

# **Integrating conservation and development at the landscape scale in the lower Mekong countries**



**Workshop summary Mondulkiri**  
(Mondulkiri, Cambodia)

**4-7 September 2006**

**Organized by WWF, WCS and CIFOR**  
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## Schedule

Day one 4 Sept 2006	Day two 5 Sept 2006	Day three 6 Sept 2006	Day four 6 Sept 2006
Presentation Jeff Sayer, WWF International Introduction "Conservation and development trade offs-lessons learned and innovative approaches in the lower Mekong countries"	Presentation Seng Teak, WWF Greater Mekong "Cambodia's eastern plains landscape: WWF's large scale conservation approach"	Field trip to village	Presentation Terry Sunderland, CIFOR Indonesia "ICDPs: an overview"
Planning discussion for the week	Presentation Joe Walston/Tom Evans WCS Cambodia "Southern Mondulkiri"	Presentation Eric Meusch, WWF Laos "Aquatic resource management to improve rural livelihoods"	Tom Clements, WCS Cambodia "Northern plains of Cambodia"
	Group activities- visioning, tracking outcomes, historical trends analysis	Exercise: How can this project help existing projects? What are the key questions or tools that would be helpful to you in your project?	Wrap up
	Presentation Marieke Sandker, CIFOR Cameroon "Introduction to STELLA"		

All presentations are available from Karah Wertz at CIFOR

## **Objective of the Workshop**

Several conservation organisations (and the development assistance agencies that support them) are engaged in interventions with the twin goals of supporting environmental conservation and improving local livelihoods in the three countries of the Lower Mekong region. A newly launched three-year project that will be implemented by CIFOR with funding from the MacArthur Foundation, will be researching the synergies and trade-offs between conservation and development outcomes in three countries in the Lower Mekong (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos). To launch this project, two inception workshops were held in Cambodia and Vietnam in September 2006; the first was held with partners from WWF and WCS Laos and Cambodia in Mondulhiri, Cambodia September 4-6, 2006. The objective of the Mondulhiri meeting was to bring together people involved in these conservation and development initiatives in Cambodia to begin a process of learning lessons and testing innovative approaches to increase the impact of these interventions.

## **Workshop format**

It was decided that the format of the workshop be kept informal to take into account the needs of the group and to accommodate serendipitous ideas and directions the interactions and presentations may generate. The schedule that was planned as on page one of this report. It was emphasised that this is a fluid experience- the agenda was by no means set in stone and participants were gathered to explore what is being done in Vietnam in terms of conservation and development projects and how there could be possible synergies between the project and the groups represented here.

## **Day one**

### ***Introduction***

Presentation: Jeff Sayer

“Conservation and development trade offs-lessons learned and innovative approaches in the Lower Mekong countries”

CIFOR and WWF are looking at conservation and development issues, trying to understand how to attain better conservation and livelihood outcomes, working in large scale landscapes. A comprehensive review in the landscape approach was provided, setting the scene for the introduction of the CIFOR-led project funded by the MacArthur Foundation; “Losing less and winning more; looking beyond the trade-offs in conservation and development in the Lower Mekong”.

The objective of our project is to review experiences of large scale conservation and development interventions in the Lower Mekong, understanding what works and what does not and under what circumstances? The intention is to develop a typology of approaches and try some approaches/tools in the Lower Mekong. The project plans for a two year study with follow up in each of the three target countries; Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. This workshop will begin the process by developing some

principles or guidelines and allowing the participants to share their work at both the landscape level and integrating conservation and development.

Jeff's presentation introduced some of the techniques that will be used by the project such as historical analysis, participatory mapping, tracking outcomes at the landscape level using an assets-based approach and participatory modelling.

## **Day two**

### ***Presentation: Seng Teak, WWF Greater Mekong***

“Cambodia's eastern plains landscape-WWF's large scale conservation approach”

The Eastern Plains landscape is one of five priority landscapes in the Lower Mekong Dry Forests Ecosystem identified by WWF.

