

GEF NATIONAL DIALOGUE
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Report

Day 1: January 19th, 2006

Opening Session

Dr. Monthip Sriratana Tabuganon, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, opened the GEF National Dialogue on behalf of The Permanent Secretary. Dr. Monthip explained that the role of the Permanent Secretary, as GEF Operational Focal Point, was to ensure that all GEF projects are in accordance with national priorities. Endorsement mechanisms therefore include consultation among relevant agencies.

There are already a number of GEF-funded projects under implementation in Thailand, including:

- Building CFC replacement programme
- Removal barriers to biomass
- Livestock waste management
- PEMSEA

Among projects currently being developed are:

- Promoting BD conservation with social equity
- Demonstrating and scaling up alternatives to DDT

The GEF National Dialogue will enable all partners to work effectively with GEF, by increasing the understanding of eligibility criteria, project cycle, and approval procedures.

The RTG plans to expand the partnership with the GEF to include more projects on BD. The National Dialogue will help to identify priorities.

Ms. Funke Oyewole, Manager of the GEF Secretariat's Corporate Affairs Team, introduced the GEF family, explaining that it is composed of the GEF Secretariat, Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank) and Executing Agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNIDO, and the four regional development banks).

Ms. Funke explained that the National Dialogue seeks to enhance country coordination within context of national priorities and development plans. The goal of the Dialogue was to ensure clearer picture of how the GEF can support national priorities under international conventions, building national and institutional capacities.

Ms. Joana Merlin-Scholtes, UN Resident Coordinator in Thailand, on behalf of the GEF Implementing Agencies, welcomed participants to the UN Conference Centre. Ms. Merlin-Scholtes described how the GEF could benefit Thailand. She highlighted three important reasons why an active partnership between Thailand the GEF should be developed. These are:

- The GEF does not provide funds in support of development – it provides funding to cover the costs of actions in individual countries that generate global environmental benefits.
- Secondly, the GEF places great emphasis on learning – sharing experiences so that countries can learn from each other. Because of Thailand's capacity and expertise in environmental matters, the GEF can help to facilitate cross-border learning, thereby enhancing Thailand's international reputation in science, policy development, and the environment.
- Finally, the GEF offers can support the development of eco-industries as a contribution to Thailand's sustainable development. Ms. Merlin-Scholtes gave the example of "bioplastics", which can contribute to eliminating persistent organic pollutants, or POPs

Finally, Ms. Merlin-Scholtes invited participants to collectively explore other ways in which an active partnership can be developed.

Session 2: Presentation on GEF

The session was chaired by Dr. Ampan Pintukanok, Director of International Cooperation Affairs, MONRE.

Mr. John Pernetta (UNEP) described the background of the GEF, its operational structure and the six focal areas in which it works.

The GEF consists of:

- An Assembly, which includes representatives of all member countries, and only meets once every 3-4 years, in conjunction with financial replenishments of the GEF
- A Council, which consists of 32 members, representing constituencies of countries, meeting twice a year
- A Secretariat, which services the Council and Assembly
- Three Implementing Agencies (UNDP, UNEP, and the World Bank)
- Seven Executing Agencies (FAO, IFAD, UNIDO and four regional development banks)

The focal areas in which the GEF works are::

- Biodiversity, governed by the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD), for which the GEF is the financial instrument. The GEF has three strategic priorities for work on biodiversity
- Climate change, governed by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which the GEF is the financial instrument. The GEF has five strategic priorities for work on climate change
- International Waters, for which there is no single global convention. The GEF has three strategic priorities for work on international waters
- POPs, governed by the Stockholm Convention, for which the GEF is the financial mechanism. The GEF has three strategic priorities for work on POPs
- Land Degradation, governed by the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, for which the GEF is one of two financial mechanisms. The GEF has 2 strategic priorities on land degradation

- Ozone, governed by the Montreal, for which the GEF provides financial resources for countries in eastern Europe and the CIS, which are not covered by the Montreal Protocol's Multilateral Fund.

