

## **CHARM: COASTAL HABITATS AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT A NATIONAL CO-MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE IN THAILAND**

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Following the European Commission –Thai Senior Officer Meeting held in Bangkok in July 1998, a concept paper was developed based on existing EC-Thailand cooperation, which outlined a Coastal Habitats and Resources Management project (CHARM) accepted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives (MOAC) and then submitted to the EC as a pre-proposal document in February 1999. In July and August 1999 a preparation mission was fielded in order to make a more detailed examination of the complex issues and problems to be addressed by the proposed Project. Based on the outcomes of the preparation mission and the guidelines of the activities from the project dossier prepared by Thai officers, the Financing Agreement between the European Community and the Kingdom of Thailand was signed in 2001 and the Department of Fisheries from MOAC was designated Leading Agency of the Project. The CHARM Project has made of the main issues identified by the preparation mission (lack of horizontal and vertical integration, insufficient community and private sector ownership, lack of human resources capacity, lack of basic information for decision-making) its main components for the promotion of a co-management approach at the national, provincial and local levels, where institutional arrangements and technical operations will be tested into two pilot areas, Phang Nga Bay on the Andaman Sea and Ban Don Bay on the Gulf of Thailand. While the CHARM Project builds on the so-called Community-Based Coastal Resources Management or Locally-based Coastal Resources Management experiences, it seeks to enlarge the scope to the provincial and national levels in order to involve all the concerned stakeholders, from local communities to the central government (bottom up). Such an ambitious goal entails the CHARM Project to develop an institutional strategy, strengthening the institutional capacity for more coordinated planning, management and information transfer in central government with the advisory activities of the Project Management Unit (PMU), whilst catalysing better vertical integration through the linkage with the Field Management Offices (FMO) and counterpart organizations (top down). The organization structure of the Project has thus been thought to tackle this two-track (bottom up / top down) approach strategy.