



Wetlands governance in Asia

Strengthening wetlands management and regional cooperation



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This report is a summary of a workshop discussed about promoting the understanding of governance mechanisms and institutional arrangements that help in scientifically based management and sustainable use of wetlands for the benefit of humankind and biodiversity, in a transboundary and regional context.

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Acronyms and shortened names

CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CDA	Chilika Development Authority
DoEQP	Department of Environmental Quality Promotion
DoNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LMNC	Lao National Mekong Committee
MAF	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
MoEF	Ministry of Environment and Forests
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoU	Memorandum/Memoranda of Understanding
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MWD	Mekong Water Dialogues
NFTP	Non-timber Forest Products
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ONEP	Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SLB	Songkhla Lake Basin
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

1. Background information

Human well-being depends on the many benefits provided by ecosystems, some of which come from healthy wetlands. Wetlands are vital parts of natural infrastructure that provide food, store carbon, regulate water flows, store energy, and are crucial for biodiversity. Their benefits are essential for the future security of humankind and nature. Conservation and the wise use of wetlands are thus vital for people, especially for the poor. The degradation and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that of any other ecosystem, and this trend is accelerating due to major changes in land use, increasing water diversions, and infrastructure development.

Access to freshwater is declining for 1-2 billion people worldwide, and this in turn negatively affects food production, human health, and economic development, thereby increasing societal conflict. There is an urgent need to improve water governance. Instead of being demand-driven as this promotes over-allocation of water, water governance should treat wetlands as our “natural water infrastructure”; integral to water resource management at the scale of river basins. Within this water governance are good wetland governance mechanisms. Wetland governance is described as the interaction between policies, laws and other norms as well as institutions and processes through which a society exercises power and allocates responsibilities to make and implement decisions affecting wetlands and wetland users and to hold decision-makers accountable.

Wetlands governance is therefore essentially about

- Who has the power to make decisions that affect wetlands and wetland users and how those decisions are made.
- Who has the power and responsibility to implement those decisions, and how those decisions are implemented.
- Who is held accountable, and how, for implementation.

Policy-making, planning, decision-making, and management actions by a wide range of sectors at all levels - from international to the local - contributes to effective wetland governance.

Recognizing the key role of wetlands in supporting human populations and biodiversity as well as the need to maintain resilience and productivity of wetlands through wetland conservation has received increasingly greater attention over the last two decades. Efforts at global, national and local levels have included activities ranging from awareness-raising, developing guidelines, policy and legislation, co-management and governance arrangements. Learning from these experiences across regions is important, and will help sustain such efforts. With this mandate, IUCN organised a Regional Workshop on Wetland Governance in Pakse, Lao PDR

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To promote the understanding of governance mechanisms and institutional arrangements that help in scientifically based management and sustainable use of wetlands for the benefit of humankind and biodiversity, in a transboundary and regional context.

The workshop presented an array of case studies from across the region focusing on the following:

- What are the key drivers and principles that ensure effective wetland governance? What are the enabling mechanisms? How can the sustainability of effective wetland governance be ensured?
- What are the mechanisms to ensure the participation of communities, including indigenous peoples, and also to ensure that traditional knowledge is duly integrated into management solutions?
- How have national/state-level laws, policy and institutional frameworks led to state or local-level institutional innovations for effective wetland governance?
- What are the mechanisms to ensure long-term financial security of these institutions?
- How has management/governance of these wetlands dealt with risks to their operation, and other such external risk factors?

Experienced practitioners in the field of wetland governance and co-management were invited from across the region's major river basins to participate. The workshop brought together representatives from government agencies, river basin authorities, wetland management authorities, civil society, and other experts.

2. Organisation of the workshop

This workshop was structured as a three day event combining field visits, presentations and group discussions (see the agenda in Annex 1).

On the first day, a field visit to the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site was organised by the IUCN Lao team in order to present the ongoing work at site-level and to give an overview of both life in a Lao community as well as an introduction to the stakeholders involved in governance of the site.

This field visit to the Ramsar Site was followed by a trip to the Khone Phapeng waterfall to discuss the threats and challenges that the "4000 islands" wetlands is facing and also to discuss transboundary management issues with the Cambodian Ramsar Site, Steung Treng.

On the second day, the morning was dedicated mostly to an opening session, with presentations by Mr Tounalom the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Mr Boudtivong the Vice Governor of Champassak Province, and Mr Robert Mather the head of IUCN's Southeast Asia group.

The technical sessions were initiated with a presentation about Ramsar in Asia, followed by a case study on the governance of large lakes, wetlands and deltas by participants from Southeast Asia, India and Bangladesh (see the presentations in Annex 2). Each presentation lasted for around 30 minutes and included a brief question-and-answer session.

Short movies related to wetlands were screened during the workshop in the coffee breaks or as part of case study presentations (see the list of screened documentaries in Annex 3).

On the last day, the participants worked in groups on some selected topics identified during the initial day. The goal of these group discussions was to build on knowledge acquired

during the first day and to identify main threats in terms of sustainable governance for wetlands in order to take concerted action.

Participants in the workshop included government representatives from the different countries, wetland managers, researchers and NGO staff (see the list of participants in Annex 4). Organisation and logistics were led by IUCN Lao PDR

This workshop received financial support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and the Ramsar Convention Secretariat through the Ramsar Small Grant Funds Programme

3. Field visit to Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site

3.1 Opening speech

The opening speech was held in the community house in Ban Beung Kiat Ngong and was delivered in Lao language (for the translation of the speech see Annex 5). Mr Soulivanh Sawatthasin, Governor of Pathoumphone District inaugurated the workshop in Beung Kiat Ngong village located in the Ramsar Site.

The commitment of the Lao Government to conserve and manage the Ramsar Site in the country brought to attention, especially that of Pathoumphone District, regarding conservation of the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site jointly with communities and villages in the site. Mr Sawatthasin also provided a brief presentation on the district which covers a total area of 2,87,000 hectares and has 68 villages containing 10,200 households, with a total population of more than 57,700 people. Eighty percent of the population lives in rural areas and the main occupation is agriculture (plantations and livestock). The average income is approximately US\$1,000 per person per annum.

The economic value of the Beung Kiat Ngong Wetland for local communities through the production of fish, non-timber forest products (NTFPs), water and agricultural products was highlighted in Mr Sawatthasin's presentation. The value of the site was explained in term of biodiversity, ecosystem services, and cultural significance for the locals, notably through the *Mahout* (elephant domestication) tradition.

The challenges that the site and the communities are facing to achieve sustainable development and management of the wetlands were also discussed. Overharvesting of natural resources, population increase, lack of capacity of local staff, lack of knowledge, or broader threats such as climate change were some of the few reported challenges.

Mr Sawatthasin brought to attention the support received by donors funding various projects at the site, such as the World Bank (Sustainable Forestry for Rural Development Project), the Asian Development Bank (Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (Mekong Water Dialogues/Livelihoods and Landscape Strategy). All these projects have brought in additional knowledge and techniques for improving the management of the site.

As stated in the opening speech, the IUCN-led Mekong Water Dialogues (MWD) project recently supported the implementation of a governance system for the Ramsar Site and also provided long-term planning for the site through participatory drafting of a five year management plan to address threats and achieve objectives in terms of maintaining livelihoods, conserving biodiversity and cultural values of the site, as well as improving governance mechanisms at the provincial, district and site levels.

Mr Sawatthasin concluded by thanking the district authorities as well as villagers in the areas for their support and participation as well as the international organisations, especially IUCN. He stated his hopes to achieve concrete implementation of the five year management plan and wished the seminar to be a success.

3.2 The Baci ceremony, songs and dance

Following the speech of the Governor of Pathoumphone District, villagers invited the participants for a *Baci* ceremony¹. The village spiritual leader led the ritual and an Elephant *Baci* was performed by feeding elephants waiting around the house as a blessing.

Around 20 children from the Beung Kiat Ngong Primary School performed traditional dances and songs for the audience. The theme of the songs was about protection of the forest and water resources.



Baci ceremony at Ban Kiat Ngong



Elephant feeding

¹ *Baci* is an important ceremony practiced in Lao culture and Northern and Isan Thai culture. *Baci* is an animist ritual used to celebrate important events and occasions, like births and marriages, and also entering monkhood, departing, returning, beginning a new year, and welcoming people etc. The ritual of the *baci* involves tying strings around a person's wrist to ensure good luck, and has become a national custom.



Traditional songs and dances by primary students

3.3 Field visit to Phou Asa and presentation of the work of MWD and the Management Plan

After the ceremony, the participants went to Phou Asa (Asa mountain), overhanging the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site (5 km from the village) to view the wetlands. Raphael Glemet, Water and Wetlands Programme Coordinator at IUCN Lao PDR, briefly presented the work of MWD performed at site-level and distributed a summary of the Management Plan (see the document on p. 7).

Since the first phase of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs funded project, IUCN Lao PDR has been working at site level to collect information, identify local concerns and threats to site conservation as well as to analyse the gaps in knowledge. MWD supported the Government of Lao PDR to become a member of the Ramsar Convention in late 2010. It provided information and documents to support the designation of the Beung Kiat Ngong Wetlands as a Ramsar Site. Regular dialogue platforms and events with the communities have been organised by the MWD field coordinator and the district and provincial officials. These discussions allowed the team to get an initial idea of what could be a management plan for the site as well as for strengthening involvement of communities in decision-making.

The main goal of MWD, in addition to providing long term planning for the Ramsar Site, was to support as much as possible, a bottom-up governance approach by drafting a document that would reflect concerns of the communities and on which they would feel a sense of ownership and have a full understanding. The work, led by the Ramsar Provincial Committees, the Ramsar district implementation team, and IUCN Lao PDR - resulted in the finalisation of a five year management plan for the site in late 2012.

The long term objectives for this management plan are to ensure the conservation and restoration of wetland functions, habitats and biodiversity; to maintain and enhance food security, livelihoods and incomes; to preserve the cultural value of the site; and to improve the governance of the Ramsar Site management. To achieve these goals, a series of specific objectives addressing the threats and related activities have been drafted, discussed and approved (see the Management Plan summary on p. 7). The implementation is currently ongoing, with involvement of the Regional Programme Coordinators and local communities. Participants then discussed activities and the main threats related to the management of Ramsar Sites in the various countries.

The visit ended with the explanation of the cultural value of Phou Asa which is the former location of a very famous temple from the 16th century that adds cultural value to the overall site. The participants then returned to the village for lunch prepared from local products (fish and plants sourced from the Ramsar Site).



Group photo at the top of Phou Asa



Management Plan of the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site

In September 2010, the Beung Kiat Ngong Wetland, in Champassak Province, Lao PDR was formally recognized as one of the 2 Ramsar sites in the country.

The wetland is a unique and precious site because it contains diverse wetland types (swamps, lakes, marshes, and peat land); has potential high biodiversity value; and supports the livelihoods of approximately 11,500 people. The Government of Lao PDR, with support from IUCN, has taken key steps to implement the convention. National, provincial and site level committees have been set up to manage the site and in 2011 and 2012, with support from IUCN Lao PDR, workshops were held to build support for Ramsar implementation among community members.

This dialogue between community members and the Ramsar Provincial Committee on the long-term management of the Ramsar site led to the drafting of an initial 5-year (2013-2017) management plan.

The long-term objectives of the management plan for the site include:

i) **To ensure the conservation and restoration of wetland functions, habitats and biodiversity** by decreasing overfishing and overharvesting and improving land use planning at the site. Further studies and surveys will be performed to gather information on water management, on the potential impact of the growing livestock population on the wetland, and on natural habitats and key species populations in the Ramsar site. Climate change issues will also be studied in the wetland through a vulnerability assessment of the site.

The involvement of local communities in management and monitoring will be sought through the establishment of community patrols and participatory workshops and trainings.

ii) **To maintain and enhance the food security, livelihoods and incomes** of the 13 villages that are directly dependent on the site, by increasing the yield from rice cultivation and diversifying cultivation, as well as by managing NTFP resources to improve sustainability and income on a community-shared basis. Tourism improvement will be sought as an important alternative source of income.

iii) **The cultural value of the site** will also be one of the focuses of this management plan, and efforts will be made to document and disseminate the Mahout tradition and the local history.

iv) **The improvement of governance and organization** is a primary objective as well of this management plan, to be achieved through better distribution of information and through activities to raise awareness of the site's Ramsar status. Incorporating local communities in the management process and improving coordination between local authorities and the village level will be prioritized to maintain the collaborative dynamic initiated during the drafting of the plan.

All activities will be managed by the Provincial Ramsar Committee, with support from IUCN Lao PDR office and cooperation among different partners and, as much as possible, the leadership and involvement of the communities in the technical implementation of the plan. The plan will be regularly assessed and revised, as a living document and a framework for any future activity on Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar site.

For more information please contact our Water and Wetlands Programme Coordinator
Mr. Raphael Glemet at raphael.Glemet@iucn.org

3.4 Field visit to Khone Phapheng waterfall

Later in the afternoon, a group of participants went to Kong District in southern Lao, which is located near the border of Cambodia, to visit the Khone Phapheng waterfall on the Mekong mainstream. This waterfall is part of the main wetland complex on the Mekong mainstream in Lao PDR, called Siphandone or “4000 islands” because of the complexity of its channels, islands, sand bars and rocky areas.

The participants saw traditional Li fisheries that use wooden or bamboo traps to catch migratory species during the rainy season. They also discussed hydropower development in the site as well as transboundary agreements and cooperation between the Stung Treng Ramsar Site and the Siphandone wetlands.

IUCN Lao PDR discussed the study on transboundary fish trade that they conducted last year, with research partners in Cambodia and Thailand (see the recommendation paper in Annex 6). This study assessed the importance of fish trade between Stung Treng Province in Cambodia and Lao, in terms of employment and income generation. Lao communities in the district are highly dependent on fisheries for more than 70% of their yearly income. This generates more than 20,000 direct jobs (as fishermen, middlemen, traders and fish sellers) and probably as many indirect job opportunities through fish-gear manufacture and fish transportation (truck drivers, ice box maker and ice sellers).



Khone Phapheng waterfall

4. Workshop day 1: Opening and case study presentations

4.1 Opening session

The opening speeches of the workshop were held at the Grand Hotel Champassak meeting room in Pakse. The Vice Governor’s speech was delivered in Lao language. A copy of the speeches was provided as part of the workshop package distributed to participants during registration (see Annexes 7.1 and 7.2).

Opening remarks from His Excellency Dr Akhom Tounalom, Vice Minister, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Dr Tounalom expressed his pleasure on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Lao PDR, on the occasion of opening this important workshop on wetland governance in Asia organised by IUCN.

The audience were reminded of the importance of wetlands in the Southeast Asian region as a shelter for threatened species, an important support to local livelihoods and the economy, as well as a highlight of cultural values and traditions. The speech emphasised that wetlands in Lao PDR are under threat from unsustainable use, the undesirable effects of mainstream development, and climate change.

Questions were raised about conservation of these ecosystems in an ever changing region, on how to ensure that the management of wetlands benefit all sections of society and on how to achieve efficient governance, where policies are understood by all. Dr Tounalom insisted on governance as a key component for all kinds of management, from central and national policies to the local level.

The work of the Lao PDR Government and development partners was then introduced and steps toward achieving efficient wetland governance in the country. One example he cited was that Lao became a member of the Ramsar Convention in 2010 and the subsequent designation of two sites under this Convention followed. He explained that the Lao Government decided to give a strong structure to Ramsar governance in the country by creating several committees at site, district, province and central level. The objective was to ensure efficient understanding of all the steps in the management process.

It was stated that the Lao Government is also working on strengthening national policies and strategies on water and wetlands by developing a specific strategy on wetlands or by including wetlands in the revision of the water law.

Mr Tounalom insisted on the need to see governance as a local process with local ownership of central level processes. It was explained that, with support from IUCN Lao PDR, the government of Lao PDR worked on a co-management approach for the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site by involving different Ramsar Committees as well as communities and wetland users in the decision-making process.

Dialogue platforms and workshops have been provided, with support from IUCN's MWD project. Lao PDR learnt a lot through this process, and has been able to design guidelines and recommendations to improve wetland governance. These can be applied to other wetlands within the country.

Dr Tounalom expressed his satisfaction at seeing representatives from all the Mekong countries, as well as those from India and Bangladesh, attending the workshop. Finally he conveyed his gratitude to IUCN for supporting this process and to the participants from all over Asia who came to attend the workshop. Then he declared the workshop open.

Opening remarks from Mr Somsanith Boudtivong, Vice Governor of Champassak Province, Chairman of the Ramsar Provincial Committee of Champassak and member of the National Ramsar Steering Committee

Mr Boudtivong thanked the audience and organisers of the workshop, in particular the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and IUCN.

A brief presentation on the Province of Champassak followed, which provided geographical details such as its total area that is 1.5 million hectares and its population which is more than 600,000. The main occupation practiced is agriculture (plantation and livestock). The area is rich in natural resources, particularly forest and water resources, as it includes the Mekong River, Xe Done, Bang Lieng and Ban Champee.

Champasak Province hosts one of the two Ramsar Sites in the country. The Beung Kiat Ngong Site was declared a Ramsar Site on 28 September 2010, when Lao PDR became the 160th member country. The Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland is an important and valuable site for livelihoods of people living in the area. The implementation of conservation efforts is one of the Lao Government's obligations to the international community, contributing to the conservation of natural resources.

Mr Boudtivong conveyed his strong belief that this workshop will facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience amongst the representatives. He closed the speech by thanking the different organisations involved in supporting the province in improving management of the Ramsar Site, in particular the governmental organisations and related sectors at all levels, local villagers for providing support to seek funding, and especially international organisations such as IUCN. He expressed his hope that many international organisations will continue to provide support in the implementation of sustainable management plans in the Ramsar Site and ensure improved livelihoods for the local people. Finally, he wished the participants successful implementation of the outcomes from this workshop.

Opening remarks from Dr Robert Mather, Head of IUCN's Southeast Asia Group

Dr Mather opened the workshop by saying, on the behalf of IUCN, how pleased he was to be present in Pakse. He thanked his Excellencies Dr Tounalom the Vice Minister and Mr Boudtivong the Vice Governor of Champassak Province and all the Lao people for hosting the international workshop. He expressed how fortunate the audience was to be able to start this workshop by visiting the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site, which provides a good opportunity to see the progress of the work on the field. He explained that this was a wonderful introduction for foreign participants, especially those from India and Bangladesh, about life in a Lao community as well as the rich Lao culture.

The field visit also provided an opportunity for participants to discover other highlights of the province, in the World Heritage Site of Wat Phouand at the Khone Phapheng waterfall, providing a very good introduction to the area. Thanks were also conveyed to Mr Sounbim for sharing information about the Champassak Province and Mr Akhom for the information on the progress on Ramsar Convention implementation in Lao PDR and his thoughts about wetlands governance issues.

Dr Mather brought to attention that the audience included people working in six countries in the Lower Mekong Basin and in South Asia, and that this would be a guarantee to learn more about different experiences, activities, and challenges and also to try to draw out some lessons learnt and recommendations for the future. Case studies from all these countries were included in the presentation sessions and the last day focussed on going into more depth to discuss these challenges and to provide recommendations. He added that IUCN will be happy to share the workshop outcomes and the workshop report with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Provincial Governments of Champassak and Savanhaket Provinces. This report will be a basis for further discussions on how to identify and prioritise support from IUCN on Ramsar implementation in Lao PDR and other countries in Asia.



Opening the workshop

4.2 Case studies

4.2.1 The Ramsar Convention in Southeast Asia

(See the presentations in Annex 2.1)

Wetlands are ecosystems that can be natural or artificial with water that is permanent or temporary, static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of coastal water that are less than six metres at low tide. This definition is very wide ranging and includes inland wetlands such as glaciers, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams, aquifers; coastal wetlands such as mangroves, tidal flats, seagrass beds, coral reefs; and human-made wetlands such as rice fields, fish ponds, reservoirs, ditches and canals.

The Ramsar Convention was adopted on 2 February 1971 as the first of the modern intergovernmental environmental treaties with a mission to support conservation and the wise use of wetlands through national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development. There are presently 164 contracting parties worldwide.

Implementation of the convention is based on three pillars: sustainable use of wetlands and their resources to benefit humankind (this applies to all wetlands in the country – not just those designated as Ramsar Sites); designation of priority wetlands as “Wetlands of International Importance” (Ramsar Sites), and ensuring their conservation and wise use (now 2,160 sites worldwide); international cooperation for shared wetlands and their resources, such as water and migratory species including birds and fish.

For successful implementation of the Convention, effective governance systems are critical. This is about *who* has the power to make decisions that affect wetlands and wetland users and *how* those decisions are made; *who* has the power and responsibility to implement those decisions and *how* those decisions are implemented; *who* is held accountable, and *how*, for implementation. Current best practice include establishment of a National Committee, a Provincial Committee, and a District Working Group/Site Level Committee in each case; including key stakeholders at every level together with participatory management planning processes. Lao PDR provides an impressive example of how each of these components has been put in place over a very short time since joining Ramsar as the most recent party.

In the Mekong Region, MWD has identified a number of governance challenges in the wetlands sector, including inadequate/poorly implemented policy, law, and/or processes; mandates of different agencies are often unclear and overlapping; planning is done on a sectoral basis with limited cross-sectoral collaboration; participation of civil society stakeholders in wetland planning and management; unclear legal status of many wetlands/open-access resources and traditional practices breaking down because of modern external pressures.

At the same time, there has been interesting progress in a number of areas, such as draft versions of the Lao Water Law recognising wetlands – a great innovation for the region; the cancellation of commercial fishing lots in Tonle Sap and the empowerment of local communities for managing the fisheries, and the creation of new Ramsar Sites in the last three years (2 in Lao; 3 in Viet Nam and 2 in Thailand).

Moving ahead, there are a number of big picture challenges to wetlands management and governance in the region, including hydropower development in the Mekong Basin, Economic Corridors in the Greater Mekong Sub-region, and the \$12 billion water management plan in Thailand.

4.2.2 Large lakes and wetlands

Community Based Participation in Wetland Management: Sharing Experiences from Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh

Mr Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, IUCN Bangladesh

(see presentation in Annex 2.2)

The extensive wetlands of Bangladesh offer essential sources for food and livelihoods to the population of the region and provide habitats as well as a natural spawning and feeding ground for aquatic and terrestrial wildlife. Bangladesh produces the third largest yield of freshwater fish and over a third of this fish comes from wetlands. It is estimated that the economic value of the wetlands are 2-3 times more than a single crop.

One such wetland in Bangladesh is the never ending stretch of pristine ecosystem known as the Tanguar Haor, which is probably the country's most important freshwater wetland. Lying in the northeastern part of Bangladesh, it extends to over 9,500 hectares and consists of a seasonally flooded depression dotted with 50 permanent bodies of water or "*beels*". There are an estimated 120 to 150 plant species in the Haor (only 78 have been officially recorded). There are 141 species of freshwater fish inhabiting the Haor, which is more than half of the country's freshwater fish species (266). The population of birds can reach up to 500,000 in the migratory season; covering over 200 species of which 98 are migratory. In addition; 34 species of mammals, 11 amphibians, 34 reptiles and 12 butterfly species round up this star studded group. Despite its rich biodiversity, human beings are the most abundant. There are a total 56,000 people living in and around the area, of which 95% depend exclusively on the Haor as their sole source of livelihood.

In recognition of its importance, Tanguar Haor was declared one of the country's seven "Ecologically Critical Areas" in 1999, and on 20 January 2000 it was nominated by the Government of Bangladesh as the country's second Ramsar Site. With the wetland facing impending doom, conservation steps were taken in 2002. The main problems of the site were issues related to ownership of Tanguar Haor and a leasing system for its fisheries. Controlled by the Ministry of Land, the lease was given to the highest bidder. In 2001, the area was handed over to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), and subsequently the leasing system was finally banned. In 2002, at the request of the MoEF, IUCN Bangladesh presented a proposal titled 'Community Based Sustainable Management of Tanguar Haor' to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in 2005. So began the battle for Tanguar Haor.

The overall goal of the management plan was to use the protected status of Tanguar Haor as a Ramsar Site to develop a collaborative management partnership between the Government of Bangladesh represented by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the District Administration of Sunamganj, and the rural communities of the 46 villages living in the periphery of Tanguar Haor. The co-management body is a simmering cauldron full of organisations from different governing tiers. The body, including all its tiers, possesses a gargantuan decentralized framework with the community in charge of field management of the wetland - overseen by the central, district and national level governing sectors.

