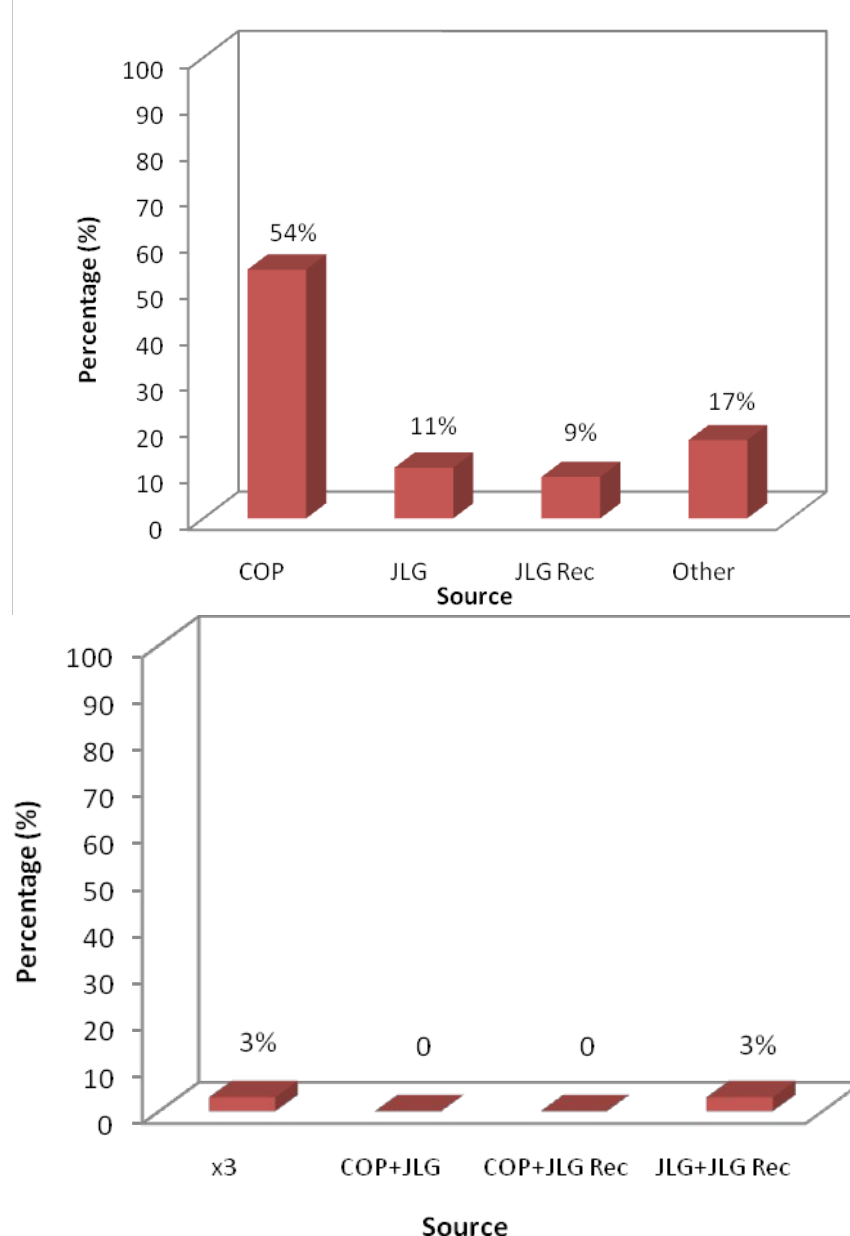


Respondents were also asked to select the source which was most indicative of the synergies between the Rio Conventions. The choices included: (1) COP decisions, (2) the existence of the JLG, (3) JLG recommendations, and (4) the existence of the Rio Conventions themselves (“Other”). Most respondents (54%) pointed out that relevant COP decisions were the source of their understanding of the synergy, while 17% generally understood about the synergy from the very existence of the Rio Conventions. It should be noted that more respondents were reportedly aware of the COP decisions than of the Rio Conventions (where these decisions derived from); what that means in terms of education and public awareness is uncertain.

In addition, 11% of the respondents credited the existence of the JLG as the source of their awareness of synergies across the Rio Conventions; 9% pointed to the JLG recommendations as the source for their understanding of the synergies. Only one respondent acknowledged the COP decisions, the existence of the JLG and the actual JLG recommendations as indicative of the broader synergies across the Rio Conventions, while another person cited only the JLG and its

recommendations for providing awareness on the synergies. All of the comparisons between acknowledge sources can be seen in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Credited source for respondents' awareness of Rio Conventions' synergies



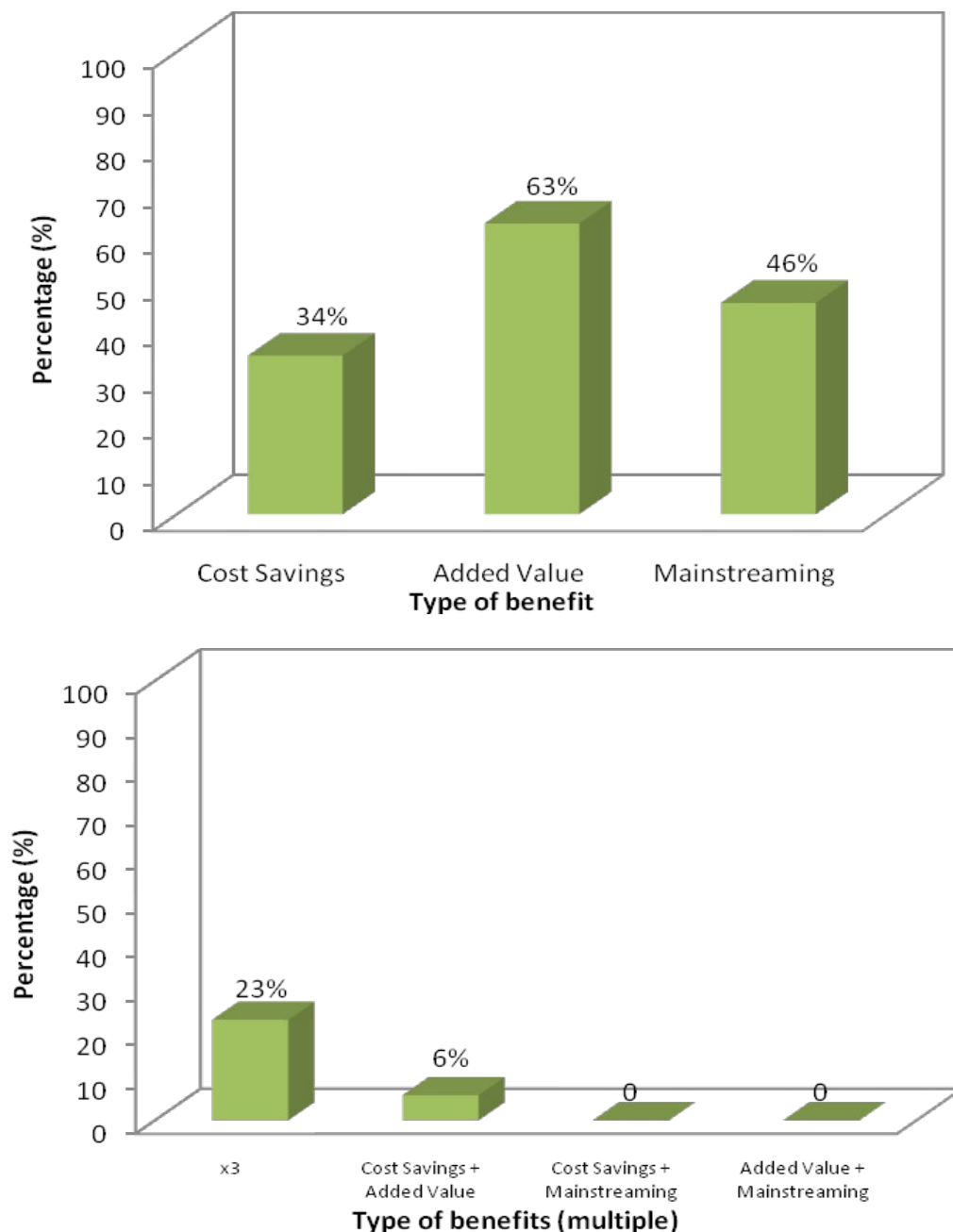
Participants were also asked about the perceived benefits of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions (see Figure 3 below). The potential benefits that respondents could choose from included (1) cost savings, (2) added value, (3) mainstreaming, or any combination of said benefits. One respondent was of the opinion that embracing a synergistic approach would ensure more integrated policy in implementing the Rio Conventions; this opinion didn't seem to be shared by the majority of participants although they were able to see other benefits.

