

การบริหารจัดการโครงการช้างสุรินทร์คืนถิ่น

**The “Elephants Return to Homeland”**

**Project Management for Provincial Economic Development in Surin Province**

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**Executive Summary**

Surin Province is one of the provinces that raise the largest number of elephants in Thailand, e.g., about 1,026 out of the 3825 elephants all over the kingdom. Currently, the families that raise elephants as well as the elephant mahouts or elephant babysitters (ควาญช้าง) are poor. Therefore, they have been riding elephants to places particularly to the big cities to earn their living from selling souvenirs or elephants’ food. This has affected negatively the image of Thailand as a country that loves and respects elephants. There are three problem issues related to elephants’ raising as follows:

1. Elephant mahouts or elephant babysitters do not have sufficient regular income for sustaining the living of their families and themselves.
2. Problems related to the conservation of elephants, sources of food for elephants, insufficient food and plants to feed elephants.
3. Problems related to the conservation of tradition and culture of Guay clan who are local aborigines whose way of life is closely linked with that of the elephants to an extent that they regard elephants as one of their family members.

To solve the above problem situations, Surin Province and Surin Administration has developed the project called ‘Elephants Return to Homeland’ to stimulate the economic growth of Surin Province. The Project has the following objectives:

1. To build up the largest elephant raising village in the world.
  2. To ensure the elephants raisers have the occupation which provide them with sufficient income for their families and which allow them the live happily in their homeland.
  3. To conserve and protect elephants from being abused, to solve the homeless elephants problem in a sustainable manner.
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  5. To revitalize, conserve and develop the natural resources and environment with elephant food plantation.
  6. To conserve the traditional way of living between human beings and elephants and keep the tradition of elephants raising of Guay clan which is the only one unique ethnic group in the world
- The Project ‘Elephants Return to Homeland’ for Suring Development has its goals, procedures and operating budget which can be summarized as follows :

### Goals :

The goals of this Project are (1) to develop the Elephant Village in Surin to become an important tourism and cultural attraction of Surin province; (2) to improve and develop the land area which is the conserved national forestry and public areas around the Elephants Village by plantation and elephants food plantation activities; (3) to attract elephant mahouts with homeless elephants from Surin and Buriram provinces to register for this program; (4) to build the canal and underground wells for elephant food plantation and forestry plantation as well as promote the dry season plantation to the residents of the provinces; (5) to organize elephants' shows about the way of living between men and elephants on a daily basis; (6) to raise fund for elephant, etc.

### Procedures :

1. Organize management activities of the elephant village such as the set up of the Elephant Support Fund to protect and conserve the elephants for sustainable development and the Surin Administration Organization by the Elephant Studies Center to be the main managing organizations

2. Activities that develop the food sources for elephants such as forestry resustenance, tree plantation for elephant habitat and herbs for elephants healing. Other activities to support and promote the neighboring villages and other areas which are suitable along the Moon River to grow plants as elephants' food sources, dam or big irrigation dam construction activities for Chi River and Moon River to keep the water for the project land area as well as build the water distribution system to the Dong Sai Tor Forest and Dong Poo Din Forest; and elephant manure processing for organic fertilizer and Sa paper for handicrafts.

3. Tourism activities promotion of the Elephant village such as the improvement of the Elephant Studies Center at the Ta-klang village, Krapoh Town, Tah Toom District which is both Elephant Studies Center and Museum. The building of shelters for both elephants and for the elephant trainer in the form of elephant village, the building of resort for tourists in the form of home stay hut, the elephants show, souvenirs, OTOP products and activities for conservation of culture, tradition of Guay ethnic group for learning and traveling.

### Budgeting :

The implementation of the 'Elephants Return to Homeland for Surin's Development project which is according to the Master Plan for the world's biggest Elephant Village for 2006 - 2010 will request funding from 4 sources, that is, government support, countries to which Thailand had sent elephants such as Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Japan, Sri Lanka and China; local government support, and various other agencies concerned with elephants. Foundations both local and foreign, and 5-year budget plan for the total amount of 536,500,000 baht. This will be used for the expenses for organizing various activities including the expenses for the village management, expenses for the elephant food plantation, expenses for the support of the neighboring village's activities related to elephant food plantation, costs of dam and Moon river irrigation dam (เขื่อนทดน้ำลำน้ำมูล), Chi river and the maintenance, expenses for the

water transmission to the land area for elephant food plantation, expenses for the shelter construction for both elephants and elephant trainers, expenses for the resort construction, expenses for the infrastructure in the elephant village and the tourists accommodation, expenses for the elephants' manure fertilizer processing and expenses for activities for the field for elephants show and other buildings.

**The 'Elephants Return to Homeland' project has the following policy recommendations :**

1. Improve the efficiency of project management. There should be an improvement, modifications of the Elephant Studies Center from being under the supervision of the Permanent Provincial Administration to become a Special Organization which has its own autonomy in management or become a division or a bureau of the Provincial Administration Organization or determine the form of management by a Project Manager to achieve efficiency and potentials in project administration.

2. Improve the Master Plan for the world's biggest Elephant village for 2006 - 2010 to be the Master Plan as the research conducted and reported jointly by the educational institution and consulting agencies. It should encourage all sectors concerned to have their say in the development of the Master Plan which is standardized and acceptable and reliable. The Master Plan should be updated in term of its operational plan on an annual basis.

3. Increase the number of elephants returning home and limit the homeless elephants according to the Master Plan which indicates 120 - 200 as the target number of returning home elephants each year. This is expected to be through the increasing remuneration to the elephant trainers and increase the elephant foods which should motivate the elephant trainers to bring back the elephants to their home more than it is today.

4. Increase the diverse sources and sufficient quantity of elephants food by developing the elephant food plant system and the elephant food distribution system in the local community.

5. Promote the tourism within the elephant village, Elephant Studies Center and the nearby areas to become the comprehensive tourism area.

6. Surin and the Surin's Provincial Administration organization are the principle in implementation according to the integrated group provincial strategic development plan with the municipality, town administration in all local areas as the second host and which is considered important policies of Surin province.

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