Representatives from communities have been included in all levels of the committees and a bottom-up approach has been followed in decision making that ensures participation and transparency. This community based governing system has instilled a passion and zest in the local people to protect their heritage. Overall, the community has accumulated BDT 15,200,000 and has set up alternate income generating activities to reduce the human population's pressure on the Haor. The real success story has been the inclusion by 92.59% of underprivileged women-led households into the organisational platform. Of the five *beels*, 60% are designated as no fishing zones to improve ecological integrity. The improvement in the ecological state was evident when the population of migratory and local birds drastically increased.

The governance system established at the site has had many successes and hopefully it will persist in the future to preserve one of Bangladesh's most significant natural resources; a biodiversity hotspot for fish and birds.

Key questions and answers following the presentation

Was the decision to hand over the control of the lease of wetlands from the Ministry of Land to the Ministry of Environment in 2001 linked to the Ramsar Site declaration?

Due to the importance of Tanguar Haor as an ecologically sensitive area, only the leasing of Tanguar Haor has been handed over to the Ministry of Environment in Bangladesh. Leasing of other wetlands still remains under the Ministry of Land. In 1996-97, the first management plan was formulated for Tanguar Haor by the National Conservation Strategy Implementation Project. This plan proposed the handover of the lease control and also identified the process of its declaration as a Ramsar Site. The overall goal of the management plan was to use the protected status (as a Ramsar Site) of Tanguar Haor to develop a collaborative management partnership between the Government of Bangladesh – represented by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and the District Administration of Sunamganj – and the rural communities of the 46 villages in the periphery of Tanguar Haor.

Firstly, why are there challenges in wetland management with community based organisations (CBOs)? Secondly, there are so many committees for co-management of Tanguar Haor when there is a need for specific approval of a policy. Who takes decisions?

CBOs are often controlled by local elites. So even when the lease is given to CBOs, actual leaseholders are the local elite and fishermen who do not have a voice in these organisations. Decisions are taken at the highest level by the district level committee, but implementation is undertaken at village level. Representatives of different village level committees are members at the higher Union level and from Union committees, district level committees are formed. So the committees are essentially formed by the same people.

In Thailand, we have so many committees, but they do not meet and are not so effective. How often do the committees in Tanguar Haor meet?

Local level committees meet regularly, at least once a month. Central committees meet at intervals to take decisions.

Eco-restoration and management of Chilika Lake

Dr Ajit Kumar Pattnaik, Chilika Development Authority
(see presentation in Annex 2.3)

Chilika is the largest lake along the east coast of India, situated between 19° 54' N and longitude 85° 05' and 85° 38' E. The lake is a unique assemblage of marine, brackish and fresh water eco-systems, with estuarine characters. This fragile ecosystem is known for its amazing biodiversity and is a designated Ramsar Site. It exhibits avian grandeur and is the wintering ground for more than one million migratory birds. The highly productive ecosystem of the lake with its rich fishery resources sustains the livelihoods of more than 0.2 million fisher folk who live in and around it. Hydrologically speaking, Chilika is influenced by three

subsystems: (1) the distributaries of River Mahanadi, (2) minor rivers flowing into the lake from the Western catchment, and (3) the tidal outlet to the Bay of Bengal. Construction of major hydraulic structures upstream in the Mahanadi have altered the flow pattern into Chilika. The long shore sediment transport along the coast of the Bay of Bengal is estimated to be 0.1 million metric tonnes, annually tending to shift the lake mouth opening to the sea every year. This had been adversely affecting the lake's ecosystem. This changed flushing pattern has significantly affected the salinity regime, consequent natural recruitment and breeding migration of the species. The spatial and temporal salinity gradients resulting from the freshwater flow from the drainage basin and the seawater influx gave it unique characteristics of an estuarine eco-system, exercising a continuous and selective influence on its biota.

The hydrological alterations leading to transformation of the lake toward fresh water ecosystems were considered a potential threat to the biota of this unique ecosystem. This could be broadly attributed to the change in the flow pattern from the drainage basin and the changes in the coastal processes. Due to the depletion of the health of the lake, it was added to the list of the Montreux Record (the threatened list of Ramsar Sites) in 1993. The lake encountered a combination of increased siltation due to changes in the land use pattern and degradation of the drainage basin, as well as partial closure of the outlet channel connecting the sea. The consequent decrease in salinity caused proliferation of invasive species, increased turbidity, shrinkage of the water spread area, depletion of fishery resources, and an overall loss of biodiversity.

The overall decline in productivity has adversely affected livelihoods of the local community. Being concerned with this, the Government of Odisha (the provincial government) created the Chilika Development Authority (CDA) in the year 1992, for integrated management of the lake. CDA adopted a holistic approach for integration of coastal processes and lake basins in management planning that evolved by way of a wide-scale consultation and targeted scientific studies. For a clear understanding of this complex eco-system, the services of premier institutes of the country were commissioned to carry out targeted studies in order to trace the root cause of the degradation of the lake ecosystem.

Following the outcome of the numerical modelling, an artificial mouth was opened on 23 September 2000 by CDA. The opening of the artificial mouth and the desiltation of the lead channel not only rejuvenated the ecosystem of the lake but also immensely benefited the community depending on the lake, whose average annual income increased significantly. The drainage basin of the lake had been the logical starting point for management of the lake. An innovative participatory micro-watershed management concept was adopted with a "sustainable rural livelihood" approach for the holistic management of natural resources. The micro-watershed level institution has been the Watershed Association constituted for effective implementation of the micro-plan in consultation with the community.

Notably, there have been increased earnings from land and non-land activities for the poor, reduced debt, and improved livelihood and food security leading to further poverty alleviation, reduced environmental degradation and reduction of silt load into the lake. The restoration initiatives by CDA demonstrate how integrated water resource management is

for restoration of a coastal wetland and its drainage basin. The primary feature of the restoration model is the integration of the watershed and coastal process with the active participation of local communities with shared decision-making. Another strong attribute of the restoration initiative is “good governance” that encompasses ideal procedural aspects of planning and management as well as concepts of legitimacy, fairness, wisdom, acceptability, transparency and accountability.

One of the key elements of the restoration model is the successful strategic partnership built through networking, consultation and coordination. Multilevel effective institutions and their networking have been the secrets of success for the restoration and wise use of the wetland and its basin resources. The outstanding financial management and strategic planning by CDA are demonstrated through effective utilisation of the very limited available resources in the form of grants from the Government of India, for the entire restoration intervention of this vast wetland and its catchments without any overseas funding. This is further testified by the fact that Chilika was removed from the Montreux Record by the Ramsar Bureau effective 11 November 2003. Notably, Chilika Lake is the first wetland in Asia to be removed from Montreux Record. The prestigious Ramsar Wetland Award 2002 was also conferred to the Chilika Development Authority for the impressive way in which restoration was carried out with the active participation of local communities.

Wetlands governance mechanisms for Himalayan high altitude wetlands

Mr Pankaj Chandan, WWF India
(see Annex 2.4)

High altitude wetlands in the Himalayas are crucial for biodiversity and sustainable economic growth, not only locally but also at the river basin and regional level. In addition, they regulate micro-climates and have immense livelihood, cultural and spiritual significance for the communities living amongst them. A large number of these wetlands are very important breeding sites for key species of Himalayan birds. Also, these wetlands are important sources of livelihood for local communities as they are directly dependent on them. Wetland-dependent tourism in the Himalayan high altitudes has huge economic significance for the region.

Owing to the immense ecological and economic significance of these wetlands, it is vital to conserve them for future generations. One very vital component for the long term conservation of these wetlands are diverse governance mechanisms. The ownership of these wetlands belongs to a wide and diverse range of local stakeholders. Due to the strategic position of the Himalayas, the wetlands are controlled by the armed forces in many areas. In many other places, wetlands are controlled either by state forest and wildlife departments, local communities, or by religious bodies such as local monasteries.

This complexity in the ownership of the Himalayan high altitude wetlands makes it vital to understand overall governance mechanisms for these wetlands. For the Himalayan high altitude wetlands, it is important to provide the institutional scope for each key stakeholder for participation in the conservation and management of these wetlands. This has a special significance, as each site has a specific governance mechanism which is based on the

presence of a particular stakeholder in the area. The paper provides a detailed overview of various current governance mechanisms for Himalayan high altitude wetlands. In some parts of the Himalayan high altitudes, WWF India has evolved some site-specific governance mechanisms for wetlands conservation with active involvement of the local community. The paper also highlights these governance mechanisms.

Wetlands governance in Lao PDR

Mr Lonkham Atsanavong, Department of Environmental Quality and Promotion

Mr Raphael Glemet, IUCN Lao PDR

(see Annex 2.5)

Lao PDR is a country rich in term of its wetlands, based on the 1996 inventory that identified around 30 wetlands of national importance. Like many countries in Southeast Asia and in Asia, wetlands in Lao PDR are not directly referred to in any national policy but are included in or concerned with a range of policies referring to the use and management of wetland-related resources including water, agriculture, and living aquatic animals and plants. These policies have two central features; a link between development, conservation and poverty alleviation and the right of access to natural resources (Constitution, Government of Lao PDR 1991) and the obligation to protect and sustainably use resources. The right to use water resources is outlined in the Water and Water Resources Law (DOI 1996), but no reference to wetlands is currently included in this national law.

Wetland management is under the overall responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE) mainly through two departments. The Department for Water Resources is responsible for all wetlands except the Ramsar Sites whereas the Department of Environmental Quality Protection (DoEQP) is in charge of the implementation of the Ramsar convention at national and site-level. The Lao National Mekong Committee (LMNC) is responsible for wetlands under the Mekong River Commission (MRC) projects (adopting a mainly transboundary approach). This organisation is quite recent and still lacks coordination or clear terms of reference for each department.

Since it became a member of the Ramsar Convention in 2010, the Government of Lao PDR has implemented a three-level governance structure to ensure management of the two Ramsar Sites in the country as well as the implementation of the Ramsar Convention at national-level. One Ramsar National Steering Committee has been formed and is chaired by the Vice Prime Minister with the involvement of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) and 7 other ministries. The secretariat is chaired by MoNRE through the DoEQP with staff from other departments. This national organisation is also used at provincial level by the two Provincial Ramsar Committees with the Secretariat led by DoNRE. At site level, district officials and representatives from communities form the Ramsar Implementation Team. Roles and responsibilities of the different Ramsar Committees are to provide guidance for the management of the two Ramsar Sites and implementation of the Convention in the country and to ensure coordination of ongoing activities at national and provincial levels. The cross cutting composition of the different Ramsar Committees is a first in Lao, and enables the various ministries and departments to work together for wetland management. In terms of governance at site level, the co-management approach used to draft the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site Management Plan is a good example of involvement of communities in

the direct management of their environment. Through dialogues and workshops since 2010 at site level, MoNRE and IUCN Lao PDR through the MWD project supported involvement of the communities in decision-making for the management of the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site. This led to a management plan co-drafted by all parties and regularly discussed with communities to ensure a fuller understanding and approval of proposed activities.

A study on the customary rights governing the use of natural resources in the Xe Champhone Ramsar Site has also been conducted and has led to the participatory drafting of a proposal for site regulation. This draft regulation is based on the current habits and customs of local communities in managing their environment. The document recognises the importance of customary rules at site-level and uses the lessons learnt from the study to achieve a clear and understandable regulation for locals. The endorsement and enforcement are yet to be implemented.

Challenges remain to improve wetland governance in Lao, but recent developments like the ongoing revision of the water law including clear legal frameworks for the management of the wetlands in Lao PDR have facilitated a clearer legal framework for wetland governance at national level. Previous examples presented will most likely be “reproduced” in several sites in Lao PDR to strengthen the involvement of communities in management of wetlands.

Key questions and answers following the presentation

The first draft of the water law in Viet Nam involved communities but was progressively revised and finally left little space for community management or decision-making. Has it been the same process in Lao PDR?

The new draft is being awaited, but the concept paper for the revision of the water law as well as the last revised draft both included provision for local communities to play a more active role in their management and protection through local wetland committees with rule-making powers. It is still to be determined whether this will be included in the final draft. IUCN Lao PDR will work on this legal revision, focusing more on ensuring that wetlands were taken into account in this new law rather than focusing on involvement of local communities. Nevertheless, IUCN provided experience of governance at site level (Beung Kiat Ngong and Xe Champhone) and also involved the National Working Group from the MWD project in the revision process.

Wetlands governance in the Tonle Sap

Mr Jake Brunner and Mr Kong Kimsreng, IUCN Cambodia
(See Annex 2.6)

In terms of biodiversity and food security, Cambodia’s Tonle Sap is arguably the world’s most important freshwater wetland. Designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 1997 and established by Royal Decree as the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve in 2001, this large and dynamic wetland (water surface area fluctuates annually between about 2,500 km² and 15,000 km², with a related change in water level of about 8 m) provides food that is consumed by almost half of Cambodia’s population of 18 million. According to some estimates, fish caught from the Tonle Sap is responsible for 60% of national protein intake.

The dramatic changes in volume and in area of the Tonle Sap are the result of its connection with the Mekong River. The smaller Bassac River flows out of the Tonle Sap and meets the Mekong 100 km away at Phnom Penh. Flood waters in the Mekong force the Bassac River to reverse its flow between July and October every year, filling the lake and contributing to about 57% of its total water volume. This seasonal flooding brings in an influx of nutrients and migrating fish (that come to breed) and has made the Tonle Sap the world's most productive inland fishery. A conservative estimate of the value of the Tonle Sap resources made by the Fisheries Administration came to US\$ 233 million per year.

More than 1.2 million people live on or around the Tonle Sap and depend upon it for their livelihoods. Until recently, much of the fishing area of the Tonle Sap was inaccessible to most local fishers. Government-authorized fishing lots were owned and operated for commercial purposes, using economies of scale and modern fishing gear to maximise production, with little benefit to local communities. Families that are not affiliated with commercial fishing lots were excluded from these areas and forced to fish in marginal places at some distance from their homes.

However, in August 2011, Prime Minister Hun Sen suspended 35 privately owned fishing lots in the Tonle Sap. Then, in March 2012, the Prime Minister signed the Sub-Decree No. 37 entitled "Abolishing the Fishing Lots around Tonle Sap Lake in Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap, Pursat, Kampong Chhnang, and Kampong Thom Provinces in order for Family Fishing and Fishery Conservation". While this is potentially a boon for local fishers who were now given unrestricted access to previously off-limits fishing grounds, there is a significant risk that these changes will lead to acceleration of unsustainable fishing practices. The Prime Minister has thus set in motion a major natural experiment. It remains to be determined whether such an outcome can be avoided in the case of a classic common pool resource (defined as a resource system whose size or characteristics make it costly to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use) that is already showing signs of unsustainable use. Nation-wide, of the newly liberated fishing lots, 97,500 hectares (23.5%) have been earmarked for fish conservation zones that are managed by the Fisheries Administration. Twenty-four of these zones, covering 93,000 hectares, are in the Tonle Sap. In reality, there is no prospect that the Fisheries Administration can effectively manage such large areas without meaningful participation of local fishers.

Key comments raised following the presentation

Mr Long Sochet, Head of the Coalition of Cambodian Fishers in the Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia made a comment. He stated that in the 1980s, there were many fish in the Tonle Sap Lake. In 2000, the fish stock rapidly declined in the Tonle Sap Lake, due to the illegal fishing and overfishing by fishing lots. In 2001, the Government of Cambodia had its first policy reform on fisheries, by declaring to cut down about 51% of the fishing lots which were to be kept as open access for the public. Then there were several community fisheries established to manage fishery resources by local fishing communities. However, during that time, the capacity of Community Fisheries Committees were so weak and were not enough to manage their areas properly.

During 2001-2011, due to the tension between fisher folk and fishing lot owners, the local

fishing communities raised their concerns to the Government to take action, supported by local NGOs and development partners. In March 2012, the Government declared that they would abolish all fishing lots across the Tonle Sap Lake. Following this, local fisher folk were happy to have three key benefits: (1) The right to access fishing everywhere, (2) no conflicts between fisher folk and fishing lot owners, and (3) allow only family fishing or small-scale fishing (large scale is illegal).

However, since that time, illegal fishing has also increased. There is also the inequitable sharing of resources between the rich (who can afford to buy large fishing gears) who get more benefits than the poor (who cannot afford to buy large ones).

On behalf of Cambodian fisherfolk, Mr Sochet urged the Cambodian Government to offer more exclusive rights and power to community fisheries; particularly the right to stop illegal fishing and send offenders to the court and to identify a clear role of line agencies to support and cooperate with the Community Fisheries to manage their fisheries resources sustainably.

Management and governance of Songkhla Lake

Mr Paisan Padungsirikul, ONEP, Thailand
(See Annex 2.7)

About the Songkhla Lake Basin

The Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) lies in 3 provinces; i.e. in all 11 districts of Phattalung Province, 12 (out of 16) districts of Songkhla Province and 2 (out of 23) districts of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. The Basin covers approximately 8,729 km² consisting of 88% of the land area and 12% of the lake area; the basin spans approximately 150 km from the north to south and approximately 65 km from the east to west.

The Songkhla Lake Basin is the only basin in Thailand where fresh water from precipitation - via streams and overland flow - draining into the lake, is mixed with saline water from the sea, making this lake a large lagoon system consisting of fresh, brackish, and salt water depending on the part of the lake and time of year. In the rainy season, there is a larger extent of fresh water, while in the dry season more saline water intrudes further north into the lake.

Songkhla Lake Basin Management

For decades, authorities responsible for Songkhla Lake Basin development have gone through a series of organisational restructuring. In 2002, a cabinet resolution set up the Songkhla Lake Basin Committee for managing the basin. In 2003, the Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) was assigned to develop the "Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan – a twenty year plan". Directed by ONEP, three major local universities in the Songkhla Lake Basin were assigned with developing the master plan. This plan was finished in 2005, and was approved with the cabinet resolution on 29 November 2005. During the period of the master plan development, the Songkhla Lake Basin Committee was chaired by the Vice Prime Minister for the benefit of cooperation between many ministries.

After the master plan was finished, ONEP was designated to be responsible for the

transformation of the plan to action. In this period, the structure of the Songkhla Lake Basin Committee was amended. At present, the Songkhla Lake Basin Committee is chaired by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

The Committees come from various organisations for driving the plan into action such as the Permanent Secretary of Interior, the Permanent Secretary of Agricultural and Cooperatives, Permanent Secretary of Transport, Secretary General of the Office of National Economic and Social Development Board, the Budget Director, the Bureau of the Budget and the Governors of three Provinces in the Songkhla Lake Basin; namely Songkhla, Phattalung and Nakorn Sri Thammarat. In addition, the Committee comprises of seven experts from various sectors, three experts from universities, and six local people representatives in the SLB.

The Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan and the vision of the basin

Songkhla Lake Basin shall be restored and managed with a sustainability framework, keeping the balance amongst ecological, economic and social systems; under institutional frameworks which pay high respect to public participation, efficiency, transparency and justice.

Strategies

- Strategy 1 Rehabilitation of natural resource and biodiversity in the Songkhla Lake Basin
- Strategy 2 Sustainable use of the Songkhla Lake Basin's natural resources
- Strategy 3 Pollution prevention and control
- Strategy 4 Restoration and conservation of arts, culture, historical and archaeological sites, tourism sites, and local wisdom
- Strategy 5 Enhancement of efficiency in the Songkhla Lake Basin administration and management, with emphasis on public participation

Master Plan: The transformation into action

In 2007 which was the first year of implementation of the Master Plan, the budget allocated for the plan was THB 296 million; about 22% of the Master Plan. In the following years, budget allocation was not enough when compared with the plan.

Key comments and questions raised after the presentation

Dr Apichart, Director of the Natural Resource and Environmental Management Division of Thailand said, "We have here two lakes, around the same size with similar issues, but the approach and results are quite different. In Songkhla, we started with a very high level committee including mainly officials. Dr Ajit Kumar Pattnaik from the Chilika Lake Development Authority sent 20 people to Thailand to learn from our study. But after ten years, they abandoned this approach and changed. They started their restoration work late in 1991, and rehabilitated the lake already. We are still drafting the Master Plan for Songkhla lake. In Chilika, we have now counted 150 Irrawady dolphin. In Songkhla lake, we have only a few and they have almost come to extinction. US\$ 16.6 million has been spent on Chilika and US\$ 300 million for the Songkhla Lake Master Plan. This is a very good opportunity for those interested in the wetlands to compare the two systems. Make your own choice for good governance and management."

How many people are there based around Chilika Lake?

There is a population of 1.6 million around the lake, so the population is more dense than Songkhla.

In your opinion what are the key factors for the success of the Chilika Lake model?

One institution – the Chilika Development Authority – is responsible and accountable for the Chilika Lake. In the case of Songkhla Lake, their data is better since they have conducted a lot of studies and monitoring, but have carried out little action. In Chilika, initiatives are underway and actions have been prioritised, giving scope to plan for strategies. It takes a long time to look for an ideal plan, but because the ecosystem changes, waiting for long periods is not advisable.

Coffee break and screening of the movie “The disappearance of flooding season”

4.2.3 Deltas

The Mekong Delta: The unmaking of an ecological disaster

Dr Andrew Wyatt, IUCN Viet Nam
(see Annex 2.8)

Once a vast intact wetland, the Mekong Delta has within the last 300 years undergone enormous changes as a result of human settlement and modification through large-scale engineering works to support an ever increasing need to irrigate and protect predominantly rice growing areas. Large-scale canals in the upper delta floodplains were initially built by the French to drain and convert the upper-delta floodplains into rice growing areas and to transport produce out of the Delta. When the French left, the American War further devastated both the upper-delta and coastal wetlands through more canal building to drain wetland battlefields and the use of defoliants to uncover enemy strongholds. After the war, the unified Vietnamese government continued the process of human modification in the Mekong Delta.

Widespread food shortages after the war resulted in the government issuing successive food security policies that drove subsequent infrastructure planning processes and implementation, predominantly focused on supporting the expansion and intensification of rice growing supported by the technological advances of the green revolution. This included the destruction of the coastal mangroves by rice expansion beginning during the French colonial period, the use of defoliants during the American War, and in the last two decades, shrimp farming. Upstream mainstream hydropower developments and climate change contributes to the threats to the future of the Mekong Delta.

Today, the last semi-natural wetlands are constrained to seven isolated and fragmented protected areas consisting of a mix of national parks and provincial level wetland reserves. The manifold consequences include negative impacts on fisheries; changes in sediment dynamics; changes in the magnitude, timing, and spatial distribution of the annual floods; reduced surface area for aquifer recharge and coastal groundwater depletion; and land subsidence.

In the making of this ecological disaster were top-down and unaccountable governance systems that began with the French colonial administration, transitioning to a Soviet-style centrally planned system, both of which valued the wetlands only in terms of their industrial production values. As Viet Nam transitions to a market economy, its 'socialist orientation' meant that it has kept vestiges of the inflexible (rice) production-target driven planning approaches of the old centrally planned economy. Characteristic of this master planning approach is the narrow disciplinary and sectoral biases in the system led predominantly by northern irrigation engineers and hydrologists from successive agriculture and construction ministries. When it came to protecting the last vestiges of the wetlands, this responsibility was vested predominantly with land managers and industrial foresters who have lacked the crucial ecological knowledge that is necessary to ensure their ecological futures. Managing the Mekong Delta as an ecological entity has also been a challenge. A 2002 attempt to initiate a delta wide approach to managing water resources through the establishment of a Cuu Long River Basin Organisation failed as a result of the ingrained sectoral and parochial provincial cultures, and a lack of political oversight. Crucially, there was also little of what we may consider a functional civil society during the making of this ecological disaster.

To unmake this ecological disaster, governance of the Mekong Delta needs to move towards a 'modern' governance system that incorporates meaningful participation from a wider range of societal interests. To a certain extent, this has been happening already. What characterises the governance of the Mekong Delta in the last decade has been the emergence of an increasingly vocal and influential civil society that is beginning to demand more accountability from government actors. This paper documents this emerging civil society and provides a number of case studies of new actors and actions, some of which have been supported by IUCN. This includes the retired reformers and the 'quasi'-NGOs, the activist scientists, a more informed media, and working together for a more strategic engagement with political actors. Altogether, while challenges remain, they hold the promise of unmaking the ecological disaster, and avoiding a catastrophe.