Approximately 63% of participants felt that embracing a synergistic approach towards implementation of the Rio Conventions would result in added value, while 46% thought such an

approach would improve the mainstreaming of the conventions. Additionally, 34% believed that cost savings could be realized by taking a synergistic approach.

In addition, 23% of the respondents believed that synergistic implementation of the conventions would be beneficial for mainstreaming and achieving value added and cost savings. Only 6% felt that added value and cost savings could be realized but not mainstreaming. See Figure 3 below for the graphs showing the statistical responses on perceived benefits of synergistic implementation.

Figure 3: Perceived benefits from the synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions



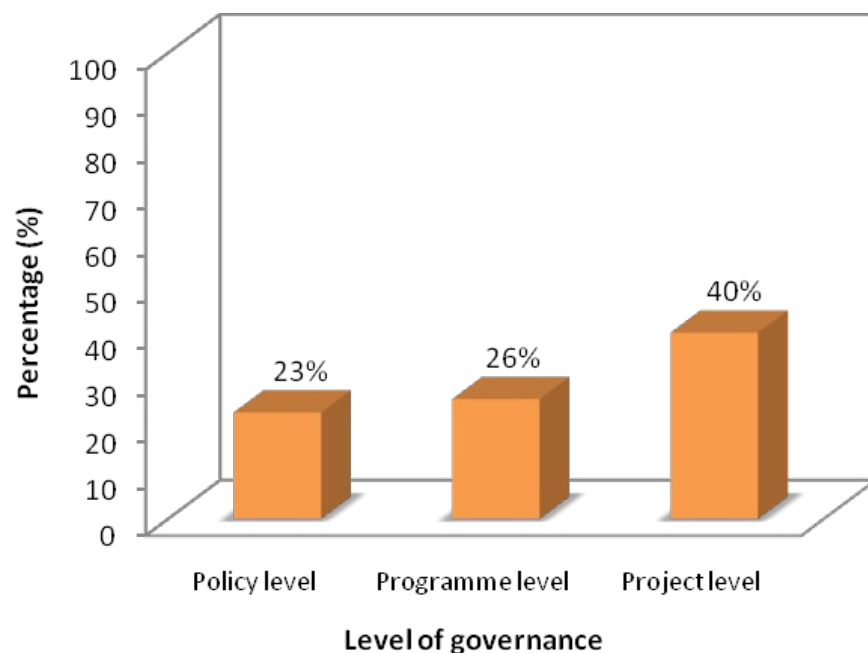
Lastly, participants were asked to consider their respective job responsibilities and their employer's implementation of strategies at the policy, programme and project level – with policy

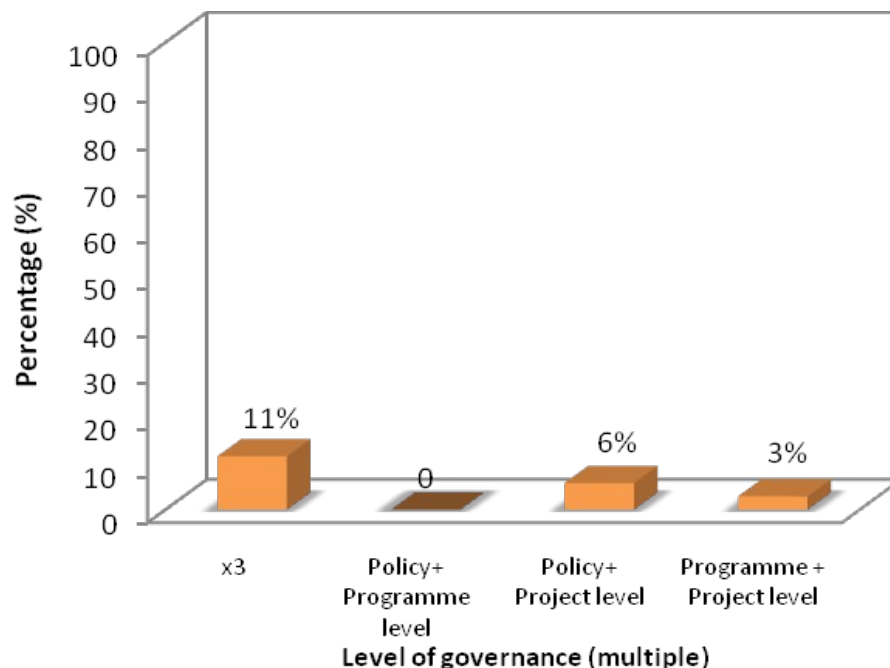
level the highest in order/scope and project level as most local in scope. The synergy assessment team asked the participants to indicate the levels (i.e., policy, programme, and project) where their employers were already utilizing synergistic approaches or where the respondents themselves felt that synergies were apparent. Figure 4 depicts the results from this query.

Many respondents (40%) acknowledged synergistic elements in their projects while 26% identified synergies at the programme level and 23% at the policy level. The respondents also considered synergies at multiple levels of governance; 11% identified synergistic elements in their respective policies, programmes and projects and 6% viewed the policy and programme levels as embodying synergy elements (but not at the project level).

