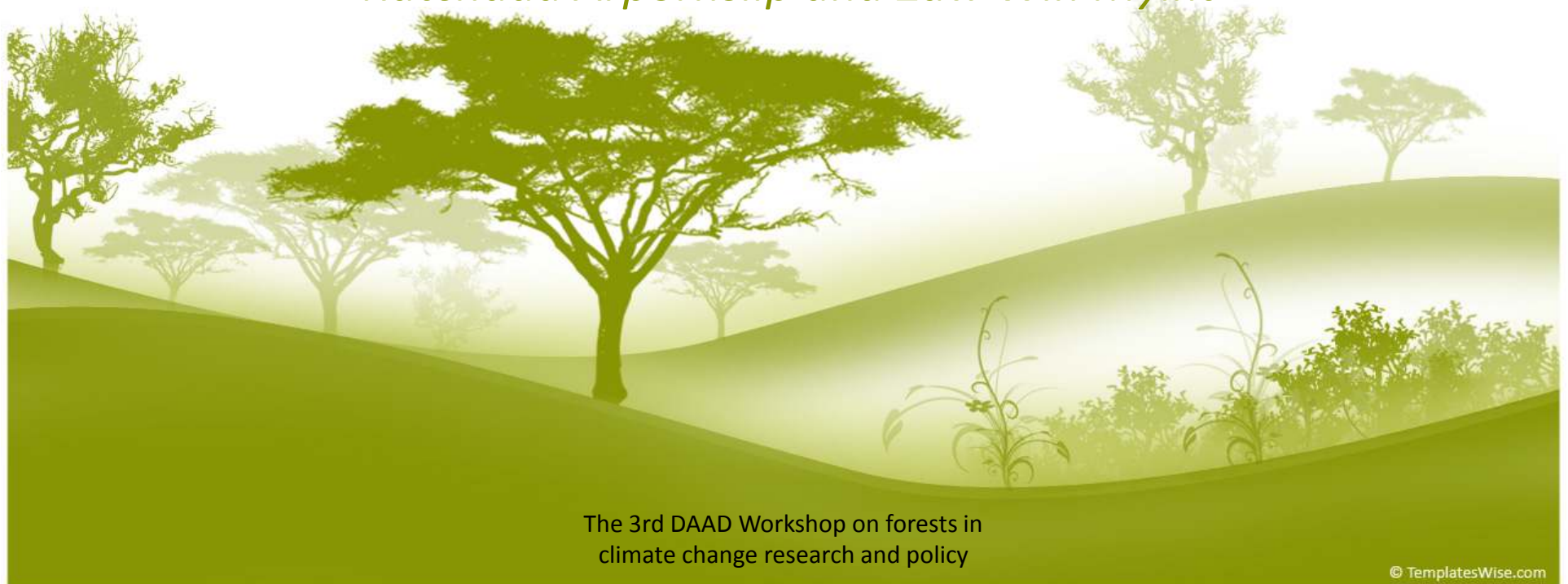


The role of Community Forests in REDD+ implementation

Cases of Thailand and Myanmar

Ratchada Arpornsilp and Zaw Win Myint



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Overview

- Definition of CF and its significance to REDD+ objectives
- CF in Thailand and Myanmar
 - Background & Characteristics
 - Existing challenges
- Connecting CF and REDD+
- REDD+ progresses in Thailand and Myanmar
- Risks and Opportunities to CF
- Conclusion

Definition of Community Forestry

- **FAO (1978):** *“any situation which intimately involves local people in a forestry activity – collecting wood and other forest products for local needs, through the growing of trees at the farm level to provide cash crops and the processing of forest products at the household for food, other activities to generate income of forest dwelling communities”*
- Community forestry is defined as forestry by the people, of the people and for the people.

Significance of Community Forestry

- Community forestry has a huge potential for contributions towards the objective of sustainable forest management
- Meta-Analysis study by CIFOR (2011) comparing conservation effectiveness (deforestation rate and forest conservation/recovery) between 33 CFs and 40 PAs across the tropics found that CFs perform better in all variables.