Key questions and comments following the presentation

Mr Houamphan of the Lao Biodiversity Association said, "The Viet Nam side should not encourage the exploitation of timber in Lao, because this exploitation of wood is badly affecting the Viet Nam delta. In China, more than eight dams are being proposed. Most of the watersheds in Lao are degraded. Ten major Mekong tributaries are in Lao. If deforestation occurs in Lao, it will affect the Mekong delta. Because of the dams in the upper Mekong, the water level in the river is very low and there is an increased saline intrusion into the delta. We should stop the exploitation of wood in Lao to preserve the Mekong delta. Good wetland governance is also linked to watershed management".

The Sundarbans

Mr Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, IUCN Bangladesh
(see Annex 2.9)

The Sundarbans mangrove forest ecosystem, which is globally recognised as the largest mangrove forest formation in the world, is one of the most unique gifts of nature. It is diverse

both in terms of flora and fauna, and supports the largest array of life forms amongst forest ecosystems of a similar type. This particular forest ecosystem is the longest scientifically managed mangrove forest in the world and continues to support species which have disappeared from many other forests. The Sundarbans has attracted global attention among conservationists, researchers and nature lovers and has also earned a place as a global natural wonder on a number of occasions.

The Sundarbans is also the single largest source of forest produce in the country. It has a very high economic importance and is a source of livelihood for several million people. It also plays a very important role in protecting the habitations in the greater Khulna region from the devastation caused by recurring sea storms and tidal surges. It also sequesters and stores large amounts of carbon from nature and thus helps in the initiatives against climate change. The diversity, uniqueness and richness of the ecosystem have earned it recognition both as a natural World Heritage Site and Ramsar listing as a Wetland of International Importance.

The Sundarbans are truly a unique ecosystem of global importance. It has a massive array of tidal mangrove forests, creating a fascinating labyrinth of ever-changing islands and twisting water channels forming a vast river delta that spans the coastline of Bangladesh and West Bengal in India, extending over an area of 10,000 km². The Bangladesh portion of the Sundarbans alone covers an area of some 6000 km². It is considered by many to be perhaps the largest expanse of mangrove forests in the world and is home to a great diversity of species. The Sundarbans are formed by the outpouring Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna river basins as they make their way from the Himalayas to the ocean. Where these great river systems meet the sea, they join with the salt water from the Bay of Bengal to create a vast wetland of brackish estuaries.

Out of the 35 species in the world, the Sundarbans hosts some 12 to 13 commercially important species. Mangroves are unique in that they thrive in intertidal zones such as the Sundarbans. Mangroves are also well known to provide a wide variety of ecosystem services. They are critical breeding grounds for a wide variety of fish, crabs and molluscs and therefore provide immense benefits to human food security as they grow and leave the forests for open water where they are caught by fishers. While mangroves are threatened by climate change and specifically by sea level rise, they are also well known to provide critical natural infrastructure. Through their important role as carbon sinks and in their ability to absorb the impact of large coastal storms, they thereby protect human communities further inland.

Within this great mangrove ecosystem, a wide variety of wildlife thrives. Of course, best known is the enigmatic Royal Bengal Tiger. It is well known for its beauty, cunning and majestic grace. In local lore, supernatural qualities are attributed to its strength, fierce stare and ability to seemingly vanish in the camouflage of the forest. There are however a number of other important wild animals who live in this unique ecosystem. The Chital and Barking

Deer, wild boar, the *Rhesus Macaque*, the otter, a variety of lesser cats, tree shrews and rats, civets, mongooses and porcupines are joined by aquatic animals such as the Ganges River dolphin, the Irrawaddy dolphin, crocodiles, monitor lizards, the King Cobra and other venomous snakes and a variety of other reptiles and amphibians. There are a huge number of birds, with at least 226 species representing about 36% of the birds recorded in Bangladesh.

The Forest Department is the custodian of the Sundarbans mangrove forest. Selection and improvement of the tree stand is followed as a silvicultural system till moratorium was imposed in 1989. The Sundarbans was first declared reserved in 1876 and the first management plan was written in 1893. Following this, a series of forest inventories was conducted to monitor the condition of the forest regarding composition, growth and health. From the inventories, it was revealed that the forest is degrading at an alarming rate. To reverse the situation and to ensure people's participation in forest management, a co-management model has been introduced. This model has created a great deal of enthusiasm and ownership among the stakeholders of the Sundarbans. To strengthen the process further, a protocol and an MoU on the Bengal Tiger - the flagship species and conservation of the Sundarbans - has been signed in between Bangladesh and India. Under the purview of the protocol and MoU, the co-management policy and other management programmes can be developed for conservation of the Sundarbans ecosystem.

Screening of a short movie on the Sundarbans

Closing remarks for day 1

Ms Sansanee Choowaew, Thailand

Ms Choowaew expressed her pleasure at closing the first day of presentations for the workshop. She noted that between India, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan and China; there are some of the highest wetlands in the world of critical value and acknowledged their role as the "water tower" for most of the region. She then alluded to the interesting example in the Tanguar Hoar presentation where there are various management focuses from biodiversity to ecosystem services with an interesting approach, probably the most important on livelihood. She also highlighted how the audience benefitted from many ideas on sharing and a market approach which is critical to ensure sustainable management in the wetlands.

The Chilika Lake is thought to be a good model and example, as Ms Choowaew acknowledged. This lake is on the Ramsar Site list and was notably removed from the Ramsar Sites under the Montreux Record in 2002. What is interesting is the integrated lake and basin management, including the hydrological aspects. The site-based management, especially monitoring and restoration, are ongoing processes. Ms Choowaew appreciated Mr Pattnaik's emphasis on "self-initiative", but added that because this varies from case to case, some successful cases may not fit others.

In the case of Lao, though the country recently joined the Ramsar Convention, they already have a Ramsar governance structure in place in terms of government at all levels and have established a Provincial Committee and a district implementation team. At local level, the community participates and is responsible for wetlands. Co-management is new in Lao and the uses of local customary rule and agreement are very important at the site and at community-level. From Ms Choowaew's experience, these local rules would be much more effective than national law. This is because communities may not know national laws, but they know communal rules and agreements which they will follow.

Ms Choowaew then proceeded to discuss the Tonle Sap and emphasised the importance of

good policy, in terms of the cancellation of fishing lots. She then outlined how it would be useful to learn more about hydrological conservation which links to Mekong mainstream dams. She added that other threats caused by disturbance as a result of mainstream dams require assessment. The Songkhla Lake also faces challenges, because even though there is a self-management plan in place, there is a lack of clear focus on the wise use of wetlands. No clear action or improvement has taken place on the ground. Ms Choowaew feels Thailand can learn from these experiences.

There is a large delta in the Sundarbans; wetlands management and governance would be extremely complicated in this regard. For the delta, she mentioned the diverse types of wetlands, the status of protection, the canal network, and agricultural production. This brings to mind the canal network in the lower central plain of Thailand. A similarity lies in the fact that the canal network in Thailand is also threatened by urbanisation. Management of the Mekong delta, it is not just confined to Cambodia and Viet Nam, but is more of a transboundary issue of the Mekong. The Sundarbans is an excellent transboundary initiative as it tries to address concerns of climate change adaptation, conservation and co-management.

5. Workshop day 2: Group discussions and the way forward

The participants split into different groups covering four topics:

- Large lakes
- Chilika Lake compared with Songkhla Lake
- Inland wetlands
- Deltas

IUCN Lao PDR provided guidelines (see Annex 8) for the group discussion covering four questions:

1. What are the key elements to achieve the effective governance of wetlands?
2. What are the main challenges and constraints to be addressed? How do we address these challenges?
3. How can regional cooperation be further developed?
4. Priorities and actions in the next 1-3 years.

Participants had one hour to discuss the different questions. A rapporteur from each group then gave a 15-20 minute presentation of the key elements of the group discussion (see Annex 9).

Large Freshwater Lakes: Tanguar Hoar and the Tonle Sap

Rapporteur: Mr Jake Brunner, IUCN Viet Nam
(see presentation in Annex 9.1)

A number of key issues were highlighted in the opening section of the presentation. Tanguar Hoar has a four tier management system in place since 2006; where Village Committees, Union Committees and Central Committees are democratically elected. In addition, 73 villages have elected Management Committees. The Central Committee is connected to the

Tanguar Hoar Power Committee that has five members. They are appointed and chaired by a powerful District Commissioner and function as a mini-basin authority. Financing is not carried out with a lot of money. It covers three phases over 10 years with a total budget of US\$ 5 million. This has been critical for putting the Management Plan into action. The committees have been able to build capital by taking a percentage of fish sales – 36% go into a pot as well as interest on microloans so the project has long-term financial sustainability. This money is being used to finance patrols as well as offices and infrastructure. Patrol financing is a great indicator for the success of fishery management.

A number of weaknesses were identified, particularly that for 150 years wealthy traders have been awarded leases with no thought of the local people. This has led to a lack of confidence and fear amongst the locals, as former lease holders have made threats that when the project ends they will reclaim their fishing areas. Accruing of a million dollars worth of capital is good, but if misused through corruption, it will make the project lose its credibility. In this regard, there is some desire for IUCN to bring in a financial manager. For long term sustainability, when looking at the ratio of fish to people, there are unfortunately not enough fish. In terms of supplementary income-generating activities, there has been a lot of interest in livestock raising.

Some potential solutions were identified by the group during the comparative exercise. Compared with the Tonle Sap, the ratio between the area of the lake and the people living is almost exactly the same in Tanguar Hoar. However, the Tonle Sap is much larger as Tanguar Hoar covers just one district while the Tonle Sap covers ten. Therefore, management would be much more complex in case of the latter. The Cambodian Government would benefit from more centralised management. There have been many large (US\$ 10-15 million) projects that usually last for a short period, between 3-5 years. Perhaps the Tonle Sap could benefit from a more long-term approach, with slow money infusions like that of Tanguar Hoar. International cooperation has not been discussed before, but exchange visits have been planned.

In terms of activities for the future, an anticipated difficulty is getting people involved and for them to not be afraid of former leaseholders who are politically powerful. Fortunately, the government has so far supported the project and has rejected pleas from these leaseholders. The project is working well and should continue in this manner. Professional office staff and experts are required for handling funds, and this is also needed after the project is completed. Participants request for an exchange of experts and government officials in order to learn more about this project.

Chilika and Songkhla wetland governance

Rapporteur: Dr Nguyen Duc Tu, IUCN Viet Nam
(see presentation in Annex 9.2)

A number of ways for improving wetland governance were put forth in the presentation; such as public awareness and participation, considering customary laws and traditional knowledge, strategic operational planning, and incentives for all sectors of the population to participate in wetlands governance. The improvement of scientific data is also required.

The main challenges faced are the competition for resources between stakeholders. There is limited knowledge as not many people understand the value of wetlands. More transparency is also important in this regard. As potential solutions, ways to develop regional cooperation were proposed, such as the need for improving technical information-sharing and making available better information for regional decision-makers. This will facilitate the creation of dialogues. The better usage of international treaties such as Ramsar, CBD and ASEAN etc. was also proposed so as to coordinate enforcement of wetland governance regulations. Another possible way is coordination between NGOs such as the World Wide Fund for Nature and the World Conservation Society etc. Creating a regional working group to propose concepts and transboundary collaboration were also suggested for the long-term.

Deltas: Mekong Delta and the Sundarbans

Rapporteur: Mr Andrew Wyatt, IUCN Viet Nam
(see presentation in Annex 9.3)

The presentation conveyed a number of issues that were collectively discussed and analysed by the group. The first was that a sectoral approach to planning and management is problematic, particularly in the Mekong Delta, where there are many sectoral master plans with no links between the different sectors (particularly districts, agencies and communities). The solution proposed was to adopt an ecosystem or basin approach. Links must be made between sectors, so that all show integrated Inter-American Water Resources Network principles. Institutional and financial support is required in order to create a basin management approach.

Challenges were anticipated during the group discussion, particularly through learning from past experiences in Viet Nam, where management failed because of a sectoral rather than an integrated approach. This failure took place because the sectoral approach was much too complicated and did not function well. A more organic approach - something driven internally not from the outside groups - was proposed as a good alternative. There is a need to look at what is working on a regional-level and build upon that.

Community dialogue and their participation are problems in the Mekong Delta. This has not been the case in Bangladesh, where this aspect has been well integrated into their governance systems for many years now. There is a Dutch pilot project to get further input from communities, but this has been slow. In the Mekong, there have been problems with synthesizing information. Therefore, better communication is needed between policy makers and agencies as well as between agencies.

A number of activities for the future and recommendations were proposed following the group discussion. An observation made was that the Mekong Regional Committee has a political commitment to ensure minimum flows in the Mekong. However, minimum flows are only one part of an ecosystem. Other components such as water quality have been left out. There is a need to explore why a minimum sediment load at political-level is not in place. This is an example of a non-ecosystem approach. In the Mekong Delta, there have been initiatives to create more dialogues such as "Save the Mekong", but much more work needs to be done in this area. Bangladesh recognizes the many uses of water in the Sundarbans for biodiversity, human use, and irrigation. This has led to the opening of many cross-

boundary dialogues with India, but these can be further strengthened. There is already a good dialogue between local councils and communities. A two-tier system exists for management issues. The first tier consists of a council of stakeholders and government groups and within this is the second tier of a smaller group of co-management committees.

Further recommendations include the formation of an advisory body for the Southwest Steering Committee. Participants requested for exchange visits, as people in the Delta want to learn from experiences of successful management. The media must have greater involvement, as greater coverage is needed for addressing management challenges.

Inland wetlands

Rapporteur: Archana Chatterjee, IUCN India
(see presentation in Annex 9.4)

Ways to ensure effective wetland governance were central to the discussions of this group. As the group members observed, wetlands are governed by many different agencies and are used by different stakeholders. Therefore, central management is the way to ensure effective governance. Suggestions for improving governance include the need for a strong monitoring system because wetlands are very dynamic; changing daily, monthly, and yearly. Monitoring wetlands also ensures effective governance. In this context, transparency and accountability are essential. It was also suggested that motivation levels should be kept high.

A number of challenges and constraints were conveyed during the presentation. An important point raised was that capacity is lacking at local and national levels, especially amongst the forestry officials and community management groups, who could use more training and capacity-building. Examples from South Asia were highlighted, particularly those of Bangladesh and India. In Bangladesh, there are problems with some stakeholders overpowering others in meetings, so dialogue should be more equitable. In India, wetlands do not have specific government designations. Despite a lot of awareness regarding wetlands in India, they still fall under the category of 'Wastelands', so this classification system needs to change.

Climate change, flash floods from glacial melts, and monsoons are factors that need to be taken into account when formulating wetland policy. Furthermore, if restrictions are put on fishing, then capacity-building for alternative livelihoods must take place or else fishing restrictions will not be honoured. There is, in general, a lack of political commitment and engagement at all levels.

A number of possible solutions were put forth. Site-level management needs to be fully implemented at all levels, and there is a need to integrate local sites with basin management. Building dialogue is also important. Capacity building for wetlands managers is required through trainings and visits to better managed wetlands. Managers should also engage community members. It was suggested that exchange visits should be organised in the future. Transboundary frameworks need to be created or improved. In this context, how to acquire political interest is also important. Politicians pay attention mostly to economic

values; this perspective is inadequate and needs to be developed to get their attention. Engagement of civil society and participation in international treaties such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and Ramsar were also suggested.

Proposed priority actions include that more data is needed to make regulation and governance effective. An inventory of species as well as ecosystems are required, and rapid development activities should be stopped. Capacity building to address climate change, especially at the local level, is needed. Livelihood improvement is important as well as the implementation of government agreements.

5.1 Summary and closing

Dr Robert Mather, Head of IUCN's Southeast Asia group

In his concluding speech, Dr Mather highlighted that there is a wide gap between science, policy and decision-making processes which needs to be addressed and that political commitment for ecosystem conservation is required. He added that conservation has to take place over a sustained period of time and that long-term financing is often better than one-time large financial support.

The ways ahead will differ for each project, but Dr Mather asserted that these ideas need to be integrated into their workplans and there is a need to learn from other projects. For example, he proposed that the MWD and Mangroves for the Future project can support work in the Mekong Delta and in the Sundarbans.

In terms of the next steps, a workshop report would be produced and case studies on all of the featured projects will be completed in the near future. IUCN will then publish all the project case studies ideally before World Wetlands Day in 2014.

Dr Mather concluded by expressing his thanks to the IUCN Lao team for organizing the workshop.

6. Media reports

To support the release of media reports, the IUCN communications team drafted a press release in English and in Lao (see Annex 10).

Both national and provincial media attended the first two days of the workshop, with journalists from the Lao National TV and the Vientiane Times as well as journalists from the local newspaper Champamai and the TV station of Champassak Province. Consequently, several media reports were published.

Markets urged to separate food stalls to save stomachs

Xayxana Leukai

Developers building new produce markets are being advised to keep different food sections separate in the interest of protecting consumer health.

Vientiane Health Department Food and Drug Division Head, Dr Somchine Singharaj, told *Vientiane Times* building fresh food markets had become popular among entrepreneurs throughout Laos, but some markets were not well-managed, with different types of food sometimes placed in close proximity.

"Making food sections separate is necessary to ensure food safety," he said.

Some vendors have been observed selling meat at the same table as vegetables, while others sell cooked food close to raw meat.

Flies landing on the raw meat before moving to the cooked food can cause gastrointestinal problems such as dysentery and typhoid.

To solve the problem, Dr Somchine advised market

administrators to play their part by encouraging vendors to sell different kinds of food in different sections.

Dr Somchine said health officials had difficulties encouraging vendors to sell food and other goods separately as some markets were established long before food regulations were created.

He also recommended vendors cover their cooked food to protect against flies, which are a major carrier of disease, and warned against the use of formalin to extend the shelf life of food or the use of borax to make meatballs crunchy.

"These kinds of chemicals will harm people's health and should be regulated under the food and drug law," he said.

Dr Somchine said vendors should consider customers' health as their main priority, rather than their own profits.

Vendors selling in an unhygienic environment should be avoided and reported to the Vientiane Health Department on 021 214240 or 021 223272.

Xieng Khuang retreat slated to be the next Vangvieng

Times Reporters

Xieng Khuang province's Thathom district is set to be the next Vangvieng in terms of tourism activities, thanks to easy access provided by the newly opened road from Bonkhammay province.

Tourism officials told *Vientiane Times* yesterday Thathom district has many things in common with Vangvieng. It is located on the Nam Xan river and runs kayaking and tubing operations.

With its tourism potential also including caves and waterfalls, Thathom could become a new attraction in the years to come, generating income for local people and boosting development in the district.

President of the National Assembly, Ms Pany Yathortou, visited Thathom on Tuesday to spur rural development and poverty reduction efforts based on the potential of the district.

The district comprises 24 villages and 2,660 families and has a total population of more than 16,000.

Since the completion of the 81-km Road 4B connecting Borikhamxay and Xieng Khuang provinces, Thathom has become a significant gateway between the central and northern regions of Laos.

Many people are now using this shorter route to travel between Vientiane and Xieng Khuang and other northern



Ms Pany Yathortou visits Xieng Khuang and Borikhamxay provinces.

provinces. Thathom could become a convenient stopping point for visitors travelling along this road.

Construction will soon begin on a bridge linking Laos and Thailand across the Mekong River, connecting Borikhamxay province with Thailand's Bung Kan province. This will make travel in the area even more attractive to tourists and will also help to boost trade and investment in the region.

Director of the Xieng Khuang provincial Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, Mr Khamphet Phommadiuangkaysone, said Thathom used to be an isolated

district, but was rapidly turning into a transit hub.

"We have seen many changes there recently. Thathom now has a market, electricity, banks and other facilities," he said.

"I think tourism development will be the district's main focus because there are many families who rely on slash and burn cultivation for their livelihood. They could earn a better living by being part of tourism development and there is great potential to provide tourists with the facilities they need."

Mr Khamphet said the authorities would encourage businesses to invest in hotels,

guesthouses and restaurants.

During her visit, Ms Pany also toured the Nakoun development focus area in Borikhamxay district before visiting a nearby rubber factory.

She advised local authorities to pay more attention to rural development and poverty reduction. The authorities should encourage villagers to grow more commercial crops so they could earn sufficient money to alleviate their poverty, she advised.

Ms Pany asked the authorities to review the allocation of land and permanent jobs for local people, which she said would bring prosperity.



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Weather forecast

Xieng Khuang			
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather
	Min	Max	
23/08/2013	19	23	Isolated showers
24/08/2013	19	24	Scattered showers
25/08/2013	19	24	Light rain
Luang Namtha			
23/08/2013	21	31	Isolated showers
24/08/2013	21	32	Isolated showers
25/08/2013	21	32	Light rain
Luang Prabang			
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather
	Min	Max	
23/08/2013	24	30	Isolated showers
24/08/2013	25	31	Isolated showers
25/08/2013	25	32	Light rain
Vientiane Capital			
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather
	Min	Max	
23/08/2013	23	30	Isolated showers
24/08/2013	24	31	Isolated showers
25/08/2013	24	31	Light rain
Savannakhet			
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather
	Min	Max	
23/08/2013	24	29	Light rain
24/08/2013	25	30	Light rain
25/08/2013	25	30	Isolated showers
Champassak			
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather
	Min	Max	
23/08/2013	24	30	Light rain
24/08/2013	25	31	Light rain
25/08/2013	25	31	Isolated showers

Species under threat at Ramsar wetlands site

Phonesavanh Sangsomboun

Biodiversity and large mammals at a Ramsar wetland site in Champassak province are under threat from agricultural encroachment and overharvesting, a survey has found.

The survey, conducted at the Ramsar site in Pathoumphone district's Beung Khat Ngong village by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), found some species common to Laos could not be located in the area.

A Ramsar site is a wetland area of international environmental significance, as designated by the Ramsar Convention.

IUCN Water and Wetlands Programme Coordinator, Mr Raphael Glemet, said the results of the survey, which focused on birds and large mammals, were a bit disappointing and raised concerns over the management of the site.

"We think it is because of overharvesting and logging in the areas surrounding the site, which can directly and indirectly disturb birds and large mammals," he said.

IUCN discussed the results of the survey during a field trip to the area this week, attended by participants from Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Bangladesh and India, who each brought experiences of Ramsar site management in their home countries.



Common animal species may be under threat at the Beung Khat Ngong Ramsar site.

The Ramsar site in Beung Khat Ngong is important for many species and features rich biodiversity, which is vitally important to the livelihood of local villagers.

The 2,260ha area, covering eight villages, became a recognised Ramsar site in 2010, with Laos becoming the 160th signatory to the convention.

However a lack of proper management in the past has led to overfishing, slash-and-burn cultivation and agricultural encroachment, endangering the fragile wetland ecosystem.

Climate change is also posing a threat to water in the reservoir.

Changing weather

conditions and food security problems have forced villagers to expand their agricultural areas, slowly moving deeper into the reservation.

Ms Bangon Kedkasone, a local resident, blamed the growing population as a factor in villagers' ever-increasing lack of food security.

"In the past we had plenty of food here, but for the last few years forest products and fish numbers have rapidly decreased," she said.

Ms Bangon said villagers had no other choice if they wanted to make a living.

The reduction in resources has not only affected villagers, but also the tourism industry. After conducting the

survey, IUCN organised workshops at the community level to explain the results and how villagers could better use their land to create a reliable income in the long run.

IUCN has also worked with authorities to create a five-year management plan for the villagers, encouraging them to become involved in activities like ecotourism to maintain their food security, livelihood and income.

Laos is home to two Ramsar sites - Beung Khat Ngong and the Xe Chomphone wetland in Savannakhet province.

The wetland sites are regarded as vital for the survival of species and biodiversity in the country.

26-30 August 2013: One article in Lao language in the provincial weekly newspaper called Champamai



Champamai Weekly newspaper

Workshop on Wetlands governance in Asia was held in Champassak Province

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Champassak Provincial Sector organised a workshop for Asian countries to share lessons learned and strengthen regional links on wetlands governance.

The workshop was held from 22-23 August 2013 at Champassak Grand Hotel, Pakse District, Champassak Province. “Wetlands governance is an important step to learn and operate with from now on. Therefore, this important workshop was organised for Asian countries to share lessons learned, real working experiences about wetlands governance, and management and plans for future use”, says Dr Akhom Tounalom, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

Two major wetlands in Lao PDR - Xe Champhone in Savannakhet Province and Beung Kiat Ngong in Champassak Province have become members of the Ramsar Convention. These two wetlands are a source of water, food and shelter for local people. In addition, wetlands are an important concern in terms of climate change, flooding, and droughts as well as places to store carbon.