The findings presented in Figure 4 indicate that most respondents had already seen or were capable of seeing synergy elements within their own projects/activities after the introductory presentation, yet only a few had observed integration or symbiotic congruence of relevant policies.

Figure 4: Perception of synergistic elements at different levels of governance





The respondents pointed out capacity for technical undertakings, communication and public awareness as the priority needs for enabling synergies. Furthermore, building capacities in the areas of information access—particularly data inventories and the availability of trained specialists and educators—was deemed crucial in order to make effective use of technical resources. Some respondents recognized that financial capacity remained vital for enabling a synergistic approach to the Rio Conventions, and saw capacity for resource mobilization and for the development of “proposal” writing skills as integral in ensuring adequate funding.

The respondents found tools and resources for CEPA – such as educational and technical materials and coordinators – as notable factors in facilitating capacity development for enhancing public awareness. In order to facilitate synergistic implementation, the respondents found it necessary for there to be clear policies on the synergy; inter-agency cooperation; and improvement of understanding of the Rio Conventions (and their synergies) at all levels in public organizations.

It should also be noted that respondents were aware of efforts made by the Rio Conventions’ focal points, especially for the CBD, in making available information on issues related to their respective conventions; the respondents noted on several occasions, however, that the efforts were lacking in continuation and follow-up after the initial introduction of issues.

As with the first consultative workshop, the participants (not exclusive to the respondents) noted the following areas as the most recognizable issues with potential for enabling the synergy between the Rio Conventions:

- Air pollution, particularly suspended particulate pollution from incineration of agricultural by-products;
- Soil conservation and rehabilitation;
- Managing impacts from transportation development; and
- Education and public awareness.

Annex X: Summary of the Third Consultative Workshop on Synergy of the Rio Conventions

April 1, 2009

Conference Center, Asian Institute of Technology, Pathum Thani Province

The third consultative workshop for the synergy assessment of the NCSA Project was organized on April 1, 2009, at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Pathum Thani Province. The workshop was attended by 30 participants from eleven organizations.³⁶ Similar to the first two workshops, the aim of the meeting was to introduce the scope and nature of the synergy assessment and its relationship to the implementation of the Rio Conventions; to enable self-identification of the synergy's elements in the participants' lines of work; and to point out capacity needs for enabling synergies, including through meeting individual requirements as well as matching material and technical resources between organizations. The workshop was again attended by Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn, the NCSA Project Manager, and facilitated by Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the documentation consultant, as requested by Dr. Phanna Waikakul, the lead consultant for the synergy assessment. Mr. Kittisak Prukkanone, a representative of the UNFCCC national focal point, was also present as an observer.

The workshop commenced at 09:30 in the morning.

Morning session

Dr. Phanna Waikakul welcomed the participants to the workshop and briefly introduced her involvement in the NCSA Project as a consultant for assessment of the synergy between the Rio Conventions. She then described the three documents which participants had received upon entry to the session, and asked the participants to give due notice to the standard questionnaire and the query form. The participants were requested to fill in the first two questions of the standard questionnaire (knowledge about the Rio Conventions and their synergistic correlations) before the morning coffee break in order to assess their level of understanding on the conventions. They were also urged to complete the query forms and to return them to the organizers before lunch, so that the information compiled from these forms could be used in the discussion during the afternoon session. Dr. Waikakul further reminded the participants to complete the workshop evaluation forms and return them to the organizers at the end of the workshop. Following the introduction on the documents, she invited Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn to present brief description of the NCSA Project.

Dr. Hutacharn briefly elaborated on her previous service with the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, and her present role as the project manager for the NCSA Project. She told attendees about Thailand's eligibility for support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), including financial support for implementation of the NCSA Project, as the direct result of the country's ratification of the Rio Conventions; hence, the NCSA Project aimed to evaluate progress made in Thailand's implementation of the three conventions through participatory involvement of relevant stakeholders.

She further explained that a consultant was assigned to each of the Rio Conventions to conduct the thematic assessments of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the United Nations Convention to

³⁶ A list of the participating organizations is included at the end of Annex X.

Combat Desertification (UNCCD). For each assessment, the consultants sought to determine the present level of implementation of the provisions, decisions and guidance under the conventions, as well as the capacity needs for improving national implementation.

Dr. Hutacharn also identified another consultant (Dr. Waikakul) who was responsible for assessing national capacity for synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, including through the organization of stakeholder consultations such as this workshop. She recognized the workshop as one of the synergy assessment's fact-finding activities, in addition to ministerial and executive interviews and stakeholder meetings in selected regions of Thailand. Dr. Hutacharn revealed that stocktaking activities under the NCSA were limited to a period of approximately six months and would greatly benefit from the honest inputs of stakeholders, such as the participants, regarding their views and experience related to implementation of the Rio Conventions. She identified September 2009 as the month for the NCSA Project's closing workshop—where all findings and recommendations were to be made available—and invited the participants to attend the workshop.

Following the brief explanation of the NCSA process, Dr. Hutacharn asked Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi to present an introduction of the Rio Conventions and their synergies. She described Mr. Pookpakdi as the documentation consultant of the NCSA Project and the NBSAP Project, and an experienced analyst of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

In the early part of his presentation, Mr. Pookpakdi explained the background of the National Capacity Self-Assessment (NCSA), including the focus on evaluation of national responses to the Rio Conventions. Mr. Pookpakdi also noted inclusion of the synergy assessment in the NCSA, particularly the potential benefits from identifying capacity needs for enabling the synergistic implementation of activities related to the conventions; such actions stood to benefit from possible funding by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and other international donors.

After the morning coffee break, Mr. Pookpakdi described the correlations between the Rio Conventions as the common mechanisms for realization of a global agenda on sustainable development; he pointed to Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation under the WSSD, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as relevant examples of the growing international consensus for environmentally and socially concerned development approaches. In addition, Mr. Pookpakdi explained how the three conventions were all based on the principles of conservation as well as minimization of anthropogenic impacts – aiming to minimize human-driven impacts on climate, to conserve biodiversity or to conserve land resources and minimize negative impacts to soil. He noted the publics' indifference to the Rio Conventions as stemming from the lack of understanding of their similar goals and principles.

Mr. Pookpakdi also highlighted the misconception held by many that the implementation of the conventions was the sole responsibility of selected public organizations and not the common obligation of all sectors of the society. In other words, people believed that the only stakeholders for implementation were the national or state agencies, not the local community or the private sector among others. To overcome this problem, Mr. Pookpakdi recommended the participants treat the Rio Conventions as (i) tools for demanding the government's actions on issues addressed by the conventions, and (ii) as guidance for practical and effective execution of activities related to their provisions.

