Outcomes Assessment of the USAID Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests (LEAF) Program in Chiang Mai

MAY 2015

ALYSSA COCHRAN, ZHERONG KANG, EDWIN NIEDERBERGER, AND MARISSA OLIVER

Mon Cham Forest Restoration Site. March 2015
Table of Contents

Table of Contents ................................................................................................................................. i
Abbreviations ........................................................................................................................................ ii
Executive Summary ................................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 2
Background ............................................................................................................................................. 2
    USAID LEAF ..................................................................................................................................... 2
    The Chiang Mai Landscape ............................................................................................................... 3
    Deforestation in Thailand and Chiang Mai ....................................................................................... 4
Assessment Purpose ............................................................................................................................... 4
Assessment Framework and Methodology ............................................................................................. 4
Limitations ............................................................................................................................................. 6
Key Findings .......................................................................................................................................... 6
    Desired Outcomes .............................................................................................................................. 6
    Policy Development .......................................................................................................................... 9
    Natural Resource Management Training ......................................................................................... 10
    Gender ............................................................................................................................................. 13
    Curriculum Development ................................................................................................................... 15
    Payment for Ecosystem Services ...................................................................................................... 17
Implementation Challenges .................................................................................................................... 20
Lessons Learned .................................................................................................................................. 21
Recommendations ................................................................................................................................. 22
    Considerations for the PES Mechanism ......................................................................................... 23
Conclusion ............................................................................................................................................ 25
Annexes ................................................................................................................................................ 26
    Annex I: Works Referenced ............................................................................................................. 26
    Annex II: Interview Schedule .......................................................................................................... 27
    Annex III: Semi-Structured Interview Guides ............................................................................... 28
        USAID LEAF Staff ....................................................................................................................... 28
        Government Partners ............................................................................................................... 29
        Community Partners ............................................................................................................... 31
        Private Sector Partners ............................................................................................................. 32
        University Partners .................................................................................................................. 34
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviations</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CBFCM</td>
<td>Integrated community-based forest and catchment management through an ecosystem service approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMU</td>
<td>Chiang Mai University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP</td>
<td>Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plants Conservation, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORRU</td>
<td>Forest Restoration Research Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHG</td>
<td>Greenhouse Gases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GWU</td>
<td>The George Washington University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAPPEN</td>
<td>Holistic Approach of Public Partnership for Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KU</td>
<td>Kasetsart University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAF</td>
<td>Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAB</td>
<td>Man and Biosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSKM</td>
<td>Mae Sa-Kog Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PARO 16</td>
<td>Protected Area Regional Office (Chiang Mai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PES</td>
<td>Payment for Ecosystem Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RECOFTC</td>
<td>The Center for People and Forests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REDD+</td>
<td>Reduction of Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REO-1</td>
<td>Regional Environmental Office 1 (Chiang Mai)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNV</td>
<td>Netherlands Development Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAO</td>
<td>Tambon Administrative Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TICA</td>
<td>Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWG</td>
<td>Technical Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USG</td>
<td>United States Government of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WI</td>
<td>Winrock International</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Executive Summary
The five-year regional United States Agency for International Development Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests (USAID LEAF) program aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through increased capacity in forestry and land use management. In the last year of the program, Winrock International (WI) partnered with an evaluation team from The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs to complete an assessment of project activity outcomes in their demonstration site in Thailand.

This assessment evaluated the behavioral change of the people with whom the project works directly in the Mae Sa-Kog Ma (MSKM) Man and Biosphere Reserve (MAB) in Chiang Mai. The team conducted qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with community members, local government officials, private sector participants, academia, and USAID LEAF project staff. The semi-structured interviews sought to analyze the progress made in reaching the desired behavioral change outcomes from policy development, natural resource training, gender, curriculum development, and payment for ecosystem services (PES).

The MSKM MAB Management Plan is the major policy output of USAID LEAF’s partnership with the PARO 16 Technical Working Group (TWG). The participatory planning process gathered ideas from all stakeholders and gained popularity among the communities in the project area. The approval of the plan is crucial for the sustainability of USAID LEAF’s activities in the MSKM MAB. The plan is waiting for approval from the central Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plants Conservation (DNP) office, and government officials in PARO 16 are making arrangements to begin implementation once approved.

USAID LEAF included a regional and local training component that aimed to build the capacity of local leaders to better manage their natural resources. As an outcome of the training component, participants stated they had improved their understanding of forest restoration, fire management, and water quality monitoring. It is difficult for local leaders to find the budgetary support to implement all of the new techniques learned, but they reported they are actively looking for ways to integrate the new approaches when opportunities arise. The approval of the MSKM MAB Management Plan may provide a budget for the implementation of some activities.

The outcome of USAID LEAF’s efforts at integrating gender in Chiang Mai made a larger impact than originally anticipated. USAID LEAF’s Gender Leadership Initiative Training influenced participants’ mentality and approach towards gender. Staff are also using participatory techniques to ensure that both men and women are actively taking part in project activities. DNP’s lack of a gender mandate, as well as USAID funding restrictions, limited USAID LEAF from supporting more gender work with their counterpart.

Professors who attended curriculum development trainings are integrating material from three of the four course modules including Basic Climate Change, Low Emission Land Use Planning, and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring into their teaching. The continuous inclusion of university administrators in curriculum development activities will help ensure sustained support from university leadership. While professors said they plan to continue to utilize the curriculum modules, some would like to see a more tailored design of the curriculum such as the availability of different languages and Thai-specific case studies.

PES is a relatively new concept in Thailand and required a lot of awareness raising among stakeholders. Stakeholders have shown an increased understanding of PES and one private sector partner is now working with USAID LEAF to set up a PES pilot this year. USAID LEAF should consider garnering policy support to back up the program should they be interested in implementing PES on a larger scale.
After analyzing the key findings, the team identified several lessons learned that can be utilized by the government of Thailand should they wish to replicate this program in the other three MAB sites in Thailand, or by other programs with a similar objective to USAID LEAF. These lessons learned include: establish clear expectations between stakeholders; mentorship is critical for capacity building; integrate the local context into curriculum development; gender can always be integrated; work with the private sector; and finally, plan for sustainability from the start of the project.

Building on the lessons learned, the team identified specific recommendations USAID LEAF should consider during their last year of implementation to advance project outcomes and increase sustainability.

1. Support the establishment of a MSMK MAB Committee and Chair under the MSKM MAB Management Plan,
2. Help create a framework for the “model” community,
3. Host training of trainers for continuous local capacity building,
4. Translate the curriculum into Thai,
5. Support emerging gender champions in Chiang Mai,
6. Promote the Aura PES pilot as a model to increase private sector engagement, and
7. Establish the foundation for a PES mechanism for the MSKM MAB.

The establishment of a PES mechanism for the MSKM MAB was stated to be the main focus of the project during the last year of implementation. The team used the external literature review to develop specific considerations for the payment mechanism, quality assurance and monitoring, and marketing of the PES mechanism.

The outcomes of USAID LEAF’s project activities in Chiang Mai are evolving. Overall, the team found that USAID LEAF has laid the foundation for future efforts to improve forest management of the MSKM MAB and their approach can be replicated across the other three MAB sites in Thailand or in similar areas in Southeast Asia. The amount of stakeholder involvement and their appreciation for the project’s various activity components exemplifies the benefit of taking a participatory approach to program development and implementation.

Introduction
The following study is an outcomes assessment of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Lowering Emissions in Asia’s Forests’ (LEAF) program activities in Chiang Mai, Thailand. It reviews multiple levels of program activities implemented in policy development, natural resource management training, gender, curriculum development, and payment for ecosystem services. The study will report on the findings that resulted from an extensive review of project documentation and external literature as well as interviews and focus group discussions with staff and stakeholders, the majority of which took place during two weeks of field research. Included in the report along with the team’s findings are lessons learned in case of future replication, as well as recommendations for the program to consider during their last year of implementation. These recommendations are aimed at helping USAID LEAF address some of the challenges identified and improve their program outcomes and sustainability.

Background
USAID LEAF
Deforestation in Southeast Asia is a major driver of global climate change and to address this issue, on January 20, 2011, the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) awarded Winrock International, in partnership with SNV –
Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), Climate Focus and The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC), a five-year $20 million cooperative agreement to implement the USAID LEAF program to help mitigate this problem.

According to USAID LEAF’s Thailand Program Document, the program’s goal is to: *strengthen the capacity of target countries to achieve meaningful and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the forestry-land use sector.*

The program employs a regional approach to meet this goal by collaborating with a diverse group of stakeholders, partners, and regional organizations to implement and/or support subnational interventions in six countries: Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, and Malaysia, and sharing lessons learned and best practices to scale-up innovation in and/or from potentially six other countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Nepal, and the Philippines).

USAID LEAF’s regional approach in addressing these issues is designed to meet the following objectives:

1. Replicate and scale-up innovation through regional platforms and partnerships,
2. Assist in the development of policy and market incentives for GHG reductions,
3. Build and institutionalize technical capacity for economic valuation of forest ecosystem services and monitoring changes in forest carbon stocks, and
4. Demonstrate innovation in sustainable land management.

Within these four objectives, the program tracks progress towards key results including:

- GHG emissions from the forestry-land use sector reduced or avoided,
- Domestic and international finances in environmental services invested,
- Best practices, models, and methodologies regionally replicated,
- Capacity of regional platforms strengthened,
- REDD+ policy, planning, and institutional frameworks strengthened,
- Individual and institutional capacity increased,
- Gender equality and women’s empowerment increased in climate change mitigation from the forestry-land use sector,
- Management of natural resources in the demonstration area improved, and
- Livelihoods of local communities in the demonstration area improved through climate change mitigation actions.