Participants from six IUCN country offices; namely Lao PDR, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, India and Bangladesh, presented case studies which included community-based participation in wetland management. The workshop also discussed plans for wetland governance in the future.

26 August 2013: TV report on Lao National TV in the Lao language

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKRF4LPfZc&feature=youtu.be>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPrx_OsrRWM&feature=youtu.be

Annex 1: Agenda of the workshop

Workshop on Wetlands Governance

Strengthening wetlands management and regional cooperation
21-23 August 2013, Champassak Grand Hotel, Pakse, Lao PDR

Wednesday 21 August 2013	
07.30-19.00	Field visit to Bueng Kiat Ngong and Khon Phapheng <i>Raphael Glemet & Vilavong Vannalath, IUCN Lao PDR</i>
Thursday 22 August 2013	
08.45-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.20	Opening and welcoming remarks <i>Mr Somsanith Boutivong, Vice Governor of Champassak Province , Lao PDR</i>
09.20-09.30	Opening Remarks <i>Mr Akhom Tounalom, Vice-minister, MONRE, Lao PDR</i>
09.30-09.45	Welcome and Overview of the workshop <i>Dr Robert Mather, Southeast Asia Group Head, IUCN ARO</i>
09.45-10.00	RAMSAR implementation in the Mekong Region <i>Dr Robert Mather, Southeast Asia Group Head, IUCN ARO</i>
10.00-10.30	Coffee break/short movie on fish biodiversity
Session 1: Large lakes/wetlands	
10.30-11.00	Community Based Participation in Wetland Management: Sharing Experiences from Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh <i>Mr Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad, IUCN Bangladesh</i>
11.00-11.30	Case study on Chilika Lake, India <i>Dr Ajit Kumar Pattnaik, Chilika Development Authority</i>
11.30-12.00	Wetlands governance mechanisms for Himalayan high altitude wetlands <i>Mr Pankaj Chandan, WWF India</i>
12.00-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.00	Wetlands governance in Lao PDR <i>Mr Lonkham Atsanavong, DoEQP and Raphael Glemet, IUCN Lao PDR</i>
14.00-14.30	Wetlands governance in the Tonle Sap <i>Mr Jake Brunner and Mr Kong Kimsreng, IUCN Cambodia</i>
14.30-15.00	Management and Governance of Songkhla Lake <i>Mr Paisan Padungsirikul, ONEP, Thailand</i>
15.00-15.30	Wetlands governance in Thailand <i>Ms Sansanee Choowaew, Asia Regional Chair of IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management, Thailand</i>
15.30-16.00	Coffee break/short movie on the Mekong river

Session 2: Delta	
16.00-16.30	Wetlands Governance in the Mekong Delta in Viet Nam <i>Mr Andrew Wyatt, IUCN Viet Nam</i>
16.30-17.00	Wetlands Governance in the Sunderbans (India-Bangladesh delta) <i>Mr Brian James Furze, IUCN India</i>
Friday 23 August 2013	
09.00-12.00	Discussion by the group on all the different case study presentations on: -the key elements for effective governance of different types of wetlands -the important challenges/constraints to be addressed to achieve more effective governance (and how these things could be addressed) -priorities for action in the next 1-3 years.
12.00-12.15	Wrap up and closing
12.15-13.45	Lunch
13.45-15.00	Screening of the movie "Mekong"

Annex 2: Presentation of case studies by participants

Annex 2.1 Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

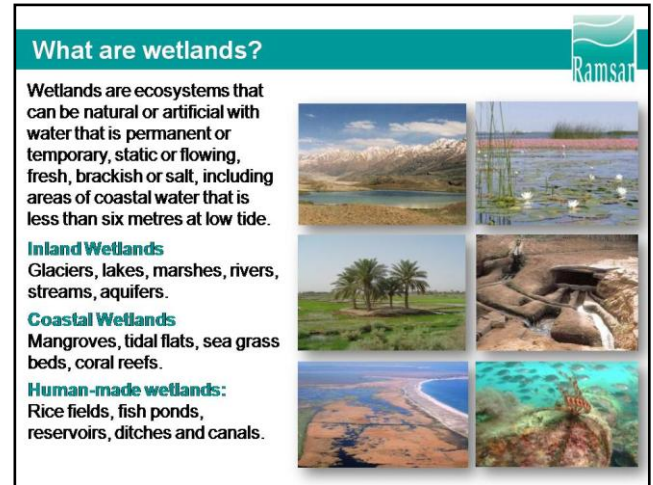
Slide 1:



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Ramsar Convention Secretariat
Rue Mauverney 28
1196 Gland
Switzerland
e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org

Slide 2:



What are wetlands?

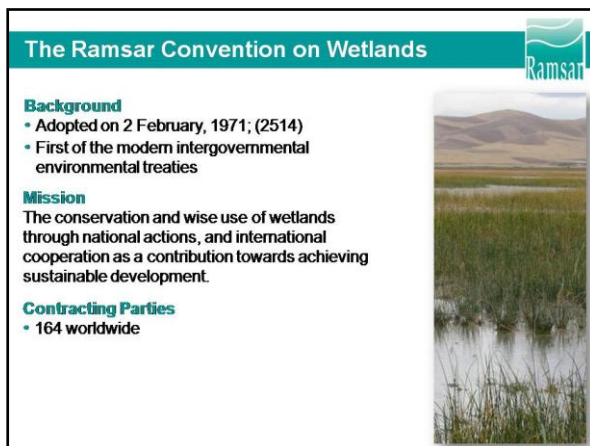
Wetlands are ecosystems that can be natural or artificial with water that is permanent or temporary, static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of coastal water that is less than six metres at low tide.

Inland Wetlands
Glaciers, lakes, marshes, rivers, streams, aquifers.

Coastal Wetlands
Mangroves, tidal flats, sea grass beds, coral reefs.

Human-made wetlands:
Rice fields, fish ponds, reservoirs, ditches and canals.

Slide 3:



The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Background

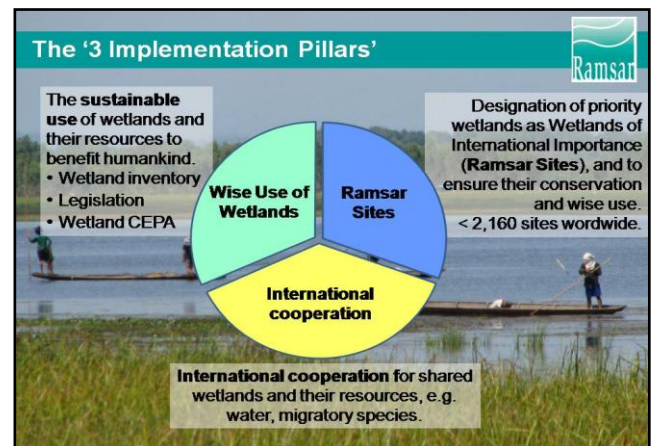
- Adopted on 2 February, 1971; (2514)
- First of the modern intergovernmental environmental treaties

Mission
The conservation and wise use of wetlands through national actions, and international cooperation as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development.

Contracting Parties

- 164 worldwide

Slide 4:



The '3 Implementation Pillars'

The **sustainable use** of wetlands and their resources to benefit humankind.

- Wetland inventory
- Legislation
- Wetland CEPA

Designation of priority wetlands as Wetlands of International Importance (**Ramsar Sites**), and to ensure their conservation and wise use. < 2,160 sites worldwide.

International cooperation for shared wetlands and their resources, e.g. water, migratory species.

Slide 5:

Implementation: National level

National wetland inventory

- Identify the distribution and status of the wetlands in the country, assess the services they each provide and to prioritise them for conservation designation and management;

Establishment of a 'National Wetland Committee'


- Broad-based forum for discussion and/or decision making for the conservation and wise use of the wetlands;
- Involvement of all the relevant stakeholders.

Review national legislation and policy

- To ensure that they are compatible for the conservation and wise use of wetlands;
- Development of a national wetland strategy/action plan

Representative network of Ramsar Sites

- Covering priority wetland habitat types in the country




Slide 8:

Ramsar Sites – benefits of designation

Wetlands designated as Ramsar Sites are in better condition.

	% of Asian Contracting Parties reporting	
	Condition improving	Condition deteriorating
Ramsar Site	41 %	12 %
Other wetlands	12 %	47 %




Slide 6:

Implementation: Ramsar Site level

Site designation is only the start.....

- Engage the local community**
 - raise their awareness of the importance of the site;
 - gain their support and ensure their involvement in site designation, management and monitoring;
- Establish a broad-based 'site management committee'**
- Draft and implement management plan**
 - Local involvement
 - Based on traditional knowledge and science
 - Restoration, monitoring
- Periodic assessments of the management effectiveness**
 - Not only focus on the effectiveness of conservation, but on the benefits to the local community.



Slide 9:

Support from STRP


Scientific and Technical Review Panel
Made up by 13 recognized experts and networks in the field of wetland conservation and wise use including:

- natural sciences,
- socio-economics,
- Communications, Education, Participation & Awareness (CEPA),

to provide the best scientific and technical advice to the Convention.

Support

- Provide advice on an as need basis
- Participate in Ramsar Advisory Missions (RAM)
- Drafting of Technical Report, Briefing Notes, COP Information Papers and Resolutions

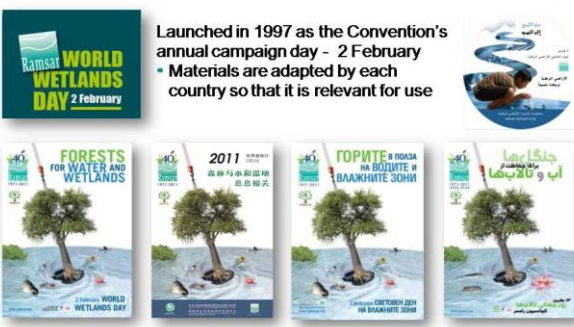


Slide 7:

Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness

Launched in 1997 as the Convention's annual campaign day - 2 February

- Materials are adapted by each country so that it is relevant for use



Slide 10:

Support from Partners

Multilateral Environmental Agreements

- The Ramsar Convention is the lead implementation partner on wetlands for CBD through CBD COP3 Decision III/21
- MoU and Joint Work Plan with many MEAs



Slide 11:

Support from IOP's

International Organization Partners (IOPs)

IUCN

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL

BirdLife INTERNATIONAL

IWM International Water Management Institute

WETLANDS INTERNATIONAL

WWF

Slide 14:

Ramsar

GOVERNANCE

- **who** has the **power to make decisions** that affect wetlands and wetland users and **how** those decisions are made
- **who** has the **power and responsibility to implement those decisions** and **how** those decisions are implemented
- **who** is held **accountable**, and **how**, for implementation.

Slide 12:

Ramsar Sites: Myanmar-Lower Mekong Region

Country	No. Ramsar Sites
Cambodia	3
Lao PDR	2
Myanmar	1
Thailand	14
Vietnam	5

Slide 15:

Ramsar

GOVERNANCE

- **Components of Governance**
 - Policies
 - Laws and other norms
 - Institutions
 - Processes
- **Qualities of Governance**
 - predictability/rule of law
 - transparency
 - participation
 - accountability

Slide 13:

Ramsar

Threats to wetlands and species

```

    graph TD
      OE(Over-exploitation) <--> WP(Water pollution)
      OE <--> FM(Flow modification)
      OE <--> SI(Species invasion)
      OE <--> HD(Habitat degradation)
      WP <--> FM
      WP <--> SI
      WP <--> HD
      FM <--> SI
      FM <--> HD
      SI <--> HD
  
```


Slide 16:

Ramsar


GOVERNANCE ISSUES 1

- Inadequate /poorly implemented policy, law, and/or processes
- Mandates of different agencies are often unclear and overlapping
- Planning is done on a sectoral basis with limited cross-sectoral collaboration

Slide 17:

 **GOVERNANCE ISSUES 2**

- Participation of civil society stakeholders in wetlands planning and management
- Unclear legal status/ open-access resources
- Traditional practices breaking down because of modern external pressures




Slide 20:


 **THANK YOU!**



Slide 18:

 **Legal and Policy Reform**

- Draft Lao Water Law recognises wetlands
- Cancellation of commercial fishing lots in Tonle Sap
- New Ramsar sites in last 3 years (Lao 2; Vietnam 3 Thailand 2, Cambodia ?)



Slide 19:

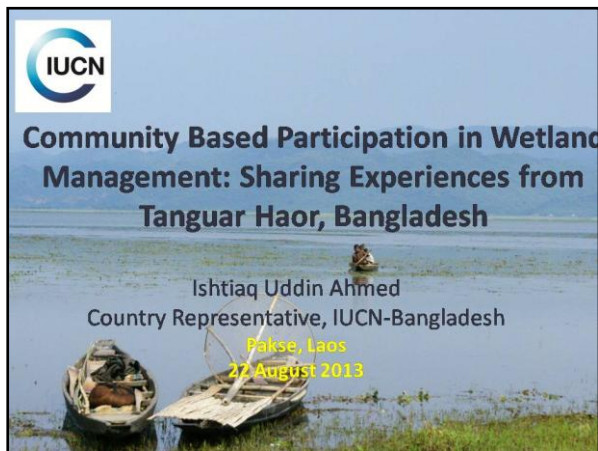
 **Challenges Ahead**

- Hydropower Development in the Mekong Basin
- Economic Corridors in the GMS
- \$12 billion water management plan in Thailand



Annex 2.2 Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh

Slide 1:



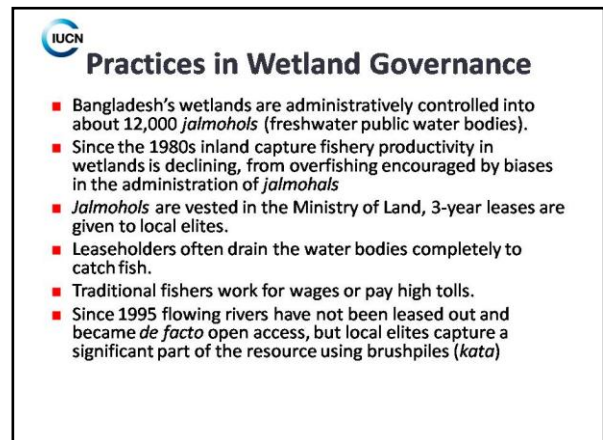
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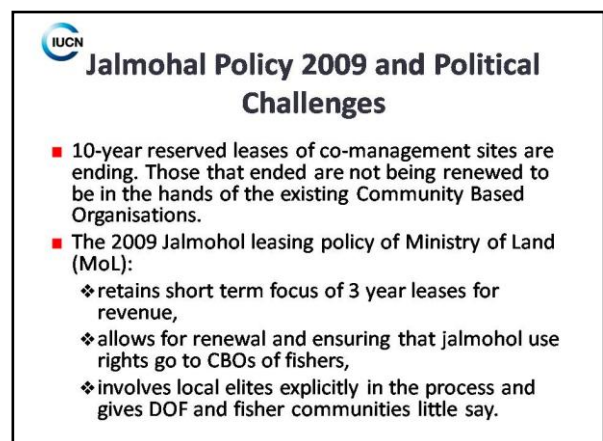
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Slide 4:



Slide 5:



Slide 6:



Slide 7:

Challenges cont.

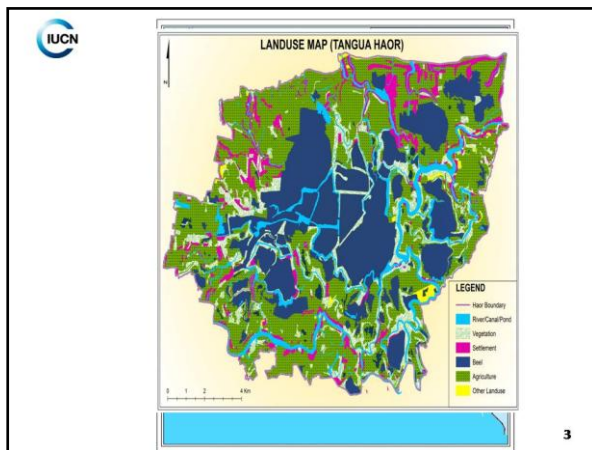
- Legal actions by CBOs and NGOs in the courts in early 2012 placed a temporary injunction on 19 lease awards away from existing CBOs in two areas, but the injunctions will not last indefinitely, and more are threatened in 2013.
- Ending of co-management and a return to short-term competitive leasing, will be devastating for wetland productivity and for the hundreds of thousands of poor households that have continued to benefit directly from past initiatives.
- There is a strong risk that decades of investment in community-based wetland management will be lost.

Slide 10:

Major features.....contd.

- The principal economic resource of Tanguar Haor is fish and agriculture and people has very high dependency (93%) on the haor.
- Avg. household size is 5.94, more than half of the populations are illiterate, 29 % receive primary education and 8% receive high school education.
- Average monthly income - Tk. 3000 – Tk. 5000 (approx US\$ 40-65)
- Flash flood is one of the major vulnerabilities that affects livelihood of all social classes.
- The depth of the haor is reducing gradually due to silts carried from upstream.
- Pollution from different sources including uncontrolled tourism, oil spill from mechanized boats are threatening the ecosystem.

Slide 8:



Slide 11:

Resources of Tanguar Haor

- A total of 200 wetland plant species, 141 fish species, 11 amphibians, 34 reptiles (6 turtles, 7 lizards and 21 snakes), 206 birds, 31 mammals and 12 butterfly species occur in this haor.
- On an average 50,000 – 100,000 individual bird of around 70-80 species are found every year in the Tanguar Haor.
- Population number of the birds can reach up to half a million in the migratory season, covering over 200 species of which 98 are migratory.
- The rare fresh water swamp is still found in Tanguar haor.
- So far found 107 genera of phytoplankton representing five classes.
- More than half of Bangladesh's 260 freshwater fish species is found in this Haor. This includes 55 fish species that are threatened in Bangladesh, of which 28 are endangered.

Slide 9:

Major features of Tanguar Haor

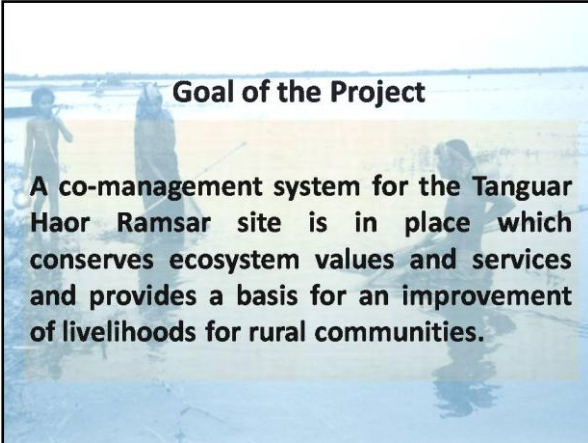
- 51 permanent water bodies comprises a total area of 9,727 hectares.
- About 10,205 households in 88 villages comprising a population of 56,000.
- Located at an elevation of only 2.5 – 5 meters above sea level.
- During the monsoon, it merges into one large body of water in a natural depression between the levees of several rivers.
- In the dry season waters recede into the rivers and all that remain are some permanent water body which covers about 25 - 30% of the area.
- This considered to be an important breeding ground of many species of fish. They also attract many waterfowl during the winter season.
- Waters in Tanguar Haor consist mainly of water backing up from the Suma river system, south of the haor and some water is received from streams flowing from the Meghalaya Hills in India to the North.

Slide 12:

Past Management Practice in Tanguar Haor

- It has always been subject to "elite capture".
- Elites used to control the resources excluding the local and poor.
- Resource was fiercely guarded which used to result in conflict and violence.
- Swamp forests have diminished as local people harvest wood for use as fuel.
- Reed beds have depleted due to unsustainable harvesting practices.
- Fish stocks had been seriously diminished due to over-exploitation by leaseholders.
- Lack of income and employment opportunities for the people of the basin as a major cause of resource depletion.

Slide 13:



Goal of the Project

A co-management system for the Tanguar Haor Ramsar site is in place which conserves ecosystem values and services and provides a basis for an improvement of livelihoods for rural communities.


Slide 16:



Co-management approach in Tanguar Haor

- **7 main approaches-**
 - A **model of co-management** approach: between state, local government and communities of TH;
 - A **livelihoods** approach: according to the choices of the beneficiaries;
 - A **ecosystem based** approach: placing human needs at the centre of biodiversity management;
 - A **specific focus on gender** aspects: gender mainstreaming at all levels;
 - A **concept of capacity development**: understanding the challenges of all stakeholders;
 - A **public awareness**: concerning the values of wetlands ecosystems through civil society organisations at local, regional and national levels.
 - A **market approach**: with the development of opportunities (better access to market, new markets, etc) pro poor groups

Slide 14:



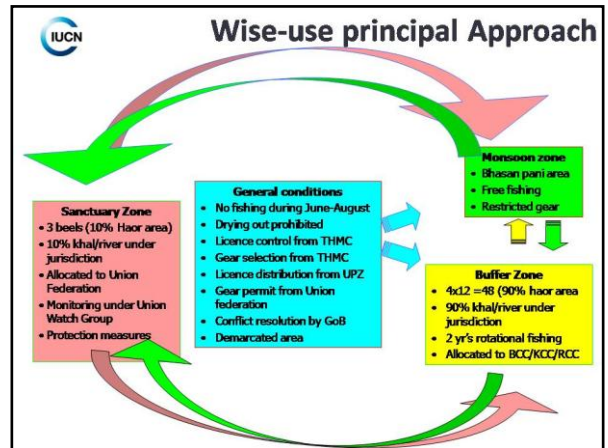
Outcomes of the Project

Outcome 1:
The co-management system in Tanguar Haor is consolidated and effective.


Outcome 2:
The communities of the Tanguar Haor have improved livelihoods and increased incomes.

Outcome 3:
The sustainability is assured beyond project intervention.

Slide 17:



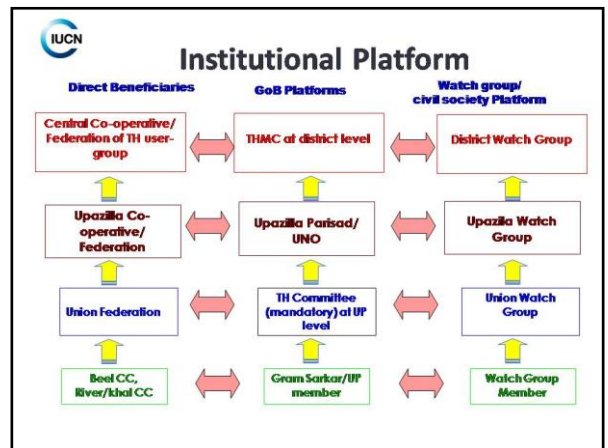
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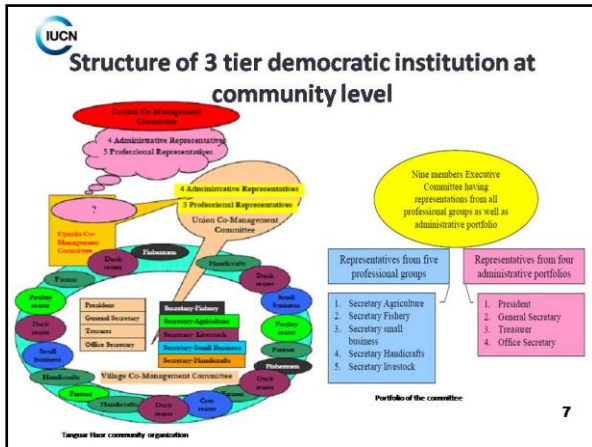
Govt. Initiatives in Tanguar Haor

- 1992-MoEF started NCS-Implementation Project in Tanguar Haor with NORAD Funding; IUCN Bangladesh provided technical assistance
- 1999 – Declaration as ECA
- 2000 – Declaration as Ramsar Site
- 2006-SDC appointed Peter Hislair to appraise the project.
- Hislair recommended 15 years program with three stages namely, Preparatory, Development and Consolidation.
- Preparatory Phase started from December 2006
- Review by Hislair in 2008 and argued for a full swing operation of co-management system before starting the development phase
- 2nd phase as an extension of preparatory phase started from May 2009.

Slide 18:



Slide 19:



Slide 22:

Problems and Challenges

Challenges at a Broader Scale

- Negative propaganda (sometimes even direct threats and assaults) by the vested interest groups patronised by the previous leaseholders (who still remain active in the locality).
- The difficulty in managing and accommodating the diverse stakeholder groups & their complex relationships and interests.
- Facilitating the process of gradual community control over TH within a short period.
- Controlling illicit fish poaching.
- Lack of linkages between community and other stake holders including government agencies.

