



BIOLOGISK INSTITUT

DET NATURVIDENSKABELIGE FAKULTET
AARHUS UNIVERSITET

TROPICAL MARINE MOLLUSC PROGRAMME (TMMP)

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Tropical Marine Mollusc Programme, TMMP

Funded by: Danida (in total DKK 14 million) covering the Southeast Asian Region.

Initiated by: Dr Jørgen Hylleberg and implemented by Dr J. Hylleberg and staff from Marine Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Aarhus.

Countries: Southeast Asia region

Phuket Marine Biological Center (PMBC) was established in 1968 as a joint Thai-Danish activity. The marine fauna of Thailand, particularly in the Andaman Sea, was poorly known at that time and very few publications on this topic were available. Many of the species were undescribed - even larger animals such as fish, molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms and those organisms that were so often proved impossible to identify, which is necessary for nearly all types of biological work. Dr Jørgen Hylleberg (Marine Ecology, Department of Biological Sciences, AU) was the driving force behind the establishment and continuous development of the so-called Reference Collection at PMBC.

TMMP was established by Jørgen Hylleberg in 1990, after many years of co-operation between PMBC and the University of Aarhus. India and Indonesia also joined TMMP within a few years, as did Cambodia and Vietnam in 1999. The programme started on a small scale and expanded successively

The aim of TMMP was to build strong research foundations, including scientific infrastructure, in the member countries through enhancement of research capacity. It means strengthening of research capacity in general and in mollusc biology and aquaculture in particular.

Implementation involved yearly meetings bringing people together for the purpose of exchange of research findings and subsequent publication in English. The yearly congresses and workshops were very much appreciated by the participants and facilitated communication among the 22 countries and nearly 60 institutions working together within the TMMP. The results of the research of each TMMP participant were presented at the congresses and workshops in the form of a talk in front of an international auditorium. Thereafter a manuscript was submitted to the editor of the proceedings volume. Each congress and

workshop was followed by an excursion for a few days. These excursions were important because they made it possible to see various coastal habitats, research institutes and facilities. They also facilitated the establishment of personal contacts in a friendly and informal way. Much information was transferred and many ideas and new projects were planned during these excursions.

Over the years it has supported a large number of counterparts in South East Asia in various aspects of mollusc research. Thus strong scientific relations have been built up among individuals, universities, research institutions and environmental agencies, not only Europe-Asia but not least among the countries in South East Asia.

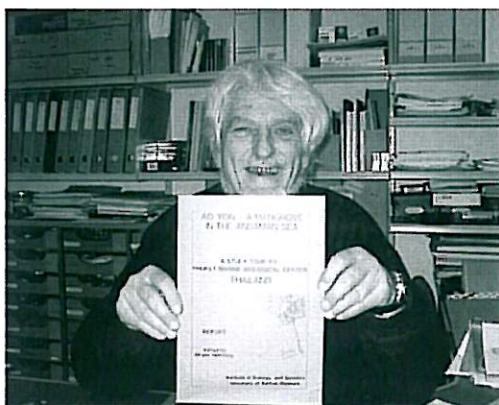
H.R.H. Princess Chulabhorn of Thailand said: ". . . *scientific development is a key factor for national prosperity and is necessary not only for Thailand but also for every other country in the world*".

Education and research are not isolated activities but must be handled as a system. Higher education (M.Sc. or Ph.D.) must therefore be followed by research co-operation. "The International M.Sc. and Ph.D. Programme in Marine Science" and TMMP have formally been separate projects, but there has been much co-ordination between them. It can often be difficult to find good applicants for higher education but the research co-operation programme, TMMP, has been a good recruitment instrument of young talented scientists that could apply for M.Sc. studies. After completed education TMMP has also provided a follow-up for many of the former M.Sc. students. The TMMP has offered a wide spectrum of activities, such as training and education, research, international research co-operation, attending international symposia, and publication in international journal. All these links in the chain are often difficult to master for the individual scientist in these countries, particularly for young scientists. This system of programmes has been a success in all respects, and shows the need for this kind of long-time co-operation when research capacity should be built up.

Research capacity building is always a process with much individual co-operation and interaction from person to person. Consequently, such projects can't be too big if they are to be effective, but need to remain relatively small. The only disadvantage is that many small projects give DANIDA much more work, administration, higher costs and problems with co-ordination, but also these higher costs should be accepted, because they will pay back.

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Dr Jørgen Hylleberg - the founder of the TMMP programme.



The almost unknown large muricid snail *Chicoreus ramosus* was selected as the target species for research at the beginning of the programme, and invaluable knowledge about this species has accumulated over time with dozens of publications covering many aspects of its life.



Proceedings of the Tropical Marine Mollusc Programme

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