

ACCCRN Thailand moves forward with Chiang Rai City's Intervention Project

ACCCRN Thailand advanced towards the implementation of its intervention project for Chiang Rai City, one of the ACCCRN cities in Thailand. The intervention project consisted of restoring the important Kok River, which runs through Chiang Rai City. The Kok River ecosystem, which has gone through significant degradation due to urbanization, serves as the backbone of a number of communities surrounding the river area. The intervention project aimed to restore the ecosystem of the Kok River, which is expected to positively impact the socio-economic conditions of surrounding community groups. In addition, the intervention project adds on to the efforts of Chiang Rai Municipality's plans to improve the Kok River channel. Developments of the river channel include creating a public space with clean water, a healthy environment, recreational activities for the public, and to develop the area as an eco-tourism site.

At present, hydrological and ecological assessments have been carried out to analyze and evaluate the condition of the river and its surrounding biodiversity and environmental characteristics. In addition, community needs assessments have also been carried out to understand the perceptions, views and cultural connections of the surrounding communities with the Kok River. Through public forums and hearings, communities have voiced the problems faced due to degradation of the river area, and their needs and opinions on the viability of the intervention project. In addition, a section of the Kok River has had its hydrological and ecological characteristics restored. This section of the river, which was the chosen site for the implementation of the pilot project of the city intervention project, has also undergone significant changes to its landscape; the area around the river has been transformed into a public space that can be accessed by both tourists and locals.

At present, the project is in its monitoring and evaluation stage, where a 'lessons learned' handbook is being published for dissemination. In addition, public hearings are being organized to interview 5 communities on their perceptions, recommendations and comments on the viability and effectiveness of the pilot project. The Chiang Rai Municipality has also agreed upon restoring other sections of the Kok River with the same hydrological and ecological restoration practices deployed in the ACCCRN pilot project. Although at present water flows in the Kok River are low, it is expected that flows will increase as the monsoon season approaches.



Left - Restoration of the Kok River Channel in Progress



Right – Members of Chiang Rai Municipality with local communities



Before and after restoration of the Kok River channel