Functional and Operational Constraints

- Difficult terrain and weather (wet and dry season, limited transports, flash flood prone area) limits mobility.
- An effective institutional structure of community-based patrol and policing is yet to fully develop

Slide 20:

PROGRESS AND ACCOMPLISHMENT: HUMAN RESOURCE AND INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSION

Democratic Co-Management Structure Developed and Made Operational

- 73 Village Co-Management Committee (VCC) formed in 76 villages out of 88.
- 4 full fledged Union Co-Management Committee (UCC) formed through formal election
- Full fledged Central Co-Management Committee (CCC) formed.
- Out of 10205, 4765 HHs received membership.

Slide 23:

Key messages

- A permanent platform for co managing all available natural resources is mandatory.
- Empowerment of the community organizations is essential to ensure access and benefit sharing.
- A scientific management should be in place to ensure sustainability of the ecosystem.

Slide 21:

Progress (continued)

Piloting of Key Policies and Procedures for Effective Co-Management

- Adoption of benefit sharing modality for fish (40F:36O:24G)
- Adoption of benefit sharing modality for forest (60B:25O:15G)
- Acquisition of khas land for office construction (20Dec.x4Nos.)
- Modality development for cultivable Khas land is underway
- Steering Committee at national level functioning
- Tangrar Haor Management Committee (THMC) at District level functioning

Slide 24:

Save our Wetlands

THANK YOU

Annex 2.3 Chilika Lake, India

Slide 1:

Wetlands governance challenges in managing Chilika lake ; a Ramsar site from India

Workshop on Wetland Governance - Pakse

Dr. A. K. Pattnaik,
Chief Executive, CDA
& PD ICZM Project, Odisha
Member ILEC Scientific Committee

IUCN Chilika

Slide 4:

Hotspot of biodiversity

211 bird species; largest Irrawaddy Dolphin population; 217 fish species
Exceeds 1% biogeographical population in case of 30 migratory species.

Chilika

Slide 2:

Wetland governance challenges

- Is **sustainable institution** are in place to address multi sectoral & multi-stakeholders interest issues ?
- Has there been an emergence of **Political interest/commitment** to manage/use of lake ,its basin resources in a sustainable manner.
- Has efforts being taken to establish a **effective legislative frame work/policy** for managing the Lake and it's basin in a sustainable manner.
- Has efforts being taken to **enhance the stakeholders participation** in the formulation & implementation of the Lake & its basin management.
- Has efforts being taken to **incorporate scientific information and research results** in to Lake management programme.
- What effort is being taken to develop **financing mechanism for lake its basin management activities** focusing on sustainable use.

Slide 5:

Management Issues

- Complex ecosystem, multitude stake holders
- **Open use of the common property resources**
- Shrinkage of water spread area of the lagoon due to siltation
- Fall in salinity level
- Unauthorised shrimp culture.
- **loss of biodiversity & productivity & decrease in the fish yield/ diversity adversely affecting the livelihood of local communities.**
- **Included in Montreux Record in 1993 due to change in the ecological characters by Ramsar convention.**

Shrinkage in Lagoon Area (1972 - 2001)

Decrease in fish landing

Chilika

Slide 3:

Salient features of Chilika lake

Length	-	64 kms (110 kms)
Breadth	-	20 kms (max)
Avg. water spread area	-	1066 sq. km
Depth	-	0.38 to 4.2 m
Catchment area	-	4406 sq kms
No. of fishermen villages	-	192
Total fisher folk	-	0.2 million

INDIA

Chilika Lagoon

Bay of Bengal

Designated as Ramsar site -1981

Chilika

Slide 6:

Enabling Institution

Governing Body
Chilika Development Authority

Chairman
Chief Minister
Orissa

Created in 1991

- Chief Secretary, Govt. of Orissa
- Agriculture Production Commissioner, Orissa
- Principal Secretary, Fisheries & Animal Resources Department, Govt. of Orissa
- Principal Secretary (Finance), Govt. of Orissa
- Principal Secretary Forest and Environment, Govt. of Orissa
- Principal Secretary, Health Department Government of Orissa
- Secretary, Revenue Department, Govt. of Orissa
- Secretary, Water Resource Department, Govt. of Orissa
- Secretary Housing and Urban Development Department Government of Orissa
- Chairman, Orissa State Pollution Control Board
- Secretary, Tourism Department, Govt. of Orissa
- Chief Wildlife Warden, Wildlife Department, Govt. of Orissa
- Experts, people's representatives, representatives of fishermen co-operatives
- Representative from MAF
- Chief Executive, Chilika Development Authority (Secretary)

Chilika

Slide 7:



Slide 10:

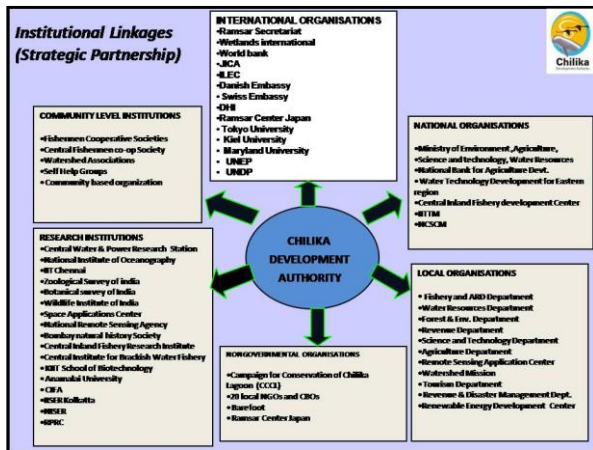
Primary Fishermen Co-operative Society(PFCS)
Grass root level institutions

- 104 Primary Fishermen Co-operative Societies are grass root level institutions
- A federation of the PFCS

Chilika Central Fishermen Co-operative Society is the apex organization.

- All PFCS are members affiliated to the CCFCS.

Slide 8:



Slide 11:

Legislation

Proactive Judiciary

The Supreme Court (Apex Court of the country) by an order banned shrimp culture in and within 1 Kilometers of Lake periphery.

Chilika fishery regulation Act -2013

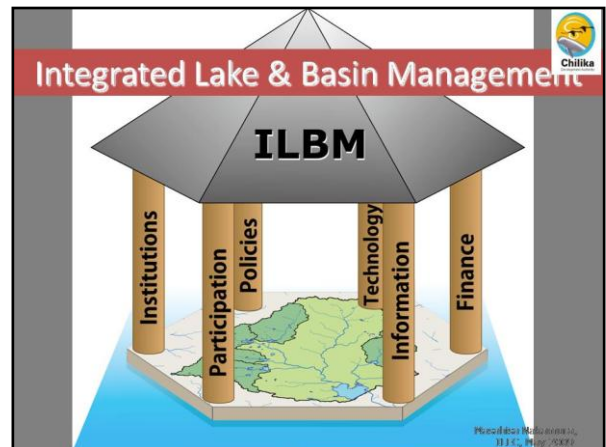
The state government is now in the process of enacting the "Chilika fishery regulation Act".

Slide 9:

Watershed (lake basin) institution

- Watershed Association at each micro watershed are the key institutions to manage the natural resources and ensure equitable distribution of the benefits.
- The watershed associations are also registered under Societies of Registration Act.



Slide 12:



Slide 13:

Restoration strategy (Ecosystem approach)

- Key targeted studies to understand the complex ecosystem and to trace the root cause of degradation
- Adaptive restoration planning through wide consultative process.
- Integration of the lagoon basin in the management of the wetland with micro watershed as a functional ecological unit .
- Empowerment of local communities through capacity building .
- Priority on CEPA activities .
- Strategic partnership with a wide array of organization.
- A robust monitoring protocol.

Slide 16:

IRS 1D LISS III IMAGE OF CHILIKA LAGOON
DATE : 23rd OCTOBER 2000





Technical intervention have done to have impact on lagoon



Slide 14:




Hydrological set up

Slide 17:

Improvement after hydrological intervention



- Seven fold increase in annual fish & prawn landing (25 million US \$ enhancement of fishery resources per annum), average annual increase in family income of fishers by 1000 US\$.
- Improvement of salinity flux & tidal flux.
- Expansion of sea grass meadows , increase of dolphin population and habitat of avian fauna
- Reappearance of native fish Sps.
- Improvement of sediment flushing and water transparency
- Decrease of invasive species .
- Removed from Montreux Record due to improvement of the lake ecosystem in 2002

Slide 15:

Environmental Flow Assessment




- Naraj Barrage was constructed upstream under Orissa Water Resources Consolidation Project
- Financer (World Bank) recommended environmental flow assessment be undertaken before the barrage is made operational.
- Study involved many organisations and wide consultation across government and local communities and based on that the operational rule of the barrage was determined.
- A committee constituted to periodically review the operational rule of the barrage under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary . Two fishermen and a grass root level NGO are the member of the committee.

Slide 18:

Biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood

- With the amelioration of biodiversity new vistas opened for the community based ecotourism (8 million US \$ per annum).
- As an alternative source of livelihood more than 850 boats are being used for dolphin watching and 400 boats to conduct the tourists for bird watching by the local fishermen. (reducing pressure on fishery).
- To facilitate this : capacity building of the local communities and infrastructure development is being done by CDA
- The dolphin population in the Lake is steadily increasing and the migratory birds are protected by local communities.

Slide 19:

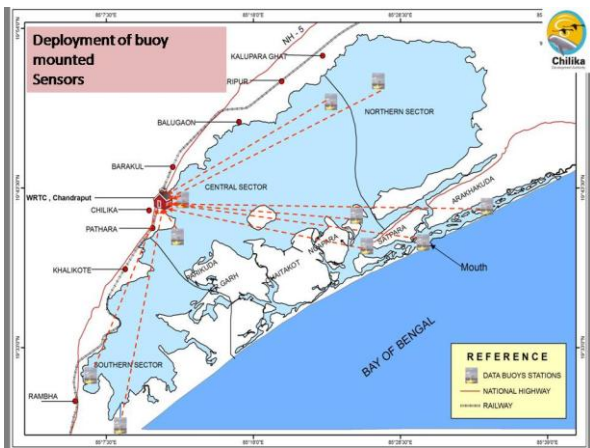


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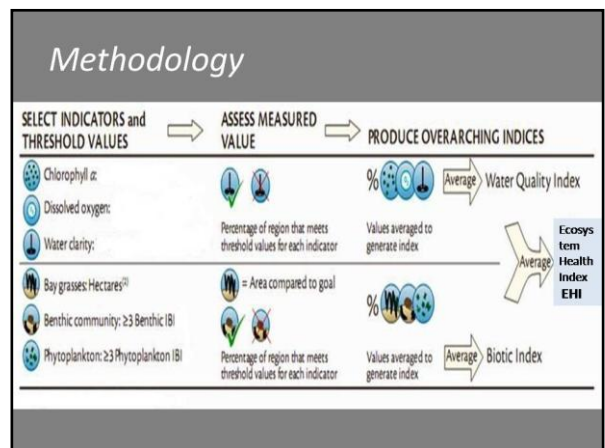
Ecosystem Health Report Card

Environmental report cards are transformative assessment and communications products that compare environmental data to scientific or management thresholds and are delivered to a wide audience on a regular basis.

Slide 20:



Slide 23:



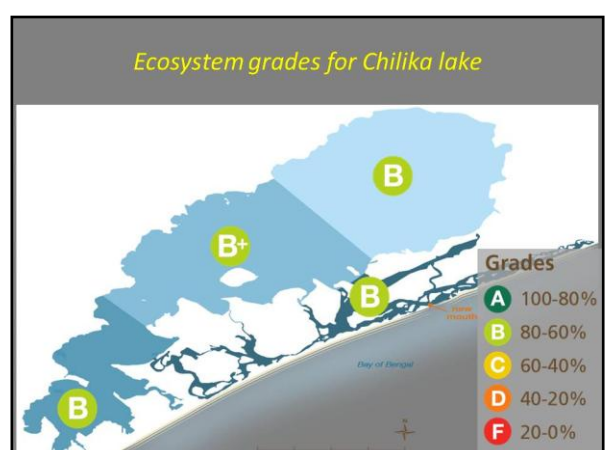
Slide 21:

Bridging knowledge gaps

Studies to bridge knowledge gap

1. Comprehensive study of water bird of Chilika lake (BNHS)
2. Comprehensive study on the fish fauna of Chilika lake (CIPRI)
3. Comprehensive study on faunal diversity of Chilika lagoon (ZSI)
4. Benthos and meiobenthos of Chilika lake (ISER)
5. Bioprospective of microbes of Chilika lake
6. Macrophytes of Chilika Lake (RPRC)

Slide 24:



Slide 25:

Sustainable resource management in lake basin

- One of the most successful initiatives by the lake basin communities has been a series of rainwater harvesting structures, designed and installed by them.
- They succeeded in recharging aquifers and rejuvenating local ecosystems as well as their surrounding economies.
- The advantage of the system is that along with arresting rainwater, it improves the moisture regime (**Green water productivity**) in the field, particularly downstream. This acts as insurance against crop failure, a frequent occurrence.
- It is an ecological success in many respects, notably, there have been increased earnings from land and non-land based activities, reduced debt, conflict resolution and social integration and improved livelihood and food security, leading to further poverty alleviation, reduced environmental degradation and reduction in the silt load into the lake.



Slide 28:


Self initiated good practices

- Unanimous decision by villagers of Sipakuda along inlet channel to convert 25 acres of shrimp enclosure to mangrove plantation in 2005
- First ever reintroduction of the Mangrove in Chilika.
- The nearby villagers could realize the benefit of mangrove over shrimp farming and are going for mangrove plantation in 500 acres of shrimp enclosure in 2013.



Slide 26:

From ridge to Coast



Slide 29:




Nalabana Sanctuary

Slide 27:

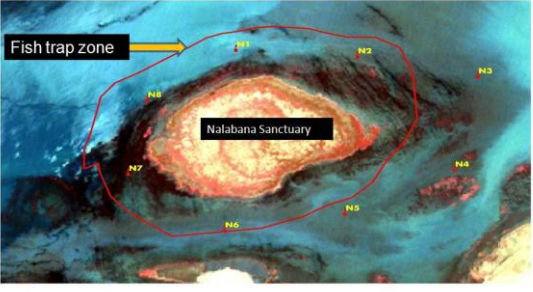
Positive impact on the coastal zone

- Chilika lagoon with estuarine character serves as an important spawning and nursery area and contribute for the marine stock.
- Restoration of the wetland and its drainage basin is playing a significant role in the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities.
- This is evident from the increase in the fish production from the adjoining coastal areas and increase in the number nesting of highly endangered Olive Ridley (turtle) on the sand bar located along the estuarine zone.



Slide 30:

Conservation and Livelihood



Fish trap zone

Nalabana Sanctuary

Scale 0 5 Kilometers

Station Location position by GARIMAN S-Map GPS

CDA, BBSR

Slide 31:

Resource users to resource managers – empowerment of the local fishers towards responsible fishery .



- Building capacity of 104 Fisher Cooperatives .
- Investment through microfinance (liberating from money lenders).
- Incentives > better cold chain ,post harvest care , hygienic processing , marketing network.
- Conservation strategies , participatory research , mapping of fish migratory routes.
- Institutional strengthening for 'responsible fisheries'
- Certification process.

Slide 34:

Secretary General Ramsar interacting with lake communities



Slide 32:

Lesson learnt

- Management of coastal ecosystem needs adaptive institutions with ability to work at multiple scales and engage with diverse stakeholders with the local communities (major resource users) at the center stage.
- Investing into multiple knowledge base systems to benefit from cutting edge science as well as traditional knowledge is highly essential . Participatory research (informed stake holders translating scientific findings into practice), helps in connecting ecosystem to the communities and facilitate resource efficient and inclusive management .
- Diversity and resilience are essential for maintaining ecological integrity and sustainable livelihood.
- Investment in restoration of ecosystem can lead to enhancement of ecosystem services , ameliorate biodiversity making the system resilient , ensuring sustainability .
- Respect the power of grass-roots advocacy and action to achieve change...

Slide 35:



Slide 33:

CBD –CoP-11 – October 2012



Slide 36:

Junior Rangers Chilika



Slide 37:

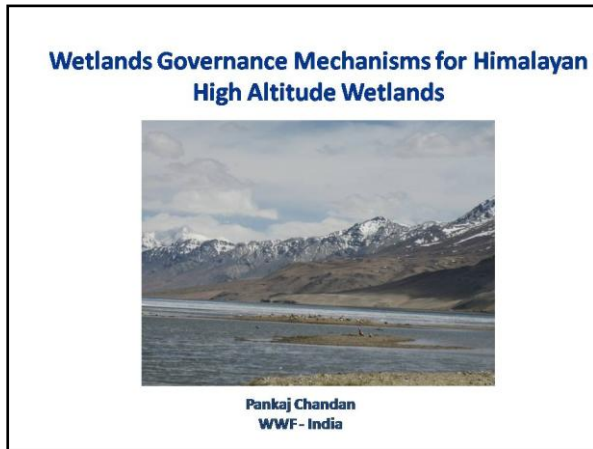


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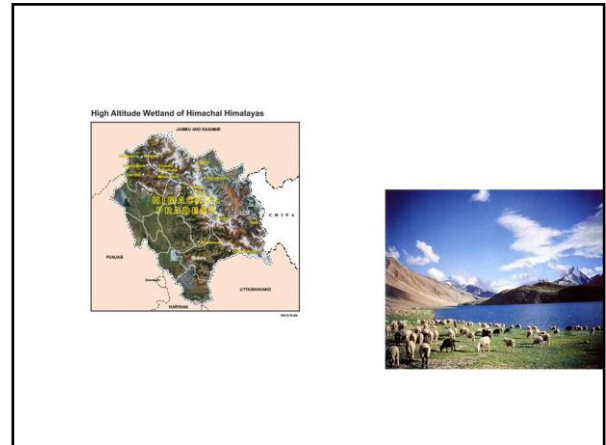


Annex 2.4 Chilika Lake, India

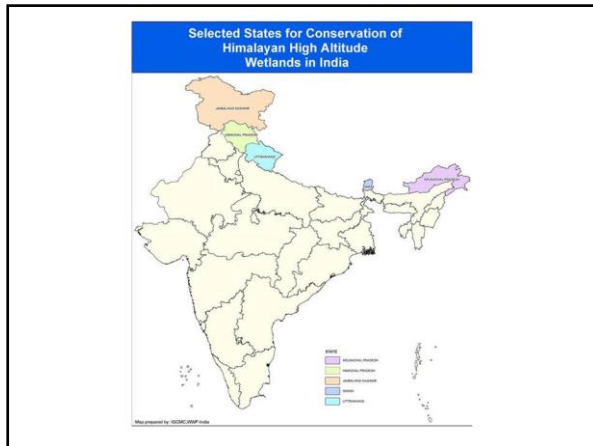
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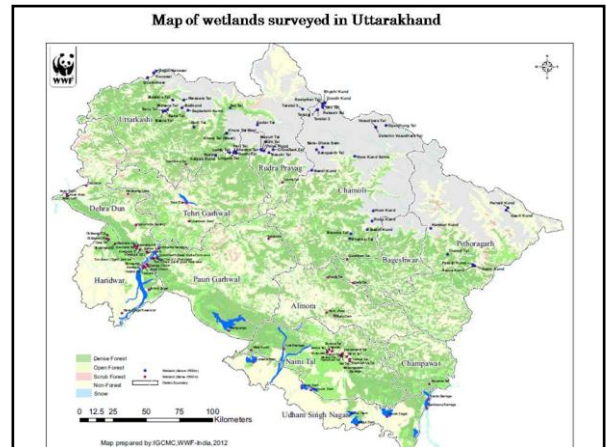
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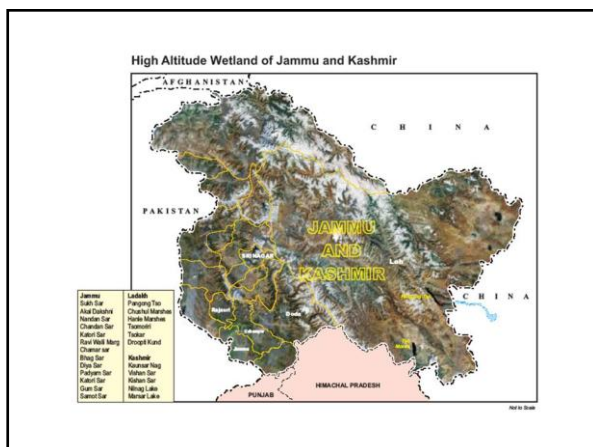
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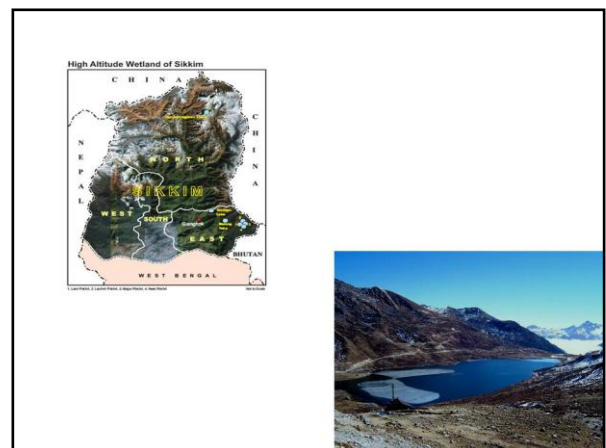
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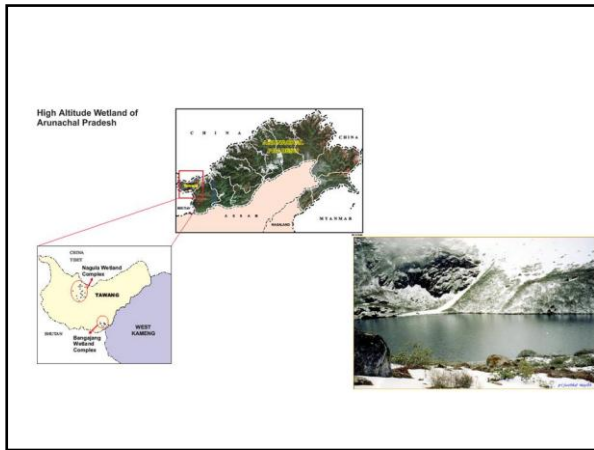
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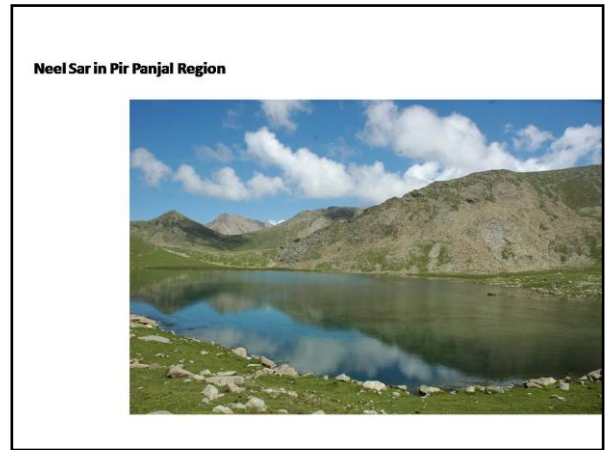
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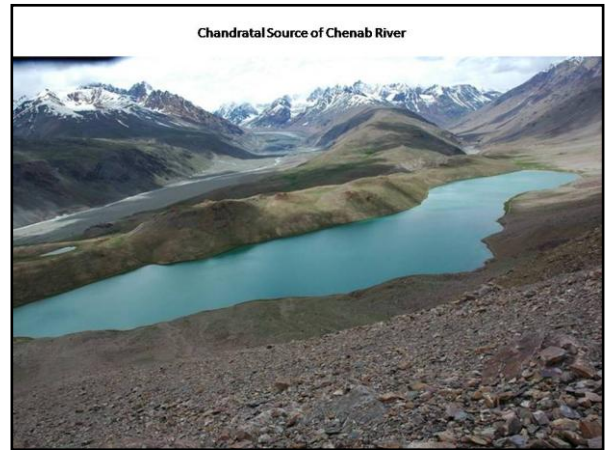
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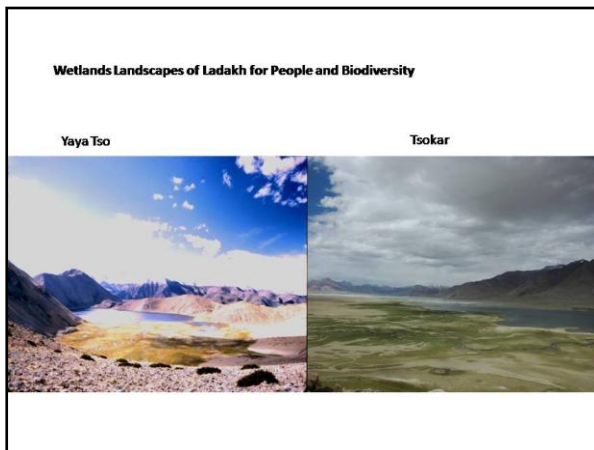
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Slide 11:



