

GROUNDWATER GOVERNANCE IN THAILAND: THE CASE STUDY FROM FIVE GROUNDWATER BASINS

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INTRODUCTION

The Project of Enhancing Groundwater Knowledge and Governance for Sustainable Groundwater Management was initiated by Department of Groundwater Resources (DGR), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in order to investigate and apply a concept of groundwater governance in five selected groundwater basins comprising of Lower Chaophraya basin, Chiang Mai -Lumpoon basin, Udonthani - Sakolnakhon basin, Hat Yai basin, and Rayong basin. In this project, each basin was studied under the collaboration among DGR and five Thai universities which were Chulalongkorn University, Chiang Mai University, Khon Kaen University, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, and Prince of Songkla University. The objectives of this study are 1) to investigate and analyze a suitable approach of groundwater management under a concept of groundwater governance in five groundwater basins; (2) to develop a groundwater network and its database and communication system; (3) to enhance and promote groundwater knowledges; and (4) to propose a strategic and action plan for developing groundwater network.

This research utilized questionnaires and focus group meetings to obtain responses from groundwater users and related stakeholders and agencies in Thailand. In-depth and semi-structured interviews of key informants were also included in order to examine real insider perceptions as it is meaningful properties of the social reality and find a better way to create a groundwater network and sustainable groundwater management.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study suggests that in order to strengthen groundwater governance in Thailand, more adaptive and flexible management and participatory approach which is appropriate for each groundwater basin should be applied and studied in every basin and sub-basin. However, the improvement of groundwater database, as well as, laws and regulations regarding groundwater well drilling permissions, groundwater conservation recharge are required to support better groundwater management in each area. Finally, enhancing groundwater network and participation; and knowledge dissemination is essential to support sustainable groundwater management under the governance perspective in Thailand.