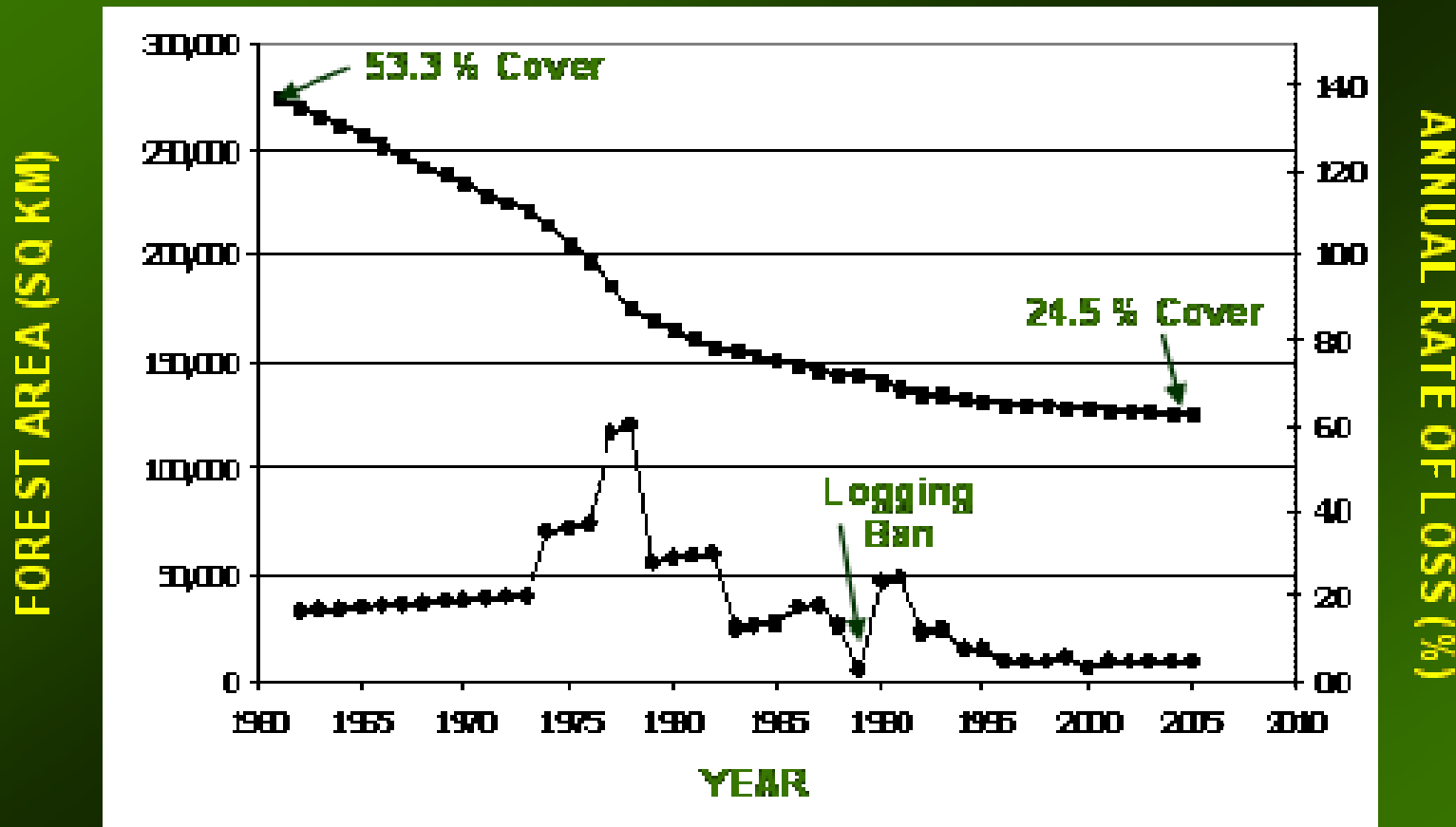
Photo credit: Somying, 2011



Source: *Environment and Poverty Times*, UNEP and GRID Arendal, 2007.