**The Chiang Mai Landscape**

The Mae Sa-Kog Ma (MSKM) Man and Biosphere (MAB) in Chiang Mai Province is the field site for activities implemented by USAID LEAF in Thailand including the PES pilot. The MSKM MAB is one of four MABs in Thailand and was selected by USAID LEAF’s counterpart, the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plants Conservation, Thailand (DNP) for project implementation with the hopes of implementing similar activities in other MABs in the future. The MSKM MAB covers approximately 360 square kilometers and was designated a MAB by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1977. The UNESCO MAB Programme is an intergovernmental scientific initiative to integrate issues related to environment, society and development. Biosphere Reserves are meant to promote the harmonious integration of people and nature for sustainable development and ecosystem and natural resources conservation through a participatory approach that engages all stakeholders from governmental officials to the private sector to local communities.\(^1\) The Protected Area Regional Office 16

\(^1\) UNESCO. Ecological Sciences for Sustainable Development: Man and the Biosphere Programme.
(PARO 16, Chiang Mai) technical working group (TWG) is the designated agency from the DNP to collaborate with USAID LEAF in the planning and implementation of program activities.

**Deforestation in Thailand and Chiang Mai**

According to Thailand’s REDD+ Readiness Preparation Proposal, from 1982 to 2000, Thailand lost more than 1.5 million hectares of evergreen forests, more than 3 million hectares of dry dipterocarp forest, and nearly all of its pine forests. Deforestation rates between 2000 and 2006 were estimated to be 191,000 hectares per year. Major causes of the deforestation and forest degradation were:

- Forest encroachment
- Infrastructure development
- Illegal logging and harvesting of non-timber forest products for commercial use
- Uncontrolled forest fires

Specific to the MSKM MAB, smoke from forest fires has a severe impact on the health of individuals living within the MAB and the surrounding area. Furthermore, the smoke detracts tourists from visiting the area, impacting the tourism based economy in the region.

**Assessment Purpose**

As with many development programs, USAID LEAF’s monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is constrained by resource limitation and having to operate under a larger M&E system where data is standardized for aggregation. Currently, performance monitoring of USAID LEAF is being conducted primarily through quantitative and standardized measurements. USAID LEAF’s performance indicators were designed to provide brief snapshots of the project’s progress, and to facilitate ease of data management, many of them measuring inputs and outputs rather than outcomes or actual benefits. Current indicators capture: number of trainings and their duration; number of participants; amount of investment leveraged; and the number of policies drafted or revised with the United States Government’s (USG) assistance, as opposed to capacity improvement, benefits from leveraged resources or changes in the country’s enabling environment. As such, the purpose of this assessment is to identify and assess the project’s outcomes in the Chiang Mai landscape.

**Assessment Framework and Methodology**

Using a utilization-focused evaluation methodology, the capstone team worked with USAID LEAF’s Chief of Party, Program Officer and M&E Advisor to narrow down the focus of the assessment and how USAID LEAF plans to utilize the final report. The report will be used for USAID LEAF’s internal learning and will be disseminated to USAID and the Government of Thailand. Based on these discussions, the team identified the key assessment question as, “What are the observed outcomes from USAID LEAF activities in the Chiang Mai landscape?”
Using USAID LEAF’s results framework and activities in Chiang Mai, the key question was narrowed down into six sub questions: 1) What are the desired outcomes; 2) What are the outcomes of the policy development activities; 3) What are the outcomes from the regional and local trainings; 4) What are the outcomes from the gender activities; 5) What are the outcomes of curriculum development activities; and 6) What are the outcomes from the PES activities?

*Figure 1: Outcome Assessment Research Framework*

The outcomes assessment was conducted in two parts, first, a desk review and second, field research. The desk review included an examination of articles, case studies, and reports on gender, policy, livelihoods, curriculum development and social aspects of forest management systems and climate change in Thailand and Southeast Asia. In addition, the team also examined USAID LEAF’s resources and publications with a special focus on documents produced by project staff in Chiang Mai.

To complement the literature review, the team traveled to Bangkok and Chiang Mai for two weeks to interview key staff and program stakeholders from March 2-15, 2015. Prior to traveling, the team conducted ten semi-structured interviews over Skype with key USAID LEAF staff based in Washington DC, Bangkok and Chiang Mai. The USAID LEAF staff in Chiang Mai arranged interviews and focus group meetings based on a list of stakeholders generated by the team.

The goal was to interview and meet with a diverse number of participants and stakeholders. The team interviewed members of the PARO 16 TWG, local government, community leaders, private sector stakeholders and university partners. In the end, we conducted 31 interviews and one focus group discussion, speaking to a total of 37 individual stakeholders including staff. Of the stakeholders interviewed, 24 were male and 13 were female. Each interview and focus group discussion was transcribed into Dedoose for qualitative data analysis to highlight key findings.
Limitations

There are some limitations that could have an impact on the key findings. The first limitation is the amount of time spent in Chiang Mai and the timing of the field work. The team was in Chiang Mai during the dry season and communities were busy managing fires and building fire breaks to prevent increased forest damage. As a result, the team met with only a few representatives from each stakeholder group, making it difficult to quantify and substantiate some of the key findings. The limited time in the field also prevented the team from collecting quantitative data through surveys. The team was limited to using semi structured interviews and focus group discussions to collect qualitative data. Conducting a survey would have allowed the team to reach more stakeholders and better quantify some of the key findings.

A second limitation is that none of the members of the capstone team are native to Thailand or speak Thai. This resulted in the team being dependent on USAID LEAF staff to translate the interviews and focus group discussions. This could have introduced some bias in how the questions were answered and how the answers were translated. It was clear in some cases that answers were not translated verbatim, but a general summary of the response was provided instead. In addition, not being native to Thailand made it a challenge to pick up on social cues. As a result, some context could have been lost in translation. However, despite this limitation, the team believes interviewees were open with their responses and limited bias was introduced during the translations.

The last limitation is the narrow focus of the assessment. USAID LEAF is a regional project with a broad results framework to encompass their entire regional approach. Because the focus was solely on Chiang Mai, the team was unable to see what influence the other three USAID LEAF landscapes may have had on Chiang Mai and vice versa. Some stakeholders attended regional trainings and were able to speak about their experience, but it is not possible to substantiate the impact of USAID LEAF’s regional approach without speaking to stakeholders from the other landscapes. However, the Chiang Mai landscape is unique in its focus on PES, as the other USAID LEAF demonstration sites are working towards REDD+, so their impact on MSKM MAB could be limited.

Key Findings

Desired Outcomes

Due to USAID LEAF’s broad results framework, there was a need to develop a separate set of desired outcomes specific to Chiang Mai. The team used USAID LEAF’s program documentation on Chiang Mai and consulted with the M&E Advisor to develop a list of the expected desired outcomes for each activity area. The team’s expected desired outcomes include:

Policy Development:

- Development of policies that are better informed, more participatory and based on sound standards,
- Implementation of the MSKM MAB Management Plan,

Table 1: Stakeholder Interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th># Males</th>
<th># Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USAID LEAF Staff</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNP/PARO 16/REO-1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAO Sub District</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Leaders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Professors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Utilization and adoption of the MSKM MAB policies by the other MABs and the government's National Environmental Plan

**Natural Resource Management Trainings:**
- Participants apply knowledge from trainings
- Continued engagement with training participants from other countries

**Gender:**
- Gender champions develop policies to establish gender equity in management of the MSKM MAB
- Increased decision making power for training participants and women in the communities

**Curriculum Development:**
- Utilization of the curriculum by professors and students
- Creation of new or improved classes or subjects on climate change

**PES:**
- The private sector invests in the PES fund to establish the PES pilot scheme
- PARO 16 TWG enacts policies to incentivize the PES scheme
- Execution of agreements between communities, the private sector and the government to engage in the PES pilot
- Improved livelihoods for the community
- Improved management of natural resources

While interviewing stakeholders, the team’s definition of outcome (*the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly*) may have caused confusion as it was discovered that staff as well as stakeholders had little training or knowledge on M&E terminology including the term outcome. The team did their best to give examples, but stakeholders may have confused the word for other meanings such as results or outputs, and this could have influenced their answers.

Stakeholders desired the following outcomes related to the **overall project and policy development in MSKM MAB:**

- Collaboration amongst all parties to manage the MSKM MAB. Several stated that different sectors take different approaches to managing the area, so they hope to see everyone working towards a common goal.
- Increased awareness of the importance of protecting the environment, reducing deforestation and using resources in a sustainable manner.
- An operational management plan for the MSKM MAB that can be replicated within Thailand to improve the management of other MSKM MABs and possibly replicated abroad.
- Utilization of the plan to facilitate improved livelihoods and better natural resource management.

“One desired outcome would be a better, more integrated and consultative approach to the management of the MSKM MAB that balances community aspirations with conservation needs of that reserve area.”

- LEAF Staff Member

Some wish that the private sector would be more supportive of communities and overall, stakeholders consistently mentioned that they would like USAID LEAF to extend their project to work on PES and continue their role as “coach” within communities.
When asked how they would like the government to change as a result of the project, stakeholders expressed a desire for more funding from the government for their participation in forest activities. For example, one village head stated that community members take off work to care for the forest, but they do this voluntarily. Therefore, if the government could provide a stipend or at least subsidize food for the participants, this would help tremendously in easing their burden.

Another stakeholder mentioned that the government could use its budget to ensure there is funding for MSKM MAB management activities such as participatory zoning of the area, setting up an information site, planting trees and rehabilitating degraded areas, establishing a park ranger station and forest protection unit, and capacity building. According to one national park superintendent, the government could help survey communities for socio-economic information which would help decrease the conflicts between the national park and the communities in the area. Lastly, one stakeholder mentioned that the government should be more aware of the species planted within the park and take special care of local species.

The stakeholders interviewed also provided their desired outcomes for the remaining activity areas outlined below:

**Natural Resource Management Trainings:**
- Stakeholders applying what they learn from the trainings and changing their behavior as a result
- Livelihood improvement
- Awareness raising

**Gender:**
- Increased inclusion within LEAF activities
- Promoting recognition of both men and women, female visibility in meetings and decision making processes
- Greater engagement with female leaders
- At least 40% attendance of women at events and meetings
- Women seen and recognized as active agents within forest management

**Curriculum Development:**
- Strengthening of 13 universities across 6 countries
- Professors and students improve their awareness of gender equality as a result of the curriculum
- Continuous commitment and dedication from training participants

**PES:**
- Better understanding of PES in the communities
- Possible alternative livelihood or livelihood improvement for communities as a result of PES

“In terms of managing the forests, it is quite challenging to create an understanding with the communities. LEAF has helped us to create this understanding between the communities and to see the importance of natural resources so that together we can protect the environment. The important thing in terms of managing the area is to have all the different ethnic groups living together and maintaining their own way of life and culture without destroying the environment.”