Special characteristics:

- Large, intact landscape block;
- Wide range of habitats from lowland deciduous dipterocarp forest at 100 m altitude through mixed deciduous and semi-evergreen lowland forests to montane evergreen forests above 1000 m. Wetlands include headwater streams, a major river (the Srepok) and many lakes and pools.
- Populations of species already lost in many parts of Cambodia and the region survive here because of large area of intact habitat
- 5 areas under protection (1 million+ ha);
- One of largest protected area complexes in Asia;
- Supports exceptional bird and mammal populations

Srepok Wilderness Area (SWA) Project: Using Wildlife Ecotourism for Sustainable Resource Management in Monduliri Protected Forest

Vision: “To restore to its natural state an area of the Dry Forests Ecoregion, to protect and support representative and viable populations of the indigenous wildlife, and through its sustainable use provide a widely recognised contribution to the economy of Monduliri Province and the well being of communities in the region”

### ***Presentation: Joe Walston and Tom Evans, WCS Cambodia***

“A vision for the future of southern Monduliri”

Seima Biodiversity Conservation Area, Monduliri Protected Forests and Phnom Prich Wildlife Sanctuary are within the landscape

This region of Eastern Cambodia has been somewhat neglected by conservation and development initiatives. It is an area of high biodiversity with a number of ecologically important ecosystems and an impressive collection of large bovines, ungulates and carnivores. However, the forest is also a source of income, particularly for the Phnong people of the region who rely on NTFPs, particularly the sale of resin (*Dipterocarpus albus*). However, external influences, such as increased migration, are resulting in a corresponding increase in small-scale agriculture, hunting, illegal logging and plantation development, particularly of pines. WCS is working closely

with the Government of Cambodia at both the national and provincial levels on developing a land-use strategy for the region. They are taking a more innovative approach than just creating a national park level protected area and are integrating a wide range of land uses within the landscape.

## **Group activities**

### **Visioning**

*Imagine the scenarios and trajectories for landscapes and people in 15 years, including opportunities and drivers*

The participants of the workshop were split into groups; “optimists” and “pessimists”, and each group discussion future scenarios for both the landscape and for local people. It was an interesting exercise that created significant debate amongst the two groups. In general, deforestation was not seen as a huge pressure and road building and economic growth in China are some of the elements seen as problematic for conservation. It was difficult for either group to find positive drivers of development, but some were mentioned, including government will and pride in conserving species and current political stability.

### **Landscape modelling**

*Starting the scenarios...interactive STELLA demonstration with Marieke Sandker*

STELLA is a modelling program used to make a model of the landscape taking in account driving forces, outcomes, and opportunities (for more information about STELLA refer to presentation below or contact Marieke Sandker.)

The elements that can be included in the model: land cover, population, mining land tenure, economic investment, biodiversity, governance, illegal hunting and fishing mining, tourism forestry operation education health and infrastructure, small scale logging, different types of forests and land use (see table below). In short, all elements that describe the situation of local development and biodiversity conservation in the landscape are defined in the model.

The objective of the modelling is to get a better comprehension of the trade-offs and synergies between conservation and development. Defining these in the model forces the experts to make their assumptions explicit, facilitating discussion on different strategies in NRM.

Some points that arose:

The potential level of detail is almost infinite- this should be considered carefully by the user, not going into more detail that they have time for or that is really necessary.

How do you supply a value for your variables? How do you evaluate this? Actual numbers are somewhat arbitrary. Of course it is not possible to actually measure “governance” but it is possible to define specific laws; if there is good governance, x law will happen, if bad then y will. It is important to remember that the model is an exploratory tool; it can be used to try out different scenarios, but not as a predictive model.

## Historical trends analysis

The historical trends analysis exercise provided a very comprehensive summary of the historical events that have occurred in the Monduliri landscape.

**1880-1954:** Mostly forests and upland grasslands, no good early data on wildlife  
The country was part of a French colony: Indo-China  
Phnong were already present; the region was characterised by A low population density, swidden and forest products  
Only one road, no plantations  
Changing national borders  
Khmerisation begun, not on a large scale  
ca. 1-2 people per sq km

**1954-1970:** mostly forest and upland grasslands some wildlife declines  
Few good early data on wildlife  
Sihanouk period  
Fixed international border  
Creation of provincial units  
Establish national dept of forests and hunting  
National parks established

**1970- 1975:** little change in vegetation cover- wildlife declines  
Lon Nol period (pro American)  
National civil unrest worsens- overspill of conflict in Vietnam  
Khmer Rouge takes over province and then country  
Roads built for HCM trail  
Increased hunting and trade

**1975-1979:** local increases, clearance. Wildlife declines in some areas and increases in others  
Dolphins collapse  
Khmer Rouge  
Genocidal Maoists  
Forced migration to Koh Nyele District  
Massive mortality  
Khmer in-migration from Phnom Penh  
Logging and wildlife trade to China  
Organised bushmeat hunting  
Some areas with less hunting pressure  
Lots of guns.

