

Centre for Tropical Ecosystems Research Aarhus University, Denmark (cenTER Aarhus)



Background & Objectives

The Centre for Tropical Ecosystems Research at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, has been operating since 1995. In 2001 the Senate at the University of Aarhus approved a set of statutes creating a "Centre for Tropical Ecosystems Research" (cenTER Aarhus). cenTER Aarhus has an advisory board. The day-to-day management is carried out by the cenTER Director and cenTER Manager.

At cenTER, we have continued to develop our strengths within tropical coastal ecosystems research, and particularly within our core field of mangrove ecology and management:

- Our *long term* goal is to be recognized as a centre of excellence for mangroves and associated coastal ecosystems, both within Denmark, and internationally.
- Our *objective* is also to serve as a catalyst for new activities within the broader field of Environment and Development on behalf of University of Aarhus, and to embed cenTER's work firmly within the university's educational and research frameworks and development plan.

Our strategy in the *medium term* is to strengthen our involvement in tropical coastal ecosystems research by gaining first hand knowledge of more tropical countries where mangroves are an important natural resource and to involve the social scientists, economists and other key research groups at the University of Aarhus in some of our research related to mangrove use and co-management by coastal communities. At the same time, we are very conscious of recent developments in research within the fields of coastal zone management and biodiversity protection in Europe, so it is also important that we continue to participate in other Danish and European research activities and maintain good links to other European centres, as well as to the tropical regions of the world.



Resource Management

cenTER is working in the field of resource management in the tropics. Our focus is on sustainable management of the dwindling mangrove resources in SE Asia. During the last decades the mangrove area in SE Asia has declined about 60%. This loss has been attributed mainly to clearing for shrimp and other types of aquaculture, however rice-production and urban and tourism development has also been a major factor in the loss of mangrove ecosystems. The effect on artisanal fisheries has been severely negative.

Recently cenTER is currently providing the coordinator for the *Mangroves for the Future Initiative* (MFF). MFF is a multi-agency, multi-country initiative for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, coral reefs, wetlands, forests, lagoons, estuaries, beaches and sandy shores. It covers ten tsunami-affected countries in South and Southeast Asia and the Western Indian Ocean. The initiative involves collaboration between multiple partners, including government agencies, NGOs and CBOs, research institutes and universities, UN agencies and other multilateral bodies.

In Vietnam, cenTER provided the long term advisor and some short term consultants to the Danida funded "Marine Protected Areas Network" Project (MPA). The purpose of the MPA Project was to try and regenerate the coral ecosystem and the fish population, which have been heavily impacted by human activities. Finally the Danida Funded "Cantho University - Aarhus University Link in Environmental Science Project" had a resident Danish Advisor based in Can Tho City in the Lower Mekong Delta, Vietnam. The focus of the CAULES Project was to develop an MSc program in Environmental Science at Can Tho University as well as upgrade the human capital and physical facilities at the University.



Capacity Development & Training

An old Chinese proverb says “If you give a man a fish he will eat for a day. If you teach a man to fish he will eat for a lifetime. If you teach a child to fish he may feed the world”. In all our development projects we have a component of capacity development and training of local people. Our focus is to provide formal education as well as raise awareness on environmental issues and good practices of resource management. Our training is – whenever possible - based on case studies from the region in which we are working. We use interactive training methods, e.g. field-trips, discussion classes and mini-project approaches.

Currently we can offer block courses in Coastal Zone Management; Mangrove Management; Tropical Ecosystems – Management and Development; in addition to tailor-made courses.



Recent Projects

- Mangroves for the Future (multi-donor funded)
- Cantho University – Aarhus University Link in Environmental Science Project (Danida Funded).
- Principles for a Code of Conduct for the Management and Sustainable Use of Mangrove Ecosystems (World Bank Funded).
- Support to the Marine Protected Area Network in Vietnam (Danida Funded).
- KNOWFISH: Knowledge base for fisheries management (EU INCO-DEV Funded)



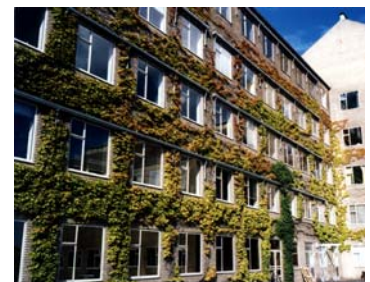
Customers & Partners

Our main customers include the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida), as well as the World Bank, the EU and other international donor organisations.

The Centre is working closely with a number of **Danish** Governmental Agencies (National Environmental Research Institute and Danish Institute for Fisheries Research), Danish Universities (Copenhagen University, Aalborg University, Roskilde University), NGO's (Danish Red Cross) and others (NIRAS, Institute for Fisheries Management and Coastal Community Development). In the **SE Asian** region we collaborate with – **Vietnam** - Ministry of Fisheries (Hanoi), Can Tho University (Mekong Delta), National University (Hanoi), Quang Nam Province and - **Thailand** - Kasetsart University, Asian Institute of Technology, Royal Forest Department, Thai Environment Institute as well as **Regionally** - UNESCO Man and Biosphere Program, Network of Aquaculture Centres in Asia-Pacific, IUCN, UNDOP plus various governmental departments, Universities and NGOs in the Asian region.

Location

cenTER is located on the beautiful Campus of the University of Aarhus. cenTER has an Asian office in connection with the MFF Project office at IUCN Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand. Field offices in Ranong, Thailand and at Cantho University in the Mekong delta, Vietnam.



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