Mr. Pookpakdi then used several examples to illustrate how to identify correlations among the issues under the Rio Conventions. One such example is the implications of organic fertilizers, which are beneficial for improving soil fertility (for preventing desertification); enriching soil biodiversity; and reducing emissions of nitrogen-based greenhouse gases (GHG). A second example is the use of native plant species for reforestation projects, which would ensure benefits including increased carbon sequestration, added biomass in the soil, and enhanced conservation of native species.

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Pookpakdi was asked to comment about the current reforestation policy which favored fast-growing non-indigenous species to slow-growth native plants. He identified the policy as an effort to ensure quick and visible results from rehabilitation projects without adequate recognition of the need to prioritize natural recovery as a primary objective in the reforestation effort. Mr. Pookpakdi also noted the CBD's guidance on liability and redress which indicated compensation for loss of natural habitats when natural recovery was no longer feasible, and which opposed efforts to rehabilitate the deteriorated areas with non-indigenous species.

A participant then questioned whether enabling synergies would advance local involvement in implementation of the Rio Conventions. Mr. Pookpakdi assured that greater exposure to the conventions and the "synergy" concept would enable better communication between local communities and relevant public agencies and that several communities were carrying out activities with synergistic elements already.

Afternoon session

After lunch, group discussions were held. A compilation of issues related to the Rio Conventions were presented and were based on what participants had identified in the query forms earlier in the session. Twenty issues were used as a framework for guiding the discussion of synergistic elements. Out of the twenty, the participants were able to identify fifteen issues which had possible synergies across the main topics of the Rio Conventions – climate change, biodiversity, and desertification. The fifteen issues found to be compatible with relevant synergies include:

- Inventorying of flora;
- Utilization of plant species;
- Promotion of carbon footprint labeling;
- Disseminating biodiversity information;
- Restoration of soil resources;
- Promotion and conservation of biological resources at the local level;
- Solid waste management (landfills);
- Controlling epidemics;
- Conservation of inland waters;
- Managing centers for education on nature and natural resources;
- Conservation of marine and coastal resources;
- Institutional coordination of the national implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- Developing university curricula on the Rio Conventions;
- Sustainable resource management in land use; and
- Assessing impacts of climate change on fishery resources.

Mr. Pookpakdi commented that based on the above listing, synergies seemed more identifiable when they could be connected with specific geographical entities (i.e., habitats and ecosystems) or could be used in environmental education. Mr. Pookpakdi also identified the need for more effective involvement of the media who could benefit from and contribute to enabling synergistic actions by promoting and mainstreaming a more comprehensive and accurate understanding on the Rio Conventions. As for the participants, they noted the need for technical collaboration and institutional cooperation as the main capacity gaps which were constraining the synergistic implementation of actions under the three conventions.

In the closing address, Dr. Hutacharn expressed her appreciation for the attendees' input at the workshop. She felt that the workshop successfully stimulated recognition of synergistic elements in activities related to the participants' lines of work and, to a certain extent, taught them how to adopt a synergistic approach in their work. Finally, Dr. Hutacharn reminded the participants of their invitation to the closing workshop where the findings and recommendations were to be delivered for final comments.

The meeting closed at 15:00 in the afternoon.

List of participating organizations

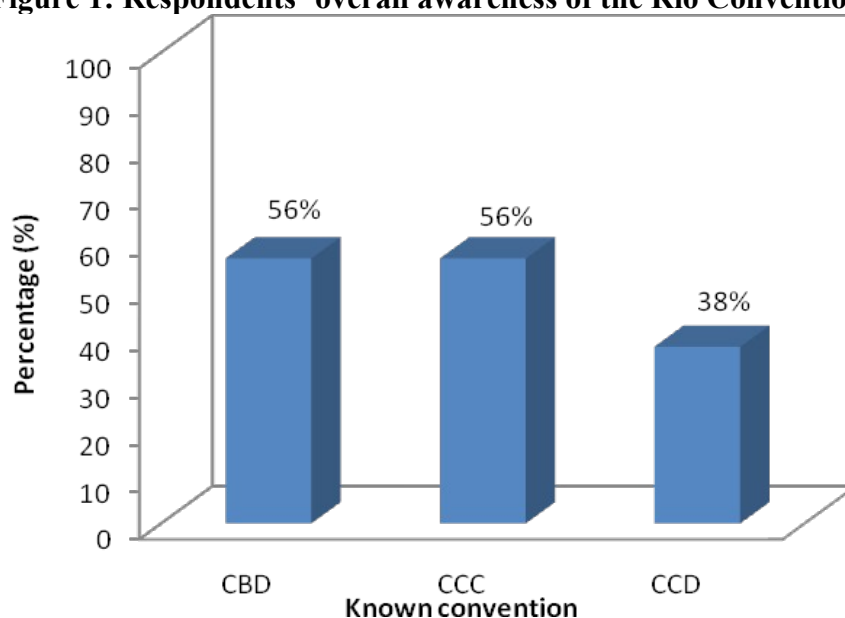
- Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University
- Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, Kasetsart University
- Faculty of Forest, Kasetsart University
- National Center for Metal and Material Technology
- The 1st Regional Land Development Office
- Department of Fisheries
- WWF Thailand
- Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
- National Science Museum
- Klong Luang Municipality, Pathum Thani Province
- Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning

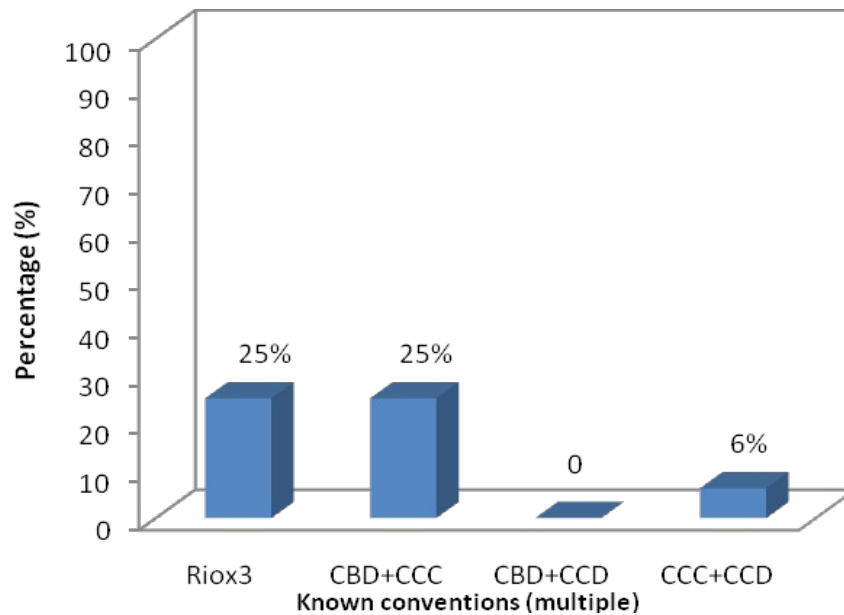
Annex XI: Polling results of the third consultative workshop

As summarized in Annex X above, the synergy assessment team held the third consultative workshop in Pathum Thani Province on April 1, 2009. The participants in the workshop filled in a standard questionnaire which tested their knowledge on the Rio Conventions and the synergies which exist between the conventions. Annex XI describes the results from the responses to the questionnaire.