**1979-1989:** vegetation cover still high, but some decline, some wildlife decline  
Republic of Cambodia (DRK)  
Everything started new. Roads still awful.  
Serious insecurity, chaos  
Khmer to the lowlands  
Phnong back to old villages (but slowly)  
Vietnamese loggers  
Fishing and hunting increasing (trade driven)

Population at its lowest level? Begins to rise (births and migration)  
Resin tapping begun with introduction of roads and trade, with returning families claiming trees for production

**1989-1991:** State of Cambodia (independent transition. Not much change from above)

**1992-1998:** vegetation cover still high. Severe wildlife declines, serious forest degradation

Military logging, then concessions issued

1993 Wildlife Sanctuaries declared

KR still active, high insecurity

New road built across SBCA (concession)

Massive logging

Gold mining begins

Upsurge in hunting (lots of guns, new roads, logging crews in forest)

Local in-migration for gold mines and concessions

Phnong movement largely completed

**1998-2003:** Vegetation cover in sharp decline. Severe wildlife declines, serious forest degradation

Massive logging until 2000, slowed, but still high

Massive wildlife hunting/trade

Road improved

Much in-migration of Khmer/Cham families

Land concessions issued

Gun confiscation program

Mining expands

Active conservation begins (2000-2001)—NGOs come in

Official log transport ban

**2003-present:** Vegetation cover declining.

Localised wildlife recovery or decline

In-migration continues, land grabbing steep increase in population

Sale of cattle and buffalo and domestic elephants

Land concessions expand (e.g. pine)

Mining expands; road network extends

Infrastructure and dams proposed

Logging and hunting down in protected sites

Local perceptions of conservation improves?

Growing conservation projects; protected area boundaries questions

### ***Presentation: Marieke Sandker, CIFOR Cameroon***

“Scenario building to alleviate poverty in conservation landscapes”

In areas with extreme poverty and high biodiversity the challenge is to get achieve the optimum outcomes for both. The use of basic modelling as a visioning tool can help achieve this. Marieke illustrated this with some examples from Cameroon.

Modelling can:

- Examine relationships
- Reveal how conservation and development are related: synergies and trade-offs
- Explore plausible future scenarios and the potential impact of interventions

Pros of modelling:

- The model and the scenarios it presents can be a great communication tool
- It is relatively low-cost to develop and utilise
- Models force people to step back and see how everything is linked

Cons of the modelling

- The model can be very complex, putting off some field practitioners
- Model can become the objective instead of the means-to-an-end it is intended to be
- Can be heavily influenced by the views of those who build the model: objectivity should be encouraged

Landscape models can be used as a scientific tool and can be quite powerful. For example, it is possible to include standard deviations, random variables etc. But they can also be used to simply generate discussion. The STELLA software is very user-friendly and the programme can be learnt within a week.

A demonstration was given of how STELLA is used in a Central African landscape. As an indicator for conservation, a graph of the elephant population over the next 25 years was shown; as an indicator of development a graph of the average household income is shown over the next 25 years. Accordingly, the potential impact of different interventions on these indicators are shown under different plausible futures (e.g. under a fixed NRM budget or a strongly decreasing NRM budget).

### ***Discussion: Can there be both conservation and development?***

Elements of this discussion took place during the week and culminated with a formal session looking at the possibilities of integrating conservation and development. A further discussion took place following a presentation of ICDPs by Terry Sunderland of CIFOR on day four. This summary is based on all of these discussions.

In essence, the importance and the possibilities (and maybe the futility) of using conservation as a platform for alleviating poverty were debated.

The questions explored included:

- Can conservation organisations be responsible for poverty impact?
- Is it realistic to assume that we can have impact?
- Should we even be entertaining this idea?
- Should the conservation NGOs be focussed on both poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation?

A summary of points raised follows:

There is a fallacious belief that conservation causes development and over harvesting is a function of poverty. Many participants were not convinced that this is the case.

A recent World Bank report suggests that the largest single driver resulting in lifting people out of poverty has been illegal logging. Hence the best investment is a chainsaw! However, this is an example of poverty alleviation at the expense of biodiversity and hence reducing poverty does not reduce the impacts on the forests.

A discussion centred around how “poverty alleviation” became such a key component of the donor agenda took place. However, was stated that poverty is now “out” and “governance” is in (at least at DFID) and hence donors will change their emphasis in the coming months/years.

