Community Forest Program

Love the Forests and the Community Project

Objectives

- Promote community engagement in the management, development and rehabilitation of forest resources for sustainable community benefits.

- Accelerate the number of community forests, to increase national forest areas and carbon sinks.

- Develop, care for and restore community forests with prize money.

Target group

Nationwide community forests

"Love the Forest and the Community Project", in cooperation with the Department of Royal Forest and community forests across the nation, is aimed at promoting and supporting community engagement in the management, development and rehabilitation of forest resources under the Sufficiency Economy Principle guided "sustainable forests for community benefits" target as forests can be the source of food, water and resources for community. It also supports the national strategies in increasing forest areas and achieving carbon neutrality in 2050 and net zero emissions in 2065 as well as SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

The Community Forest Contest 2024 offered prize money to the 16 forests winning the national-level and regional-level awards as well as the awards for outstanding development. Located in the North, the Northeast, the South, the East and the Central Region, the forests span 37,062.61 rai and are able to sequester approximately 233,494 tons of carbon or equivalent to 856,146 tons of greenhouse gases. The forests also help store groundwater, discharge runoff, and with biodiversity create a huge value of ecosystem services.

Love the Forests and the Community Project's carbon and water storage capacity and ecosystem services

Community forest contestants
- In 2024: 801 communities
- 17-year period: 18,676 communities

Capacity of carbon sequestration (average 6.3 tons/rai)

Capacity of carbon sequestration
- In 2024: 233,494 tons of Carbon
- 17-year period: 10,124,554 tons of Carbon

Awarded community forests
- In 2024: 16 communities, for prize money worth THB 1.45 million
- 17-year period: 1,789 communities, for prize money worth THB 47.37 million

Water retention in soil and run off discharge (≈686 cubic meters/rai)

Water retention in soil and run off discharge
- In 2024: 25.42 million cubic meters
- 17-year period: 1,102.45 million cubic meters

Total area of awarded community forests
- In 2024: 37,062.61 rai
- 17-year period: 1,607,072 rai

Value of forest ecosystem services (≈THB 89,737/rai)

Value of forest ecosystem services
- In 2024: THB 3,326 million
- 17-year period: THB 144,214 million

References: The Biodiversity-Based Economy Development Office (BEDO), Department of Royal Forest
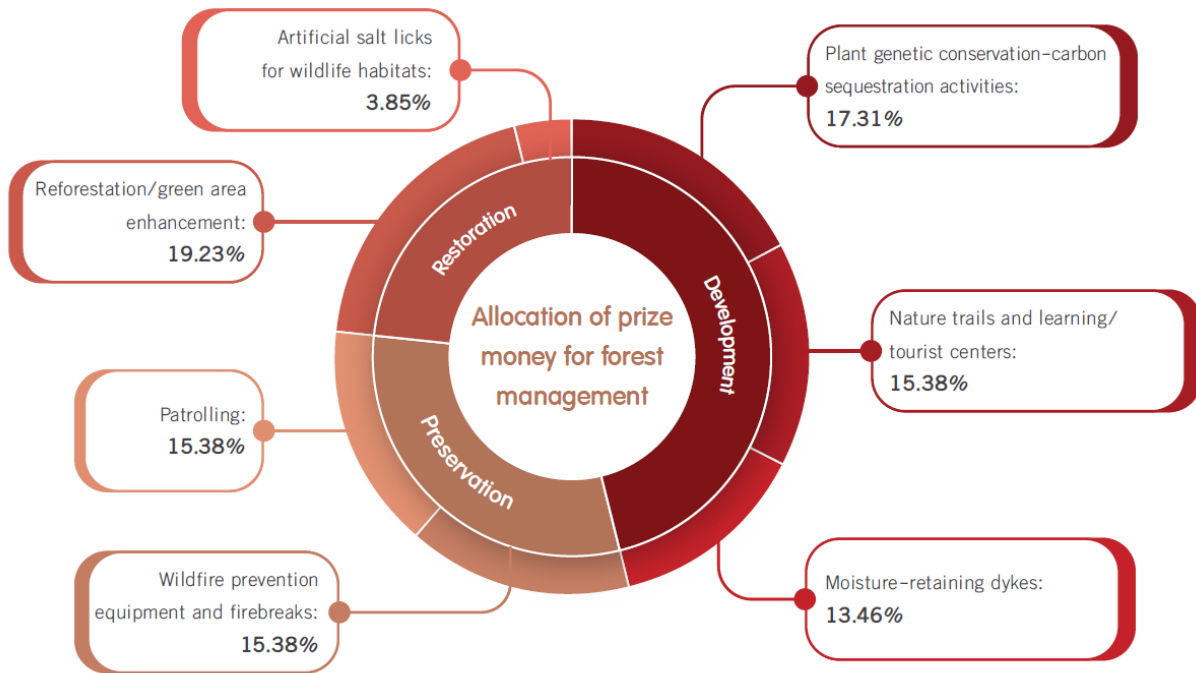
Positive impacts on community

A total of 6,794 households, or approximately 21,333 people, from community forests have benefits from the awards and forests. These households rely on and utilize community forest resources in various ways, which can be summarized as follows:

Economic Dimension	Social Dimension	Environmental Dimension
• Awarded forests support daily life, helping reduce household expenses and increase income by approximately THB 30.2 million • Communities are supplied with water for household and agricultural use all year round.	• Community members are united to preserve community forests. • Since 2008, the project has attracted 1,789 participating community forests. • 348 community leaders received training on forest management. • Forest officers of 11 Forest Resources Management Offices were given a morale boost. • Community forests serve as multi-dimensional learning centers for 66 schools, educational institutions, academia and neighboring communities, benefiting 3,159 students.	• Forests preserved under the program's supports encompass 37,062.61 rai. • The preserved forests are able to sequester about 233,494.44 tons carbon (average 6.3 tons carbon/rai). • Communities are safe from natural disasters like wildfire, drought, and land slide.

Since the project inception in 2008, 1,789 community forests have been awarded the combined prize money of THB 47.37 million. RATCH has supported the development of 7 community forests, spanning 5,695 rai, into carbon credit projects in collaboration with the Department of Royal Forest. The financial supports during 2022 and 2024 totaled THB 1,897,830.

Survey: awarded forests' allocation of prize money

Forest Carbon Credits Management for Sustainable Development Project in collaboration with Mae Fah Luang Foundation

The project promotes the coexistence of community and community forests. Community forests are developed as a T-VER project. Under this initiative, the community will have strong mechanism in maintaining forest resources, gain knowledge in maintaining and following up on forest growth and biodiversity and enjoy job opportunities, while natural carbon sinks are created

Forest Carbon Credits Management for Sustainable Development Project in collaboration with Mae Fah Luang Foundation	
Area	10,000-rai community forests in the northern and northeastern regions
Performance/ Results	• Registered the project with the TGO's Thailand Voluntary Emission Reduction (T-VER) program on 24 September 2024. • Expecting to acquire 16,404.21 tCO_2e of carbon credits throughout the 5-year period (2023-2029).
Area	1,000-rai Baan Na Charoen Community Forest, Chiang Rai Province
Performance/ Results	• Registered the project with the TGO's Thailand Voluntary Emission Reduction (T-VER) program on 24 September 2024. • Expecting to acquire 1,653.54 tCO_2e of carbon credits throughout the 5-year period (2022-2027). • Trained 14 community members to track the growth of trees for the calculation of carbon sequestration.