Slide 9:



Slide 12:



Slide 13:



Slide 16:



Slide 14:



Slide 17:



Slide 15:



Slide 18:



Slide 19:



Slide 22:



Slide 20:



Slide 23:



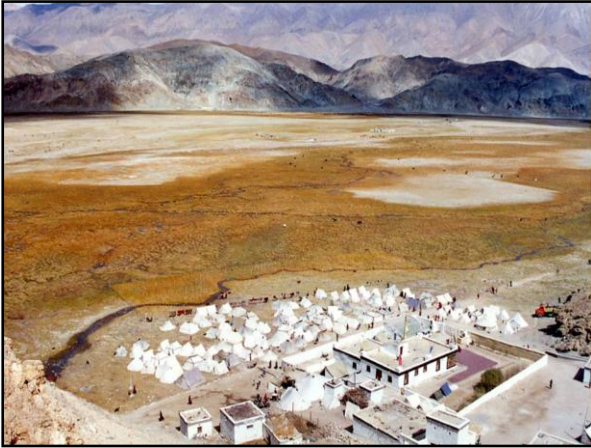
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Slide 24:



Slide 25:



Slide 28:



Slide 26:



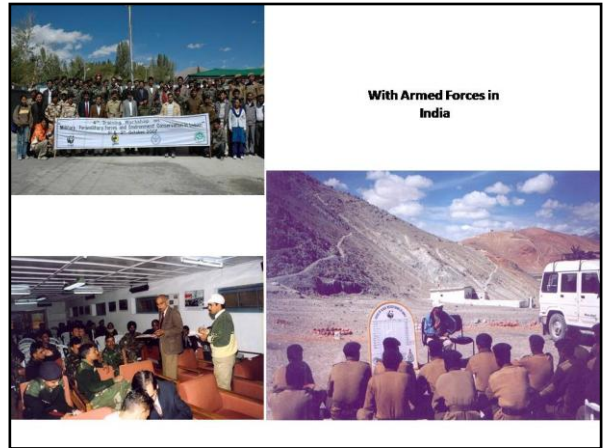
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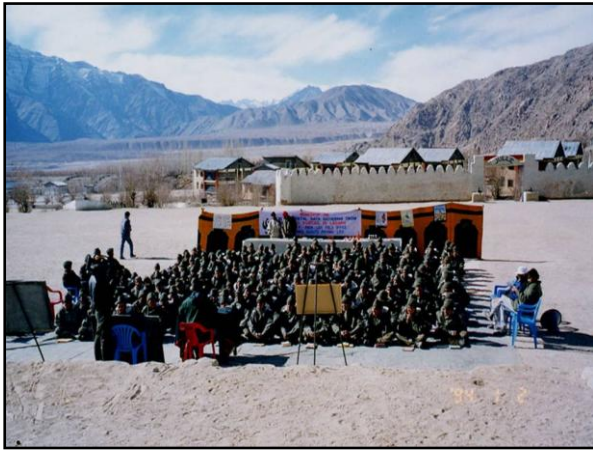
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Slide 30:



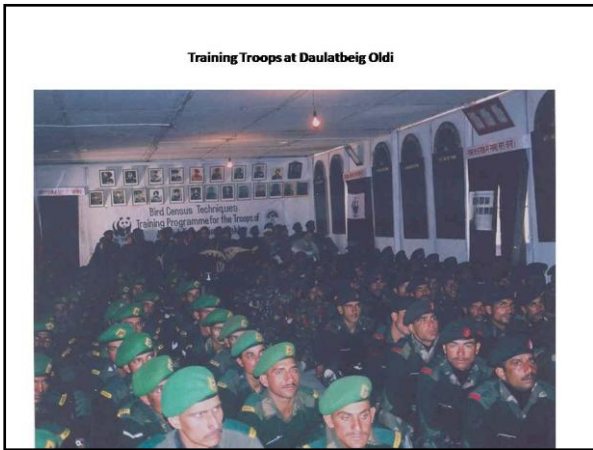
Slide 31:



Slide 34:



Slide 32:



Slide 35:



Slide 33:



Slide 36:



Slide 37:



Slide 38:



Slide 39:



Annex 2.5 Wetlands governance

Slide 1:

Wetlands Governance in Lao PDR

Workshop on wetlands governance
22 August 2013, Pakse, Lao PDR
Mr Raphael Glemet, Water and Wetlands coordinator,
IUCN Lao PDR
Mr Lonkham Atsanavong, DDG of DoEQP

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 4:

**Wetland governance :
National policies and guidelines**

- The areas of policy that are relevant to wetlands are found in development, environmental, and conservation policy. Each area of policy is prepared by line agencies in conjunction with the Prime Minister's Office.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 2:

Wetlands in Lao PDR

- Definition :**
Officially adopted is the definition by Cowardin et al. (1979)
"Wetlands are lands transitional between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface or the land is covered by shallow water"
- One inventory (IUCN Claridge 1996) as a basis for definition (30 wetlands/outdated).

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 5:

**Wetlands governance :
legal and institutional framework**

- There are no laws directly related to wetland resources.
- The Lao laws supports the policies outlined including sustainable use of resources in pursuit of economic development and poverty alleviation.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 3:

**Wetland governance :
National policies and guidelines**

- Wetlands are not referred to directly in any national policy;
- Range of policies referring to the use and management of wetland-related resources including water, agriculture, and living aquatic animals and plants;
- 2 central features :
 - Link between development/conservation and poverty alleviation.
 - Right of access to natural resources (Constitution, GoL 1991) and obligation to protect and sustainably use the resources.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 6:

**Wetlands governance :
legal and institutional framework**

- Water resources law : The right to use water resources is outlined in the Water and Water Resources Law (DOI 1996). This legislation retains **ownership of all water resources with the state** but delegates the **right of small-scale use to individuals** and organizations.
- Environmental Protection law (1999)
- Forestry law and Agricultural law(DOF 1996, Ministry of Justice 2002)

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Slide 7:



Wetlands governance : legal and institutional framework

- **Local rules and regulations :**
Citizens are given rights over the use of natural resources, but are subject to the centrally planned laws and regulations. Limited capacity to regulate and enforce resource use
- **Examples of local rules recognised and ratified into district and provincial law and regulations :**
Nam Ngum reservoir fishery (MAF 1995) regulation/Fish or Crocodile conservation zones.
No local regulation enforced for the overall management of a wetland (ongoing through **MWD in Xe Champhone**)




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Slide 10:



Multi-sector governance : Ramsar governance

- **1 Ramsar National steering committee;**
- Chaired by Mr the Vice Prime Minister
- Involvement of Minister of MAF and MoNRE and 7 other ministries/ Secretariat under MoNRE, DoEQP + staff from other departments
- **2 Provincial committees;** (coordination by DoNRE)
- **Ramsar implementation teams** at district level.





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Slide 8:




Wetlands governance : international agreement on wetlands

- Ramsar convention (member since 2010); a long process for signature but a quick catch up !
- Bilateral international agreements are being developed by the Lao National Mekong Committee.

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Slide 11:




Multi-sector governance : Ramsar governance

Roles and responsibilities of different RAMSAR committees

- Provide guidance for the management of the 2 RAMSAR sites;
- Liaise with The Ramsar secretariat in Gland;
- Provide guidance for/ and support the preparation of proposals for new RAMSAR sites;
- Ensure reporting , summaries of lesson learnt and provide directions for future implementation;
- Nominate the secretariat personnel;
- Provide guidance for cooperation and facilitate international cooperation;

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Slide 9:



Role and duties of government agencies

- **MoNRE** has the overall responsibility for management of the wetlands in the country.
Through 2 departments :
 - **DoWR** has responsibility for all wetlands except for the Ramsar sites;
 - **DoEQP** has responsibility for the wetlands under Ramsar.
- Agricultural uses of wetlands are still under **MAF** (Department of irrigation, DLF...).
- **LNMC** is responsible for wetlands under MRC projects (transboundary approach mainly).
- ➔ **New organization (2011), still lacks clear coordination and ToR for each department.**

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 12:




Multi-sector governance : Ramsar governance

- **Cross-cutting composition of the Ramsar committees** (National and Provincial), with the involvement of various departments (Department of Water Resources, Living Aquatic Resources Research Center, Department of Forest Resources Management, Department of irrigation and Department of livestock) and ministries (MAF).

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 13:




Co-management approach :
Example of the Beung Kiat Ngong RAMSAR site

- Development of a **bottom-up/participatory approach**, through workshops and dialogue platforms at site level to draft the first log frame for the management plan;
- Process led by the **Ramsar Provincial committee and Ramsar district implementation team** with regular back and forth to site level;
- Presentation of the draft to **communities for discussion/improvement/approval**
- **Final approval of the plan by the RSC/RPC.**

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Slide 16:



Challenges

- No specific policy/strategy on wetlands
- No clear regulation document or law (wetlands are currently being integrated in the water law revision).
- No clear ToR for departments related to wetlands management, lack of coordination (new organization).
- Challenges in law enforcement and awareness
- Civil society and communities not well prepared to participate in governance.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 14:



Co-management approach :
Example of the Beung Kiat Ngong RAMSAR site


- Management plan gives **space to management led by communities :**
- Development of community fisheries
- Development of participatory patrolling and monitoring
- Participatory approach for the revision of the LUP

➔ New process : lessons learnt to come in a few months.



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 17:




Opportunities :
Revision of the National law on water and wetlands resources

- "The revised law will apply to the water resources of Lao PDR [...]. It will also apply to wetlands and the banks, beds, gravel, sand, and shores of water bodies."
- The revised law will provide that MONRE/DWR is the principal water resources management agency;
- Creation of a National Water Resources committee;
- MONRE/DWR will act as the secretariat/executive body of the Nation Water Resources Committee.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 15:



Recognition of customary management system : Example of Xe Champhone

- Study of **customary rules governing use of natural resources** (interviews, field visits, GIS map);
- **Comparative analysis** between statutory law vs customary law;
- Participatory drafting of site regulation;
- Drafting of a National decree for Ramsar sites regulation based on lessons learnt and including recognition of customary rules.



INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 18:




Opportunities :
Revision of the National law on water and wetlands resources

The revised law will:

- require **the identification of wetlands of national or regional importance** in the National Water Resources Strategy and river basin management plans;
- provide for the declaration of particularly important **wetlands as protected areas** (economic activity restricted or prohibited);
- contain general principles to **promote the wise use of wetlands**;
- regulate the development of wetlands through a **permit regime**;
- make provision for local communities to play a **more active role in their management and protection** (local wetland committees with rule making powers).

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 19:




Opportunities : Ramsar governance as a model

- Work under Ramsar is a key stone for wetlands governance definition in Lao PDR.
Bring examples from local to central level;
Lessons learnt;
Involvement of many different stakeholders and organisations;
Can design a model to be applied for all wetlands...

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Slide 20:




Mekong Water Dialogue and Wetlands Governance

- National working group;
- Testing the co-management approach at site level
- RBA : Proposal of a decree on wetlands (National and site level) + developping the RBA approach in other wetland sites;
- Support to revision of the water law (focus on wetlands);
- Study on governance of transboundary fisheries between Stung Treng and Siphandone wetlands;

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Slide 21:



Thank you



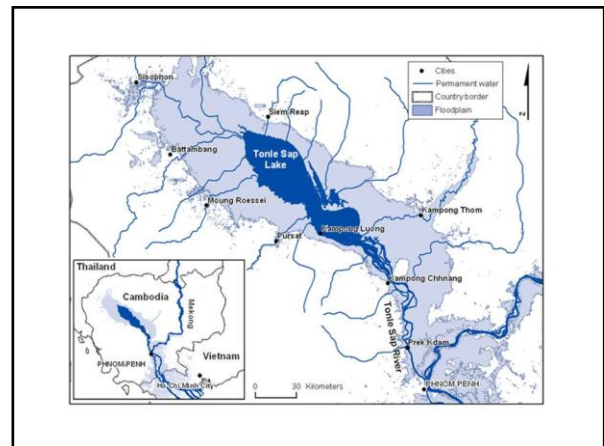
INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR CONSERVATION OF NATURE

Annex 2.6 The Tonle Sap, Cambodia

Slide 1:



Slide 4:



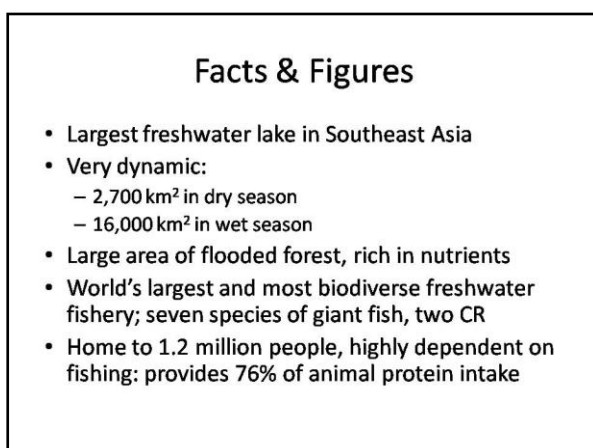
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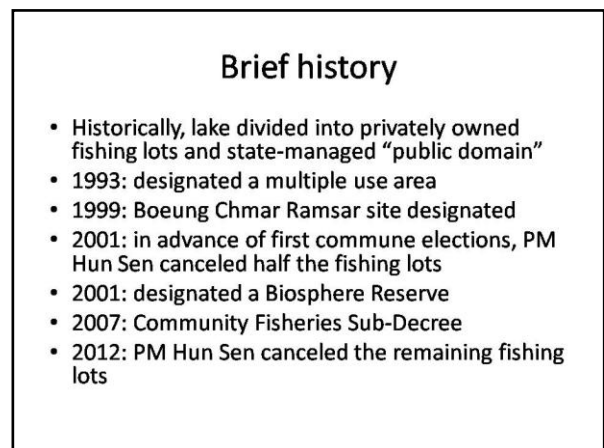
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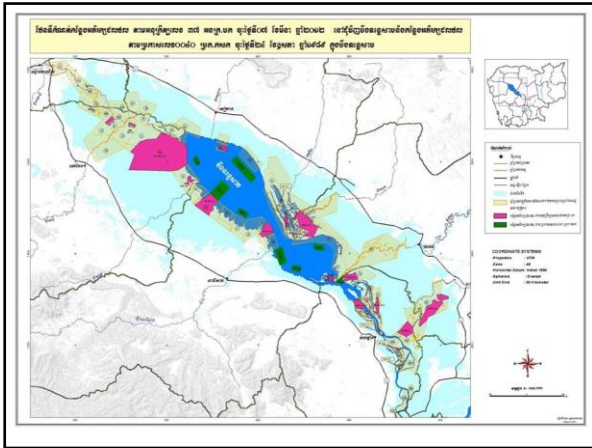
Slide 3:



Slide 6:



Slide 7:



Slide 10:

Challenges

- Management authority fragmented (MOE, FiA, TSA, six provinces, multiple donors)
- Systematic neglect of small-scale fisheries in favor of irrigated rice
- FiA unable or unwilling to enforce the law effectively and impartially
“Resoundingly, across all three sites, illegal fishing was seen as the major challenge.”
—Situation Analysis of Pilot Sites, IUCN, 2013

Slide 8:

Multiple tensions

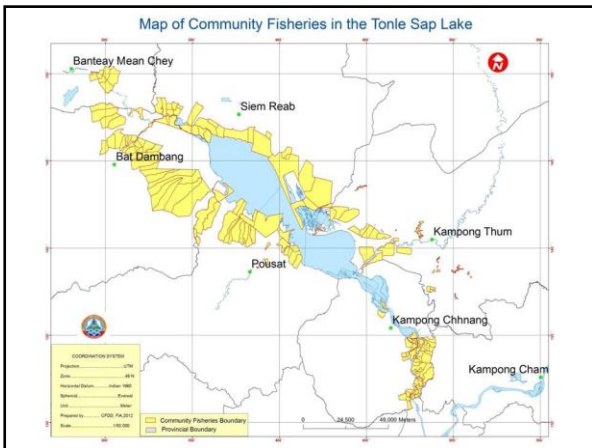
1. Land use
 - Irrigated rice vs. flooded forest (*black fish*)
2. Hydrological regime
 - Dams vs. food security (*white fish*, 63 to 29 kg/yr by 2030)
3. Access and benefit sharing
 - Fishing lots vs. communities
 - Open access vs. managed access
 - Selective vs. impartial law enforcement
 - Vietnamese vs. Khmer
4. Policy implementation
 - FiA has not supported implementation of community fisheries; little time to prepare for lot cancellation

Slide 11:

Opportunities

“To ensure that commercial concessions are not replaced by potentially even more damaging free-for-all “open-access” fisheries leading to a “tragedy of the commons”, more effort must be applied to supporting the development of community-managed fisheries with agreed use rules and restrictions.”
—The Status and Distribution of Freshwater Biodiversity in Indo-Burma, IUCN, 2012

Slide 9:



Slide 12:

Fish conservation areas

- 35% of the canceled lots converted to FiA-managed fish conservation zones
- New project testing community-managed fish conservation areas in remaining 65%
- Target deep pools that protect brood stock (mother fish) in dry season
- 10-100 hectares, located close to villages, managed by elected committees

Slide 13:



"If the government can crack down on illegal activity then maybe there would be enough fish to go around", Village Chief, Kompong Pluk



Slide 14:

Success criteria?

1. Government commitment
 - Management body with real power
 - Financing
 - Scientific input
2. Community capacity and self-confidence
3. Management rules suited to a CPR
4. Ramsar designation: high status

Annex 2.7 Songkhla Lake, Thailand

Slide 1:

Management and Governance of Songkhla Lake, Thailand

MR. PAISAN PADUNGSIRIKUL
OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PLANNING,
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT, THAILAND

Slide 2:

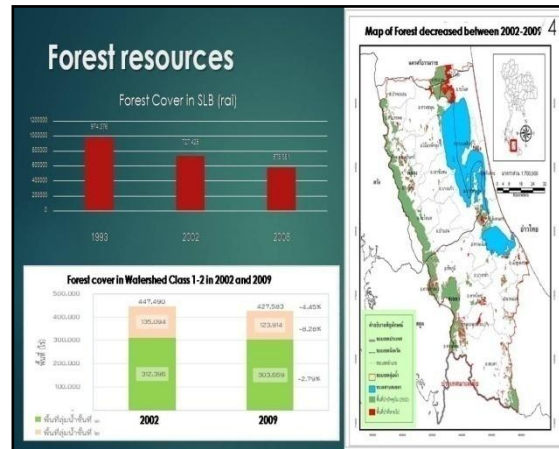
Part 1
KNOWING THE SONGKHLA LAKE BASIN (SLB)

Slide 3:

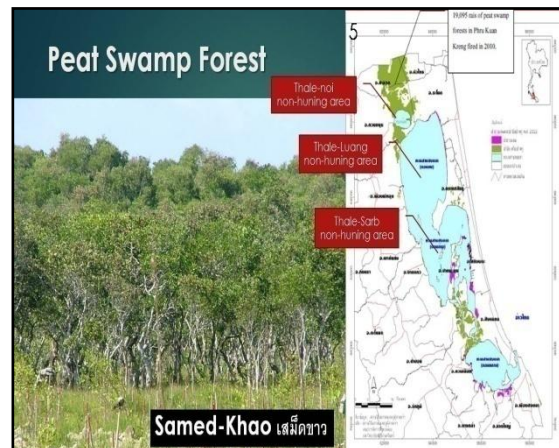
Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) Background

- Songkhla, Pattalung, and Nakorn Sri Thammarat Province in southern Thailand
- Basin area 8,727 km² (Lake area 12%, Land area 88%)
- Unique lake system (fresh-brackish-salt water)
- 1.6 million people

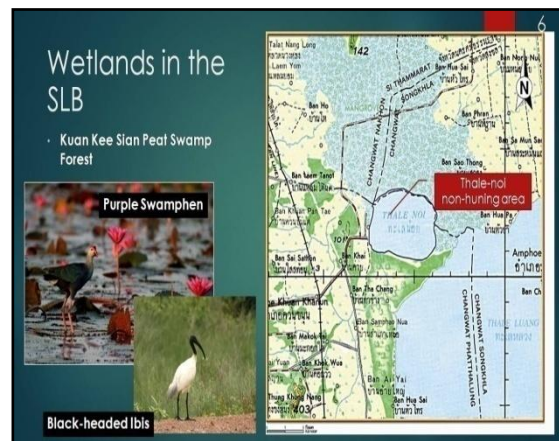
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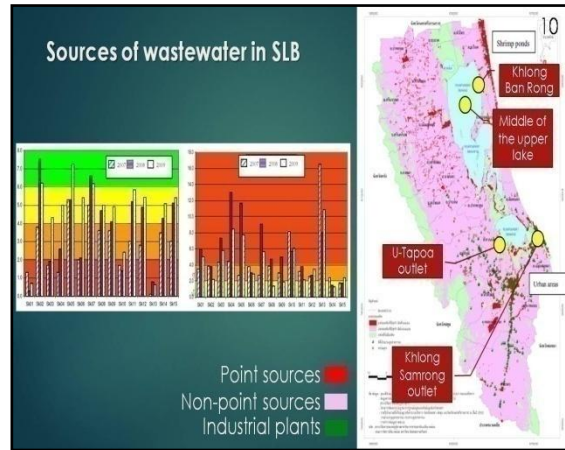
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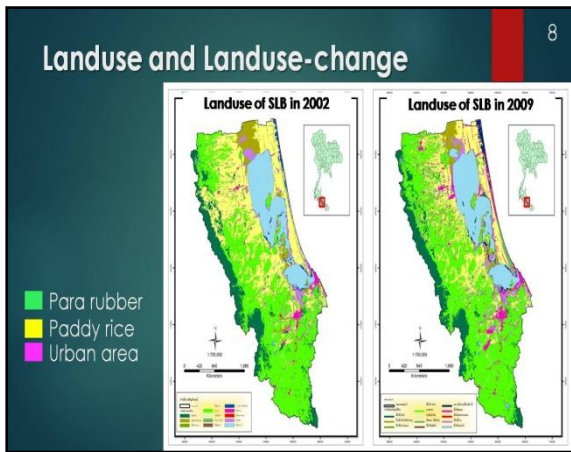
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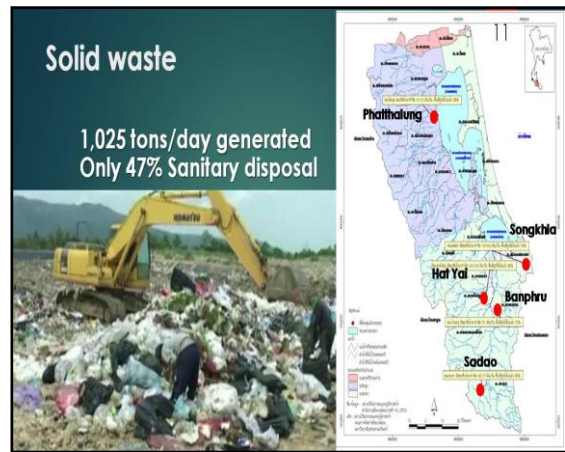
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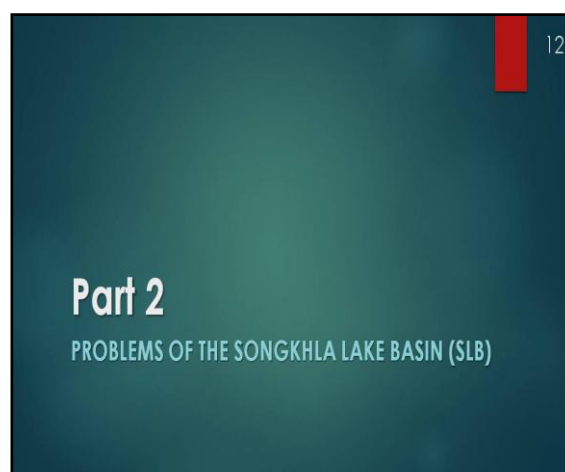
Slide 11:



Slide 9:



Slide 12:



Slide 13:

Summary of SLB Problems and Issues

1. Steady decline of upstream forest
2. Steady decline of mangrove and peat swamp forest
3. Soil erosion and sedimentation in waterways and Lake
4. Loss of rare and vulnerable wildlife species
5. Inappropriate and unplanned land use
6. Lack of integrated water management

Slide 16:

Swamp Forest Encroachment

Slide 14:

Summary of SLB Problems and Issues

7. Freshwater over-pumping / saline intrusion
8. Groundwater overuse
9. More severe flooding
10. Over-capacity fishing
11. Insufficient wastewater treatment facilities

Slide 17:

Over-capacity fishing

Slide 15:

Summary of SLB Problems and Issues

12. Wastewater pollution problems
13. Unsanitized solid waste management
14. Deterioration water quality in waterways and lake
15. Lack of effective management

Slide 18:

Persistent sedimentation

Slide 19:

19

Part 3

MANAGEMENT OF THE SONGKHLA LAKE BASIN (SLB)

Slide 22:

22

Songkhla Lake Basin Committee

- ▶ **Committee(s)**
 - ▶ Permanent Secretary of Interior
 - ▶ Permanent Secretary of Agricultural and Cooperatives
 - ▶ Permanent Secretary of Transport
 - ▶ Secretary General of Office of National Economic and Social Development Board
 - ▶ Budget Director, Bureau of the Budget
 - ▶ Songkhla Province Governor
 - ▶ Pattalung Province Governor
 - ▶ Nakhonsi Thammarat Province Governor
 - ▶ Experts (not more than 7 persons from Environment, Fisheries, Coastal Engineer, Biology, and Social sectors)
 - ▶ Experts from Academic (not more than 3 persons)
 - ▶ People representatives 6 persons (Songkhla 3, Pattalung 2, and Nakhonsi Thammarat 1)

Slide 20:

20

Songkhla Lake Basin Management

- ▶ **Cabinet resolution 17 Dec, 2002**
 - ▶ Setting up Songkhla Lake Basin (SLB) Committee
- ▶ **Cabinet resolution 17 Jun, 2003**
 - ▶ Assigning Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP) to develop the "Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan (2006-2015)"
- ▶ **Cabinet resolution 29 Nov, 2005**
 - ▶ Approving the SLB Master Plan (2006-2015) and assigning ONEP, with 3 provinces and related agencies, to transform master plan into action.