– PARO-16 TWG Member
• A PES project with private sector stakeholders and separately, the successful creation and implementation of a PES project with AURA.

“The courses/modules that LEAF developed will not be gender-blind. Teachers who are engaged during the curriculum development process will at least know that gender is a key integral component to be considered in climate change.” Provided that the modules are integrated into university curricula, a desired outcome would be that the next generation of students coming out of forestry schools will have a better understanding and appreciation of social and gender issues within the field of climate change.

- LEAF Staff Member

Policy Development
Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA) initially proposed that USAID LEAF work in all four MAB sites within Thailand, including Mae Sa-Kog Ma, Huay Tak Teak, Ranong, and Sakaerat. Through discussions with DNP and to make the most of resources available, the central government asked USAID LEAF to focus on the MSKM MAB. UNESCO has chosen the MSKM MAB as the site for its 2016 global MAB conference where representatives will monitor the progress of activities in the area. However, the absence of a management plan for the MSKM MAB has resulted in a lack of budget and activities for the reserve for the past 30 years. As such, one of USAID LEAF’s program objectives for the MSKM MAB was to work with PARO 16 TWG to develop a management plan.

During the year and a half planning process, USAID LEAF and the PARO 16 TWG took a participatory approach in drafting the MSKM Management Plan by gaining input from communities, the private sector, and local organizations. This approach has created a feeling of ownership over the plan which is beneficial for the sustainable implementation of the plan. One project partner indicated that she believes the plan is “actionable”, because all the ideas came from the communities.

This participatory process also helped communities establish a network of people with environmental concerns to help them find solutions together. Local villages developed a Doi Zang Pledge, which sets up rules among the different villages on issues such as land use, resource management, and agricultural practices. However, local villagers expressed their concerns about the delay in approval of the management plan since the pledge is included as part of the plan. The communities hope their initiative will get policy support.

The consultation process also raised public awareness of the MSKM MAB in the surrounding area and drew attention from the private sector. The status of the area as a UNESCO Man and Biosphere Reserve could help attract additional tourism and thus, improve livelihoods. The MSKM MAB Management Plan development process opened the door for USAID LEAF and the PARO 16 to begin conversations with the private sector regarding establishing a PES mechanism to provide sustainable funding to support MAB management activities.

The stakeholders interviewed further believed that the plan will provide a framework for sustainable collaborative management of the MSKM MAB and can be adopted by the other MAB sites as well. Because of USAID LEAF’s successful participatory planning in Chiang Mai, DNP has requested USAID LEAF’s support to arrange a similar approach with the PARO 13 in Lampang, where they would like to develop a management plan for the Huay Tak Teak MAB.

“The process is very good because it’s participatory and offers a chance for all stakeholders in the area to come and voice their opinion and also be a part of shaping what would happen to their communities in the future.”

– PARO 16 TWG Member
Although the MSKM MAB Management Plan is currently waiting for approval from the central government, some national park staff mentioned they had already integrated activities from the plan into their future work plans and would be incorporating other sections once the associated budget has been approved. The PARO 16 TWG indicated they had followed up with the approval process but have not heard back from the central government.

Natural Resource Management Training
As part of USAID LEAF’s scope of work in Thailand, the project aims to build the capacity of their counterpart, PARO 16 and other local leaders in natural resource management as part of their third program objective. USAID LEAF accomplishes this in two tracks, by inviting leaders to regional USAID LEAF trainings and by hosting local capacity building trainings in Chiang Mai. The regional training schedule is developed by the USAID LEAF regional office in Bangkok and invitations are distributed to country partners through USAID LEAF’s local team in Chiang Mai.

USAID LEAF’s regional training program component is also utilized to build regional capacity in the gender, curriculum development, and PES components. USAID LEAF reported hosting sixteen regional trainings as of their 2014 Annual Report to USAID². Participants from Thailand involved in the landscape in Chiang Mai attended fourteen of the trainings. Table 2 outlines which regional trainings had participants from Thailand.

Table 2: List of Regional Trainings with Participants from Thailand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Training name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th># participants from Thailand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Road to Readiness – Making RELs Work</td>
<td>Aug. 23-25, 2011</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Policy and Governance in ASEAN Region</td>
<td>Nov. 21-26, 2011</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Low Emission Land Use and Forest Planning at the Sub-National Level in Southeast Asia</td>
<td>Jul. 3-4, 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Social and Environmental Soundness in REDD+ (co-sponsored with FCMC)</td>
<td>Nov. 5-8, 2012</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Synthesis Workshop on Options for Monitoring Forest Degradation at Sub-Nat Levels in the Mekong</td>
<td>Nov. 13-14, 2012</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Asia-Pacific Leadership Workshop on Gender and Climate Change/REDD+</td>
<td>Nov. 25-30, 2013</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regional Climate Change Curriculum Development</td>
<td>Aug. 5-9 and Aug. 12-16, 2013</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>UN-REDD National Forest Monitoring Systems for REDD+: 4th Regional Lessons Learned WS</td>
<td>Oct. 15-17, 2013</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the local trainings, WI worked with their sub partner RECOFTC, an international organization based in Bangkok, Thailand that works with local communities to help them sustainably manage their forests,3 to help develop and implement the capacity building trainings in Chiang Mai. USAID LEAF conducted a needs assessment with communities within the MSKM MAB to identify the gaps in local knowledge to develop the training program. The needs assessment highlighted the need to focus on awareness raising of the MSKM MAB, hold consistent trainings, and engage youth. For the first few years, USAID LEAF prioritized raising awareness of climate change and the need to practice sustainable forest management. In order to avoid duplication of trainings in the area and conflicting messaging, USAID LEAF tried to coordinate with two other environmental projects managed by the Regional Environmental Office in Chiang Mai (REO-1), the Integrated Community-based Forest and Catchment Management through an Ecosystem Service Approach (CBFCM) and Holistic Approach of Public Partnership for Environment (HAPPEN). Lastly, USAID LEAF integrated youth into their training program by developing two youth ecosystem water monitoring camps. To date, USAID LEAF has hosted nine local trainings for the Chiang Mai landscape.

Table 3: List of Local Trainings for Chiang Mai Landscape

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Training Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th># Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>PES Study Tour to Lam Dong, Vietnam</td>
<td>Feb. 6-10, 2012</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MAB Natural Resource Management Planning</td>
<td>Jun. 6-20, 2013</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concept and Practice of Tropical Forest Restoration</td>
<td>Jul. 26-28, 2013</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>MAB and Participatory Management (for local stakeholders)</td>
<td>Aug. 21-23, 2013</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>PES Schemes: Mechanism Design</td>
<td>Nov. 20-21, 2013</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Ecosystems (Water) Monitoring</td>
<td>Jan. 15-17, 2014</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Basic GPS Concept</td>
<td>Feb. 27, 2014</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Ecosystems (Water) Monitoring 2</td>
<td>May 28-30, 2014</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tropical Forest Restoration</td>
<td>Jul. 8-10 2014</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stakeholders who attended regional and local trainings were able to recall their experiences and the purpose of the trainings. For the regional trainings, participants said they enjoyed sharing their experience and learning about the challenges facing participants from other countries. Participants said the regional trainings brought together stakeholders from Thailand, providing them an opportunity to discuss what they had learned and could implement when they returned. Participants reported that they did not stay in touch with colleagues from other countries whom they met at the trainings, but remained in contact with their fellow colleagues from Thailand. It was noted that some topics from the regional trainings did not apply to Thailand. For example, Thailand has few activities related to REDD+, so while those trainings helped build participant knowledge, they said they were limited in what they are able to do with this knowledge.

The participants who attended the local trainings or engaged in the development process reflected positively on the participatory approach of the trainings. Some participants mentioned having plans to put to use what they learned at the trainings, but it depends on them finding a budget. Several discussed utilizing improved check dam and fire management techniques, which require fewer resources than purchasing seedlings for reforestation. USAID LEAF worked with Chiang Mai University’s Forest Restoration Research Unit (FORRU) to introduce their framework species reforestation technique, which involves planting the least amount of indigenous trees necessary to prevent weeds and attract seed-dispersing animals to naturally increase the biodiversity of the forest. Several communities said they were interested in utilizing FORRU’s technique and one community leader from a village in Samoeng reached out to FORRU directly after USAID LEAF’s Tropical Forest Restoration training to request a follow up training specifically for the other members of their village. FORRU conducted that training in March 2015. The community has identified an area to start developing a forest nursery using the technique and is trying to identify funding to purchase the necessary seedlings.

Through USAID LEAF’s training program, a network was built between the communities, FORRU and RECOFTC, who can continue to train and market the improved forest management and restoration technique after USAID LEAF ends. However, this example also highlights a challenge that was mentioned with regard to the trainings. Participants appreciated what they learned and expressed their eagerness to start using the technique in their communities or sub districts, but they lacked the resources for implementation. It was clear that communities and sub district government officials did not fully understand that USAID LEAF is a capacity building program and is restricted in its ability to support direct implementation in Thailand. As a result, most of the suggestions received from participants were about establishing a budget to support direct implementation, so communities can learn from “practical action.” Another interesting suggestion was that there should be more trainings targeting youth to encourage their participation in conserving their environment and increase long term sustainability.

“After attending a USAID LEAF training, we brought back what we learned on forest restoration to create check dams. We also looked at the appropriate seeds for planting in our own area. It’s really beneficial for our community forests. In our community, we live in a mountainous area. In the beginning when we used to clear the forest for plantation, we used to clear everything, but after I learned this reforestation technique, we know which ones we should still keep. There are some saplings we should just leave as they are, so we don’t clear them out and they become big trees later on.” – Community Leader in Samoeng

USAID LEAF targeted youth specifically in the water trainings, but the suggestion of building and supporting a youth group could be utilized in future programs.