In the beginning at WWF, everything was focussed on small amounts of money to set up protected areas and conserve species. Now, WWF does not give any money to anyone unless it has come from an aid agency. This is an indication of how dependent we have all become on donor agencies.

Poverty should this be part of our vision/focus but not the forefront. Environmental management for poverty alleviation is being asked for by donors, governments etc, and NGOs are expected to prove this result. But this is not why we (WCS, WWF) do it. We do not do this for poverty alleviation: some people are shocked by this declaration.

### **Key statements**

- By dividing responsibilities we are over-simplifying- we need to focus on livelihoods and NRM
- We focus so much on livelihoods that conservation objectives are lost.
- Getting out of poverty is often at the expense of biodiversity
- Reducing poverty does not necessarily lead to improved biodiversity conservation

## **Day three**

Morning field trip to local communities. The workshop participants were split into three groups. One visited one of the local villages that WCS works with, one visited the agricultural area and a sacred site of the community and the other visited the facilities in the village.

### ***Presentation: Eric Meusch, WWF Laos***

“Aquatic resource management to improve rural livelihoods”

This is a four year project, which started in February 2006 as part of a WWF global project funded by the Dutch Government under its project: “Poverty reduction through improved NRM”. Its geographical focus is: Lao PDR, Ecuador, Peru and Zambia.

The Project was conceived to:

- *Reduce poverty in rural communities*
- *Collaborate to develop co-management*
- *Improve policies to support sustainable development.*

The project in Laos is focussing on the sustainable management of aquatic resources, aiming to improve livelihoods and conserve the aquatic biodiversity at the same time. Its main objectives are to:

- Establish co-management plans for critical habitat
- Food security improved for communities strengthened through sustainable management and improved access to natural resources
- Strategies for food security integrated with aquatic resource management

### ***Exercise: How can CIFOR's MacArthur project help?***

*What are the key questions or tools that would be helpful to you in your project?*

The workshop participants developed the following as a group

#### **“What does not work- bigger picture impacts”**

1. Understanding the bigger picture- the external influence beyond our control
2. Tools that allow us to anticipate policy and markets; a C & D “crystal ball”

#### **“Shared vision for landscape”**

1. Shared vision for future of landscape by govt, community, NGOs industry
2. Better understanding of how to get the government on board
3. Improve local stakeholder knowledge in conservation and development
4. Acceptance that there will be trade-offs between conservation and development (but understanding how to minimise them)
5. How can we gain coordination cooperation of stakeholders, i.e. getting everyone on the same page. Communication/cooperation.

#### **“Tools for negotiating shared visions”**

1. Convincing scenarios for decision makers, choosing best balance
2. Modelling small holder farming scenarios (crops, etc)
3. Tools to understand the effects of different interventions
4. How to choose/measure/present livelihood outcomes that are attractive
5. Better indicators for improved livelihoods
6. A way of adequately measuring “perfect” and communicating that to partners, donors, locals, etc- ways of measuring and communicating success
7. Better understanding of relationship/transition of /between subsistence vs. cash-based livelihoods
8. Benefit sharing arrangements

#### **“Organisational frameworks”**

1. What sort of national institutions are best for integration
2. Sound policy and governance?

### **“Capacity building”**

1. National staff with INRM skills

### **“Evidence on what succeeds- strategies”**

1. Can local management deliver environmental public goods? What are the incentives? Are these local schemes going to produce the goods that we are responsible for?
2. How to encourage/compensate living in areas with higher wildlife populations
3. Examples of successful conservation reserves and village development
4. What are the costs-benefits of different approaches

### **“Best practice in scaling up land use planning”**

1. Local capacity on planning
2. Participatory land-use planning (PLUP) at local and provincial levels
3. GIS for natural resources and demographics and infrastructure

## **Day four**

### ***Presentation: Tom Clements, WCS.***

“Northern plains of Cambodia”

The northern plains of Cambodia represent one of the largest deciduous Dipterocarp forests in SE Asia. These forest contain six “Critically Endangered” species plus 30 more taxa on the IUCN Red Data List. It contains a unique assemblage of eco-types and is marginally more “important” in terms of numbers of large mammal and bird species than anywhere else in Cambodia. The local Kui people rely heavily on forest resources for their household income. Indeed there is a strong cultural heritage in the region with many Angkorian temples. Hence the area has a high tourism potential. Major threats to the Northern Plains include: illegal logging, hunting for the wildlife trade, destructive fishing using poison or electricity and uncoordinated development. WCS’ *Establishing* Conservation Areas through Landscape Management (CALM) is funded by UNDP/GEF. They are undertaking participatory land-use planning, wildlife resource research and law enforcement in protected areas. WCS are also implementing an innovative scheme of “direct conservation payments”, compensating local people for specific conservation-oriented activities (e.g. protection of birds nests).