Ms Yumiko Yasuda (UNDP) described the GEF's support to capacity building, under the "Capacity Development Initiative". This includes the "National Capacity Self-Assessments" (NCSAs), which identify priorities for cross-sectoral capacity building. The assessments can then be used to justify targeted capacity building projects, as well as the need for additional capacity building in regular GEF projects.

Ms Yasuda also described GEF support to Adaptation to Climate Change, which is mobilized through four different funds:

- The Strategic Priority "Piloting an Operational Approach to Adaptation" (SPA) is funded through the GEF Trust Fund in the same way as support to other focal areas. SPA projects have to demonstrate global environmental benefits as well as supporting adaptation.
- The Least Developed Country Fund (LCDF), created by the UNFCCC CoP, is a separate fund supporting implementation of NAPAs in least developed countries
- The Special Climate Change Fund (SCCF), also created by the UNFCCC CoP, supports implementation of adaptation priorities identified in national plans and reports to the convention
- The Adaptation Fund, which is not yet operational, will be funded through the Clean Development Mechanism, and will also support implementation of adaptation priorities.

Finally, Ms Yasuda described the GEF eligibility criteria, funding windows and the project cycle. GEF projects must be country driven, generate global environmental benefits, be participatory and consistent with guidance from Conventions. They must also be scientifically sound and generate sustainable results. GEF funding can be provided through Medium-Size Projects (MSPs), in which the GEF provides up to \$1M, or Full-Sized Projects, with GEF funding of more than \$1M. Many countries, including Thailand, also have a Small Grants Programme, in which grants of up to \$50,000 are awarded to NGOs and CBOs through a process guided by a National Steering Committee. Finally, most focal areas also have "Enabling Activity" projects to support reporting and other convention obligations.

Ms Funke Oyewole (GEF Secretariat) introduced the new Resource Allocation Framework (RAF), which will be used by the GEF to allocate funding in the Biodiversity and Climate Change focal areas from July 2006. The intent is to rationalize allocation of GEF resources so that global environmental benefit can be generated most effectively. Countries may be allocated varying amount of funding based on measures of their potential to generate global environmental benefits and their capacity to do so. Final allocations cannot be determined until the size of the GEF replenishment is clear, but later in 2006 there will be a series of sub-regional workshops to discuss operational issues of the RAF.

Ms Oyewole also described the GEF governance structures, including the political and operational focal points and their functions.

Plenary Discussion

Dr. Sujitra Changtragoon, Royal Forest Department, asked how much funding in the Biodiversity focal area is allocated to each Operational Programme, and for further clarification on project preparation (PDF) funding, which appeared to her to be very generous.

The Panel responded that they did not have figures for individual Operational Programmes, but that the information could be generated. On PDF funding, they explained that the size of PDF-A, B, and C funding was related to the size and complexity of the proposed project. Although the amounts appeared to be large, some GEF projects were very large, so the preparatory funds accounted for only a small proportion of the total costs. They also clarified that it was not obligatory to request PDF funding, although it was normal.

Dr. Sujitra asked about project preparation, and the mechanism to monitor project implementation after approval. She also asked if there were any examples of projects failing.

The Panel described the M&E systems of the GEF itself and of the individual Implementing Agencies. They explained that each project document must include a full M&E plan. It is then the responsibility of the IA to ensure that outputs are achieved, through regular reports and meetings with the project team. If outputs are not being met, there can be various responses, including adjustment of the implementation schedule, a decision to drop a component and reallocate resources, or a project can be closed in a worst case scenario. However, in the experience of the Panel, although projects had sometime been suspended, they were not aware of projects being cancelled during implementation.

Dr. Chamlong of NIDA asked if the GEF supports research.

The panel explained that the GEF only supports targeted research - research that addresses issues raised by implementation of GEF projects or research that provides guidance to the GEF on areas to be focused on in future. This policy is described on the GEF web-site.