Overall, the responses to the training component were positive and everyone interviewed was aware of the MSKM MAB, the need to conserve the forest, and curtail the burning of the forests. While the team did not see a lot of direct implementation of what was learned, participants said they were planning and looking for budgets to start integrating the techniques into their work plans.

Gender

USAID LEAF recognizes that men and women have different roles and knowledge sets within the forestry field. Acknowledging and utilizing the knowledge of both parties allows for more sustainable and comprehensive management of the forest and ultimately, can play a role in mitigating climate change. In order to ensure recognition of their unique roles, USAID LEAF created the *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy and Checklist* as a guide for staff members and hired a gender expert in 2012 to oversee the process.

As part of its gender strategy, USAID LEAF chose gender champions in each of its core landscapes who were responsible for sharing their knowledge gained from gender trainings. Two representatives from the PARO 16 TWG attended the Gender Leadership Initiative Training. Additionally, USAID LEAF selected one of their staff members in Chiang Mai to be responsible for integrating gender into program activities and in order to prepare for the role, the staff member also attended the Gender Leadership Initiative training, a gender training in Laos, a workshop with Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), and received informal training from USAID LEAF’s gender expert. USAID LEAF also introduced gender content in the Thai R-PP, or REDD readiness plan and ensured to include a section within the Social and Environmental Soundness module of the curriculum that outlines gender safeguard models.

According to the gender expert, USAID LEAF’s gender approach in Chiang Mai aimed to “raise the capacity of the USAID LEAF Thailand staff along with that of their counterpart, the Department of National Parks (DNP), to explain the relevance of gender issues in the context of climate change, teach them new ways of integrating gender, and incorporate safeguards into their everyday activities. USAID LEAF aims to give these parties the necessary tools and exercises to develop their skills for gender integrated participatory processes and analysis. Finally, the approach includes collaborating with other organizations such as WOCAN to conduct gender exercises within Chiang Mai villages.”

While the above demonstrates USAID LEAF’s intent to ensure gender is a cross-cutting issue, gender integration in Thailand did not gain as much traction as anticipated due to DNP’s lack of a mandate on

---

5 Giri, Kalpana. *Gender Mainstreaming Strategy & Checklist*. LEAF, August 2012 leafasia.org.)
gender. With this in mind, the team was surprised by the results of the research. The information collected by the capstone team revealed the following findings regarding USAID LEAF’s gender work:

- Staff in Chiang Mai sent invitations to both women and men to ensure they had an equal opportunity to attend USAID LEAF activities. One stakeholder reported that she saw more women in attendance at USAID LEAF activities than others in the area.
- Women led the restoration and water quality monitoring trainings. During the water quality monitoring trainings, youth and other groups are trained along with participants from outside the women’s villages.
- Gender participatory analysis techniques were used during activities to ensure that all voices were heard and that men and women shared an equal platform.

Female interviewees were active participants in the project. They appeared empowered and voiced their opinions freely and intelligently. For example, one woman acts as the leader of the environmental committee in her community, helps with fire breaks and during the interview, the village head sitting next to her mentioned that all the knowledge was with her. In addition, another woman interviewed plays a vital role in coordinating the MAB under the sub district area in Don Kaew. She plans the management of the natural resources and coordinates with USAID LEAF along with the community in the Mae Sa catchment area to carry out her work.

- Those who attended trainings reported a higher awareness of women’s role within the forestry industry, the importance of their role and the value of ensuring their participation in activities.
- Training participants changed their behavior as a result of the training to reflect greater gender equality. One training participant recognized the need for women to be given the same opportunities as men in the workplace. As a result, he began hiring more women in his unit.

In addition, the participant became more aware of the value of women’s groups and a desire to strengthen and expand their network.

“I learned that it is possible for women to form community groups or women’s groups on environmental conservation and request support from the government. With this knowledge, I told communities in the area where my unit operates that they would have this option of forming into a group and asking for support. There are some groups that have been formed but they still need to be strengthened. Our unit will go and support this. We would be able to provide some seed funding for the women groups to engage in environmental conservation activities. After they become strengthened, they receive more benefits from natural resources from this work, the benefit would go back to the community and perhaps the fund will grow and at that stage the women group can also begin to network with other groups and expand the network.”

- Participant, USAID LEAF Gender Leadership Initiative Training

We did not have a chance to interview participants who attended the WOCAN training, but project documentation states that participants increased their understanding and awareness of women’s workload within the community/society and women’s decision making power related to agriculture. The training provided women with information about opportunities for income generation such as selling handicrafts
and improving their farming techniques and increased the number of female participants in trainings/study tours related to agriculture.

There were two main challenges limiting progress on gender. The first is USAID restrictions imposed as a result of a coup d’état in May 2014 that prevented USAID LEAF from providing additional training support to the PARO 16 gender champions. The second was that stakeholders said that gender was as a non-issue in Thailand. Therefore, the idea of implementing gender-specific activities was not a priority, especially given DNP does not have a mandate on gender or a budget to support gender equality. Therefore, should the project be replicated, it would be beneficial to start at the central level and work for a mandate that would provide a core budget for gender specific activities.

Separately, it was mentioned that there is a general lack of support in Thailand to increase women’s role in the workplace. For example, one interviewee mentioned that it would be inappropriate for women to help with fire management, but during another interview with a female community member, she stated that she did just that! One stakeholder mentioned that it would be helpful to hire more women at the governmental level. These positions have the potential to provide women with more decision making power and influence, and hiring more women at this level spreads a strong message. Additionally, it was also mentioned that Thailand’s forest industry starts out as being male-centric due to the technical focus of the training that students receive in school which makes it hard to incorporate gender inclusive ideology. USAID LEAF is hoping to change that as we will see in the next section.

**Curriculum Development**

As previously mentioned, one of USAID LEAF’s objectives is to build and institutionalize technical capacity for economic valuation of forest ecosystem services and monitoring changes in forest carbon stocks at the project and national levels. In order to meet this objective, USAID LEAF began collaborating with the U.S. Forest Service in October of 2012 in the creation of climate change curriculums in several countries including Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Papa New Guinea and Malaysia. The U.S. Forest Service brought over forest education specialists to work with professors across Asia to develop four curriculum modules that could be used in existing forestry and natural resources management (NRM) degree programs and non-degree training courses. As a result of the collaboration, the professors came up with a curriculum on Basic Climate Change (BCC), Social and Environmental Soundness (SES), Low Emission Land Use Planning (LELUP), and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring (CMM). This process has been particularly successful within the Thai landscape as professors from across the country have requested more material. Additionally, the Chiang Mai University team along with Phayao University in the north and Kasertsat University conducted a national seminar on replicating the curriculum development

---

6 USAID LEAF. *TOT Course on Social & Environmental Soundness and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring*. Regional Climate Change Curriculum Development: Training of Trainers Course. May 2014, Bangkok, Thailand

7 USAID LEAF. *TOT Course on Social & Environmental Soundness and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring*. Regional Climate Change Curriculum Development: Training of Trainers Course. May 2014, Bangkok, Thailand
materials to 16 more universities in Thailand last year. The information gathered on curriculum development by the capstone team revealed the following findings:

- Participants who attended the curriculum development trainings are using portions of the Basic Climate Change, Land Use Planning, and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring module in their classroom.
- Professors noted that they value the flexibility of the curriculum, i.e., that they can tailor it to the subject they are teaching and use the materials that are most relevant to their class.
- Professors stated that they discussed what they learned at trainings with other faculty members, university authorities, and farmers in the field, but generally, they do not share the material.
- Some participants would have preferred to learn about or have an opportunity to work on different module during the curriculum development trainings than.
- Professors value their interaction with international colleagues at training events.
- Professors who attended curriculum development trainings utilize online social networking to stay in touch with other local and international training participants and learn more teaching techniques/methodologies.
- Professors think that having the curriculum in English might attract more foreign students from the region and America to Chiang Mai University.
- In the future, professors hope their students pass on the adaptation strategies to farmers, utilize the curriculum material in their research or for their thesis and/or pass on their knowledge by becoming professors.
- Overall, participants spoke highly of their training experience and would attend again if given the opportunity.

In addition to the above findings, one interviewee commented on the fact that he values the curriculum because it provides the basic groundwork for a lecture on climate change and it is structured in such a way as to allow professors to engage their students in multiple activities rather than the traditional lecture/note taking format. Another interviewee stated that the curriculum fills previous knowledge gaps within the CMM field. The student feedback that we were able to gather from professors was positive. They said they were excited about the new knowledge and impressed by the vast amount of material. Finally, a few professors stated that they really appreciated the enthusiasm and dedication of the Adult Learning and Capacity Building Specialist throughout the process.

### Professors are Using the Curriculum in Unique Ways:

| One professor designed her own course based on the USAID LEAF curriculum and another has the desire to do so in the future. |
| Professors are passing along their knowledge: A couple interviewees mentioned sharing the climate change adaptation strategies that they learned from the USAID LEAF curriculum with farmers in the field! |
| One student studying the CMM module was inspired by the new information and decided to do her research on this topic. Another student plans to do her thesis on Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), so she will utilize the PES portion of the USAID LEAF curriculum to write her thesis. |

What separates curriculum development from the other topics?
Curriculum development managed to link with the other core landscapes due to the regional trainings set up by USAID LEAF along with the social networking platforms that allow for discussion following the trainings.  
The professors in Thailand reached out to USAID LEAF and requested more advanced studies, so a workshop will be taking place in May to address their request and create curriculum materials in Thai.  
While analyzing the information collected, the team noticed that every professor interviewed regarding curriculum development was confident that it would be sustained past USAID LEAF’s departure, more so than the other topics discussed.

While professors are actively utilizing the USAID LEAF curriculum and are eager for more material, they did bring up a few challenges. The overarching challenge mentioned by every stakeholder was that the curriculum is currently only in English and unavailable in other languages, specifically Thai. Each professor is translating it and presenting it in Thai. One stakeholder described how he outlines the concepts in the classroom in Thai, but when students arrive home and only have the material provided by USAID LEAF in English, it was a challenge for them to study it without the translation. Another challenge was the lack of relevant Thai case studies or research examples in the curriculum. Finally, a few professors noted that the training period was too lengthy, so this could be something to consider when planning workshops during this last year.

