

OTOP, a national development strategy for prospecting and internationalization of traditional products: cases from the northeast of Thailand. (Oral Presentation)

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Introduction

Traditional knowledge and use of biodiversity, such as collection of non-timber forest products, has considerable potential to improve rural economies and contribute to conservation in developing countries. This case study from Thailand concerns a national development strategy, called OTO, which focuses on product development based on local tradition and biodiversity.

Objectives

To determine the main aims of the OTO programme and evaluate the results of implementation in two OTO case species, krachai dam, *Kaempheria parviflora* and sathon, *Millettia utilis*.

Methods

The origin, use and local OTO production for both species are documented. The fieldwork was done in Na Haeo sub-district, Northeast of Thailand. Methodology consisted of semi-structured interviews, along with a transect study and market investigations were done.

Results

The OTO programme started 2001 with the intention to create employment and strengthen rural economies. One aim is to develop standardized, continuous and consistent high quality products to be sold at international markets. The national income from sale of OTO products has increased rapidly in short time. Krachai dam is a medicinal herb of Chinese origin cultivated in fields and home gardens, but not found in the wild in Na Haeo. In Bung village three krachai dam OTO beverages are produced: tea, wine and liquor. Three other products derived from the herb are also made. In total 88 people are employed in krachai dam OTO production. Sathon is a tree, and the leaves are used for making a flavouring sauce for cooking. The sathon sauce is the only OTO product made from the sathon tree. The local management appears to be sustainable due to the semi-domestication of sathon. Only krachai dam OTO products are sold at central markets. For both species the sale does not bring high income.

Conclusion

The OTO programme has considerable potential for beneficiaries, both economical and developmental as well as contributing to conservation. Cultivation of popular NTFP species releases the pressure on the wild populations, especially multipurpose species. Still improvements are needed to meet the quality requirements for large scale production and international markets. The involvement of local communities in protection and sustainable use is important to improve management plans and contribute to stabilizing the forest resource.

Keywords: traditional knowledge, biodiversity

Selected References

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