Senator Panat Tasneeyanond asked whether the GEF eligibility criteria were also applied to applications from NGOs/CBOs for SGP projects. He also requested more information on the National Steering Committee

Mr. Poonsin, National Coordinator of the Thai SGP, confirmed that GEF eligibility criteria are applicable to NGO/CBOs, meaning that SGP proposals must coincide with development policies and plans. He explained that currently the NSC has 15 members, including distinguished personnel from government, NGO's and research institutes, and chaired by the Department of National Parks (Dr. Komon)

Ms Patama, from the Office of National Environment Policy asked if it was the Council's responsibility to replenish the GEF.

The Panel explained that the process is the responsibility of the GEF Trustee and donor governments.

Mr. Somsak of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs questioned the assumption that lessons can be transferred from one country to another, as national conditions vary substantially.

The Panel and contributors from the floor discussed the nature of learning lessons, and the fact that the term “best practice” was a misnomer. It was pointed out that sharing experiences promoted the possibility of innovative solutions, without an expectation that practices from one country should be exactly applicable to another.

Session 3: Thailand’s national policies related to conventions

Dr. Monthip Sriratana Tabuganon, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, introduced Thailand’s sustainable development initiatives, including the livable cities programme, as well as programmes dealing with energy efficiency, natural resources, and the environment, noting that every part of society must cooperate in these initiatives, including provincial, district and municipality officials.

Dr. Monthip emphasized the importance of good governance and the need to build the capacity of government officials. She also described MONRE’s plan for natural resources and the environment. This is a 4 year plan as part of a long-term vision to make nature pristine and provide a good environment for people’s livelihoods. MONRE uses a theme of balanced development. This includes policies to sustain biodiversity and to manage water resources in an integrated way, focusing on 25 river basins.

The government encourages public participation and delegation of responsibility. For example, maps of forest coverage by province are being developed - governors will be responsible for subsequent changes in forest cover.

Dr. Monthip mentioned the role of NGOs in helping to implement policies in the field, of international agencies in helping to deliver the government’s vision, and the importance of participation of justice system.

Finally, Dr. Monthip listed the international conventions ratified by Thailand and introduced representatives of the convention focal points to discuss national policy in more detail.

Climate Change

Ms Aree Watana, Director of the Measures Analysis section of ONEP, described the objectives of the UNFCCC and obligations on Parties, including the preparation of Initial and Second National Communications, the need to prepare a GHG inventory and to report on emissions.

Thailand has a strategy to prepare the country to adapt to problems that will result from CC and to mitigate emissions of GHG without a negative impact on country development.

The government has formed Working Groups to develop strategies dealing with adaptation, GHG emissions, awareness raising, capacity building, research and development, and the amendment of existing or formulation of new legislation.

Mitigation measures can include conservation of soil, water and forests, as means to increase sinks, as well as reduction of GHG emissions. The energy sector will develop renewable alternative sources of clean energy, and develop mass transit systems.

Biodiversity

Ms. Patama, of ONEP, described the objectives and obligations of the CBD. She emphasized that Thailand has pursued policies in support of Article 6 of the Convention even before ratification.

The 2nd NBSAP emphasizes the importance of traditional knowledge of the people, the need to increase capacity of agencies; to protect ecology; to protect species and genetic resources; to control threats to biodiversity; to motivate society to participate; and to increase international cooperation.

These priorities relate to MDG goals, such as decreasing the loss of biodiversity by 2020, while increasing the competitive position of country.

As an indication of Thailand's commitment to the CBD, ONEP organized SBSTTA 10 of the CBD in February 2005.

Priorities include the promotion of sustainable livelihoods; improvement of management systems, improvements to the clearing house mechanism, and the revision of laws and regulations concerning protected areas, sharing of benefits and control of invasive species.

POPs

Ms. Sunee, of the Department of Pollution Control of MONRE, described the objectives and obligations of the Stockholm Convention. She mentioned the 9 POPs pesticides covered by the Convention, the manufacture and use of which has been prohibited many years ago under the Hazardous Substance Act. However, some old stockpiles still exist.