The CBD and the UNFCCC were found to be the most recognizable of the Rio Conventions, each garnering 56% of participants' awareness (meaning 56% knew of these conventions prior to the consultative workshop). Conversely, 38% of respondents were previously aware of the UNCCD. In addition, 25% of the respondents acknowledged an awareness of all three Rio Conventions; approximately 25% admitted knowing of the CBD and the UNFCCC (but not the UNCCD); and 6% (one respondent) recognized both the UNFCCC and the UNCCD (but not the CBD). Figure 1 below depicts the participants' relative awareness of the conventions.

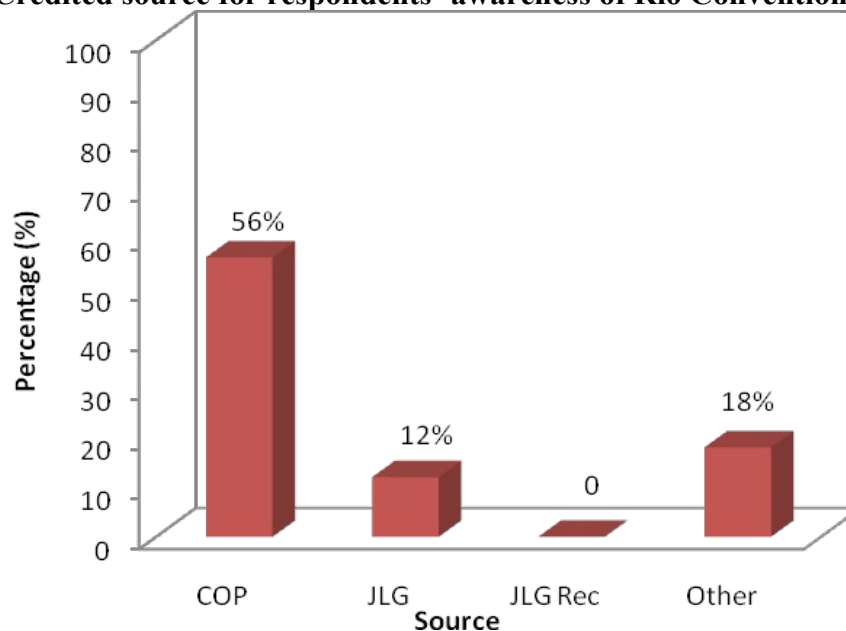
Figure 1: Respondents' overall awareness of the Rio Conventions





Respondents were also asked to select the source which was most indicative of the synergies between the Rio Conventions. The choices included: (1) COP decisions, (2) the existence of the JLG, (3) JLG recommendations, and (4) the existence of the Rio Conventions themselves (“Other”). Most (56%) noted the COP decisions as their source of information on the synergies. Approximately 18% felt that the very existence of the Rio Conventions was indicative of the synergies within them, while 12% pointed to the existence of the JLG as confirmation that synergies run across the conventions. None of the respondents credited multiple sources for their understanding of the synergies of the conventions.

Figure 2: Credited source for respondents’ awareness of Rio Conventions’ synergies

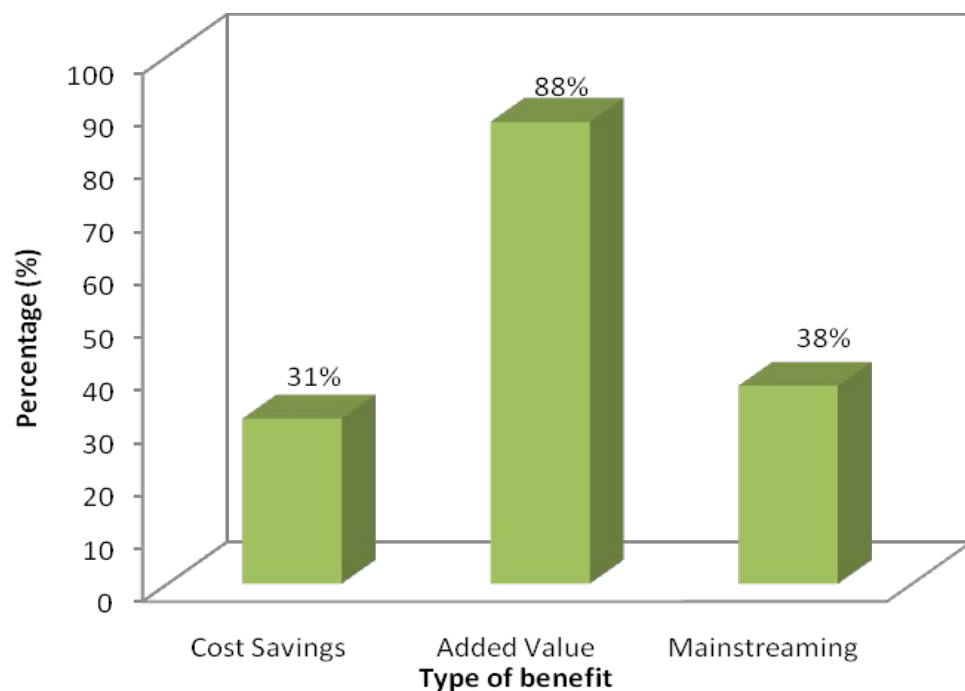


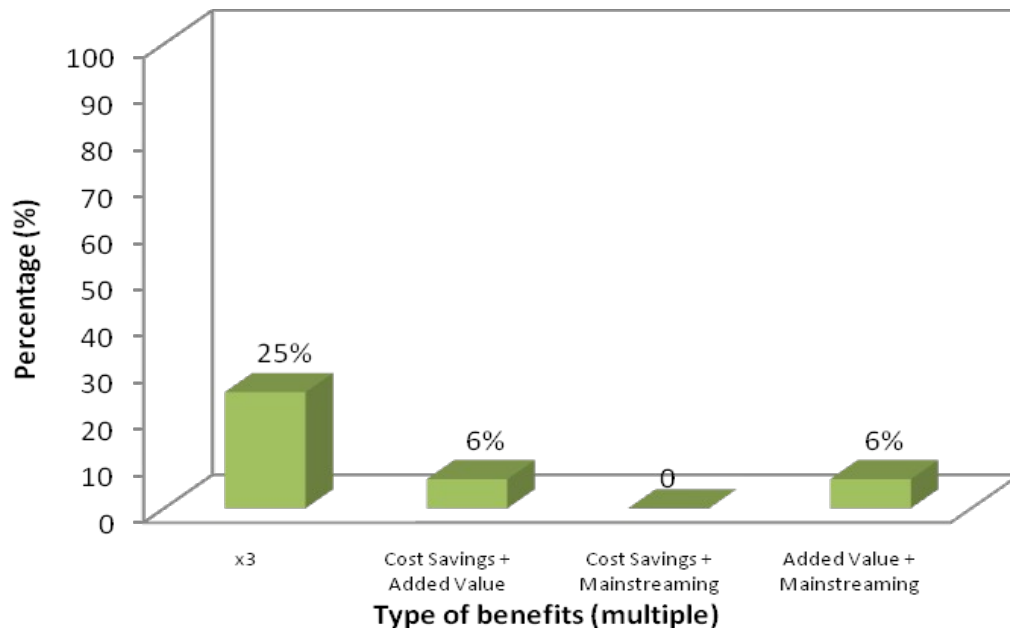
Participants were also asked about the perceived benefits of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions (see Figure 3 below). The potential benefits that respondents could choose from included (1) cost savings, (2) added value, (3) mainstreaming, or any combination of said benefits.