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Forest area in Thailand

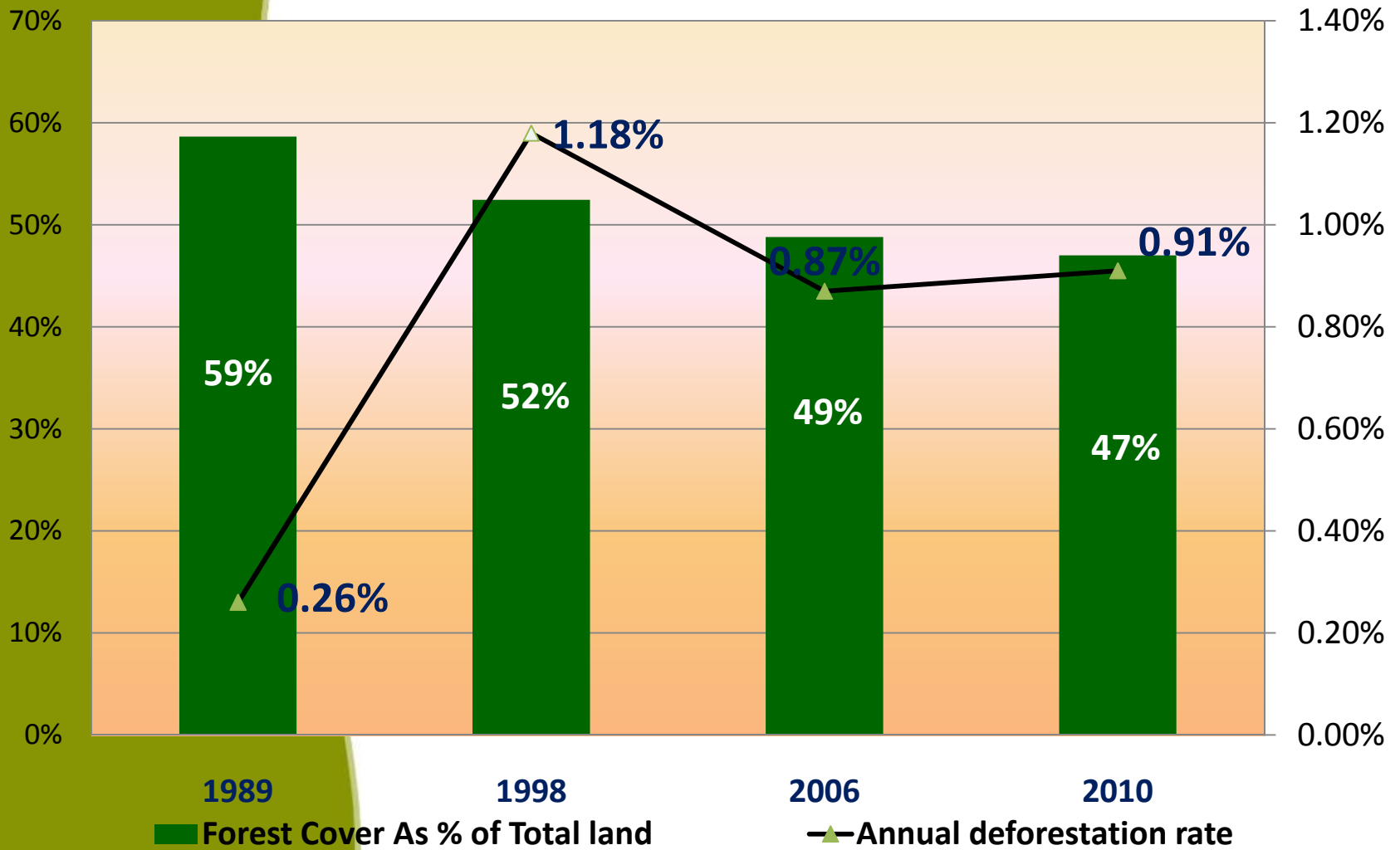


Source: Forest restoration research unit, Chiang Mai University

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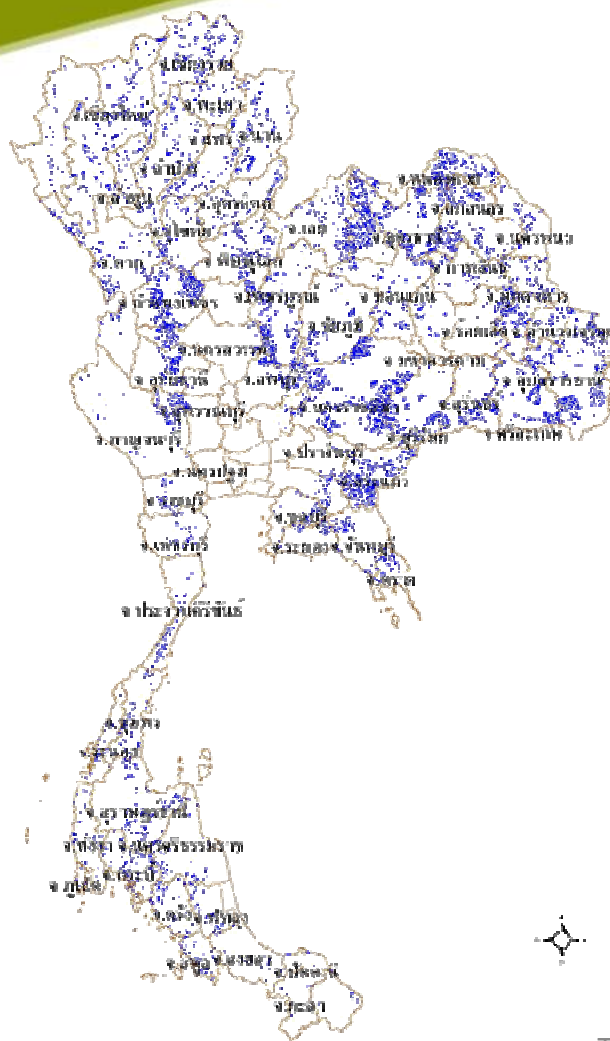
Forest area in Myanmar

1990-2010, annual loss = 372,250 ha (FAO-FRA, 2010)



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Community Forest in Thailand



Map credit: Preecha, 2011

- Officially almost 8,000 registered CFs (CF Management Bureau, 2012) in 8,500 villages
- In reality over 10,000 CF sites (RECOFTC, 2012)
- Data not representing CF in Protected Areas and Wildlife Sanctuary or CF not willing to be registered
- In total, CF area accounted for 1.2% of existing forest area but involved approx. 20 million rural population (FAO, 2007)

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Key characteristics of CFs in Thailand

