

Category C: Information from State of the Environment Reports

Introduction

Rationales of the Indicators

Apart from covering environmental issues in State of the Environment (SOE) reports, strong emphasis has been equally placed on the dissemination of the information to the public. This is because no matter how well information is presented, if it is not disclosed, the information will be of little use. Publicizing these findings to the widest possible public arena is essential in making people aware and concerned about the importance of the environment. This will then lead to public awareness in the conservation and collective responsibility in protecting natural resources and the environment.

General Situation

At present, there are several organizations that have produced and disseminate State of the Environment (SOE) reports in various forms. During the past decade (1994-2003), the following national SOE reports have been published in Thailand:

The Department of Environmental Policy and Planning published 9 reports: **State of the Environment Report** for years: 1994, 1995-1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003.

The Green World Foundation published 4 reports: **State of the Thai Environment** for years: 1994, 1995, 1996, and 1997-1998.

The Thai Society of Environmental Journalists, supported by the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, published 4 reports: **When Fishes Want to Eat Stars** for years: 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004. The reports present significant environmental issues in those particular years.

Apart from efforts in preparing national SOE reports, today regional SOE reports on the different regions of Thailand have been initiated as well. Information on environmental quality changes in the different areas would be featured and the regional SOE reports have been prepared by Environmental Bureaus of Regions 1-16, under Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and NGOs and civil society networks.

Producing the Regional SOE Report is one of the responsibilities of the Regional Environment Office¹⁴ 1-16. Nevertheless, the format and content of each report and

¹⁴ Responsibilities of the Regional Environmental Office are specified in administration rules of the Office of the Permanent Secretary under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 2002 (Government Gazette Issue 119 Part 103A). Later it was dissolved and replaced by the administration regulations of the Office of the Permanent Secretary under the Ministry of

the efforts on disseminating information on the state of each environment depends on the capabilities and resources of each particular area. Examples of regional state SOE reports that were publicized over the Regional Environment Office's web sites are as follows:

- **Report on the Basins of the Upper Ping River, Kok River, Upper Mekong River Section 1 (Mechan), and Salawin River** for years: 2003 and 2004 which was prepared by Regional Environment Office 1 (Chiang Mai) (the 2004 Report can be downloaded from <http://www.reo01.com/reo/download.php>)¹⁵
- **State of Environment Report 2003 on the Basin of Tachin River and the Areas around the Basins of its Estuaries** prepared by Regional Environment Office 5 (Nakhon Pathom) (the report can be downloaded at http://www.environnet.in.th/Mnre_reo5/pdf/report2546.pdf)
- **State of Environment Report Region 9 on the Basins of the Mekong River** for years: 2002-2003 and 2004 prepared by Regional Environment Office 9 (Udon Thani) (the report can be downloaded at <http://www.reo09.go.th/เอกสารเผยแพร่.htm>)

The state of the regional environment reports prepared by NGOs and people's networks are as follows:

- **Basic Natural Resources and the Environment of Isan** (an informal name of Northeastern region of Thailand) is a supporting document for a seminar on "Basic Natural Resources and the Environment 2003" prepared by the Isan Natural Resources and Environment Network and the Bonds Supporting Printing Organization of the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. This status report presents a variety of issues about basic resources throughout the year such as forests, water management in Isan, problems with spreading of soil salinity, history, culture of Isan people and those living around the Mekong River, summary of performances and progress of policies, and suggestions on forest and land management.
- **Communities in the South of Thailand and Sustainable Management of Resources in Today's World** is prepared by the NGO Coordinating Committee on Southern Development and Sustainable Development Foundation. Preparation for the report started from 2003 and the content of the report consists of issues concerning problems with natural resources and

Natural Resources and Environment, 2nd Edition 2004 (Government Gazette Issue 121 Special Section 26A).

¹⁵ There has been a series of yearly reports since 1997. In the early stages, the report was called State of Environment of the Northern Region Year...Report. The report was named after Regional Environment Office 1 (Northern Region) and at that time there were only four regions. Then the name of the report changed to State of Environment of the Upper North Region Year...Report which was after the Regional Environment Office 10 (Upper Northern Region) and the number of regions increased to twelve. And since October 2002 onwards, the name of the office was changed to Regional Environment Office 1 (Chiang Mai) which covers the areas in Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampoon, and Mae Hong Son (during that time there were Regional Environment Offices in sixteen regions). And finally, the name changed to State of Environment of the Basins of the Upper Ping River, Kok River, and Upper Mekong River Section 1 (Mechan) Year...Report (Interviewed officer of Regional Environment Office 1, 18 April 2005).

the environment in the south such as problems with local fisheries, forests, land and impacts from development activities like the development of basin of Pakpanang River, the construction of Klongklai Dam, the construction of the Thai-Malaysian gas pipes and gas refinery, and development plans in the south.