Overwhelmingly, 88% of respondents believed that synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions would result in added value in the process. Conversely, 38% felt that mainstreaming of the conventions would be enhanced or improved by synergistic implementation, while 31% believed that cost savings could be realized through such an approach.

Furthermore, 25% of respondents acknowledged the possibility that all three benefits (added value, cost savings and mainstreaming) could result from enabling a synergistic approach; one respondent (constituting approximately 6% of the vote) perceived cost savings and added value within relevant activities as achievable; and another respondent (6%) felt that a synergistic approach would be effective in adding value to activities and improving awareness on the Rio Conventions (mainstreaming).

Figure 3: Perceived benefits from synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions

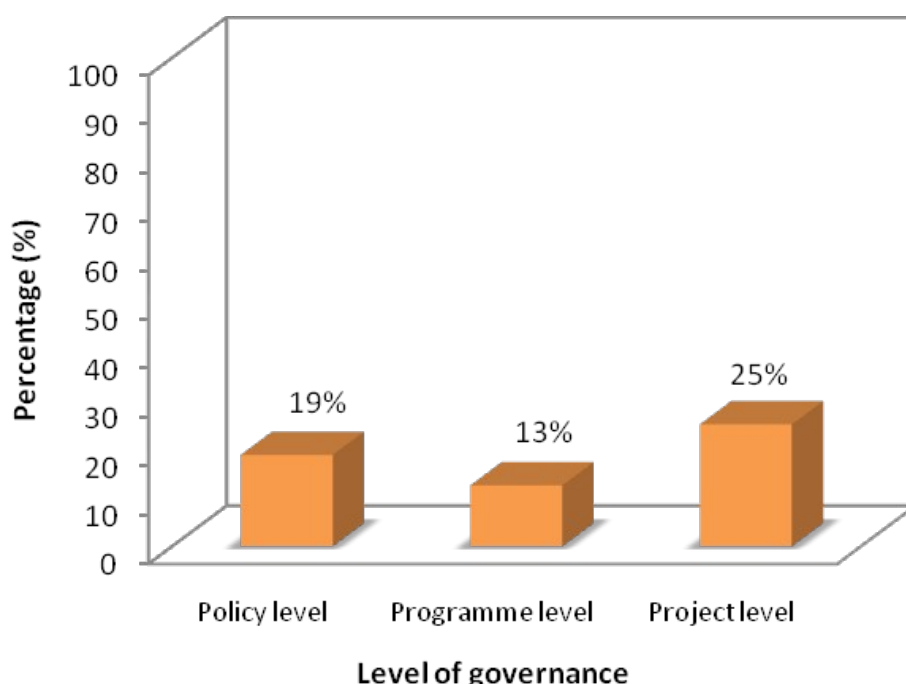




Next, participants were asked to consider their respective job responsibilities and their employer's implementation of strategies at the policy, programme and project level – with policy level the highest in order/scope and project level as most local in scope. The synergy assessment team asked the participants to indicate the levels (i.e., policy, programme, and project) where their employers were already utilizing synergistic approaches or where the respondents themselves felt that synergies were apparent. Figure 4 depicts the results from this query.

Approximately 25% of respondents were able to identify synergistic elements in their projects, while only 19% identified synergies in policies and 13% in programmes (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Perception of synergistic elements at different levels of governance



Among the main requirements for enabling synergies in activities and other implementation schemes, the respondents identified a need to build capacities for securing human and financial resources; institutional cooperation; technical collaboration; and access to updated information. The respondents also recognized how the very process of contributing to the implementation of the Rio Conventions could produce inherent benefits by building awareness within the public and government agencies and by creating clarity in the delegation responsibilities.

As for the identification of synergistic elements, the participants (not exclusive to the questionnaire respondents) found such elements within fifteen areas of their interest to their work.³⁷ The fifteen issues found to be compatible with relevant synergies include:

- Inventorying of flora;
- Sustainable utilization of plant species;
- Promotion of carbon footprint labeling;
- Disseminating biodiversity information;
- Restoration of soil resources;
- Promotion and conservation of biological resources at the local level;
- Solid waste management (landfills);
- Controlling epidemics;
- Conservation of inland waters;
- Managing centers for education on nature and natural resources;
- Conservation of marine and coastal resources;
- Institutional coordination of the national implementation of the Rio Conventions;
- Developing university curricula on the Rio Conventions;
- Sustainable resource management in land use; and

³⁷ See Annex X for a summary of how these fifteen issues were identified. It should be noted that the fifteen items were mainly identified by participants who came from technically-oriented organizations such as universities and research institutes (hence, their familiarity with convention-related terminology).

- Assessing impacts of climate change on fishery resources.

Annex XII: The Stakeholder Workshop for Participatory Review of the NCSA Synergy Assessment

**May 13, 2009
Maruay Garden Hotel, Bangkok**

The stakeholder workshop for participatory review of the NCSA synergy assessment was organized on May 13, 2009 at Maruay Garden Hotel, Bangkok. The workshop was attended by 43 participants from 14 organizations. Several of the attendees and represented organizations had participated in previous fact-finding activities for the synergy assessment.³⁸ The participation process reflected the principle aim of the workshop: to gather stakeholders' feedback on the findings made by – and the recommendations derived from – the synergy assessment. Participants' contributions and comments were expected to be used in refining the recommendations within the third report of the synergy assessment.

As with the third consultative workshop for the synergy assessment, the event was attended by Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn, the NCSA Project Manager; Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the project's documentation consultant; and Dr. Phanna Waikakul, the lead consultant for the synergy assessment. Mr. Kittisak Prukkanone, a representative of the UNFCCC national focal point, attended as an observer.

The workshop commenced at 09:30 in the morning.

Morning session

Dr. Phanna Waikakul welcomed the participants and briefly introduced the objective of the workshop. She invited the participants to share their views on the findings made by the synergy assessment team and to offer any suggestions for refining or revising the recommendations made in the assessment. Dr. Waikakul then asked Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharn to deliver a brief overview of the NCSA Project.