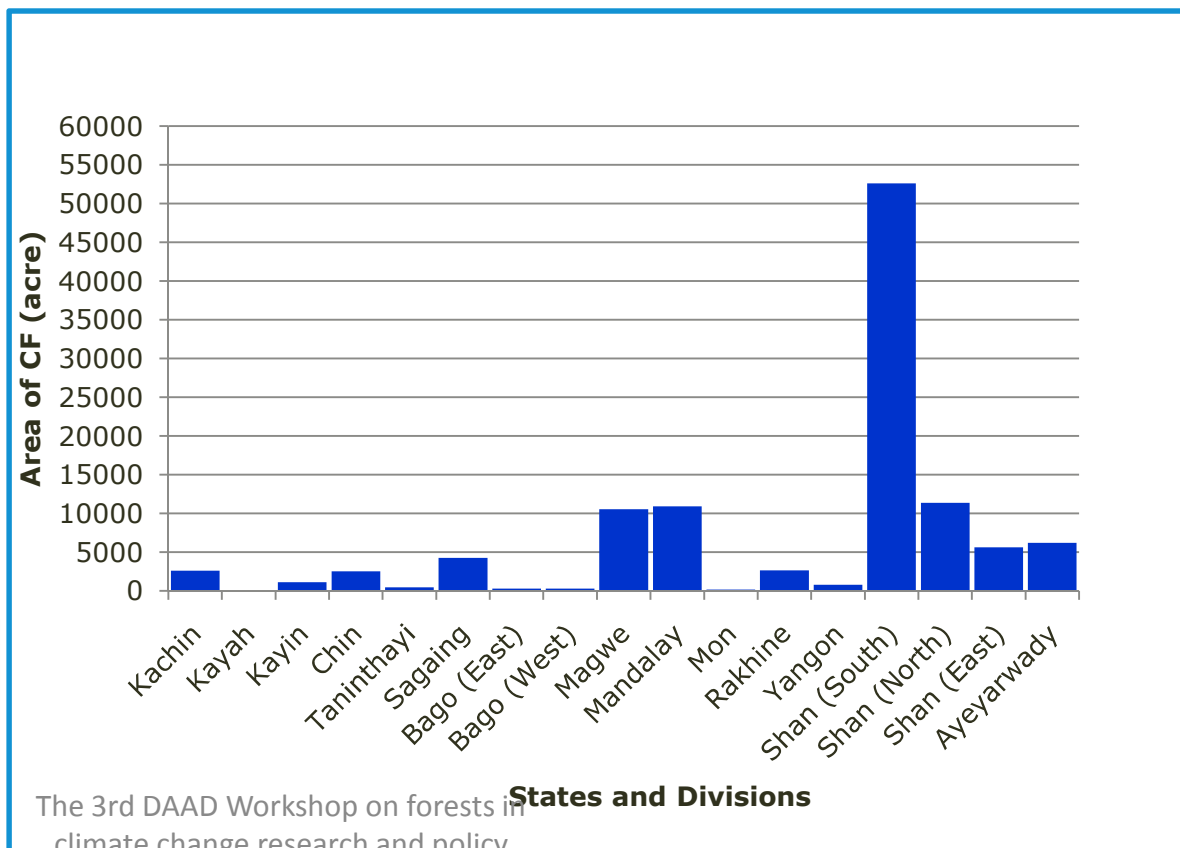
- Locally organized communities sharing access to the same communal forest resources
- CF boundary demarcation (with support from forestry officer, if needed)
- Communally agreed rules on forest access and usufruct rights, including punishment
- Communications of these rules to every household and neighboring communities; putting signs of rules at every entrance of CF
- Structure of CFM (CF Committee / Village Committee / e.g.)
- **Customary management approach (spiritual belief system, social sanction for conflict resolution and punishment, e.g.)**



Community Forest in Myanmar

Total area of community forests = 41,458 ha

Total members of forest user groups = 39,298 groups/communities



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Key characteristics of CFs in Myanmar

- Deforested areas or areas with potentials of satisfying the requirement of forest products for local consumption (tax free)
- Areas suitable for soil and water conservation
- **Areas traditionally managed by local community – spiritual forest**
- The size of land allotted to the members will be determined by government officers
- The duration of land use right is 30 years.
- CF management rules and plan are designed by the government.
- By the end of this period, the land use right can be extended.

Policy and legal framework of CF

Myanmar

Community Forest
Instruction (1995)

Forest policy (1995)

Protection of wildlife and wild
plants and conservation of
natural areas law (1994)

Forest law 1992

Thailand

National Constitution
2007

Decentralization Act
1998

National Forest Policy
1985

National Forest Reserve
Act 1964

Key challenges of CF

Myanmar

- Lack of suitable species
- Only few members know their rights and responsibilities
- Lack of regular monitoring and assessment on CF activities

Thailand

- Insecure tenure and use rights of forest products
- CFM of ethnic minority groups in protected areas not officially recognized
- Lack of Community Forestry Bill

Similar challenges

- Entrenched distrust and perception of forest-dependent communities as custodians of forest among general public and officials
- Lack of confident cooperation between local people and forest officers
- Budget constraints for CF support
- Implementation gap in participatory forest management approach recognized at the constitutional level



