

**Progress in Biodiversity Conservation Initiative for Xe Pian-Dong Hua Sao, Lao PDR
Sub-regional BCI Workshop, Bangkok,
15-16 September 2008**

Location of the Piloting Site

Laos is a global biodiversity hotspot. This means biodiversity is very high but also threatened. This project operates in a part of southern Laos located within the Tri-Border Forests landscape of Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. The current pilot phase of the corridor is working in 11 villages in Patoumphone District of Champasak Province, connecting Xe Pian and Dong Hou Sao National Protected Areas (NPA). The goals are to restore the ecological integrity of the forest landscape through sustainable poverty-alleviation activities and improved management of the land between the NPAs. The project is jointly implemented by the Water Resources and Environment Agency, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, WWF and IUCN.

Achievements to Date (August 2008) of Project Implementation

Poverty alleviation/livelihood improvement: Village Investment Plans were developed. These official documents are for implementation of project activities, leading to a range of livelihood activities and the establishment of village development funds (VDF) for six villages, with the remaining five VDF's still in process. Small village infrastructure support has also been provided.

Harmonized land management: Land use analysis has been updated where information was needed. Forest cover was analyzed, helping to draft corridors maps. A process of district integrated spatial planning is being prepared, with the corridor being positioned as a institution of influence.

Restoration ecosystem connectivity: Forest land of 909 ha has been identified as potential areas for restoration. Enrichment planting using native species and natural regeneration has been initiated in the priority area. A wildlife and habitat survey in the corridor was carried out.

Capacity building: Training on several topics has been conducted for 57 government staff and 527 villagers. Study tours were conducted with 18 government staff and 39 villagers.

Sustainable financing: A study was carried out on SF options, focusing on payment for ecosystem services. Recommendations from the study are integrated into the project work plan.

Challenges

- More villages (over 36 villages) located in the corridor area need support but under BCI only 11 receive direct benefits from the project;
- Other development plans in the corridor are not always compatible with the maintenance of forest connectivity, requiring awareness raising and negotiation and how do we engage with other relevance sectors;
- Confusion persists over village demarcation and boundaries and access to resources; this is an opportunity for the project, as well as a challenge;

- Current we are using include supporting LUP within the District and Province, analyzing the economics of Land Use Change. How can we promote best practice in other sectors.
- We have been asked whether we can assist with capacity building to evaluate EIAs;
- Measuring impact of livelihood intervention.

Regulation Framework on BCI Establishment

All relevance existing documents relating to BCI establishment are being reviewed. BCI vision has been consensus at provincial level and corridors maps are being drafted. The project is being engaged with preparation for drafting Regulation on Corridors Establishment and Management. Beside that the prime minister decree on sustainable management of production forest area (PFA) and ministry regulation on establishment and sustainable management of PFA have been released and are in progress of implementation.