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**“Resource Management:
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Sustainable Highland Development in Northern Thailand under the Royal Project Foundation

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Abstract

The highlands of Thailand lie mainly in northern region. In the past, agricultural practices in this area were traditionally for subsistence food production under shifting cultivation systems. Since 1969 the Royal Project (now the Royal Project Foundation) was established under the initiative of His Majesty the King to launch its mission in collaboration with the Royal Thai Government, foreign governments, universities, public and private agencies and volunteers.

The major activities of the Royal Project are including

- 1) **research**-on various fields such as crops (vegetables, temperate fruits, cut flowers, field crops etc.) forestry, livestock, fisheries (Goettingen University is actively involved with rainbow trout farming project) and postharvest technology
- 2) **agriculture extension and development**-the appropriated cash crops and agricultural technologies derived from research have been introduced to the hilltribe people in the 36 Royal Project Development Centres located in 5 Provinces of northern Thailand namely Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lamphun, Mae Hogn Son and Phayao. The intensive efforts have been made to develop the necessary infrastructure, e.g. village roads, irrigation systems and village electricity. The improvement of watershed areas through proper land use planning and management and soil conservation practices has also been carried out in the already slash and burn areas.
- 3) **Socioeconomic activities**-the hilltribe people in the project areas are motivated to form self-help organizations particularly production groups, village committees and co-operatives. The promotion of education and public health care have also been carried out in the project areas. Finally, marketing one of the most significant of the Royal Project's activities has been run to distribute the products of the hilltribe farmers to the markets and consumers. Through these activities the Royal Project in 1988 had the great satisfaction of seeing its efforts recognized and honored in being awarded the Magsaysay Award in the category of international understanding.