

Thailand is in the process of rapid development especially on industrial sector. At the same time government is also using Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as a measure to control, protect and rectify the environmental problems. It is a necessity for the country to speeding up the economic development along with the environmental protection.

At present, EIA system in Thailand is restricted only among implementing agencies, Consultant companies registered to the National Environmental Board (NEB) and project owners. Public, especially those who are affected by the activity/project often do not know the situation because of the lack of information. These caused a lot of conflicts which inturn delayed the project progressive. In developed countries, all information has to be distributed to the people for their understanding as well as giving them a chance to decide on the progress of the project along with the project owner.

This study believes that public participation can make the EIA system work more effectively and more acceptable. So the study is concentrated in interviewing the target groups of the awareness of EIA process. The target groups are categorized as : Project owners, Consultant companies registered to NEB, Personnel who review the EIA reports, Nongovernmental organization groups (NGO<sub>s</sub>) interested in this field, Government Agencies who permit the project and public.

Result of the study shows that target groups understand the objective of EIA and accept that EIA is a good system and should be continued in the future. But they suggested that the present system has to be modified in some section and should be improved for the better application.

About the procedure of EIA, target groups especially public and NGO<sub>s</sub> have very little knowledge in this part. Because of the lack of basic information and technical background it causes a lot of difficulty for the target group to be able to understand the EIA procedure.

The attitude of the target groups about allowing the public to involve in EIA system, they agreed in the concept but have recommended that research is needed on the readiness of public before allowing public to involve in EIA system. There should also be a good measure to prevent some problems that would occur after public involvement.

The recommendation of this studies is that, before allowing public to involve in the EIA system, some modifications should be done as follows :

1. Provide the proper knowledge concerning the environment and environmental protection to the public.
2. Provide the knowledge of the procedure of EIA system to the public.

3. Allocate the necessary finance and qualified personnel to the Government Agencies permitting the project.

4. Improve and rectify the present practice laws about the environment.

5. Disseminate more information to the public.

After the above modifications have been achieved, public should be evaluated again to see the readiness. If the public is ready, public hearing process should be set as a main involvement method of EIA system.