Photo credit: Somying, 2011

Connecting CF and REDD+

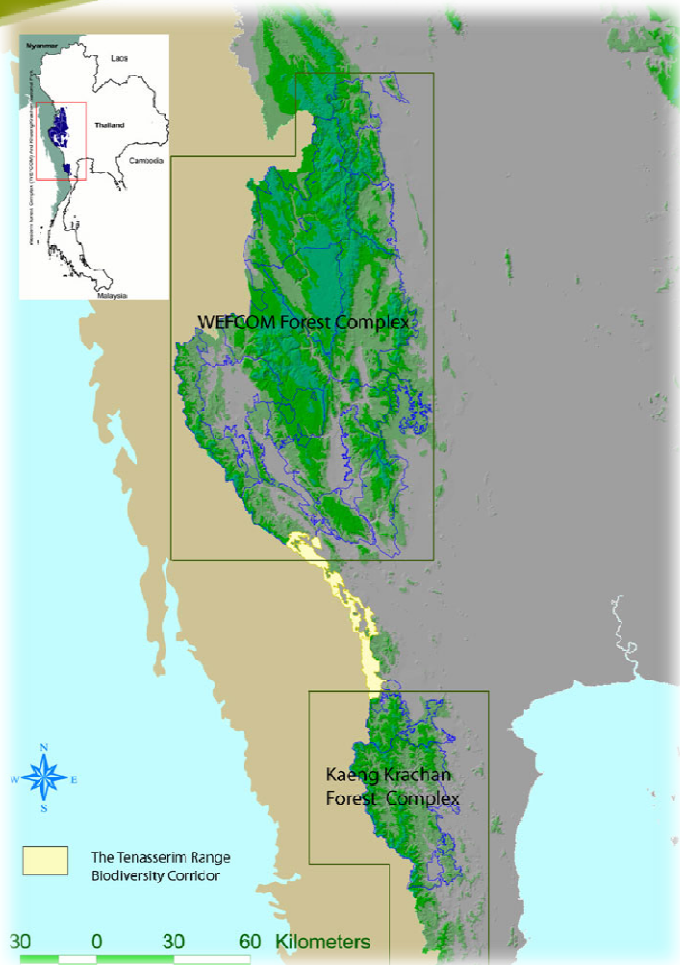
- Definition of forest: a minimum area of land of 0.05 – 1.0 ha with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10–30% with trees with the potential to reach a minimum height of 2 – 5 metres at maturity (Good Practice Guideline for LULUCF, IPCC)
- CF as a strategy for sustainable forest management by Royal Forest Department ← lowest deforestation rate over the past 30 years
- Community's view of forest beyond carbon sink → multifunctional ecosystem and wildlife habitat with traditional customs

REDD+ progress in Thailand

- Participation in Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) initiated by the World Bank in readiness preparation phase → R-PIN submitted in 2010 → \$200,000 approved for R-PP in 2011
- Readiness preparation with bilateral support from Norway government – bilateral REDD+ partnership



Proposed REDD+ approaches in pilot project site



- Capacity building for REDD readiness plan implementation
- Carbon cycle assessment and research in forest sector
- **Participatory multi-stakeholder consultations**
- **Channelling resources to beneficiaries through CBO and Village Fund**
- **Participatory benefit sharing and benefit streams**
- **Zoning of Protected Areas and Forest Researves for livelihood access**
- **Linking livelihood intervention to deforestation avoidance**
- Carbon sequestration through forest restoration and afforestation
- Climate change awareness and disaster preparedness at local level