Dr. Hutacharn introduced herself as a former official of the Department of National Parks—with over 40 years of experience in working with multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs)—and as the project manager for the NCSA Project. She then described the NCSA process as an initiative supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), with implementation oversight by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP).

Dr. Hutacharn noted that the NCSA Project aimed to review Thailand's implementation of the Rio Conventions—including the actions taken by national focal points, state agencies and other stakeholders—and to identify capacity gaps and needs for enhancing and strengthening the policies, programmes and activities contributing to such implementation. Assessing the country's ability to employ a synergistic approach towards implementation was also a major goal of the NCSA process.

To this end, Dr. Hutacharn explained that the assessments conducted under the NCSA process were led by three consultants – one for each of the Rio Conventions.. She also identified a fourth

³⁸ See the end of Annex XII for a complete list of participants from the stakeholder workshop for participatory review of the NCSA synergy assessment held on May 13, 2009.

consultant, Dr. Waikakul, whose role included the assessment of national capacity for enabling synergistic approaches towards implementation of the Rio Conventions.

Dr. Hutacharn noted that roughly half of the participants at this workshop had previously been involved in at least one of the fact-finding activities for the synergy assessment and should be able to provide views and opinions on outcomes of the activities they were familiar with. As for the participants who were new to the synergy assessment process, she asked them to offer suggestions on the technical aspects of the findings as well as the recommendations made by the assessment, particularly those of direct relevance to their organizations.

Dr. Hutacharn also invited the participants to the NCSA stakeholder workshop to be held on May 28, 2009, where the outcomes of the thematic assessments and the synergy assessment would be presented. Finally, she commended the lead consultant for the synergy assessment (Dr. Waikakul) for carrying out the assessment with the extensive participation of stakeholders and for delivering outcomes for participatory review in a timely and efficient manner.

Dr. Waikakul thanked Dr. Hutacharn for her praise and proceeded to introduce the agenda of the workshop. She pointed out that the morning session would consist of a presentation of findings from the previously conducted interviews and the three consultative workshops, while the afternoon session would include a discussion of the consolidated findings of the assessment and the recommendations derived from the findings. An additional session would also occur in the afternoon and would allow the participants to offer their views and suggestions.

Following the introduction, Dr. Waikakul discussed the stocktaking process employed for developing the synergy assessment. She highlighted the interviews and the workshops as the main mechanisms utilized in gathering stakeholder inputs. She noted that the interviews focused on executives and administrators, who would be less inclined to attend any of the consultative workshops and could contribute more effectively through direct dialogue with the consultant. Dr. Waikakul identified the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and the Chairman of the Senate Committee on the Environment as notable contributors in the interviews and pointed out that the same questionnaires used in the consultative workshops were used in guiding the interviews; pamphlets describing the synergies between the Rio Conventions (also available at the workshops) were also used as reference material during the dialogues.

As for the findings, Dr. Waikakul identified the CBD and the UNFCCC as the two most recognizable of the Rio Conventions. It was also found that the decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) for the respective conventions were the most frequently cited source for respondents' understanding of the "synergy" concept. She also noted that most respondents found added value to be the main benefit from enabling synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions, and that relatively few respondents were able to recognize the existence of Rio Convention related synergies within national or local policies, programmes and projects.

Dr. Waikakul concluded her presentation by elaborating on some of the notable observations put forward by the respondents. These included the call for inclusion of UNCCD implementation to be placed under the supervision of the National Environment Board (NEB); the development of a national agenda for enabling synergies in the implementation of the Rio Conventions; the formulation of policies and guidance for the actions taken by the public and private sectors

which could impact the conventions' implementation; and placing more focus on communication, education and public awareness (CEPA) in implementing the Rio Conventions.

After the morning coffee break, Mr. Thitiphan Pookpakdi, the NCSA documentation consultant, and Ms. Siragan Srithanyarat, an assistant to Dr. Waikakul, delivered presentations of the findings from the first, second and third consultative workshops held in Khon Kaen, Chiang Mai, and Pathum Thani, respectively. Mr. Pookpakdi explained the process of the workshop surveys to the day's attendees; he identified the "respondents" of the synergy assessment as being those participants from the workshops who had returned their completed questionnaires to the workshop organizers.

Furthermore, the outcomes from discussions at these workshops could not be directly incorporated into the assessment since they were derived not only from the respondents but also from the participants who did not contribute through the questionnaires, thereby resulting in different sets of data without normal standardization through the data instrument (i.e., questionnaire). Nevertheless, the feedback from the discussions offered a complementary source of data for giving context to the information from the respondents as well as in developing recommendations as part of the assessment.

Similar to the outcomes from the interviews, the respondents from all three workshops identified the CBD and the UNFCCC as the two most recognizable conventions and the COP decisions as the most frequently cited source of information on the synergies between the Rio Conventions. Some findings were quite unexpected; in the case of the second consultative workshop, the percentage of respondents who cited COP decisions as their source of knowledge about the synergies was actually found to exceed the percentage of respondents who were aware of any of the three Rio Conventions.

Most respondents also perceived "added value" as the most likely benefit from taking a synergistic approach when implementing the conventions. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents could identify synergistic elements in their projects while relatively few noted presence of such elements in their employers' policies or the national policies which affect them.

The presentation on the outcomes of the consultative workshops concluded with highlights from respondents' opinions on capacity for enabling synergistic approaches such as the need for better technical integration, particularly in data management and monitoring, continuous dissemination of information on the Rio Conventions, and greater efforts on CEPA activities. After the presentation, a comment was made regarding the possible involvement of the private sector in enabling synergies through corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. In addition to the need for clear policies and guidance, local participation was noted as a critical factor for pressuring CSR activities. Several of CSR related activities were likely to have had potential for enabling synergies within the context of the Rio Conventions but they had never been properly assessed.

Afternoon session

After lunch, the workshop was presented with the consolidated outcomes comprising responses from 112 respondents who participated in the stocktaking activities of the synergy assessment.

The outcomes reflected findings from the interviews and all of the consultative workshops. In some ways, the collective results were in keeping with what was seen in individual stocktaking sessions: the CBD and the UNFCCC were the two most recognizable of the Rio Conventions; the COP decisions were the most frequently cited source of information about the synergy; “added value” was also noted as the most commonly perceived benefit of synergistic implementation of the conventions; and synergistic elements were found to be mostly identifiable within activities at the project level.

Following the presentation, the participants were provided with results of the consolidated findings. These findings were derived from a comparative analysis of the issues identified from the stocktaking activities and the 31 JLG recommendations³⁹ listed in Annex II of CBD COP Decision IX/16. The results were delivered in accordance with the ten thematic areas of the aforementioned JLG recommendations. Collectively, the findings pointed out the need for the following actions: continuation of regular consultations among the national focal points to the Rio Conventions after the conclusion of the NCSA Project; reassessment of national policies with the intent of enhancing potential synergies for the conventions’ implementation (i.e., the NBSAP); development of new policies for enhancing such synergies; delegating official responsibilities for participation in implementing the Rio Conventions to a wider group of stakeholder organizations (especially specialized institutes and local agencies); and renewing efforts on CEPA related actions under the Rio Conventions with the view to overcome incomplete comprehension of the instruments.