Slide 23:

23

Songkhla Lake Basin Committee

- ▶ **Authorities and Functions**
 1. Setting up the Policy for development, conservation, and restoration of natural resources and environment in the Songkhla Lake Basin through public participation
 2. Setting up the medium term (4 years) and annual integrated budget plan to transform the Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan into action and present to the Cabinet for approval.
 3. Direct, Inspect, and Evaluate working related to the development, conservation, and restoration of natural resources and environment in the Songkhla Lake Basin
 4. Having authorizes to set up a sub-committee, working groups, or ad-hoc groups for the issues that SLB Committee assigned
 5. Working for others issues related to conservation and restoration of natural resources and environment in the Songkhla Lake Basin by the Cabinet assigned

Slide 21:

21

Songkhla Lake Basin Committee

- ▶ **Chairperson**
 - ▶ Minister of Natural Resources and Environment
- ▶ **Vice Chairperson**
 - ▶ Permanent Secretary of Natural Resources and Environment
- ▶ **Committee and Secretary**
 - ▶ Secretary-general of Office of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning (ONEP)
- ▶ **Committee and Assistant Secretary**
 - ▶ Director of the Natural Resources and Environment Management Division, ONEP
 - ▶ Director of the Regional Environment Office region 16

Slide 24:

24

Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan



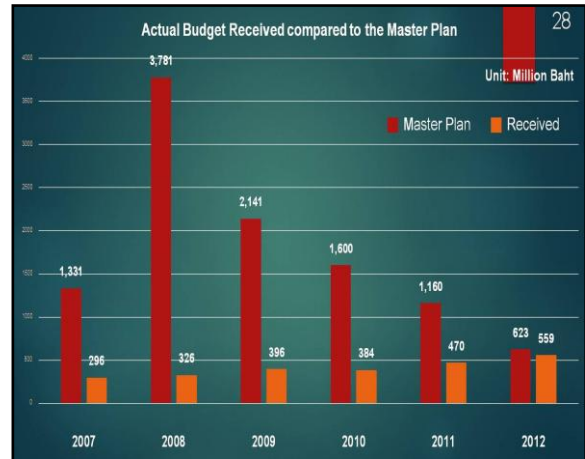
Vision

Songkhla Lake Basin shall be restored and managed along a sustainability framework, keeping balance among ecological, economic and social systems; under institutional framework which pays high respect to public participation, efficiency, transparency and justice

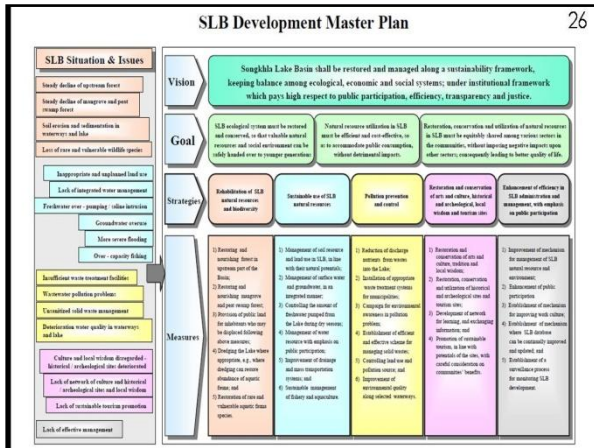
Slide 25:

Songkhla Lake Basin Master Plan	
Strategy 1	Rehabilitation of SLB natural resource and biodiversity
Strategy 2	Sustainable use of SLB natural resources
Strategy 3	Pollution prevention and control
Strategy 4	Restoration and conservation of arts and culture, historical and archeological sites, tourism sites and local wisdom
Strategy 5	Enhancement of efficiency in SLB administration and management, with emphasis on public participation

Slide 28:



Slide 26:



Slide 29:

Problems and constraints

- Budgeting and Project Formulation**
 - Setting up and disbursement a budget (related agencies do not set up a budget for projects in the master plan)
 - Large budget for an individual project use up for the amount of budget the agency received annually (budget ceiling)
 - Agencies do not have shared-vision of Songkhla Lake Basin.
- Information and Project Evaluation**
 - Lack of systematic data collection
 - Insufficient of setting up a reasonable goals and Indicators for project evaluation

Slide 27:

Master Plan transformation into Action

Slide 30:

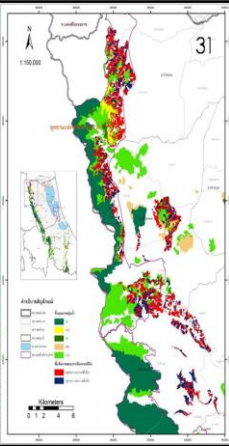

Part 4

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SONGKHLA LAKE BASIN (SLB)

Slide 31:

Recommendations from the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ Forest-conservation area Management
 - ▶ Vague boundaries
 - ▶ Controversy of right

Slide 34:



Slide 32:

Recommendations from the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ Forest conservation by Planting intercropping in the rubber plantation
 - ▶ Forest plantation not feasible
 - ▶ Solving the problem of "no area" for forest plantation



Slide 35:



Slide 33:

Recommendations from the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ Sustainable Seashore Erosion Management
 - ▶ Beware of hard structure, Dominos Effect
 - ▶ Erosion is seasonal, use soft solution



Slide 36:

Recommendations from the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ Fishery restoration by local communities
 - ▶ Not give the fish, but teach them to fish *Old proverb.*



Slide 37:



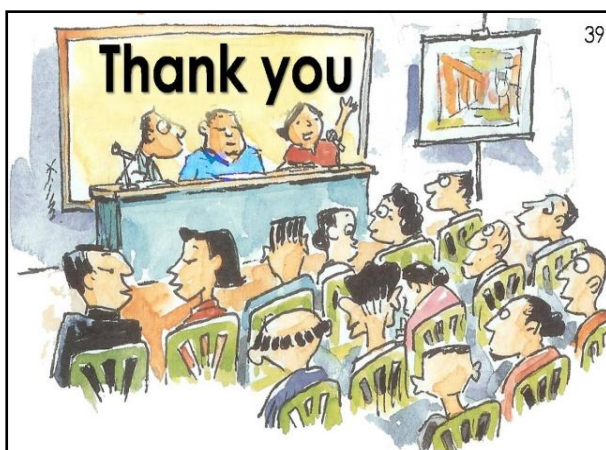
Slide 38:

Recommendations from the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation

- ▶ Committee/Budget/Management
 - ▶ Committee : Call a meeting regularly
 - ▶ Line Agencies: Shared-vision
 - ▶ Bureau of the Budget: Sufficient budget



Slide 39:



Annex 2.8 Mekong Delta, Viet Nam

Slide 1:




The Mekong Delta: The Unmaking of an Ecological Disaster

Andrew Wyatt
IUCN Vietnam

Wetland Governance Workshop
Pakse, Lao PDR
21 – 23 August 2013

Slide 4:

The makings of an ecological disaster



<http://www.1028mo.com/1WWWkchmeltz.html>

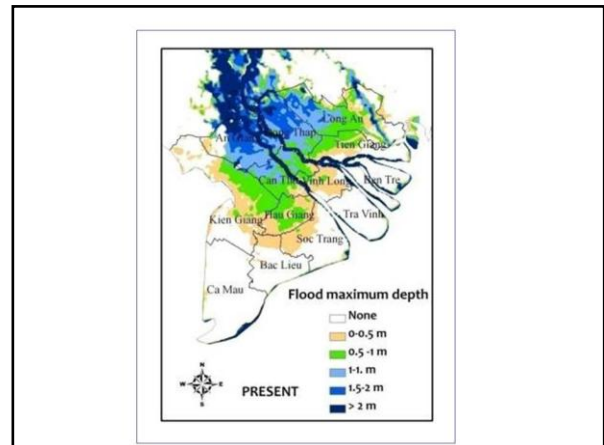
<http://mekongsgn.com/for/americanos/corro-figero-m-24-challenger/>

Slide 2:

Presentation

1. The makings of an ecological disaster
2. Governing the Mekong Delta
3. Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society


Slide 5:



Slide 3:

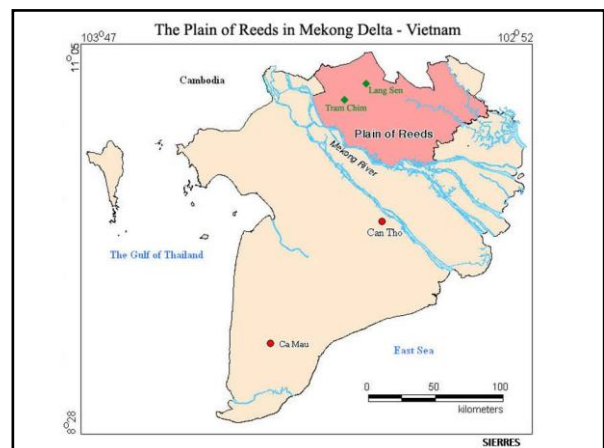
The makings of an ecological disaster

- Accountability??
- Blame the French! Canal building – irrigation and transportation (1850s to 1950s)
- Then the Americans! (1960s to early 1970s) – Draining and defoliating the wetlands (inland and coastal)

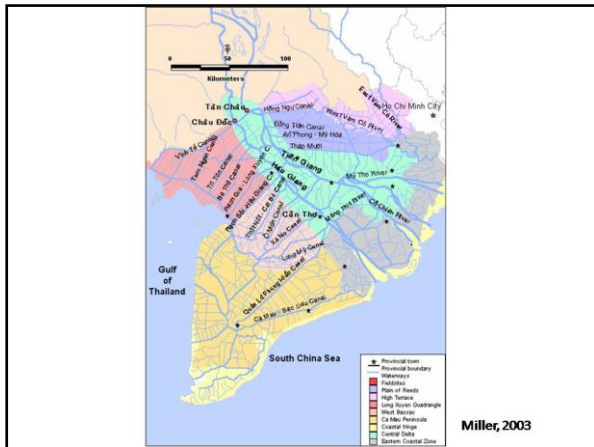


Biggs, D, 2003

Slide 6:



Slide 7:



Slide 10:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- Food security high level policy to present day drives rice production targets and supporting infrastructure (canals and high dykes)
- Resolution on National Food Security to 2020 (No. 63/NQ-CP, 2009)
 - 3.8 million ha for an output of 41-43 million tons of rice to meet the total domestic consumption and export demand of around 4 million tons of rice/year

Slide 8:

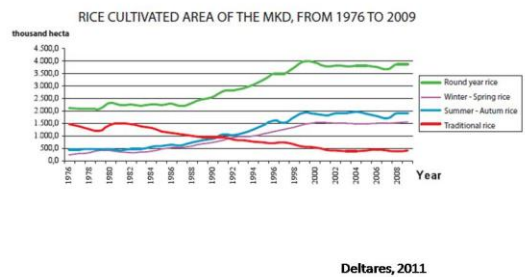
The makings of an ecological disaster

- The Mekong Delta’s Green Revolution (1970 to 2000s)

“At least during the last 5 years, the Green Revolution has been changing the appearance of the Mekong Delta in Southern Vietnam, bringing in new hopes for the country, but at the same time creating new problems for farmers.” (Vo Tong Xuan, 1975, pg. 8)

Slide 11:

The makings of an ecological disaster



Slide 9:

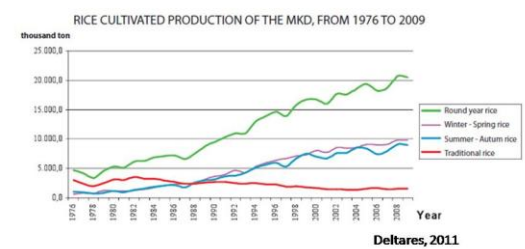
The makings of an ecological disaster

“(We can) not exaggerate the political, social, economic importance of food security in Vietnam. The famine, food shortages of the 1970s and 1980s have caused impacts on multiple levels. When Vietnam was ranked among the world’s poorest countries with the minimum amount of foreign exchange reserves, the food shortage that Vietnam experienced was the major factor for forming policies on food, agriculture and land use after that.”

(IPSARD Team, Vietnam Net, 2012)

Slide 12:

The makings of an ecological disaster



- Second largest rice exporting country by 1996

Slide 13:



Slide 16:

The makings of an ecological disaster

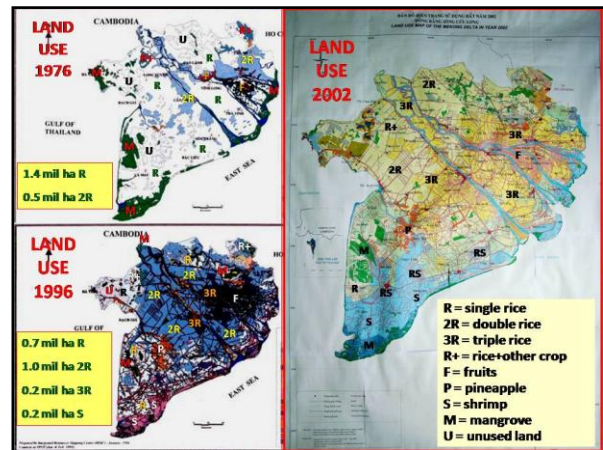
"In almost every discussion on planning to develop the Mekong Delta ... experts usually talk about irrigation and drainage." (Vo Tong Xuan, 1975, Pg. 88)

- Governance by plan: The Master Plans ... sectoral and expert driven
- 80% of irrigation investments has been for rice production
- Last of the ODA funded ring dykes ... North Vam Nao (AusAID), South Mang Thit (World Bank)
- Shifted from 2 rice crops to 3 rice crops per year

Slide 14:



Slide 17:



Slide 15:



Slide 18:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- The disappearance of the flooding season

"The flooding season now turns to the flood season"

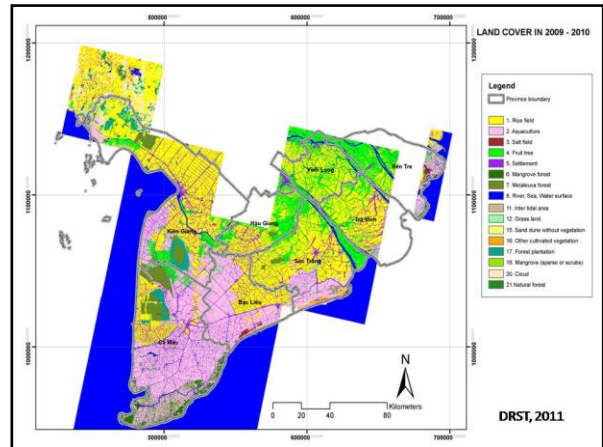
- VRN video on the high dykes and floods
 - 0 – 1:30
 - 5:20 – 7:00

Slide 19:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- **The disaster in the coastal mangroves**
- After the Americans defoliated much of the mangroves, expansion of shrimp farming into the coastal mangroves since the 1980s has led to even more loss ...
- Shrimp area grew from 90 000 ha in 1991 to 460,000 ha in 2003
- Mangrove loss from coastal erosion ... Climate change/SLR? ... Coastal sediment loss from upstream developments??

Slide 22:



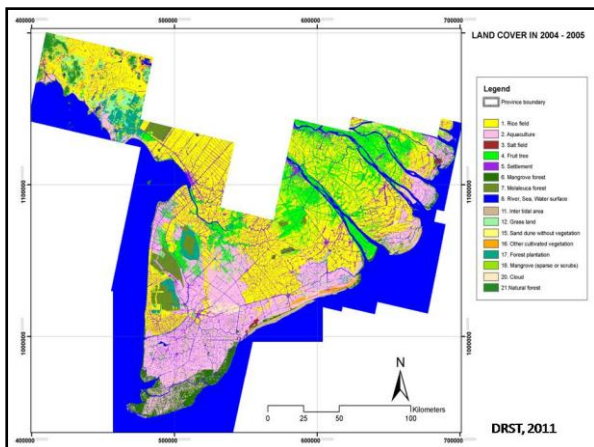
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Slide 23:



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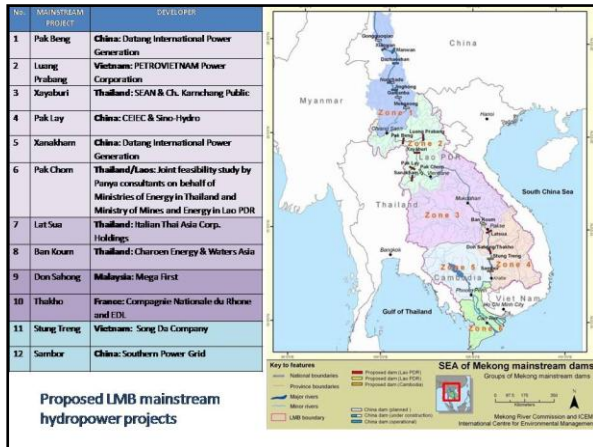


Slide 24:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- **Lower Mekong Basin mainstream hydropower dam development**
- Driven by regional energy needs
- 12 dams proposed for development with one officially underway as of Nov. 2012 (but contested)

Slide 25:



Slide 28:

The makings of an ecological disaster

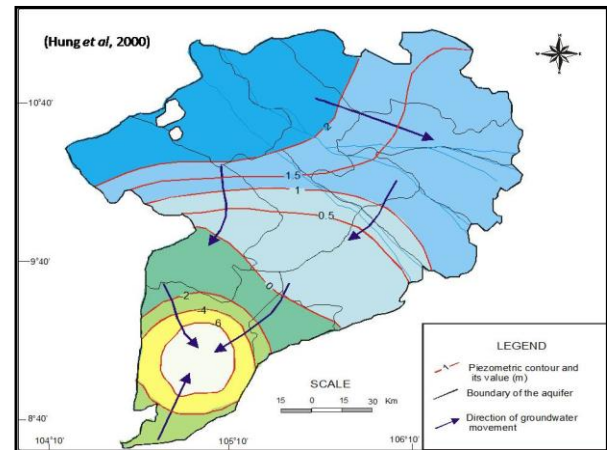
- **Reduced recharge of the underground aquifers** (Hashimoto, 2001; IUCN, 2011)
 - Supply side: High dykes and the loss of the wetlands
 - Demand side: Over extraction
- **Deeper pumping depths and increasing pumping costs** (town/household water supply and agriculture)
- **Increasing salinity intrusion into coastal underground water sources**

Slide 26:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- Strategic Environmental Assessment of the LMB mainstream dams commissioned by MRC in 2010
- Losses in the wild fishery:
 - 220,000-440,000 tons/year (only white, migratory fish)
 - 2,500 USD/ton~0.5-1.0 billion USD/Year
 - 35% are white fishes, 65% are black fishes
 - Black fish eats white fish

Slide 29:

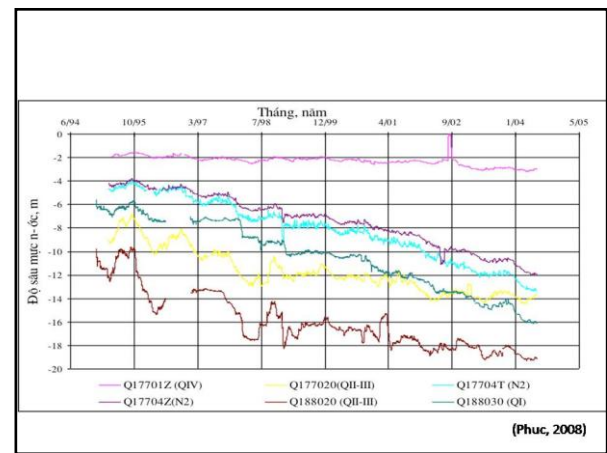


Slide 27:

The makings of an ecological disaster

- **Sediment loss in Mekong Delta**
 - Annual sediment load: 160-165 mil tons
 - If all 12 dams built, reduced to ¼ or 42 mil tons
 - Reduced nutrients supply to the whole system (degraded soils, poor nutrients supply to agriculture and ecosystems)
 - Increased river bank and coastal erosion (unquantifiable)

Slide 30:

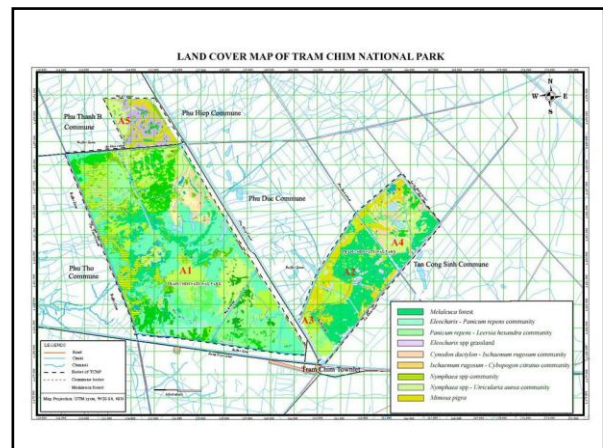


Slide 31:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- The governance crisis:
 - Narrow disciplinary, production-oriented, expert driven approach to managing the Delta. Dominated by irrigation engineers, hydrologists and water engineers, land managers, and industrial foresters – no ecologists until recently. (Watch out for the retired reformers!)
 - Parochial sectoral and provincial interests (eg. failure of the CLRBO)
 - Dogma and bad science (eg. Tram Chim / VNMC)
 - Overlapping jurisdictions of state agencies (MONRE versus MARD, eg. ground water, agriculture and water supply) – lack of accountability

Slide 34:



Slide 32:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- The governance crisis (Continued):
 - No civil society until the early 2000s (V-NGOs first legalised in 2003)
 - No informed critical environmental media until mid-2000s (eg. Tram Chim, Xayaburi, Food Security Policy)
 - No public participation in formal master planning processes (about to change with Dutch intervention – informally!)
 - Limited Provincial capacity or incentive to engage critically with national policy and planning processes – high political cost of failure (eg. food security policy,)

Slide 35:



Slide 33:

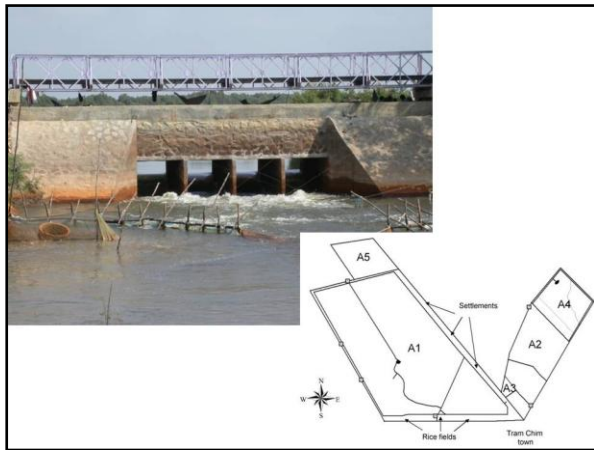
Governing the Mekong Delta

- **Case of Tram Chim National park**
- Management of wetlands suffer from sectoral divisions and restricted to protected areas
- Established as a National Park under protected area legislation in 1998
- 2000th RAMSAR designation in early 2012
- MARD is responsible for national parks containing special-use forests
- Manages Tram Chim through the Provincial Forest Protection Department – industrial foresters
- However, MONRE is responsible for the national wetland protected areas system and RAMSAR focal point
- Birth of the wetland in Vietnam! – Government Decree No. 109/CP, dated 23 September 2003, which provides the legal basis for promoting sustainable management of wetlands in Vietnam
- Park managed using Vietnamese industrial forestry practice until the mid to late 2000s with ecological consequences

Slide 36:



Slide 37:



Slide 40:



Slide 38:



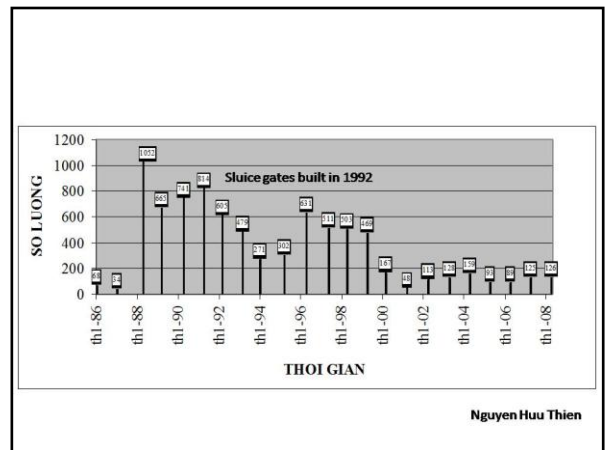
Slide 41:



Slide 39:



Slide 42:



Slide 43:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- **Master planning the Mekong Delta**

<p>(1) National Development Strategy</p> <p>(2) Mekong Delta Development Strategy</p> <p>(3) Sector Master Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-Economic Development • Transportation • Urban Development • Agriculture & Rural Development • Water management & irrigations • Natural resources and climate changes • Fishery and aquaculture • Forestry • Industry • Groundwater • Land use • Water supply and sanitation <p>(4) Provincial Planning</p>	<p>National Government</p> <p>South-west Steering Committee</p> <p>Ministries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. of Planning and Investment Min. of Transportation Min. of Construction Min. of Agriculture and Rural Development Min. of Agriculture and Rural Development Min. of Natural Resources and Environment Min. of Agriculture and Rural Development Min. of Agriculture and Rural Development Ministry of Industry and Trade Min. of Natural Resources and Environment Min. of Natural Resources and Environment Min. of Construction and Min. of Agriculture and Rural Development <p>Provinces</p>
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Deltares, 2011.