Apart from preparing the SOE report which covers various environmental issues, there are also efforts in creating reports focusing specifically on certain issues such as the report on the State of Pollution in Thailand for a particular year prepared by the Pollution Control Department, Situation and Management of the Problems of Air and Noise Pollution Report for a particular year prepared by Air Quality and Noise Management Bureau of the Pollution Control Department, and the Annual Report on the State of Water Pollution prepared by the Water Resources Department.

Although these reports were prepared by government agencies, the general public is able to request for these reports directly from the organizations or download them from the organization's web sites. This, therefore, gives an extensive and convenient opportunity for the public to have access to information from the situation reports. However, one exception When Fishes Want to Eat Stars was not provided online but hard copies of the report were available upon request at the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion. As for the state of environment reports prepared by non-governmental organization such as the report of "State of Thai Environment" prepared by the Green World Foundation, online ordering of the report was available on their web site for those interested. As for the Regional State of Environment Reports (Isan and the South) which are prepared by NGOs, even though there are ongoing data collection every year, the reports are published not on a regular basis because of limited funds. The information, however, is publicized through other methods such as supporting documents.

The numerous different reports prepared by these organizations and bodies are advantages to the public because it provides an opportunity for more people to have access to information on the state of the environment. Also the public can be informed about the quality of the environment through different perspectives and through various methods of presentation as well.

Case Selection

This assessment is based on the case study on a state of environment report recognized nationally and is the most recently published – the State of Environment Report 2003 which is prepared by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning. The content of the State of Environment Report 2003 can be divided into three main issues which are 1) Management of natural resources and environment of Thailand 2) Presentation of important, severe, or urgent environmental problems which need to be addressed in 2003 and 3) Report on the state of natural resources and the environment.

Case Study: State of the Environment Report 2003 by Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning

Table of Indicators

Indicators	
II.C.1 Mandate to disseminate State of the Environment (SOE) reports to the public*	
Values	Explanation and Justification
(0) Not applicable/not assessed	Section 13 (13) of the Enhancement and Conservation of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality Act. B.E. 2535 states that the National Environment Committee shall report State of Environment to the cabinet of at least 1 time annually. In this regard, the committee has appointed Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning to draft such report under the regulation of the Sub-Committee appointed by the National Environment Committee.
(i) There is no mandate to disseminate regular State of the Environment reports to the public	Even though there are no legislations or regulations prescribed that the agency preparing such report shall publicize it to the public, it was found that there was an attempt to share this information to general audiences. This can be seen from budget allocation for publishing and preparing CD Rom containing the Report to be distributed to other relating agencies, libraries, and interested persons throughout the country. Such regular budget allocation may be considered as informal regulations (in practice). Hence, (ii) was selected, even though it does not relate to any exemptions or general limitations.
(ii) <u>There is a mandate to disseminate regular State of the Environment reports to the public, with vague or broad exceptions or restrictions (please specify)</u>	Sources: -Enhancement and Conservation of Natural Resources and Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535 (1992) -Interview with Head of Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 11 April 2005
(iii) There is a clear mandate (including periodicity and content of reports) to disseminate regular State of the Environment reports to the public, with clearly defined exceptions or restrictions	

II.C.2 Number of core data sets, indicators, and trend data sets provided in State of the Environment (SOE) report*	
Values	Explanation and Justification
(0) Not applicable/not assessed	<p>The report is completed in terms of data and indicators. The report also provides changing trends of the information. It receives 22 scores from the total of 30 (Please see Table 1) according to the standard that information shall be presented, using tables, graphs, or maps to show changing trends from the previous years.</p> <p>Even though information on the Industry, Public Utilities, Transportation, and Population was not presented by each topic in the State of Environment Report, it was found that above 4 issues were integrated or referred in various chapters of the State of Environment Report.</p>
(i) No SOE reports were published, or too few to allow evaluation of the number of core data sets, indicators, and trend data	
(ii) The SOE report contains insufficient core data sets and indicators (only basic data)	
(iii) The SOE report contains a solid foundation of data and indicators to describe conditions and trends	
(iv) <u>The SOE report is rich in data and indicators to describe conditions and trends</u>	

Table 1: Assessment in Comprehensiveness of State of Environment Report 2003 by Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning

Sectors	Presented by using Tables, Graphs and Maps	Exhibit trends or changes
1. Agriculture	✓	✓
2. Forestry	✓	✓
3. Fishery	✓	✓
4. Industry	-	-
5. Energy and Mineral Resources	✓	✓
6. Cities	✓	✓
7. Public Utilities	-	-
8. Transportation	-	-
9. Population	-	-
10. Climate	✓	✓
11. Bio-Diversity	✓	✓
12. Water Resources	✓	✓
13. Water Quality	✓	✓
14. Air Quality	✓	✓
15. Land used	✓	✓
Total Scores 22 ←	11	11

Remark: 1 score was given to report which presented information by table, graphs, or maps in each sector; while another 1 score was given to report that shows trends or changes in a time period.