The presentation on the overall recommendations of the synergy assessment offered a comprehensive list of actions to meet the above-mentioned needs. Also addressed were capacity gaps through proposals such as:

- Identifying and utilizing synergies as a means for implementation of the Rio Conventions (including through elevating the issue as part of the national agenda);
- Providing inter-ministerial oversight to cover the UNCCD and CBD implementation mechanisms; and
- Enhancing technical integration to aid the implementation of the Rio Conventions.⁴⁰

After the presentations, the participants were invited to offer their views and opinions on the findings and recommendations. The feedback received from participants is summarized below.

- Participants were generally supportive of raising the concept of synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions to become part of the national agenda in order to enhance awareness among administrators and politicians. A representative of the Royal Norwegian Embassy further suggested that the national agenda on the synergy should actually extend beyond the Rio Conventions and include other MEAs.
- Synergistic development of common policies for all three Rio Conventions should be pursued in order to enable cost savings and reduce/prevent duplication of actions.
- Specialized organizations should be allowed to take a leading role in implementing relevant thematic areas (i.e., CEPA) of the Rio Conventions with supervision and technical assistance from the focal points.

³⁹ See Annex XIII for the complete list of the 31 JLG recommendations.

⁴⁰ The details of the consolidated findings and the recommendations are available in the second technical report of Thailand’s NCSA synergy assessment.

- Renewed efforts to promote the Rio Conventions should be supported and conducted, particularly to ensure the active involvement of marginalized and minority groups. Enabling a synergistic approach towards the implementation of the conventions could provide an effective means for such activity by enhancing the delivery of information products in relevant local languages to these and other target groups.
- Actions which affect or contribute to the implementation of the Rio Conventions (including outcomes from the NCSA process) should be regularly communicated to public administrators and parliamentarians in order to maintain their attention on the conventions and to ensure their support.
- Enabling better understanding of the Rio Conventions – and the synergies therein – could be carried out by proper training of school teachers under existing training programs.
- Outreach officials should be appointed to liaison with media organizations and to enable effective communications on the Rio Conventions and their synergies.

In the closing address, Dr. Waikakul expressed her appreciation for the participants' input at the workshop. She felt that their contributions would be a significant benefit in refining the outcomes of the synergy assessment and in ensuring that the recommendations from the assessment would eventually assist in enhancing Thailand's implementation of the Rio Conventions in a practical manner.

The meeting closed at 15:00 in the afternoon.

List of participating organizations

- Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University
- Faculty of Science, Kasetsart University
- Faculty of Engineering, Khon Kaen University
- Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation
- Royal Forest Department
- Department of Fisheries
- Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
- Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
- Office of the Basic Education Commission
- Queen Sirikit Botanical Garden
- National Science Museum
- Royal Norwegian Embassy
- Radio Thailand
- Association for Hill Tribe Study and Culture

Annex XIII: INDICATIVE LIST OF ACTIVITIES BY PARTIES TO PROMOTE SYNERGIES AMONG THE RIO CONVENTIONS⁴¹

Collaboration amongst national focal points

1. Schedule periodic meetings between focal points and focal point teams.
2. Establish a national coordinating committee for implementation of the three Rio conventions including, as appropriate, mainstreaming into sustainable development strategies, the Millennium Development Goals and other relevant sectors and strategies.
3. Engage, when relevant, focal points from other conventions when forming a position for negotiations.

Cooperation on national-level planning

4. Review existing national plans to identify gaps in synergies.
5. Identify relevant sector plans and policies that could benefit from cooperation on biodiversity, desertification and climate change.
6. Revise relevant plans and policies, as appropriate to enhance cooperation.
7. Build institutional and scientific capacity and raise awareness among different ministries, policy makers and non-governmental organizations dealing with the three Rio conventions and other relevant conventions.

Collaboration at the level of convention bodies and secretariats

8. Provide input, as appropriate, to the Joint Liaison Group.

Technology transfer

9. Provide inputs to the technology transfer databases of the three conventions.
10. Prepare, as appropriate, transparent impact assessments and risk analysis on the transferred technologies taking into consideration economic viability, social acceptability and environmental benefits.
11. Enhance cooperation among national focal points for the implementation of the programme of work on technology transfer under the Convention on Biological Diversity through, for example, the designation of appropriate institutions acting as a central consulting point for technology transfer.
12. Identify technologies of joint interest and relevance at a regional and global scale.

Forests and climate change

13. Integrate biodiversity, climate change and desertification/land degradation issues in forest sector planning.
14. Involve focal points from the United Nations Forum on Forests and relevant forest related and other conventions in discussions on relevant issues, such as, reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, as well as through afforestation and reforestation, and, the in-depth review of implementation of the programme of work on forest biodiversity and other relevant issues.

Climate-change adaptation

⁴¹ The entire content of this annex is taken verbatim from the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): COP Decision IX/16, Annex II.

15. Enhance the integration of biodiversity and desertification/land degradation issues within climate change adaptation planning.
16. Enhance consideration of the benefits for climate change adaptation of cross-sector planning in the context of the ecosystem approach.
17. Evaluate, as appropriate, the extent to which biodiversity and desertification/land degradation issues are integrated into existing climate change adaptation plans.
18. Subject to national capacity and the availability of funds, identify areas which are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, contain high levels of biodiversity or biodiversity at risk, and are exposed to desertification/land degradation.

Capacity-building

19. Clearly express capacity-building needs to the secretariats.

Research and monitoring/systematic observation

20. Conduct, as appropriate, national and local assessments of climate-change impacts on biodiversity and desertification/land degradation.
21. Identify, as appropriate, local and indigenous knowledge that can contribute to synergies.
22. Identify research and/or monitoring needs and establish mechanisms or processes by which such needs could be met.
23. Encourage additional research on the impacts of climate change on oceans and marine biodiversity.
24. Encourage additional research and monitoring on the impacts of increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events on biodiversity and associated resources.
25. Identify actions that contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of peatlands and other wetlands and enhance their positive contribution to climate change response activities.
26. Identify the impacts of climate change on ecosystem services.
27. Harmonize temporal and spatial scales in data collection and analysis considering climate change and biodiversity status and trends.

Information exchange and outreach

28. Share at regional and global levels, experiences and lessons learned on communicating synergies.
29. Develop a common pool of experts on the interrelated issues of climate change, biodiversity and combating desertification/land degradation to address the information gaps on the status, trends and threats to biodiversity, particularly within dry and sub-humid lands.

Harmonized reporting

30. National focal points share, to the extent possible, databases containing reporting data and information sources.
31. Where relevant, focal points work together on drafting the national reports for each convention.