

Common guidelines sought
Source - Bangkok Post Website (Eng)

Sunday, June 08, 2008 08:43

Common guidelines sought

Forest protection in Greater Mekong

By Achara Ashayagachat

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is hoping the success of its pilot projects, which includes forests on the Thai-Burmese border areas, will lead to common guidelines on forest protection and ecological management in all Mekong countries. Javed Hussain Mir, an ADB expert on natural resources management, said the first phase of the bank-sponsored Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative would end with some bilateral agreements to improve environmental management in the region. It could lead to common rules being used by all six Greater Mekong Sub-region countries in the near term, he added.

The 10-year, \$15 million project is part of the bank's efforts to address climate change. The pilot project, covering five sites, will be finished next year.

The first of the five sites is the Tenasserim range, or Tanaosri in Thai, between western Thailand and Burma, and includes areas in Kaeng Krachan in Phetchaburi. It is part of the Western Forest Complex. Other pilot projects are in China, Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos.

Songtam Suksawang, director of the National Park Research Division, said Thailand's negotiations with Burma for a bilateral agreement on cooperation on protected areas has been halted by Cyclone Nargis.

He admitted that illegal logging and the poaching of endangered species still were problems in the area. The Tenasserim range, which is the biggest forest in Southeast Asia, is home to two endangered animals, elephants and tigers.

Mr Songtam said there were an estimated 500 elephants living in the Western Forest Complex, including 200 in Kaeng Krachan and another 120 in Kui Buri district in Prachuap Khiri Khan. Huay Khakaeng in Uthai Thani is home to 120 tigers.

Source: <http://www.bangkokpost.com>