“...The challenge is coordination because there’s a time difference, culture difference, language difference, and in order to have a common language on the subject matter it takes a lot to bring people to the same page. It was very challenging in the beginning but we introduced the methods, we introduced the process, we introduced a nice platform for people to work together and they see this is great, this is a good chance for them.” — LEAF Staff Member

Separate from these challenges, it was hard to measure the impact of the curriculum or gather feedback from students since professors are using only portions of the curriculum in their classrooms. However, the professors interviewed provided some interesting suggestions for USAID LEAF’s consideration including: developing a less technical version for broader dissemination; hosting the curriculum online; promoting the curriculum to university administration; incorporating information on innovative technology; and developing a system to maintain and update the curriculum following the end of USAID LEAF. USAID LEAF has stated that they plan to handover the curriculum to RECOFTC to maintain it in Thailand.

Payment for Ecosystem Services
Implementing a PES scheme in Thailand aims to achieve USAID LEAF’s first objective, “replicate and scale-up innovation through regional platforms and partnerships” and the fourth objective, “demonstrate innovation in sustainable land management”. It also supports the second and third objectives, “assist in the development of policy and market incentives for GHG reductions” and “build and institutionalize technical capacity for economic valuation of forest ecosystem services and monitoring changes in forest carbon stocks.”

USAID LEAF has adopted a commonly accepted definition put forward by Sven Wunder, a senior economist for the Center for International Forest Research, that a PES scheme must meet the following criteria:

---

8 USAID LEAF. Payment for Ecosystem Services: Pilot Implementation in Mae Sa-Kog Ma Man and Biosphere Reserve. November 2014.
A voluntary transaction in which
a well-defined environmental service (ES), or a form of land use to likely secure that service
is bought by at least one ES buyer
from a minimum of one ES provider
if and only if the provider continues to supply that service (conditionally).

While in the field, the team observed that USAID LEAF’s PES activities in Thailand have revolved around three main activities. The first was a PES study tour in Lam Dong, Vietnam from February 6 – 10, 2012 that included 14 Thai participants chosen from the following stakeholder groups: government officials (district and sub district administrations), the private sector, USAID LEAF staff, DNP (International Cooperation Division & Planning and Information Office), and the PARO-16 TWG. The second major activity has been opening up discussions with the Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce and other private sector stakeholders about participating in PES. Lastly, a possible pilot PES scheme has been identified with Aura, a subsidiary of Tipco Foods PCL, playing the role of the buyer, which could act as a case study for other potential buyers of ES in Thailand. Although the team was unable to attend any additional meetings, they were informed that USAID LEAF is also continuing to host trainings, workshops, and discussions regarding PES with various stakeholders.

Our interviews highlighted several common themes pertaining to the establishment of a PES scheme in Chiang Mai. One success included increased awareness and knowledge amongst all stakeholders as to what entails a payment for ecosystem service mechanism. Despite having limited knowledge of the specific mechanism that could be implemented, representatives from the private sector agreed that some sort of PES system would be to their benefit as much of Chiang Mai’s economy is based on tourism and is hindered during the smog season. In preliminary discussions, several of the USAID LEAF staff observed that they were quite impressed with the quantity of stakeholders who have expressed interest in building a PES mechanism for Chiang Mai. USAID LEAF has been able to bring the private sector to the table and begin preliminary discussions with several private sector stakeholders.

Although concerns exist about the PES within the communities, the idea was observed to be welcomed. This is primarily because communities understand the services they would provide, is not only for the benefit of the buyer, but for themselves as well. Even if there were no PES, communities would still engage in activities such as reforestation and water quality management because it would be to their own benefit. One community member explained, “We are already doing reforestation. When there is an area without trees, we go in and replant trees. What would be good is to have a system where we are assigned a certain plot of forest that we can take care of and where we can receive some benefits to take care of the tasks. It would be better to have some kind of incentives or benefits to help motivate the villages to work on this.” A PES scheme could provide the financial resources for communities to increase their environmental value.
service activities in community managed areas and provide safeguards against any individual that would use the community forest unsustainably.

USAID LEAF faced several challenges in implementing their PES activities. At the onset of the program, the activities in the Thailand landscape were aimed to support the implementation of REDD+ readiness. However, in 2012, following consultation with DNP, USAID LEAF program activities shifted to prioritizing the development of a PES mechanism for Thailand, resulting in less time to identify potential buyers, train and educate stakeholders, and establish a PES mechanism before the end of the program. Another challenge identified was the issue of land rights. Secure land rights are necessary for most PES schemes and because it is not uncommon for communities within the MAB to live on land appropriated by the DNP, this is an additional challenge in designing a PES system.

The most common challenge mentioned by all stakeholders was the need for common understanding of PES given that it is a new concept for Thailand. The stakeholders recognized that it takes time to raise awareness, particularly for communities given that it is a technical concept. Some university and private sector stakeholders reflected that they had observed confusion between stakeholders regarding establishing a PES mechanism as there is not one common or shared approach across all stakeholders. This confusion has also impacted the engagement of potential buyers, who are unclear as to why it would be beneficial for them to participate.

An additional concern is the lack of Thailand specific PES case studies that can be pointed to as a ‘proof of concept’ to the private sector. USAID LEAF staff, university, and private sector stakeholders highlighted that the “mutually beneficial” value proposition that PES aims to provide is further complicated when considering that (1) most of the buyers would be from the urban area while the environmental services that are being performed take place in rural areas and (2) the smog and forest fires primarily occur only a few weeks out of the year, and thus does not appear to be a prevalent issue for most of the year. Therefore, it is critical for the buyers of the ES to understand that they are paying for a service that benefits them year-round.

Stakeholders also raised concerns about what sort of mechanism would be used to ensure that all stakeholders are held accountable. Each stakeholder group expressed a desire for a committee that would play a third party role. However, the purpose for this third party differed between stakeholders. The private sector’s major concern is that the PES mechanism needs to be transparent and ensure that there are no leakages. That is, all of the funds are being delivered to the sellers in their entirety and there is little room for corruption. Government counterparts expressed a similar concern and wondered how to manage expectations or deal with a scenario where the seller does not provide the quality of service that the buyer had expected. Lastly, communities also expressed an interest in a third party monitoring mechanism as some tension has developed between the communities and the tourism industry and they have concerns about being taken advantage of. The commonality that each stakeholder group recommended a third party to manage the PES mechanism can be used to move negotiations forward.

### PES Pilot to Provide Model for Others

Aura, a water bottling company and subsidiary of Tipco Foods PCL has previously participated in CSR activities and is interested in transitioning towards more PES services. Prior CSR activities included building check dams, supporting reforestation, and providing scholarships to youth in the community. Aura’s annual budget was finalized in July of 2014 and they had not set aside funds for a PES activity. However, they have identified a 10 rai plot of land on which to do a PES reforestation project for one to two years as a pilot, contingent on budget approval. It costs approximately 20,000 baht to plant trees for 1 rai, so the company budgeted approximately 200,000 baht for the whole pilot. Previously under their CSR program, Aura’s payments went directly towards replanting trees but under the new PES-CSR system, an additional amount would be contributed to those who carry out the service. As a result of the Vietnam PES site visit, Aura is now looking into adopting mechanisms that would evaluate and measure the services being provided. Aura anticipates receiving budget approval in order to begin reforestation on the identified plot in June 2015.
The stakeholders interviewed also shared suggestions for addressing the challenges identified and how to further develop the PES mechanism. Some of the common suggestions included:

- For the buyers, it is important to link contributing to the fund to the buyer’s normal business activities.
- Establish a committee composed of all stakeholders for monitoring the services and payments provided.
- Payments should be communal rather than individual.
- All stakeholders should have a common understanding of how the mechanism will work.

These suggestions were shared by members of multiple stakeholder groups and are further incorporated in the team’s recommendations for setting up a PES mechanism. Overall, USAID LEAF has built general interest from the private sector and communities which has laid a solid foundation to build a more sustainable, long term PES scheme. The initial pilot with Aura will provide a model for stakeholders to build upon in the MSKM MAB.

**Implementation Challenges**

There were two overarching challenges that were identified that affected the overall implementation of the project: 1) coordination between USAID LEAF and DNP and 2) the USAID restrictions following the coup d’état on May 22, 2014 in Thailand. USAID LEAF staff and the PARO-16 TWG both reflected on the challenges in communication and working together. USAID LEAF staff highlighted the slow approval process, particularly for the work plan noting that it took approximately two years to agree upon a joint plan and begin project implementation. The TWG discussed their experience with USAID LEAF staff not communicating clearly about the activities they were doing within the communities in the MSKM MAB catchment area. The TWG expected to be included and informed of all activities so they could ensure all Thai government regulations are adhered to. They were particularly concerned about USAID LEAF speaking to communities about implementing a PES mechanism without them present. Despite initial challenges in coordination and communication, both groups reflected that the situation has improved and they are now working well together.

The challenge with USAID restrictions following the coup d’état was beyond the control of both parties. The USG has strict regulations and policies regarding financial support to nondemocratic governments. As a result, USAID LEAF could no longer pay for Thai government staff to travel to attend workshops, meetings or regional trainings, without USAID approval. This temporarily caused project implementation to slow down as USAID LEAF had to navigate how to continue to work in the Chiang Mai landscape alongside their government counterpart, while adhering to USG regulations. As a result of the restrictions, USAID LEAF had to cancel their planned training of facilitators for the MAB so that community leaders and government forest officers could be trained to continue to promote awareness of climate change and sustainable forest management practices.

USAID LEAF continues to navigate the USG restriction going into the last year of the project. The PARO-16 TWG reflected on their frustrations with the restrictions, but it was clear they understood this is the USG policy and cannot be changed by USAID or USAID LEAF. WI was able to utilize unrestricted funding to allow a member of the PARO-16 TWG to travel to Bangkok to have the USAID LEAF Annual Work plan endorsed by the Thai government so that program activities can continue to be implemented. The work plan for the last year of the project has been endorsed and the TWG is working closely with USAID LEAF to complete the remaining activities.
Lessons Learned

After completing the analysis of the data, the team identified overarching lessons learned that can be utilized for replication in other MAB sites and for similar programs.