II.C.3 Volumes of State of the Environment (SOE) reports available on the Internet*	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No volumes of selected SOE reports could be obtained on government agency website or other websites</p> <p>(ii) Volumes of selected SOE reports could be obtained after in-depth search or multiple links on government agency website or other websites</p> <p>(iii) <u>Volumes of selected SOE reports could be obtained immediately in search or on home pages of government agency website or other websites</u></p>	<p>Both complete State of Environment Report 2003 and its Executive Summary can be located and downloaded from the website of Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (http://www.onep.go.th)</p>
II.C.4 Efforts to reach mass media with launch of State of the Environment (SOE) report*	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No effort was made in the examined case to reach mass media with launch of SOE report</p> <p>(ii) <u>A press release or media kit (press release plus multimedia materials, list of contacts, and list of background reading and resources) was distributed with launch of SOE report</u></p> <p>(iii) A comprehensive outreach effort was launched - including media kit, press conference, media training, articles written by staff - and effort reached various media outlets (television, radio, press, etc.)</p>	<p>After primary drafting of the Report, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning will invite Officials from related agencies, academia from academic institutions, representatives from private development organization, and press to have a working seminar to brainstorm opinions on draft State of Environment Report. This is one of the channels to share information on progress in preparation of the Report. Furthermore, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning distributed State of Environment Report, both in printed version and CD-Rom to several presses after the report is completed.</p> <p>In term of the Public Press Conference on State of Environment Report, the study found that this activity was held in some years, depending on the policy from National Environment Committee. In the past, the press conference held was for Reports already approved by the National Environment Committee and on process of submission to the Cabinet.</p>

	Sources: Interview with Head of Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 11 April 2005
II.C.5 Quality of information accessible to public in State of the Environment (SOE) reports*	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) The selected SOE reports contained insufficient information for assessment</p> <p>(ii) The selected SOE reports included a small percentage (less than 15 percent of hard-copy version) of statistical tables, graphs, figures, or maps</p> <p>(iii) <u>The selected SOE reports included a significant percentage (15 percent or more of hard-copy version) of statistical tables, graphs, figures, or maps</u></p>	<p>Presentation of information in State of Environment Report is carried out in several formats, including comparison of statistics from the past 10 years by tables, graphs, bar charts, and pie charts, etc. It also includes maps, and photos (black and white and color), which help clarify the report. From a rough estimation, there are 40 percent of tools (Statistics Tables, Graphs, Photos, and Maps) in data presentation of total report. (Accounting for 100 pages of totaling 255 pages)</p>
II.C.6 Free public access to State of the Environment (SOE) reports	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No SOE reports are available for free public inspection at any of the selected institutions</p> <p>(ii) SOE reports are available and can be read free of charge at one of the five selected institutions (specify number of reports and name of institution)</p> <p>(iii) <u>SOE reports are available and can be read free of charge at two or three of the five selected institutions (specify number of reports and number of institutions)</u></p>	<p>This indicator can be classified into 2 main questions: 1) Whether general public can access the State of Environment Report without any cost; and 2) Whether 5 selected organizations/agencies which possess State of Environment Report provide access to this report to the general public without cost.</p> <p>With respect to the first question, it was found that Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning who prepares such report has a clear policy to provide access to this information without any cost. Interested persons can requested directly to the Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division and can acquire the CD-Rom immediately. If the request is for printed version, the report will be available within 2 weeks, or interested persons can download it directly from website of the Department. (http://www.onep.go.th/download/download.asp#)</p>