Importation of PCBs has been prohibited since 1975 by the Department of Industrial Works, although again, some still exist. Thailand is introducing Best Available Technologies and Best Environmental Practices (BAT/BEP), for example, through IPM and avoidance of unintentional dioxin/furan releases.

Thailand has been implementing a GEF-funded Enabling Activity project through UNEP since Feb 2004, developing its National Implementation Plan (NIP). NIP formulation has been facilitated through 4 working groups: Pesticides, PCBs, Dioxins/furans; and Socio-economic impacts. The main elements of NIP are:

- Improvement of public awareness
- Updating of data
- Preparation of plans for waste management
- Monitoring POPs and bioaccumulation
- Evaluating impacts on human health
- Assessing responsibilities of institutions
- Preparing new, and amending existing legislation

The Department of Pollution Control is developing a web-page on POPs and Thailand's efforts to eliminate them.

Land Degradation

Mr. Worapong, of the Land Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, described the objectives and obligations of the UNCCD. He noted that in Thailand there are four important land degradation issues: aridity and drought, soil erosion, loss of forest area, and soil salination.

Mr. Worapong described policies of the government under six headings:

1. National Constitution
2. National Economic and Social Development Plan (focusing on changing targets of forest cover);
3. Thai government policy: to restore conditions and quality of natural resources to prevent degradation and depletion for the benefit of peoples' livelihoods
4. The Land and Forest Management Acts
5. Cabinet resolutions relevant to land degradation
6. Strategies of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives

Thailand National Action Plan focuses on the lack of water and the need to develop land and water infrastructure. Implementation of the NAP involves a number of strategies and projects, such as:

- Establishment of a network of volunteer soil doctors
- Zoning soils for cropping
- Strengthening capacity of local government structures
- Operating demonstration plots
- Promotion of soil analysis
- Development of agro-tourism
- Development of small scale water resources
- Improvement of natural water resources

Ozone

Ms Somsri of the Department of Industrial Works explained that Thailand received support to eliminate ozone-depleting substances through the Montreal Protocol's Multilateral Fund, and was therefore not eligible for GEF support, which covered only those countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS that were not eligible under the Multilateral Fund.

Nevertheless, Ms Somsri noted that Thailand had received a concessional loan from GEF under the Climate Change focal area to demonstrate energy efficiency of chiller replacements and rapidity of pay-off.

She went on to describe the various initiatives of the government to address ozone-depleting substances, with the goal of eliminating importation of CHCs from 2010. Many of these initiatives involve training of trainers in technologies that do not require use of CHCs.

Plenary Discussion

Dr. Sujitra Changtragoon, Royal Forest Department, noted that an important element of the UNCCD stemmed from forest depletion but the presentation on the National Action Plan focused only on the Department of Land Development activities. The Royal Forest Department has the mandate over forests – how will it be involved.

Mr. Worapong noted that RFD has a clear policy on forest development, but agreed that more needed to be done to ensure cohesion with the UNCCD

Dr. Sujitra suggested that the idea of promoting Thailand as “kitchen of the world” seemed likely to encourage forest encroachment, which would cause negative impacts.

Mr. Worapong agreed that coordination was necessary so as not to encourage negative consequences.

Dr. Monthip noted that an integrated plan of action is required, with committees reviewing the potential for conflicting results and ensuring that it does not happen.

Dr. Chamlong of NIDA commented that he was still unclear on what type of projects should be submitted for GEF support.

Mr. John Pernetta of UNEP responded that eligibility depends on individual portfolio area and convention guidance. The GEF has strategic guidance on priority areas for each focal area. Dr Monthip noted that the morning session described project types, but also that discussion groups on day 2 would cover the topic.

There followed a discussion on capacity building and cross-sectoral linkages. In the case of Climate Change, Ms Aree Watana explained that capacity building had been undertaken for various agencies, such as the Ministry of Industry, including training in preparation of CDM Project Design Documents.

Ms Patama noted that one of activities in the proposed NCSA project is to try to improve capacity of personnel involved in implementing conventions and synergy among the conventions.

