

**Institutional Response to Global Change: The Consequences of  
Interplay between International Regimes and Local  
Institutions for the Forests of Southeast Asia (APN 2001-14)**

**Project Leader:**

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# **Institutional Response to Global Change: The Consequences of Interplay between International Regimes and Local Institutions for the Forests of Southeast Asia (APN 2001-14)**

## **APN Funding**

US \$67,000

## **Participating countries**

Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, United States, Vietnam

## **Introduction/Background**

The state of the world's forests is an emerging global issue. Global environmental change, and the social, economic, and political processes of globalization that help drive them, are now influencing local forest conditions and management practices. At the same time political change and alliances are facilitating the evolution of novel institutions<sup>1</sup> and the interplay between institutions from different levels of governance. Some of these are clearly aimed at facilitating further exploitation of forest resources and promoting economic development, whereas others are aimed more at controlling or mitigating some of the environmental and social impacts of these transformations. At the international level a number of environmental regimes, like the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity, are evolving in ways that could potentially have a major influence on forest land development strategies of nations. At more local levels, decentralization is facilitating what is in some cases, a return to more community-based rather than state-centered forms of forest management. This project addresses the following key questions:

Under what conditions, and to what extent,

1. Does decentralization result in better forest management practices and outcomes (carbon stocks and sequestration potential, biodiversity, watershed and other ecosystem services)?
2. Are local institutions effective in protecting forests, local communities, and forest-based interests from the adverse social and environmental impacts of economic globalization and trade liberalization?
3. Does the interplay between local institutions and international regimes determine (a) the performance or effectiveness of international environmental regimes; (b) forest governance in case-study countries; and (c) actual forest management practices?

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<sup>1</sup> Institutions are systems of rules, decision-making procedures, and programs that give rise to social practices, assign roles to participants in these practices, and guide interactions among the occupants of the relevant roles. They include both rules on paper and rules in use.

If institutional interplay is a major factor then,

4. How can the various international environmental and trade regimes be re-designed so that they interact in ways that will facilitate sustainable and equitable management of forests?

The project designed six case studies in four countries in Southeast Asia in order to answer the aforementioned research questions.

Table 1. Contributing case studies to the Forest Institutional Interplay Project.

Case	Features of the ecosystem and environment and resource institutions and their socio-economic setting
Northern highlands of <u>Vietnam</u>	Consequences of land reform for the management of degraded lands and maintenance of upland forests used by ethnic minorities
Uplands of Chiang Mai, northern <u>Thailand</u>	Consequences of community forestry arrangements on management of upland watersheds and conflicts between ethnic minorities and lowland agriculture and the State
Jambi Province, Sumatra, <u>Indonesia</u>	Drivers and environmental implications of alternative land-use systems, including oil palm estate development and settlement schemes
Palawan Island and Bicol National Park, <u>Philippines</u>	Role of community-based forest management policies and practices for the recovery of degraded up and low lands forests
Coastal mangrove forests of Qanh Ninh, <u>Vietnam</u>	Effects of changing property rights systems and shrimp aquaculture development on management of coastal mangrove forests
Coastal mangrove forests of southern peninsular <u>Thailand</u>	Effects of shrimp aquaculture development on coastal mangrove forests

### Outline of activities conducted

1. In May 2001 six researchers leading case studies met in Bangkok to finalize the framework of analysis and overall comparative analysis. Having agreed upon the framework, each individual researcher continued with component case studies for about six months.
2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Working group meeting was held during 1-2 December 2001 in Bangkok with the following objectives:
  - I. To review progress on the case study analysis and draft chapters of the research output.
  - II. Make a preliminary comparative analysis and to outline synthesis.
  - III. Agree on the process and timetable for completing the draft and synthesis chapters.

These objectives were largely met.

3. An international synthesis workshop was held in February 25-26, 2002 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. The workshop aimed to present findings and invite discussions by other researchers in Southeast Asia and other regions. Invitees from other regions included experts from Australia, Canada and the United States (one from each country). Discussions focused on the issues of institutional interplay by linking existing work on local institutions and environmental relations with the new body of knowledge about international regimes. It also explored themes related to forest governance:
  - I. Under what conditions, do decentralization, economic globalization and trade liberalization result in better forest management practices and livelihood outcomes?
  - II. How do interplay between international, state and local institutions affect forests and livelihoods?
  - III. How could institutions at different scales be re-designed, or new institutions created, that would better support the sustainable and equitable use of forests?

#### **Outcomes/Products**

1. Six case study papers and one synthesis article of the aforementioned workshop.
2. Two case study papers (Philippines and Thailand) are expected to be presented at the International Association for the Study of Common Property conference in Zimbabwe in June 2002.
3. Edited volume at the end of the project.

#### **Future directions/Follow-up work**

1. Policy-briefing activities have been planned during March – May 2002 by each individual case study in Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.
2. Two researchers (Suparb Pasong and Louis Lebel) plan to follow up during 23-30 April 2002 with editing a manuscript for publication.

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