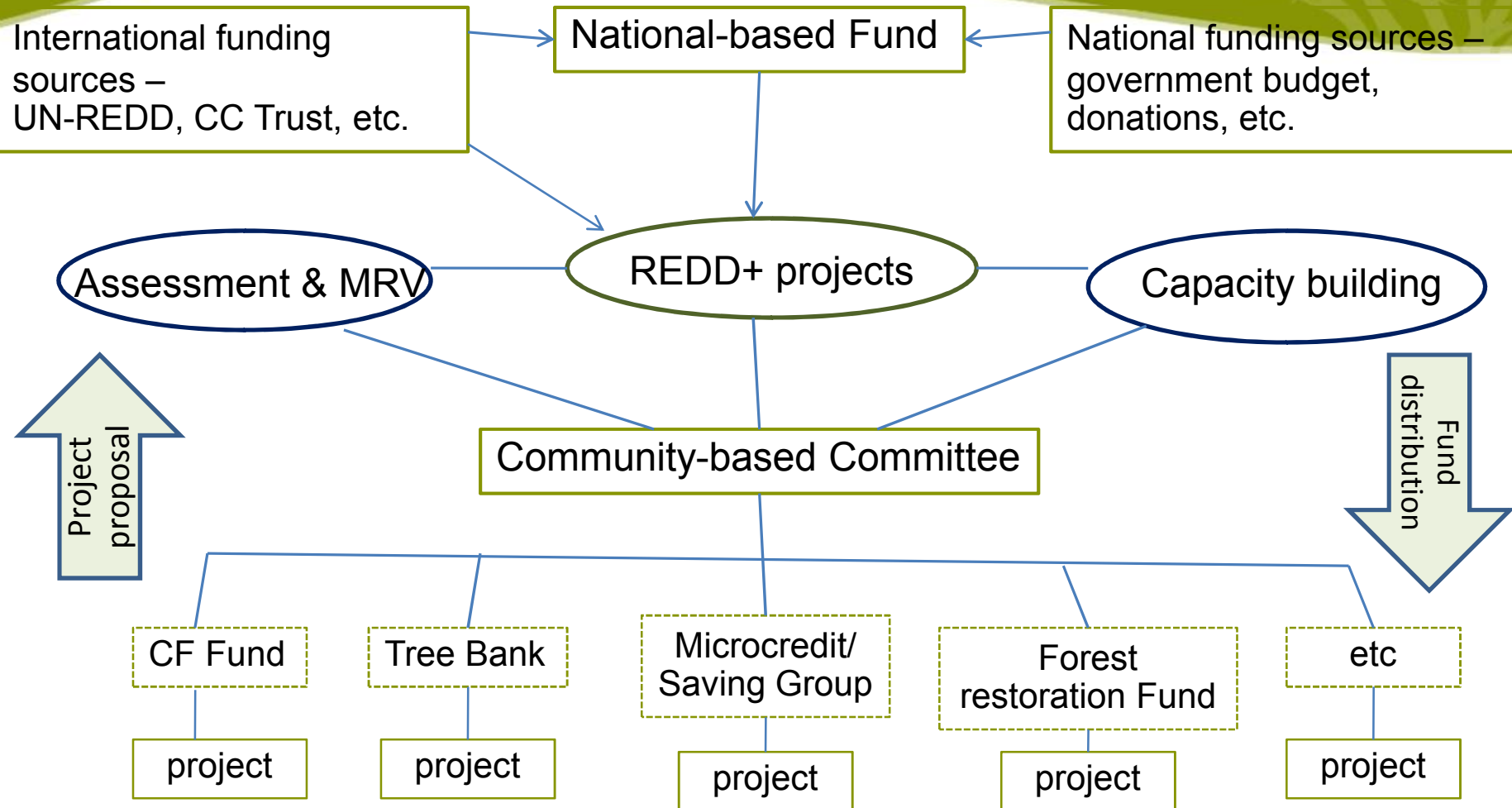
Source: World Conservation Society

REDD+ progress in Myanmar

On-going project for the preparation of REDD+ Readiness

- **Korea Forest Service**
 - Mitigation of climate change impacts through restoration of degraded forests and REDD-plus activities in Bago Yoma Region, Myanmar (2011-12 and 2012-13)
- **Norwegian Government**
 - Myanmar REDD+ Readiness Assessment with the technical support of UNREDD Programme and RECOFTC (9 months)
 - Preparation of REDD+ Readiness Roadmap and National Strategy,
 - Financing for the future
- **Asia Air Survey Co. Ltd.,**
 - The study on the strengthening methodological and technological approaches for reducing deforestation and forest degradation within the REDD implementation framework: application in Myanmar (1 year) (2012-2013)
- **ITTO**
 - Capacity building for developing REDD-plus activities in the context of sustainable forest management (3 years project) 2012-15

Supporting CF through REDD+ financing



Source: Somying et al., 2011

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Potential Risks and Opportunities

Risks

Access and usufruct rights of CF in REDD+ site to collect timber products and wild animal hunting

Intensification of existing CF user groups due to displacement of communities from REDD+ sites

Opportunities

Increase of funding support for CF conservation activities through REDD+

Increase the recognition of CF as a strategy for SFM and forest conservation

Conclusions

- **Sustainable livelihood** income-generating activities to support local communities in CF
- REDD+ must be implemented with **FPIC principles** (Free, Prior, and Informed Consent) among CFs
- REDD+ implementation must respect **traditional system** of forest management
- REDD+ implementation must enhance the **capacity of communities** to participate in the projects and related decision-making process.

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