Dr. Monthip addressed the question of which unit integrates all efforts. MONRE is proposing a new Department of International Cooperation which will look after implementation of various commitments and propose strategies to accord with various conventions and will draw on experience of other departments. Korea and China have such departments, which had proven to be very valuable.

On capacity building Dr. Monthip emphasized the importance of people's participation and education. She noted that in Japan, even primary students know about UNFCCC and CBD. There may be a gap in Thailand in terms of coordination with the Ministry of Education. NGOs have special expertise in imparting knowledge at the grass roots level.

Day 2: January 20th, 2006

Session 1: National Coordination Mechanism

Ms Funke Oyewole (GEF Secretariat) described a study undertaken on experiences with country coordination. Coordination involves exchange of information on GEF activities and decisive leadership ensuring common goal. Five countries were selected on the basis of having coordination mechanisms in place for some time, with attention being paid to covering countries that utilized different types of mechanisms. The five countries studied were Bolivia, Colombia, China, Poland and Uganda. More than 100 stakeholders were interviewed during the study.

All operational focal points of the case study countries are senior officials in relatively influential ministries with significant convening power. In Uganda the two GEF focal point positions are held by the same official in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, while in China both focal points hold positions in the Ministry of Finance. In the other countries the two focal points are in separate agencies.

Poland has the unusual situation of a national environmental fund established with the proceeds of a debt-for-nature swap acting as operational focal point, while the political focal point is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Colombia one of the focal points is based in a free-standing environment ministry, and in Bolivia in an environmental vice-ministry in the Ministry of Sustainable Development. It is interesting that the focal points who have taken the lead on national GEF coordination are in the ministries responsible for finance and economic planning or foreign affairs — i.e., relatively high profile, senior ministries with considerable convening power and authority — in three of the five countries considered (China, Poland and Uganda). Compared to the GEF family as a whole, this is a relatively unusual situation. It appears that the effectiveness of coordination is strengthened where the focal point convening the committee is based in a relatively powerful and influential ministry.

The functions of the committees are broadly similar. The main emphasis is on the review and, if successful, recommendation of endorsement of GEF project concepts and project documents, thus broadening the dialogue on the use of GEF resources while supporting one of the primary responsibilities of the operational focal point. The committees are also charged with reviewing compliance with and support for national priorities and policies, and making sure projects complement and do not duplicate existing and planned programs in the various sectors and GEF focal areas. Committee members thus spend a significant amount of time studying and commenting on potential projects.

Some committees have expanded their roles to include more proactive participation in project identification, project monitoring and identifying lessons learned. All of the committees facilitate cross-sectoral exchanges of information and enhanced coordination among line ministries and research institutions operating in the various sectors related to global environmental concerns, and in some cases this includes civil society organizations.

China, which is the largest global recipient of GEF resources, has established a national GEF office with full-time technical staff responsible for staying updated on GEF issues, disseminating information, fielding questions from potential project proponents, and sharing knowledge and lessons between projects. The government agencies executing most GEF projects in China also have staff with a sophisticated appreciation of GEF technical and policy issues. The environmental foundation serving as operational focal point in Poland has carried out some similar tasks to the China GEF Office, including the translation and dissemination of GEF technical materials, analysis of lessons learned and development of a project database.

A key role played by each of the committees — as well as by the GEF Office in China and the National Environment Fund (NEF) operational focal point in Poland — has been to support their respective national GEF Council Member, usually a position held by one of the focal points. The committees have helped their Council Member develop national positions on GEF issues, then subsequently been instrumental in disseminating formal information as well as less formal signals emerging from the Council meetings to national stakeholders.

Ms Funke also introduced the GEF's Country Support Programme, which includes:

- A Support programme for the focal points, including facilitation of participation in constituency meetings
- Development of a web-based knowledge management database
- Sub-regional training and information workshops –held annually for focal points on specific issues (based on input from sub-regional dialogues).