<p>(iv) SOE reports are available and can be read free of charge at four or five of the selected institutions (specify number of reports and number of institutions)</p>	<p>Regarding the second question, the study team has reviewed the existence of State of Environment Report in 5 organization/institutions from the distribution lists of the Department, including: 1) Library of Pollution Control Department; 2) National Library (Central Collection); 3) Ratchamangkala Pisek National Library, Kanchanaburi; 4) Pri Di Banomyong Library, Thammasart University; and 5) Central Library, Ramkamhaeng University.</p> <p>The study team searched State of Environment Report from database of each organization's website (if available), and telephoned to librarians of the Library in Kanchanaburi, which is a branch of the National Library. It was found that all 5 organizations/institutions collect State of Environment Report 2003 in printed format and/or CD-ROM.</p> <p>It was found that 4 of 5 organizations/institutions selected provide free access to the general public, except Pri Di Banomyong Library, Thammasart University that general people is subjected to an entrance fee.</p> <p><u>Comments:</u></p> <p>Though publisher of State of Environment Report has distributed this report without cost, but the finding that library of certain state university collects entrance fee shows that the access to State of Environment Report involves some cost. Furthermore, the source of governmental budget supporting universities derives from people's taxes, therefore, collections of entrance fee to the library is not an appropriate action.</p>
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II.C.7 Number of State of the Environment (SOE) reports published in the last 10 years	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No SOE reports have been produced in the last 10 years</p> <p>(ii) One or two SOE reports have been produced in the last 10 years (specify how many)</p> <p>(iii) <u>Three or more SOE reports have been produced in the last 10 years (specify how many)</u></p>	<p>Since 1994, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning has prepared and published State of Thailand's Environment Report totaling 9 issues: State of Thailand's Environment Report for years: 1994, 1994-1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003.</p>
II.C.8 Efforts to produce a family of products for various audiences about State of the Environment (SOE) reports	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No efforts have been made or no resources are available to produce a family of products such as fact sheets, posters for schools and universities, guides, etc.</p> <p>(ii) <u>One or more products (e.g., fact sheets, posters for schools and universities, guides, translation of materials in local languages, etc.) have been produced by the responsible public agency alone or in partnership with other institutions</u></p> <p>(iii) A comprehensive and planned effort has been made to produce a family of products (e.g., fact sheets, posters for schools and universities, guides, translation of materials in local languages, etc.)</p>	<p>Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning who is publisher of State of Environment Report has attempted to prepare such report in form of printed format, CD-ROM, and E-document in the website for general public access. In addition, since 2004, there has been the publication of bi-monthly Environmental Newsletter to present situations affecting the environment, and special articles regarding this subject. The newsletter uses easy to understand language and can be downloaded from the website of the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning as well.</p> <p>With regard to other agencies, it was found that the Department of Environmental Quality Promotion has published "Thailand Environmental Situation, Youth Version" from 2003. This report is prepared from youth's perspective, not alteration of language and content in the State of Environment Report prepared by the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning.</p> <p>Sources: -Interview with Head of Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, 11 April 2005 -Interview with Environmental Information Center Officials, Department of Environmental Quality Promotion, 18 April 2005.</p>

II.C.9 Timeliness of data in latest State of the Environment (SOE) report	
Values	Explanation and Justification
<p>(0) Not applicable/not assessed</p> <p>(i) No SOE reports have been published recently</p> <p>(ii) The most recent data in the SOE report are generally more than 3 years old (specify how old)</p> <p>(iii) <u>The most recent data in the SOE report are generally 1 to 3 years old (specify how old)</u></p> <p>(iv) The most recent data in the SOE report are generally less than 1 year old (specify how old)</p>	<p>Every year, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning coordinates with information owners in order to receive most updated data. However, whether information is up-to-date is also depends on enthusiasm of each agency in data collection.</p>

Analysis

Study on preparation of State of Environment Report by Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning found that, presently, there is more attempt to create public awareness and accessibility of the State of Environment Report. The Office distributes this Report both in form of printed version and CD-ROM version to target groups, covering governmental agencies in central and provincial administrations, municipalities, national library, libraries of educational institutions and research institutes totaling 1,129 organizations. Since 2002, State of Environment Reports (updated issue, and all back issues) were distributed to 17 branches of national library in the provinces. In the past two year (2002-2004), the Office increased publishing of the Report in the CD-ROM version since it can be conveniently distributed and stored. Furthermore, readers can select to explore only topic interested. (Interview with Head of Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division, 11 April 2005) Nevertheless, there is an observation that Public Library of each 76 province (full name is Public Library "Chalerm Ratcha Kumaree) under the regulation of Non-Formal Education Bureau is not in the targeted group of distribution lists of the State of Environment Report.

Apart from distribution of the State of the Environment Reports, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning also places this Report in its website for public access without cost. Readers can choose among full version of State of Environment Report (from 1998 to present), Executive Summary (from 1995-1996 onward), or download only interested items.

With regard to attempt in reaching the public press, the study found that press will be informed of progress from the working seminar to draft State of Environment Report and from an actual State of Environment Report sent by Office of Natural

Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning. There were press conferences held by National Environment Committee at times, but no any press conference was conducted when State of the Environment Report is fully completed.

