

**Title:** (upper case)

**EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS FOR SUSTAINABLE  
TOURISM IN CORAL REEFS OF MU KOH CHANG, THAILAND**

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**Abstract:** (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 400 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

Mu Koh Chang is located in the eastern part of the Gulf of Thailand, near the borderline between Thailand and Cambodia. There are about 60 islands in the area which harbour approximately 16 km<sup>2</sup> of coral reefs. The Thai Government declared Mu Koh Chang as a special administrative zone for sustainable tourism development in 2002. An estimated 30% of the coral reef areas are within the jurisdiction of Mu Koh Chang National Park which was established in 1982. Mu Koh Chang was selected as one of the demonstration sites for coral reef subcomponent under the UNEP/GEF Project on Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand. The degradation of coral reefs in Mu Koh Chang has been recognized. Major threats of coral reefs were sedimentation from infrastructure development, impacts from expansion of tourism business, unskilled divers, illegal fishing, coral reef bleaching and storms. The causal chain analysis of Mu Koh Chang revealed that root causes of coral reef degradation were lack of awareness, greed, lack of ecological knowledge, failure of coordination among institutions, inappropriate tourism management, inadequate numbers of government staff, researcher and site manager for coral reef management, inefficient law enforcement, poverty and degradation from natural disturbances. Building awareness, providing knowledge of coral reef ecosystem and capacity building are major intervention activities for the root causes. Several activities have been implemented; i) produce permanent notice boards, brochures and posters for raising awareness on coral reefs; ii) training courses of marine ecosystem and its sustainable utilization for local students, tour guides, tourism businessmen and local communities; iii) broadcast knowledge of coral reefs ecosystem on local radio, television and web site; iv) produce coral reef ecosystem conservation handbooks for schools, universities, local libraries, stakeholders and involved institutions; v) develop education media on biodiversity vi) academic supports for local communities and private sector to encourage public participation for coral reef management and conservation for ecotourism; vii) encourage local people and tourism organization to clean up coral reefs; viii) training for coral reef protection volunteer groups; ix) publish and distribute information concerning fisheries and coral reef conservation; x) training the trainers for local communities; xi) demonstration project of coral reef restoration by using coral fragments and natural recruitment. Funding mechanisms for long-term support of these activities are very important for the success of project implementation.

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