Plenary Discussion

Mr. Worapong (Department of Land Development) asked whether GEF support to strengthen focal points – database development and management included convention focal points.

Ms Funke answered that it didn't, but that there were other programmes to support UNCBD and UNFCCC focal points, and that something similar may be developed for the UNCCD.

Mr Pernetta, UNEP, noted that a long-standing international waters GEF project, IW: Learn, had a web-site that served as a portal to most significant water-related web-sites and KM on experiences on implementing water-related projects, and that something similar could be developed for land degradation. He explained that lessons from the IW focal area indicated that high level representation on policy committees is easier if technical issues are delegated to sub-committees. He also asked whether it was the case that it was more common for donor countries to be represented by Ministries of Finance.

Ms. Funke replied that this was true, and that the fact that 2 out of the 5 recipient countries included in the case study - China and Uganda - have Ministry of Finance focal points is unusual.

Dr. Chaweewan Hutacharoen, Department of National Parks, expressed concern that there was no system in Thailand to monitor or evaluate projects, to provide technical support, or any of the other functions described as constituting coordination. She encouraged Dr. Monthip to set up such a national committee

Mr. Manop Mekprayoonthong, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, commented that Thailand needs a national committee to coordinate work and duties of OFP and PFP because of the expansion of the GEF to cover many conventions.

Dr. Monthip responded that MONRE is establishing a unit to work on coordination – the Office of Cooperation in the Office of the Permanent Secretary will function as secretariat. She noted that although she had only been serving the OFP in receiving proposals for 2 months, she had tried to invite experts to come and discuss proposals – for example, on one project concerning the Ministry of Public Health switching from DDT to alternatives. In this case the experts' advice was confusing because they suggested that Thailand was technically more advanced than the level the project sought to achieve. MONRE therefore asked proponent whether they had discussed the project with experts first.

The current endorsement process involves the requesting agency forwarding the proposal to the Office of the Permanent Secretary. Proposals are checked to see whether all details required by the GEF are covered and whether they coincide with country policy. Proposals are forwarded to agencies involved with the technical

content of the proposals for endorsement. This process can sometimes be problematic due to slow response rates. Once comments are received, if positive the proposal is forwarded to the Minister of MONRE for endorsement in principle. If he endorses the proposal, the Permanent Secretary will also endorse. In the last 2 months 4-5 projects have been endorsed and 4-5 more are waiting for endorsement by the Minister.

Ways to shorten this process are currently being considered. For example, the Permanent Secretary has established a committee on international affairs with technical sub-committees on CC, BD etc. – this promises to be a mechanism to improve work flow. Time limits for comments from technical agencies will also be established.

The GEF format is still quite difficult to comprehend. Sometimes a proposal overlaps with on-going projects – sometimes agencies do not study the situation carefully – so sometimes information is out of date.

At the moment agencies are proposing 13 projects – one has been turned down, one returned for amendments, and four have been endorsed.

Mr. Manop reminded participants that there is a key role for GEF Implementing and Executing Agencies. These agencies can provide advice and help mobilize technical support for project development.

Dr. Chaweewan congratulated Dr. Monthip on the amount of work achieved, but was concerned that the absence of a coordination committee meant that all the work fell on her shoulders. She also asked for clarification on the endorsement process, because it appeared that the involvement of the Minister created one extra tier of bureaucracy, and that he was therefore effectively the OFP.

Dr. Ampan Pintukanok explained the implications of various cabinet resolutions on the process, noting that the cabinet should endorse all proposals, but had delegated this authority to the Ministers in urgent cases. MONRE planned to make a presentation to the cabinet shortly to justify regularizing the role of the Minister in endorsing proposals.

Group Discussions

Participants broke into four working groups, covering Biodiversity, Climate Change, Land and Water, and Chemicals in order to continue discussions. Groups were asked to consider the role of the GEF in relation to national policy in their thematic areas, priorities for funding by the GEF, needs for convention focal point strengthening, and mechanisms for learning and information flow.

Report of Land and water group

Mr. Worapong reported on the discussion of the Land and Water group.