Furthermore, during the drafting of State of the Environment Report, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning attempted to create public participation via arrangement of working seminar on "State of Environment Report 2003", inviting representatives from relating government agencies, educational institutions, private development organization, press, and general public to gather opinions and suggestion on such report. After that, meeting documents were published in the website of Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning.

The preparation of most up-to-date State of the Environment Report (2004) found that there is more attempt in public participation. This can be witnessed from after the 2nd meeting for review the 2nd section of the Report on 14 July 2004, Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning has published a draft of such State of Environment Report on its website, asking for opinions from general public. The opinions/suggestions can be sent to the office within 2 weeks from the date published on the website (http://www.oepp.go.th/what_new/news_item.asp?NewsID=28).

Furthermore, there is an attempt to have more representatives from private development organizations and experts to become members of Sub-Committee on drafting State of Environment Report. During the preparation of State of Environment Report 2003, a representative from private organization joined the Sub-Committee was Dr. Surapol Sudara, the then Head of Seub Nakasatien Foundation, and another person from educational institution was Professor Pichit Sakulbhrama, a then professor from Faculty of Public Health, Mahidol University.¹⁶

Contexts of State of Environment Report 2003 were in several forms including photos, graphs, and several kinds of charts with more section on trend analysis. The report was rather comprehensive since it also covers other aspects of the environment. Compared with State of Environment Report 2000, which the study team assessed 3 years before (Thailand Environment Institute, 2002), it was found that the current Report has linked environmental information with policies to solve problems. This can be seen from the context of Section 1, discussing about environmental managements such as political process, government reform and decentralization of environmental management. The report also links such three issues in analysis of case study with regards to problems and affects of tiger prawn cultivation in sweet water areas.

With respect to monitoring the application of the Report, it was found that the Situation Monitoring Group has monitored whether other agencies undertook actions as suggested in the report and to what extent. The findings will be presented in the next State of Environment Report.

Furthermore, requests have been made to participants in the meeting in reviewing State of Environment Report which come from governmental offices, educational institutions, private organizations and general public on the benefit of State of Environment Report. Interested persons who request for State of Environment Report also asked how they use the Report and to what extent.

¹⁶ The preparation of State of Environment Report 2004 has increased proportion of representatives from private development organizations such as delegates from Green World Foundation, Thai Society for Environmental Journalists, and Seub Nakasatien Foundation. (Interview with Head of Situation Monitoring Group, Evaluation Division, 11 April 2005)

Nevertheless, the limitation of State of Environment Report is a presentation style which is mostly in academic format and does not attract to general public. Moreover, data in the Report did not provide historical statistics and the report is still limited in analysis of future trend section. This is due to lack of continuity in data updating by several agencies.

Recommendations

▪ For Thailand

- 1) Since the role of Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning is only data collector, the quality and competence of information depend on agencies preparing environmental data. Consequently, these agencies shall regularly and consecutively collect high quality data for the purpose of preparing report in the future.
- 2) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning shall collect historical statistics such as 5 years or 10 years period, in order used in environmental management policy planning, and for research and analysis of the policy in the future.
- 3) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning shall increase coordination with Department of Environmental Quality Promotion to prepare State of Environment Report in different formats in order to reach users from different groups. Example are State of Environment Report, Youth Version (this may refer some statistics from the State of Environment Report but use easy language with some pictures), posters affixed at schools, brochures on annual environmental situation distributed to general public at various places, and several campaigns on the environment, etc.
- 4) Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning shall improve the monitoring of State of Environment Report usage with internet users who download it from the website. Furthermore, it shall create more coordination with Regional Environmental Offices 1-16 to monitor and evaluate accessibility of the Report and its usage by local users such as Municipalities, schools, private organizations, and general public.
- 5) Apart from the targeted group mentioned above, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning shall also distribute the Report to Public Library in each province. This will increase public accessibility of the State of Environment Report.

▪ For Development of the Indicators

- 1) Indicators on Objective of the State of Environment Report shall be developed. It shall access who is determined to be an audience of such report. This will evaluate an importance in dissemination of information to the general public.

- 2) Indicators on Usage of State of Environment Report shall be developed, both with regards to policy makers and general public.
- 3) Indicators on Numbers or Variety of Audiences who received State of Environment Report shall be included.
- 4) Indicators regarding Quality of the State of Environment Report shall also emphasize on "Quality", derived from opinions of users as well. For example, it shall assess how well the information in State of Environment Report responses to the needs of users and to what extent information in the Report is referred.