1. Establish clear expectations between stakeholders

The coordination challenges referenced by USAID LEAF staff and TWG highlight the importance of having clear expectations between all stakeholders at the beginning of the project. When working in an area like the MSKM MAB, where there are multiple government agencies that have management over sections of the land, knowing these responsibilities and taking them into consideration is very important. This could help streamline implementation. Additionally, community leaders also raised that they were unclear that USAID LEAF was a capacity building project and unable to provide funding to support direct implementation. All stakeholders need to be on the same page.

2. Mentorship is critical for capacity building

All stakeholder groups said they appreciated the network that USAID LEAF created between the government, private sector, communities and universities and that they could turn to USAID LEAF for guidance or support. One stakeholder even referred to USAID LEAF as their “coach.” In Ban Dong, USAID LEAF helped provide guidance to the community to help them successfully address a land claim dispute. The village head said that he could always call USAID LEAF for advice. The trust and relationship USAID LEAF was able to build with each stakeholder group under each activity component has enabled the project to build momentum and establish a foundation for continued collaboration and work to continue.

3. Integrate local context into curriculum development

Building a regional curriculum on climate change that meets the needs of all potential users is no easy feat. Feedback on the curriculum highlighted the importance of integrating local context to make it more relevant for students. In order to increase uptake, having the curriculum translated into local languages will help professors utilize more of the curriculum in their classrooms and disseminate it to the broader community outside of the university. Professors also suggested a less scientific version that could provide a standard method for raising awareness among local communities. It would be extremely beneficial to have common messaging at the local level and future programs can build upon the curriculum foundation established by USAID LEAF to integrate more local context.

4. Gender can always be integrated

As referenced, gender integration is not a mandate of DNP, which made it challenging for USAID LEAF to integrate their full gender component in Thailand. However, some of the outcomes observed show that gender can always be integrated even in subtle ways, such as creating equal opportunities for women to attend workshops and trainings. By creating these opportunities and encouraging attendance at the USAID LEAF Gender Leadership Training, awareness was raised in those individuals. Future programs should continue to integrate gender awareness and if possible, incorporate a budget for gender specific trainings and encourage policy adoption on gender.

5. Work with the private sector from the beginning

This lesson learned was identified by USAID LEAF staff who reflected on the challenges of trying to encourage the private sector to invest in PES in the last year of the project. Working with the private sector from the beginning would have allowed more time to explain the idea of PES and increase awareness of its benefits. Also, by diversifying stakeholders, the project could have been less impacted by the coup d’état in May 2014 since USAID LEAF was allowed to continue engaging with the private sector and the other non-government stakeholders. At the start of a new initiative or follow on activity, it would be beneficial to have a comprehensive approach to engage the private sector from the beginning to increase project outcomes.
6. **Plan for sustainability from the start of the project**

One of the concerns highlighted by several of the participants in each stakeholder group was the issue of sustainability and if the momentum built by USAID LEAF would be able to continue without their “coach”. When the team asked whether or not the activities would be sustained after USAID LEAF, one stakeholder replied “I sure hope so.” Sustainability cannot be left for chance and preparations for how to properly handover activities so they can be maintained by stakeholders need to take place throughout the life of the project, not just in the last year. USAID LEAF was strategic in working with local institutions like FORRU, CMU, RECOFTC, and PARO-16, who can continue the momentum started by USAID LEAF after the project ends. However, having a sustainability plan that is communicated to all stakeholders from the beginning of the project could help increase confidence and build additional support for continued implementation.

**Recommendations**

Building on the lessons learned, the team has developed the following recommendations for USAID LEAF’s consideration for their last year of implementation to enhance program outcomes and promote sustainability. These recommendations were derived from stakeholder suggestions, external literature, and USAID LEAF’s sustainability strategy for Thailand outlined in the FY 2015 Annual Work plan.

1. **Support the establishment of a MSKM MAB Committee and Chair under the MSKM MAB Management Plan**

   In order to ensure sustainability, it is imperative for USAID LEAF to help transition activities to the new MAB Committee and MAB Chair that will be established as part of the approved MSKM MAB Management Plan. Thailand will be hosting the UNESCO MAB Conference in 2016 in Chiang Mai and plans to utilize MSKM MAB as a model to showcase to the international MAB community. This provides an excellent incentive for continuing USAID LEAF’s trainings and capacity building activities. The MSKM MAB Management Plan will provide the policy support and budget to begin implementing the reforestation and management actions developed by all stakeholders during the participatory planning process. During the last year of implementation, USAID LEAF should transfer its highly regarded mentorship role to the identified MAB coach.

2. **Help create a framework for the “model” community**

   Several stakeholders mentioned that not all communities within the area fall within the MSKM MAB catchment area and were not able to receive the trainings that those within received. Some sub district staff mentioned they would like to utilize the communities trained by USAID LEAF as “model” communities for the other villages in their sub district. Some of the community leaders also indicated that they would like their community to be a “model community”. Their willingness to succeed and share their experiences will allow communities and stakeholders to learn from each other, and USAID LEAF can help encourage this transfer of knowledge during the last year of implementation.

3. **Host training of trainers for continuous local capacity building**

   While this may be challenging due to the USG restriction, it would be extremely beneficial if USAID LEAF could host the planned training of trainers so that local community leaders and forest officers could be trained to facilitate USAID LEAF’s natural resource management trainings. This will help support the network of model communities being developed, as the community leaders, both PARO-16 Forest Officers and sub district staff will be able to facilitate trainings at the model communities and expand the impact of USAID LEAF’s work in this area.

4. **Translate the curriculum into Thai**

   Developing a regional curriculum requires a common language to bring everyone together. However, now that the curriculum has been developed, it would be beneficial to have it translated into Thai so that it can
be more broadly used in Thailand and Chiang Mai. With the curriculum in the local language, RECOFTC, FORRU, CMU and other trainers who may utilize the curriculum can use it in community workshops conducted in Thai. This will provide a unified platform to educate the broader community. Having this common language and understanding on PES, forest management and climate change was a suggestion received by many stakeholders interviewed.

5. **Support emerging gender champions in Chiang Mai**
This outcomes assessment found that, despite the absence of a formal gender mandate in DNP, USAID LEAF’s Gender Leadership Initiative Training has increased participants’ gender awareness in their work. USAID LEAF could create a female network at the community level by bringing together the women leaders who have already been active in the project training and curriculum development activities. This could sustain the gender messaging and ensure female participation in activities following USAID LEAF.

6. **Promote Aura’s PES pilot as a model to increase private sector engagement**
The lack of PES case studies in Thailand is an obstacle for increasing private sector engagement. Aura’s implementation of their PES scheme before the end of the project is an opportunity to market their initiative to others. Interested private sector investors may observe the process and collaborate with the PARO-16 or the PES committee to further promote Aura’s pilot.

7. **Establish the foundation for a PES mechanism for the MSKM MAB**
A large number of interviewees hope that USAID LEAF will establish the foundation for a PES mechanism for continuous implementation after the termination of the project. Developing a committee or leader to hand over this mission will be essential for the momentum to be sustained. Aura’s pilot provides a case study for this committee to build on, and establish a PES scheme for the whole MSKM MAB area. To support this goal, the team has provided more detailed considerations for the potential PES mechanism below.

**Considerations for the PES Mechanism**

**Payment mechanism:**
It is critical that a clear payment mechanism be implemented that is understood by all stakeholders. Representatives from every stakeholder group said they would prefer a system where sellers would receive payments communally, rather than on an individual basis. One benefit communal payments provide is accountability against any single individual who may detract from the quality of service provided. For example, an individual would be less inclined to cut down trees if payment can be withheld from the entire community rather than a single individual. One interviewed community stakeholder anticipated that funds from the PES would be reinvested into buying more materials for resource management activities. Since sellers will likely be investing in materials that will benefit the whole community, payments distributed to a community wide fund make more sense than individual payments.

A system that can be partially replicated is Population and Development International’s (PDI) PES scheme for forests. Payment is made upon the planting of trees and the funds are saved in the Village Bank, a community micro-credit loan where residents can collectively save funds. After receiving the payment, the Village Bank is able to circulate the funds in the community. The Village Bank is managed by trained community members and is comprised of 50% women. Additionally bonuses or fines can be applied to the quality of service. If after one year the trees are healthy, an additional bonus can be received. However, if it is clear that they have cut down any trees, they can be forced to pay back the payment.

---

Monitoring & quality assurance:
A shared concern across all stakeholders was the issue of sustainability, and particularly an ability to implement a PES mechanism before the USAID LEAF project concludes. This stems from USAID LEAF having played a ‘coach’ role amongst stakeholders and now they are close to retiring from that role. It is essential that the process for filling this role is initiated prior to the conclusion of the project. One solution could be a committee consisting of representatives from the communities, private sector, government, and if possible, a reputable NGO. The NGO would be beneficial in providing technical expertise and helping monitor both the payment system and the quality of the services provided by the sellers.

The committee the serves the monitoring and quality assurance role would also benefit potential buyers of the services. Buyers may have limited resources and may be less inclined to participate in PES if they must also monitor the quality of the service. Additionally, such a committee would increase transparency between all the stakeholders ensuring against any leakages in the payments.\textsuperscript{11}

Marketing & awareness:
There are several opportunities to further raise awareness of PES amongst potential buyers. One option suggested was to continue to strengthen the partnerships with local universities and the private sector by creating a sponsored competition for university students on marketing PES to potential buyers. This would generate more awareness of PES and provide a beneficial opportunity for students.

Providing certifications to buyers of PES can simultaneously incentivize buyers and raise awareness of PES. These certifications would show customers of the companies that are participating in PES that the company supports the environment and local communities. For example with Aura, a small stamp can be placed on their water bottles certifying they participate in PES. Certification can also be provided to other potential buyers of PES such as restaurants, hotels, elephant camps, and other private sector stakeholders that rely on tourism.