In relation to the integration of GEF projects, MDGs, Conventions and national priorities, the group identified nine points. These were:

- There is not enough expertise in writing up GEF projects
- Projects need to be more inclusive, with the OFP or PFP helping to drive the process

- Projects should be consistent with national priorities
- In some cases in development of proposals, they are drafted by lower level people who may not have understanding of policy, so policy advice should be clear
- There is a need for increased capacity and knowledge management, both within and outside the educational system
- Should not duplicate projects that already exist
- Give more interest to projects for long term benefits
- Projects should link to other countries through multi-country projects
- In some circumstances projects should be consistent with long-term strategies of departments

Concerning prioritization of projects for GEF funding, the group identified 5 priorities:

- Land problems and salination emphasizing improved management
- Projects with local participation
- Sustainable management of land to avoid degradation
- Adaptation to climate change
- Establishment of climate early warning systems and improved information on climate hazards

For capacity building of the UNCCD national focal point, the group discussed 7 points:

- A technical committee needs to be formed
- A clear timeframe for consideration of proposals needs to be established
- There needs to be a clear screening process
- Formats for proposal submissions should be disseminated
- Training is required on how to draft good proposals
- Formulation of simple concepts and ideas
- There should be improved clarity of OFP identity and responsibility

Finally, concerning the development of a mechanism for smoother flow of the project submission and approval process, the group recommended the creation of an ICT network on the GEF, and the organization of regular meetings to exchange knowledge and understanding

Report of the Biodiversity group

Ms. Patama reported that the group discussed six priorities:

1. Projects should reflect needs of various agencies and be designed to benefit the public
2. Projects should be in accordance with commitments made in CBD
3. RFD and DNP favoured the setting up of a clearing house mechanism – existing databases are scattered and need to be brought together under common standards, with links established among databases. A conference of agencies with such databases should be organized to discuss next steps
4. A project is needed to build capacity of staff and personnel
5. A priority is to assess the genetic status of plants and animals as the basis for Access and Benefit Sharing
6. There is a need to draft legislation on biodiversity

In response to a question from Dr. Monthip on the existence of a Red Book for Thailand, Ms Patama advised that ONEP is currently revising the red list on plants and starting a vertebrate list. The process also involves identifying biodiversity “hotspots”

Report of the Climate Change group

Mr. Surachet reported that the Thai government is very interested in the energy sector and concerned about both negative and positive impacts of the power generation sector, co-generation sector, agriculture sector, etc. This relates to Thailand’s strategy to manage Climate Change, mitigation and adaptation; research and monitoring.

Possible projects include those dealing with the use of alternative energy, renewable energy, energy generation from municipal and agricultural waste, conservation of energy in buildings and factories, and the use of clean technology such as CNG in transport.

Required mechanisms to be used for communicating information include website giving information on processes of the GEF, past and present projects, etc. Small group seminars focusing on different Climate Change issues should be held at regular intervals.

In response, Dr. Monthip acknowledged that MONRE wants to create a web-page with all information on the GEF, and to arrange small group discussions.

Report of the Chemicals group

Ms Pornpimon Chareonsong reported that the group covered three issues. Firstly, most of group were not familiar about the GEF, and so discussed the processes of receiving GEF funding and the role of various agencies.

The second issue discussed was mechanisms to disseminate information on the GEF and improve information flow. Suggested solutions were in line with the reports of the other groups. The idea of a web-based and hard-copy handbook on how to develop proposals for GEF funding was discussed, and Dr. Ampan committed herself to be responsible.

Priorities for GEF funding under the POPs focal area will be determined by the priority setting exercise under the NIP preparation, so the group felt no need to discuss this issue, but exchanged ideas among agencies.

Ms Funke noted that the GEF Secretariat will soon be launching a web-based country support handbook including info on contacts, focal points, etc. This might be a useful resource as Thailand develops its own information mechanisms

Closing of meeting.

Dr. Monthip thanked participants for their contribution, and promised that MONRE would follow up on the ideas presented.