## Tracking outcomes

Below is a preliminary table summarising some indicators developed by the group.

What indicators can be used to measure outcomes? The following were identified, but the table needs further development.

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS						
Forest cover	% forest loss per year	More than 5%	2% - 5%	0.5% - 2%	Less than 0.5%	Zero
Endangered species population	Population size of flagship spp					
Fires frequency	Number of fires in previously unburned areas	Widespread, numerous			Local, small	Zero
Mosaic characteristics= gradient	Habitat quality for flagship species					
Connectivity between forest areas	Degree of fragmentation					
Forest area effectively protected and managed	Hectares of forest under effective management					
LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS						
NTFP availability/value	Local perception of NTFP availability					
Subsistence hunting	Local perception of abundance of target spp					
Fish stocks c. unit effort						
Soil fertility	Perceptions of change in fertility					
Water supply esp dry season						

Farming system diversity- reflecting markets demand for crops reducing vulnerability						
Land availability	Perception of land scarcity					
<b>HUMAN ASSETS</b>						
Health services	% of communities with easy access to clinics					
Schools and education	% of communities with easy access to primary schools					
Employment	% of adult males in salaried employment					
Opportunities						
General skills	% of population with marketable skills					
<b>SOCIAL ASSETS</b>						
Community conservation agreement	Number of agreements being implemented	None				All villages
# of NRM committees	Number of committees functioning/village	None	Less than 10% of villages	10 - 60%	More than 60%	All villages
Levels of corruption/transparency	Local perceptions of public centre corruption	Widespread/major	Significant		Localised/Minor	Absent
Tenure- land titling						
Security food, safety/stability	Average number of rice deficient months	More than 6	six to four	four to two	Less than 2	Zero
Resin tapping rules/organisation						
Land demarcation	Proportion of PA boundaries demarcated	Zero	Less than 25%	25 - 50%	50 - 100%	100%
Commune councils						

# of NGOs	Number of functioning local cons and dev NGOs					
Regulation of land grabbing	Area of land illegally settled					
BUILT/PHYSICAL ASSETS						
Bio-gas projects	% of villages with biogas plant					
Wells	% of villages with concrete wells and pumps					
Roads	Hours travel time to nearest Khompon Thom					
Agricultural technology	% of agricultural land under irrigation					
Rice mills	Number of villages with powered rice mills					
Durable housing	% of communities with more than 50% tin roofs					
Agro-industrial activities	Hectares of plantation crops	Less than 500	500 - 1000	1000 - 5000	5000 - 10000	10,000+

Some points that arose:

Don't necessarily need to measure lots of things- if you choose the right indicators only need to measure a very few things

Logic behind the use of this is that it is thought that you would deplete your natural capital to improve social and human capital, but it is only desired to reduce a reasonable amount

How does one measure government and policy? In Cameroon, they could use the ease with which people could get some transaction done- forms, bribes etc needed to get some sort of permit- something like this can also be used for the Mekong.

The measure of what is positive and what is negative will vary according to the audience- for example, for most local people, roads are very positive, while for conservationists they are negative.

To get a good impression of what is taking place will need to be a group activity with many stakeholders to deal with subjectivity

## **Next steps**

Mondulkiri: Have some of this tracking work slated, have done some preliminary models- targets for livelihoods and conservation (Jeff will provide some references)

Teak will try to establish the baseline data and will work on determining indicators, (i.e., wildlife trade) establish targets that are representative of the landscape. A discussion of the tracking tools and developing strategies to complete the process can be undertaken via email

Project activities and concept note completion (including workplan, hypotheses, variables etc.), need to circulate to partners

Inception report (by mid-January)

Vietnam workshop (mid September)

MacArthur donor workshop (late September)

Luke Preece to apply for scholarship (Oct)

Possibly LP travel to Cambodia to be based there (Jan/Feb 2007)

BC (and possibly TS) to travel to Laos for NAFRI meetings (Feb-Mar 2007)

Hire 3 people (1 in each country) staggered over first two years

Workshop #2 (Laos) September 2007

Writing workshop (Bogor? Somewhere nice!) May 2008

Workshop #3 (Vietnam) September 2008

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