

Thailand's Ngao Model Forest, Lampang Province

Community by community, Thailand's Ngao Model Forest is **restoring** the landscape and **adapting** to the risks of climate change.



Member since
2000



Area
175,159 ha



Villages
85 villages • 10 sub-districts



People
58,000+

Three ethnic communities – **Mien, Karen, and Akha** – govern this landscape together.

Restoration success

60%+

forest cover maintained across the landscape

Through an integrated governance model spanning Protected Areas, National Forest Reserves, and 58 community forests, the Ngao Model Forest has sustained forest cover while actively reversing land degradation.

58 community forests established under the Ngao Model Forest

Each one plays a direct role in landscape-wide fire control, early-warning systems, and coordinated forest protection.

Restoration in action

Bamboo, medicinal plants, and edible insect enterprises are **diversifying community income** and reducing pressure on the forest.

Research partnerships with Maejo University and Lampang Rajabhat University are advancing **bio-circular economies, sustainable harvesting, and poverty alleviation**.

The Ngao Forest Association — backed by Thailand's Royal Forest Department — ensures a **voluntary, community-led governance model** rooted in trust and local buy-in.

Meeting global restoration goals



The Ngao Model Forest is a **working proof point** that local governance can translate global ambition into landscape results:



Fire-risk reduction at scale

58 community forests coordinate prevention and response across **175,000+** hectares.



Watershed protection:

Sustained forest cover stabilises soils and regulates water flows, protecting rural settlements and agricultural land from flooding and extreme weather.



Carbon storage:

Forest conservation and NTFP-based livelihoods support long-term carbon sequestration, contributing to Thailand's goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 under the Paris Agreement.



Regional leadership:

As part of the Regional Model Forest Network Asia, Ngao connects local action to regional conservation priorities through partnerships with IUCN and CIFOR-ICRAF.



Outcomes trackable:

Progress is documented through tools like the IMFN's Restoration Barometer, which tracks restoration progress against 8 key indicators.



The IMFN acts as a bridge, connecting global goals to local impact, and local innovation to global progress.

Pierre-Jonathan Teasdale
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