Because tourism plays a major role in the region, partnering with tourism organizations to recognize PES buyers would be another way to raise awareness. It would also further incentivize potential buyers to receive the certification previously mentioned. For example, tour agencies can highlight hotels, animal camps, and other tourist attractions that participate in PES when advising tourists on where to go. This provides buyers an incentive to participate in PES as they would gain further marketing exposure. Proving that tourists traveling to Chiang Mai value companies and organizations that contribute to PES establishes a link to the private sector. That is, contributing to PES is directly beneficial for them. This link would only be strengthened over time as the PES fund grows and helps provide for better environmental outcomes.

\textsuperscript{11} Lessons Learned for REDD+ from PES and Conservation Incentive Programs. Examples from Costa Rica, Mexico, and Ecuador. FONAFIFO, CONAFOR and Ministry of Environment. 2012.
particularly during the smog season. This will lead to increased tourism during this period and further help local businesses.

Firms already engaging in CSR activities should be targeted as potential buyers as they are already engaged in similar activities and are likely to understand the benefits of transferring to PES based activities. Additionally, targeting larger firms will create a larger, more sustainable fund. Typically, CSR activities are attractive to larger firms for two reasons: it benefits their reputation and (in some cases) funds given towards CSR are tax deductible. If the appropriate national policy framework is implemented to enable firms to receive similar tax deductibles for becoming buyers of PES, more companies will transition to PES.

Conclusion

The outcomes of USAID LEAF’s project activities in the Chiang Mai landscape are still evolving. With one year left in implementation, USAID LEAF will be able to benefit from the key findings, lessons learned and recommendations to help increase the project’s outcomes and overall impacts. The amount of stakeholder involvement and their appreciation for the project’s various activity components exemplifies the benefit of taking a participatory approach to program development and implementation. From conception, by working through their counterpart, DNP and PARO 16, USAID LEAF aimed to meet the needs and objectives of the MSKM MAB, even adjusting their priority from REDD+ to PES. USAID LEAF brought together all stakeholders within the MSKM MAB, including community leaders, the private sector, the government, other NGO projects and universities, and created not only a sense of ownership of the MSKM MAB Management Plan but a network that can be sustained following the end of the project. The foundation USAID LEAF has established will provide an opportunity for sustained effort towards the creation of a PES mechanism that can continue to provide financial support to conserve and manage the forests in Chiang Mai.
Annexes

Annex I: Works Referenced


USAID LEAF. Final MAB MSKM Management Plan. 2014.

USAID LEAF. LEAF Field Activities: Mid-Term Assessment of Progress. Bangkok, Thailand, 31 July 2013.


USAID LEAF. TOT Course on Social & Environmental Soundness and Carbon Measurement and Monitoring. Regional Climate Change Curriculum Development: Training of Trainers Course. May 2014, Bangkok, Thailand.
## Annex II: Interview Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Meetings/Interviews</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>City/Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Winrock Office, Washington D.C.</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 February</td>
<td>Interview: USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 February</td>
<td>Interviews (2): USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March</td>
<td>Meeting and Interview with USAID LEAF staff</td>
<td>USAID LEAF, Bangkok</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 March</td>
<td>Focus group discussion: The Technical Working Group (TWG)</td>
<td>PARO16, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: PARO 16 staff</td>
<td>PARO16, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 March</td>
<td>Holiday: Makka Bucha Day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 March</td>
<td>Interview: PARO 16 staff</td>
<td>PARO16, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews (2): PARO 16 staff</td>
<td>Water Management Unit, Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: HAPPEN and CBFCM</td>
<td>REO1 Office, Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: Private sector partner</td>
<td>Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 March</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion: Community leaders</td>
<td>Samoeng District, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 March</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 March</td>
<td>Interviews (2): Local government partners</td>
<td>Sub-district office, Chiang Mai</td>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews (2): Private sector partners</td>
<td>Mae Sa Watershed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews (2): Community leaders</td>
<td>Mae Sa Watershed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: PARO 16 staff</td>
<td>Khun Khan National Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 March</td>
<td>Interview: University partner</td>
<td>Chiang Mai University</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: Private sector partner</td>
<td>Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: Local government partner</td>
<td>USAID LEAF Office, Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 March</td>
<td>Interview: University partner</td>
<td>Mae Sa Watershed</td>
<td>Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Site visit: Seminar and forest restoration site</td>
<td>Mae Sa Watershed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interviews (3): University partners</td>
<td>Chiang Mai University</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview: DNP staff</td>
<td>USAID LEAF Office, Chiang Mai</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex III: Semi-Structured Interview Guides
USAID LEAF Staff

INTRODUCTION

- [Introductions
- Interviewer to provide an overview of the assessment highlighting the aim as listed below, the use of the information (can speak anonymously if so choose and all information will be drafted into an outcome assessment) and review the consent forms (for audio taping)
- Facilitators will begin with small talk to ensure the respondents are comfortable
- Ask if there are questions prior to beginning]

Use of Information: The purpose of this assessment is to determine the desired outcomes of USAID LEAF’s program activities and what progress has been made to date in the Chiang Mai province. When we refer to Chiang Mai we are referring to Chiang Mai province. The evaluation will aim to discover what facets of the program are enabling outcomes and what challenges are there that are hindering outcomes. For the purposes of this assessment, we have defined outcome as ...the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly.

This report will be drafted for the USAID LEAF program but may be disseminated to USAID and the Government of Thailand for their use. Audio tape is only used by the writers to ensure information is accurately captured and anything stated during this interview will remain confidential. In addition, one facilitator will be taking notes throughout the session.

For the purposes of this assessment, we have defined outcome as ...the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly.

1. What is your role in the Landscape in Chiang Mai province?
   a. How does this compare to your role in USAID-LEAF?
   b. For regional staff, how do you collaborate with the Chiang Mai office?
2. Can you describe how Chiang Mai and MSMK MAB was selected as the landscape for Thailand?
3. How would you describe the objective(s) of the landscape in Chiang Mai?
   a. Has a GHG reduction target or goal been set for Chiang Mai?
   b. How does this compare to the overall objective for USAID LEAF and the other landscapes?
4. How would you define the desired outcomes for the landscape in Chiang Mai?
   a. How do you think the priority activities link to the desired outcomes?
5. What are the priority activities in the Chiang Mai province?
   a. Which of these activities do you support?[see extra questions below]
   b. How do you think the priority activities link to the desired outcomes?
   c. How do you envision these outcomes being sustained at the end of USAID LEAF?
   d. How did political instability in 2014 affect your activities?
6. Within Chiang Mai, are the same activities implemented in each of the communities?
   a. What has been the communities’ level of engagement?
   b. Are some communities more engaged than others?
   c. Have you observed if any communities have been less receptive than anticipated?
7. Who would you describe as the key stakeholders in Chiang Mai?
   a. What is the role of these stakeholders?
   b. What has been the stakeholder’s level of engagement?
   c. What has been done to encourage stakeholders involvement?
8. What successes have you observed in Chiang Mai?
9. What challenges have you observed in Chiang Mai?
10. If we were to replicate the Chiang Mai Landscape, what would you do differently?
11. How do you think the project will be maintained long term?
   a. What suggestions do you have to maintain it?

For PES Staff:
1. How have you explained and introduced the concept of PES to the communities in Chiang Mai province?
2. What role has the government played in developing the plans for PES activity in Chiang Mai province?
3. How have you identified who will participate in the PES pilot?
4. What role has the private sector played in Chiang Mai’s PES activities?
5. What are your expectations for a PES fund in Chiang Mai?
6. How do you think the PES program will improve beneficiaries’ livelihoods?

For Capacity Building and Adult Learning Staff:
1. What training topics have been most receptive in Chiang Mai?
2. How do you identify who to engage in the trainings in Chiang Mai?
3. How would you want the curriculum developed to be utilized in Chiang Mai and Thailand?
4. How do you continue to engage with training participants post training?

For Gender Staff:
1. How have you identified the gender champions in Chiang Mai?
2. What role do the gender champions have within the Chiang Mai community?
3. What gender change would you like to observe in Chiang Mai?
4. How do you continue to engage with the Gender Champions post training?

For M&E Staff:
1. What tools do you utilize to track program indicators in Chiang Mai?
2. What results have you observed in Chiang Mai?
3. What is your definition of outcome?
4. How would you link the program outputs to the desired outcomes for Chiang Mai?

Government Partners
Semi-Structured Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

- [Introductions
  - Interviewer to provide an overview of the assessment highlighting the aim as listed below, the use of the information and receive consent for audio recording. Share the introduction sheet so they can read along.
  - Facilitators will begin with small talk to ensure the respondents are comfortable
  - Ask if there are questions prior to beginning and if there is anything else they would like to add to end]

Introduction: We are independent consultants from The George Washington University in the United States. We have been contracted to complete an outcomes assessment by Winrock International for the USAID LEAF program. This assessment is to determine the desired outcomes, or behavior changes, of USAID LEAF’s activities and what progress has been made to date in the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Man and
Biosphere Reserve and in Chiang Mai Province. We are particularly interested in learning what changes in behavior participants or partners have made as a result of program activities.

For this assessment we have defined outcome as...the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly.

This discussion will be used to help us produce a report for the USAID LEAF program. USAID LEAF may share the report and the findings from our assessment with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Thailand for their use. We would like to ask you about your experience with specific program activities, the impact you would like to see from these activities and what changes you have made in your own work as a result of the program.

Your participation in this assessment is voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the discussion, please tell us and we can stop the interview. All interviews are confidential and anything you say during the discussion will remain private. We would like to record this discussion so the note takers can transcribe it accurately afterwards. The recording is only for the use of the note takers and will not be shared. Are you comfortable with this discussion being recorded?

