

# **Participation of local communities in mangrove forest rehabilitation in Pattani Bay, Pattani Province, Southern Thailand: learning from successes, failures and its sustainability**

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## **Abstract**

The approach and achievements of a project on community participation in mangrove forest rehabilitation in Pattani Bay, a wetland of international importance in Southern Thailand, are described. By working together with local communities in three villages around the Bay, this project aimed to restore severely degraded sites of former mangroves along the bay. This 3-year project followed an approach of combined environmental rehabilitation and socio-economic improvements, placing greater emphasis on the process than on outputs and facilitating initiatives of the community rather than ideas of the project team. Local ownership of the project and effective community participation were considered crucial to achieve sustainable impacts. The project focussed its main activities on strengthening of community organization, building of environmental awareness, mangrove rehabilitation through hydrological restoration and replanting of seedlings, support to alternative livelihood initiatives, and information dissemination. Although far from completely successful, the project has been able to support several income-generating activities of the communities, successfully enhanced their environmental awareness and received their cooperation in the replanting of 30 ha of community forest for which a community-based management plan has been prepared. The paper discussed the successes, failures and its sustainability of the project after almost 2 decades.

## **Keywords**

community participation, mangrove rehabilitation, Pattani Bay, Pattani Province, Thailand