Thank you for your participation in this assessment. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What is your role in your government agency? [look for involvement in policies (5-6)/ trainings (7)/ PES(8)]
   a. What is your role in the MSKM MAB Technical Working Group?
   b. What is your role in the project?
   c. Which partners do you work with on this project?
2. What is the goal of the USAID LEAF project?
3. What changes in behavior would you like to see from the government partners as a result the project?
   a. What changes would you like to see in the...communities/universities/private sector? [ask about each individually]
   b. Do you think the project activities are likely to lead to these changes?
4. Why was the MSKM MAB selected out of the four MABs in Thailand for USAID LEAF to work?
   a. Are there specific issues you wanted the project to address?
5. Have there been any new policies for the MSKM MAB since 2011?
   a. If so, what are they?
   b. What was USAID LEAF’s involvement in these policies?
6. What do you think of the MSKM MAB Management Plan?
   a. Do you think the MSKM MAB Management Plan is useful? Why/Why not?
   b. What did you think of the process of creating the plan and involving the community and a variety of partners?
   c. What have you done to implement the MSKM MAB Management Plan? [look for budget, action plan, community outreach]
   d. Why did you take this action? Or why were you unable to take action?
   e. Do you think the MSKM MAB management plan will continue to be implemented after USAID LEAF is over?
      i. Do you have suggestions for how it can be continued?
7. Have you attended any regional meetings or conferences on forest land-use management or policy hosted or sponsored by USAID LEAF?
a. If so, which ones?
   i. What was the purpose of the training?
   ii. What did you learn?
   iii. Was the training useful?
   iv. Have you been able to integrate what you learned from the training(s)? If yes, how?
   v. Why did you take action? Or why were you unable to take action?

b. If not, have your colleagues ever given you USAID LEAF training materials or information?

c. What do you think of the gender and climate change regional trainings offered by USAID LEAF?
   i. Do you think it is important to consider gender when discussing climate change?

8. What do you think of the payment for ecosystem services project?
   a. Can you explain the payment for ecosystem services concept?
   b. What benefits do you think this will provide MSKM MAB? [environment and/or community]
   c. Do you have any concerns? If so, what are they?
   d. How do you think this will impact community livelihoods?
   e. How do you think PES will be maintained after USAID LEAF is over?
      i. Do you have suggestions for maintaining it?

9. If we were going to replicate this project in another MAB area in Thailand, what changes would you make?

Community Partners
Semi-Structured Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

[Introductions
Interviewer to provide an overview of the assessment highlighting the aim as listed below, the use of the information and receive consent for audio recording. Share the introduction sheet so they can read along.
Facilitators will begin with small talk to ensure the respondents are comfortable
Ask if there are questions prior to beginning and if there is anything else they would like to add to end]

Introduction: We are independent consultants from the United States. We are working with Winrock International and the USAID LEAF program to find out what changes have been made as a result of program activities. To do that, we have come to Chiang Mai and the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Man and Biosphere Reserve to assess what progress has been made to date. Can we ask you about your experience with the project?

Participation in this assessment is voluntary and confidential. Your name will not be used and you don’t have to answer any questions that you don’t want to answer. If you agree, I will record the interview so that we can transcribe it accurately afterwards. The recording will not be shared. If you don’t want the interview to be recorded, I can take notes instead. Are you okay with being recorded?

Thank you for your participation. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Are you on a committee in your community?
   a. Are you familiar with the LEAF project?
b. Are you familiar with the Ma Sa-Kog Ma Man and Biosphere Reserve?
2. What is the goal of the USAID LEAF project?
3. What changes would you like to see in your community as a result of the project?
   a. Are there changes you would like to see in the...government or private sector?
   b. Do you think the project activities will lead to these changes?
4. What are the challenges for MSKM MAB and your community?
   a. How have the project activities addressed these challenges?
5. Did you attend any trainings on forest management?
   a. If so, which ones?
   b. What was the purpose of the training?
   c. What did you learn?
   d. Was the training useful?
   e. Have you used what you learned? If so how? /or Why not? [try to pull out factors that enables them to use or prevented them from using what they learned]
6. What was your involvement in the development of the MSKM Management Plan?
   a. If not involved, was your community involved? How?
   b. What do you think of this Plan?
   c. Do you think this Plan will benefit your community? How or Why not?
   d. Has this plan affected your community? If so, how?
7. Are you familiar with the payment for ecosystem services project?
   a. What is payment for ecosystem services?
   b. What do you think about it?
   c. What benefits do you think this will provide you and your community?
   d. Do you have any concerns?
   e. How do you think this will impact your livelihood?
   f. Would you sign a contract to participate in PES?
      i. If so, why would you participate?
      ii. If not, why?
      iii. What would encourage you to participate?
8. If we were to restart this project in your community, what changes would you make?
   a. Why or Why not?
9. After LEAF ends, do you think project activities in the community will continue?
   a. Why/Why not?
   b. What could the project do to help continue the activities?

Private Sector Partners
Semi-Structured Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

● [Introductions
● Interviewer to provide an overview of the assessment highlighting the aim as listed below, the use of the information and receive consent for audio recording. Share the introduction sheet so they can read along.
● Facilitators will begin with small talk to ensure the respondents are comfortable
● Ask if there are questions prior to beginning and if there is anything else they would like to add to end]
Introduction: We are independent consultants from The George Washington University in the United States. We have been contracted to complete an outcomes assessment by Winrock International for the USAID LEAF program. This assessment is to determine the desired outcomes, or behavior changes, of USAID LEAF’s activities and what progress has been made to date in the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Man and Biosphere Reserve and in Chiang Mai Province. We are particularly interested in learning what changes in behavior have made as a result of program activities.

For this assessment we have defined outcome as...the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly.

This discussion will be used to help us produce a report for the USAID LEAF program. USAID LEAF may share the report and the findings from our assessment with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Thailand for their use. We would like to ask you about your experience with specific program activities, the impact you would like to see from these activities and what changes you have made in your own work as a result of the program.

Your participation in this assessment is voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the discussion, please tell us and we can stop the interview. All interviews are confidential and anything you say during the discussion will remain private. We would like to record this discussion so the note takers can transcribe it accurately afterwards. The recording is only for the use of the note takers and will not be shared. Are you comfortable with this discussion being recorded?

Thank you for your participation in this assessment! Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What is your role in your company/organization?
   a. What is your involvement in the USAID LEAF project?
   b. Which partners have you worked with on the project?
2. What is the goal of the USAID LEAF project?
3. What changes in behavior would you like to see from the private sector as a result of the project?
   a. What changes would you like to see in the... communities/government/private sector?
      [ask about each individually]
   b. Do you think the project activities will lead to these changes?
4. What are the challenges for MSKM MAB and the communities within?
   a. How have the project activities addressed these challenges?
5. What is your involvement with the payment for ecosystem services project?
   a. What is payment for ecosystem services?
6. What do you think about setting up a PES scheme for MSKM MAB?
   a. What benefits do you think this will provide?
   b. Do you have any concerns?
7. Why did you want to participate in the project?
8. What do you hope to gain from participating in the PES project?
9. How do you feel about giving a monetary contribution to fund the PES project?
   a. What contribution have you made or are planning to make?
   b. Do you plan to continue to fund the PES scheme after the project?
   c. Why/Why not?
10. What role do you think the government should play in establishing a PES scheme for the MSKM MAB?
a. What policies are needed for the PES scheme to work?

11. Do you think the PES pilot will be continued after USAID LEAF ends?
   a. How? Or Why not?
   b. Do you have any suggestions for maintaining it?
   c. Do you think this PES project could be replicated elsewhere in Thailand or at the other MAB sites?

University Partners
Semi-Structured Interview Guide

INTRODUCTION

- [Introductions
- Interviewer to provide an overview of the assessment highlighting the aim as listed below, the use of the information and receive consent for audio recording. Share the introduction sheet so they can read along.
- Facilitators will begin with small talk to ensure the respondents are comfortable
- Ask if there are questions prior to beginning and if there is anything else they would like to add to end]

Introduction: We are independent consultants from The George Washington University in the United States. We have been contracted to complete an outcomes assessment by Winrock International for the USAID LEAF program. This assessment is to determine the desired outcomes, or behavior changes, of USAID LEAF’s activities and what progress has been made to date in the Mae Sa-Kog Ma Man and Biosphere Reserve and in Chiang Mai Province. We are particularly interested in learning what changes in behavior participants or partners have made as a result of program activities.

For this assessment we have defined outcome as...the change in behavior of the people with whom the project works directly.

This discussion will be used to help us produce a report for the USAID LEAF program. USAID LEAF may share the report and the findings from our assessment with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Thailand for their use. We would like to ask you about your experience with specific program activities, the impact you would like to see from these activities and what changes you have made in your own work as a result of the program.

Your participation in this assessment is voluntary. If you feel uncomfortable at any point during the discussion, please tell us and we can stop the interview. All interviews are confidential and anything you say during the discussion will remain private. We would like to record this discussion so the note takers can transcribe it accurately afterwards. The recording is only for the use of the note takers and will not be shared. Are you comfortable with this discussion being recorded?

Thank you for your participation in this assessment. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. What is your role in the university?
   a. How have you been involved with the USAID LEAF project?
2. What is the goal of the USAID LEAF project?
3. What changes in behavior would you like to see as a result of the curriculum?
   a. What changes would you like to see in the… communities/government/private sector?
      [ask about each individually]
   b. Do you think the project activities will lead to these changes?
4. What are the challenges for MSKM MAB and the communities within?
   a. How does this project address those challenges?
5. Did you attend any regional or local trainings on USAID LEAF Climate Change Curriculum?
   a. If so, which ones?
      i. What was the purpose of the training?
      ii. What did you learn?
      iii. Was the training useful?
      iv. Have you used what you learned? If so, how? / Or why not? [try to pull out factors
          that enables them to use or prevented them from using what they learned]
   b. If not, how did you learn about USAID LEAF Climate Change Curriculum?
6. What do you think about the curriculum?
   a. Do you find it useful?
   b. Are there any changes you would make to it?
7. Have you incorporated the curriculum in your teaching?
   a. If so, how? / Or why not? [try to pull out factors that enables them to use or not use the
      curriculum]
   b. Have you presented the curriculum outside of the university? To whom?
   c. What feedback have you received from students or colleagues about the curriculum?
8. What are your plans for using the curriculum in the future?
   a. Will you use the whole curriculum or specific sections?
   b. Who would be your target audience?
9. What benefits do you think offering this curriculum will have?
10. What impact [long term] would you like to see from the curriculum?
11. After USAID LEAF ends, do you think the curriculum will continue to be used?
    a. Why/Why not?