Slide 46:

Governing the Mekong Delta

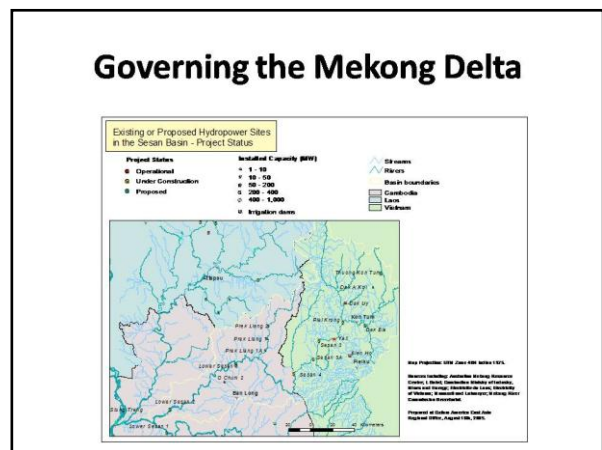
- **Governing from Hanoi:** The case of the Mekong mainstream dams and the Vietnam National Mekong Committee (VNMC)
- 1993 to 2006 – unilaterally developed tributary dams in Central Highlands with trans-boundary impacts in Cambodia (and Mekong Delta)
- Ignored Cambodian civil society and government opposition – polarised discourse
- Delta resident critics shut down

Slide 44:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- **The folly of the Cuu Long River Basin Organisation**
- Cuu Long (Mekong Delta) River Basin Organisation established in 2001 (donor driven – ADB, AusAID)
- Dysfunctional since establishment!
 - Established under MARD jurisdiction, then transferred to MONRE
 - Unclear roles between RBO secretariat and Provincial Peoples Committees and departments
 - Narrow stakeholder representation (DARD)
 - Wetland interests comes within its mandate but no representation (DONRE not involved)
 - Competing parochial sectoral and provincial interests – eg. conflict between Bac Lieu and Soc Trang Province over access to water (rice versus shrimp)
 - Dependence on technical solutions and avoidance of political solutions

Slide 47:



Slide 45:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- **Water resources managed within provincial boundaries**
- Eg. Provincial Climate Change Action Plans -> no inter-provincial issues
- Increasing underground water salinity intrusion but no recognition of the links to upstream loss of wetlands and reduced aquifer recharge
- Increased dry season salinity intrusion due to loss of upstream wetlands

Slide 48:

Governing the Mekong Delta

- Defending mainstream dam plans in Laos and Cambodia prior to 2010
- *“Benefits of mainstream dams ... increased dry season flows for river navigation and irrigation and lower wet season flows to mitigate floods and save human lives and property” (VNMC, 2009)*
- Position changed in 2010 – SEA revealed substantial impacts and losses in the Mekong Delta
- Agreed to 5 year moratorium (MRC Council response) pending further studies (SEA recommended 10 years)
- Vietnamese civil society action opposing the Xayaburi Dam worked to build Vietnamese government opposition (MONRE, VNMC) and in National Assembly

Slide 49:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society

- The beginnings of civil society action ...
- The retired reformists and the 'quasi-NGOs' (Mekong mainstream dams)
- The activist scientists (Tram Chim – 2005 to 2011)
- A more informed media (eg. Tram Chim + Mekong mainstream dams)
- Engaging the political level (Mekong mainstream dams and high dykes ... MWD and SWSC)

Slide 52:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society

- An informed media (Tram Chim):
KS Huynh, Director of Tram Chim National Park said they are under pressure to keep the National Park is not burnt. In the absence of other measures to control the fire, plans and canal water levels high throughout the year to reduce the risk of fire is applied. However, canal water holding fire now not only seriously affect important to ecosystem Tram Chim wetlands, but also increase the risk of fire. (Viet Bao, 2005)
- Turnover of journalists requires constant attention

Slide 50:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society

- The retired reformers and the 'quasi-NGOs' - case of the Mekong mainstream dams
- FORWET registered as VNGO in 2010 by the politically connected retired director of southern forest planning agency (Sub-FIP)
- FORWET provided political cover for activists to take local action following the mainstream dam SEA
- Awareness raising with leaders of key Delta provinces (funded by McKnight and IUCN MWD - 2010 to 2012)
- Lobbying at the political level – SWSC, National Assembly
- Consensus building – avoiding political risk
- Assisted by another retired reformer, the former Deputy Director General of the VNMC, now advisor to the Vietnam Rivers Network and Chair of the Vietnam National Working Group of IUCN's MWD project.

Slide 53:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society

- Resurrecting IWRM and RBO? - after the aborted MARD controlled Cuu Long RBO
- Revision of the Law on Water Resources, 2012
- WARECOD and VRN supported by IUCN MWD
- Strengthened articles on 1) recognizing that water is for life, 2) public participation and civil society engagement in water management, 3) water to be managed along IWRM principles and through RBOs.
- Will it succeed this time? Same institutional barriers to overcome – parochial and competing provincial and sectoral interests

Slide 51:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes): The beginnings of a civil society

"the development of dams for hydroelectricity generation on the Mekong and its tributaries could have unforeseen negative consequences for a country like Vietnam" (Dao Trong Tu, deputy secretary general of the Vietnam National Mekong Committee (VNMC), cited in Nov 2008 IPS news article headed **"Rare Criticism of Dams Surfaces"** from Thanh Nien News, Sept. 2008)

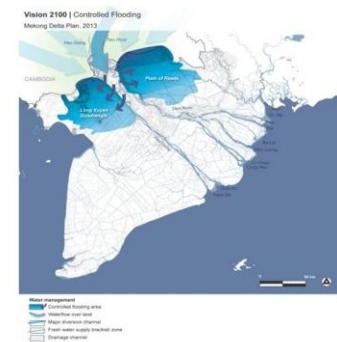
"I am so happy to hear for the first time Vietnamese officials claim far and loud that hydropower dams are ruining our fisheries," Nguyen Tu Be, a 45 year-old fisherman from Can Tho responded in a Nov 2008 IPS news article.

But ultimately betrayed by an opaque political system -

Slide 54:

Unmaking the ecological disaster (and heading off catastrophes)

- The Dutch Delta Plan ...
- Tradeoffs
- 'unofficial' public participation ...



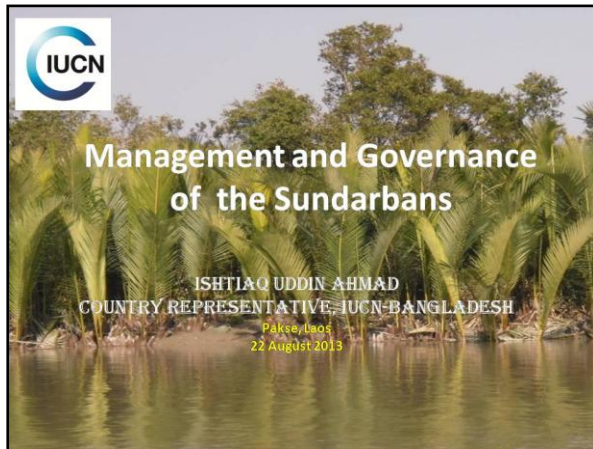
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Thank You!

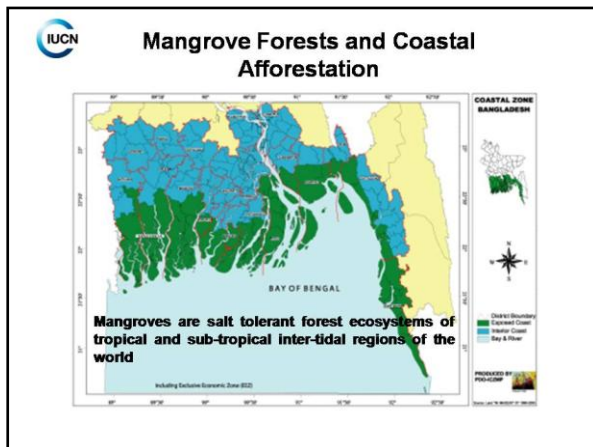
Andrew Wyatt
Andrew.Wyatt@iucn.org

Annex 2.9 Sundarbans, Bangladesh

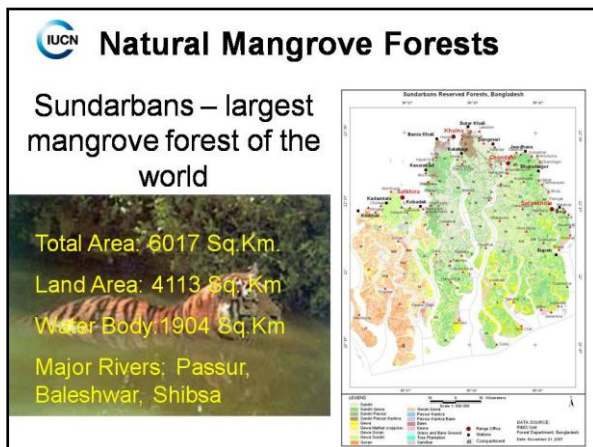
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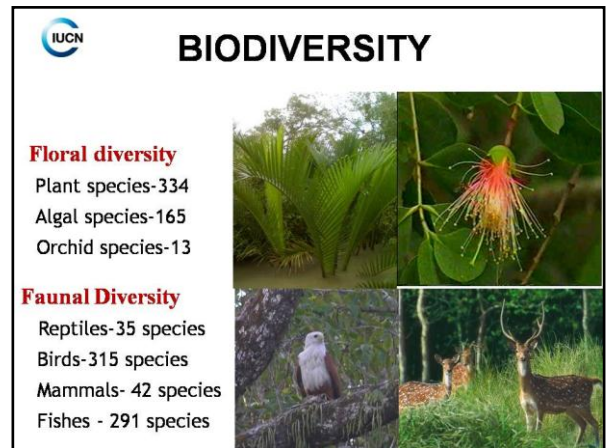
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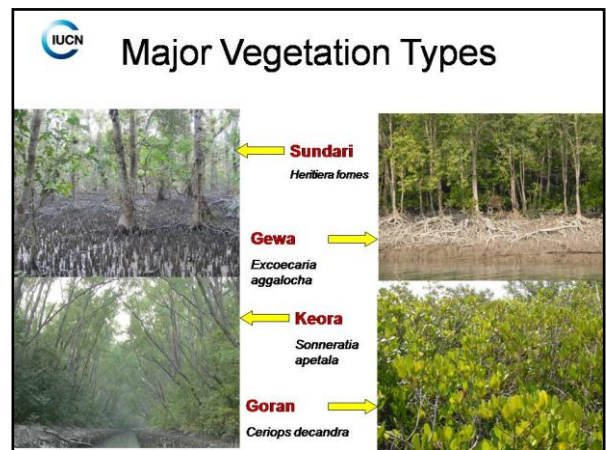
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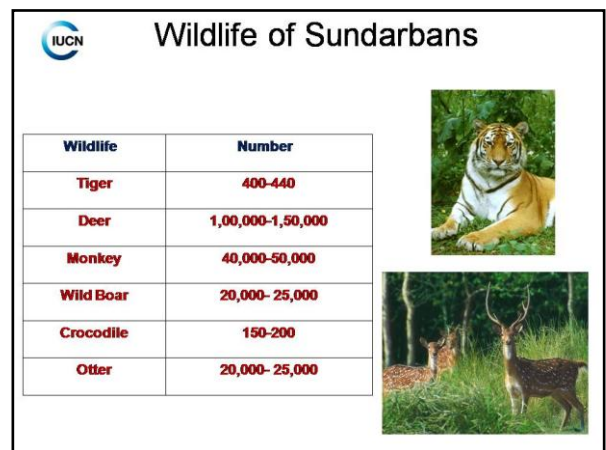
Slide 4:



Slide 5:




Slide 6:




Slide 7:

Cetaceans



Wheels of Day of Bengal

3 Types of Dolphins (Gangetic, Irawady and Bottle nose) are found in Sundarbans



Slide 10:

Tourism In Sundarbans



- ❖ FD provides Permission and Security
- ❖ Tours operated by private operators and water vessel owners
- ❖ Tour Season: October - March

Slide 8:

Sundarbans and Livelihoods


A Total of 3.5 million people of adjoining 17 Upazillas are depended on Sundarbans

Items	Quantity (Annual Average of Last 5 years)
Fish & Dry fish	4655 Metric tons
Golpata (Nypa)	22620 Metric tons
Honey & Wax	1455 Metric tons
Goran (Ceriops)Stem	3564 metric tons
Tourists	87 Thousands

Slide 11:

Dependency on Resources

- ❖ The SRF is of tremendous socio-economic importance to the communities living around it.
- ❖ Over 0.6 million people directly depend on it for their livelihoods.
- ❖ Fish, honey, wax, nypa leaves etc are collected from the SRF by the inhabitants living around the Sundarban.
- ❖ 12000 km of rivers and creeks produces large number of fishes, shrimps, crabs, oysters etc.



Slide 9:


Livelihoods




Slide 12:

Threats/Challenges

- Salinity
- Siltation
- Disease outbreak
- Natural Disaster
- Climate change impacts
- Population pressure



Slide 13:

 **Management Practices**

- Selection cum Improvement felling
- Gewa (*Excoecaria agalocha*) extraction for newsprint mills and sundri (*Heritiera fomes*) lops & tops for hardboard mills
- 1989 onwards moratorium on felling trees.
- All types of harvesting prohibited in three wildlife sanctuaries(1390 sq. km.)
- Extraction of NTFP like *Nypa fruticans* and Honey in all areas except wildlife sanctuaries.
- Fishing allowed in other places except wildlife sanctuaries and 18 canals
- Co-management in Sundarbans has been initiated in 2010

Slide 16:



Slide 14:



Annex 3: List of documentaries screened during the workshop

- The disappearance of the flooding season
- Sundarbans
- Siphandone
- The Mekong delta
- Fish surveys on the Mekong River

Slide 15:

 **Potential transboundary initiatives for Sundarbans management**

- Memorandum of Understanding between Bangladesh and India on Conservation of the Sundarbans;
- Protocol on Conservation of the Royal Bengal Tiger of the Sundarbans between Bangladesh and India;
- Joint development of Sundarbans Delta Vision (vision for 2050);
- Joint initiative for climate change adaptation for the Sundarbans delta.

Annex 4: List of participants

No.	Name and surname	Position	Province / Country	Organisation
1	Mr Akhom Tounalom	Vice Minister of Ministry of MoNRM	VTE/Lao PDR	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
2	Mr Houmphanh Rattनावong	President of LBA	VTE/ Lao PDR	Lao Biodiversity Association (LBA)
3	Mr Lonkhamh Atsanavong	Deputy of Department	VTE/ Lao PDR	DoEQP
4	Mr Somphone Nedthongsavanh	Deputy of Department	VTE/ Lao PDR	Department of Watershed Management and Land Use, Faculty of Forestry, National University of Lao PDR
5	Mr Khatthaneth Sensathith	Technical officer of ASEAN's division and assistance to wetland affairs	VTE/ Lao PDR	LNMC
6	Mr Phouthasack Souvannasao	Deputy Director	VTE/ Lao PDR	Investment Promotion Department, Ministry of Planning and Investment
7	Mr Bounlong Phimsengthong	Reporter from Lao National TV	VTE/ Lao PDR	Lao National TV
8	Mr Thatsakone Chounlamountry	Assistance to the National EP Coordinator (water and wetland specialist) DoWR officer	VTE/ Lao PDR	Department of Water Resources, MoNRE
9	Mr Athisone Silitham	Government Officer	VTE/ Lao PDR	Lao National Mekong Committee Secretariat
10	Mr Raphael Glemet	Water and Wetlands Coordinator	VTE/ Lao PDR	IUCN Laos
11	Mr Vilavong Vannalath	Mekong Water Dialogues Field Coordinator	VTE/Lao PDR	IUCN Laos

No.	Name and surname	Position	Province / Country	Organisation
12	Mr Oupasath Soulya	Administration & HR Officer	VTE/ Lao PDR	IUCN Laos
13	Mr Sinthala Vilaysom	IT & Communication Assistant	VTE/ Lao PDR	IUCN Laos
14	Mr Phonesavanh Sangsomboun	Reporter from Vientiane Times	VTE/Lao PDR	Vientiane Times newspaper
15	Thoun Thong Cheng	Reporter from Champassak	CPS/Lao PDR	
16	Mr Phothiraj	Reporter	CPS/Lao PDR	
17	Mr Khamphay Luonaglath	Head of Forestry Resource Management Section	CPS/Lao PDR	CPS Ramsar Provincial Committee
18	Mr Sengsoulivanh Inthachack	Head of Water Resource Section	CPS /Lao PDR	CPS Ramsar Provincial Committee
19	Mr Bounkham Phothisane	Deputy of PoNRE, Head of the Provincial Ramsar Secretariat	CPS/Lao PDR	Provincial Ramsar Steering Committee and Head of the Provincial Ramsar Secretariat
20	Mr Bounteuy Chanthalasin	Deputy of ICT	CPS/Lao PDR	Provincial Ramsar Steering Committee and Head of the Provincial Ramsar Secretariat
21	Mr Sinthavone	Reporter from Champassak TV	CPS/Lao PDR	Champassak TV
22	Mr Soulivanh		CPS/Lao PDR	
23	Mr Sihong		CPS / Lao PDR	Provincial Ramsar Steering Committee
24	Mr Soubin Chanthaphim	District Governor	CPS/Lao PDR	
25	Mr Khamphanith Vongsa	Head of SVK Provincial Ramsar committee	SVK/Lao PDR	SVK Ramsar Provincial Committee
26	Ms Keoudon Chounlamountry	Deputy of Water Resources	SVK / Lao PDR	SVK Ramsar

No.	Name and surname	Position	Province / Country	Organisation
				Provincial Committee
27	Ishtiaq Uddin Ahmad	Country Representative	Bangladesh	IUCN Bangladesh
28	Mohammad Sayedur Rahman	Haor and Wetlands	Bangladesh	DG, Haor and Wetland Dev. Board
29	Md. Istiak Sobhan	Programme Coordinator	Bangladesh	IUCN Bangladesh
30	Mohammed Shafiul Alam Chowdhury	Dialogue Coordinator	Bangladesh	Chowdhury Forest Academy
31	Bushra Nishat		Bangladesh	IUCN Bangladesh
32	Md. Abdur Rob Mollah		Bangladesh	NACOM
33	Ng Duc Tu	Water and Wetlands Coordinator	Viet Nam	IUCN Viet Nam
34	Mr Nguyen Huu Thien	Delta Expert	Viet Nam	
35	Mr Jake Brunner	Programme Coordinator	Viet Nam	IUCN Viet Nam
36	Mr Andrew Wyatt	Programme Manager Mekong Delta	Viet Nam	IUCN Viet Nam
37	Mr Robert Mather	Head of Southeast Asia Group	Thailand	IUCN ARO
38	Ms Lalita Rammont	Programme Manager, Water Programme, Asia	Thailand	IUCN ARO
39	Ms Dararat Weerapong	Senior Communications Officer	Thailand	IUCN ARO
40	Dr Apichart Anukularmphai	Director	Thailand	Natural Resources and Environmental Management Division
41	Mr Paisan Padungsirikun	Director	Thailand	ONEP
42	Mr Tawatchai Rattanasorn	Senior Programme Officer	Thailand	IUCN Thailand
43	Mr Rattaphon Pitakthepsombat	Project Manager	Thailand	WWF Thailand, MWD NWG

No.	Name and surname	Position	Province / Country	Organisation
44	Dr Sansanee Chooveaw	IUCN Asia	Thailand	Mahidol University
45	Ms Archana Chatterjee	Project manager	India	IUCN India
46	Dr Ajit Kumar Pattnaik	Chief Executive	India	Chilika Development Authority
47	Mr Pankaj Chandan	Head, High Altitude Wetlands Conservation Programme	India	WWF India
48	Dr Brian James Furze	Ecosystems for Life	India	IUCN India
49	Srin Boonyoung			Embassy of Finland
50	Mr Sorn Pheakdey	Water and Wetlands Field Coordinator	Cambodia	IUCN Cambodia
51	Mr Long Sochet	Head of the Coalition of Cambodian Fishers (CCF)	Cambodia	CCF
52	Mr Kong Kimsreng	Senior Programme Officer	Cambodia	IUCN Cambodia
53	Mr Tek Vannara	Deputy director	Cambodia	WGO FORUM

Annex 5: English translation of the speech of Mr Soulivanh Sawatthasin, governor of Pathoumphone District

Welcome speech by the Pathomphone District Chief

For the technical seminar on management strategies of wetlands in the Asia Pacific region,
dated 21/08/2013, at Ban Kiat Ngong

Honoured representatives at the seminar,

Technical staff from the related sectors travelling from Vientiane Capital, other provinces and Pathoumphone district,

Village organisations, villagers of Kiat Ngong, and organisations of seven related villages,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I represent the authority of Pathoumphone district, as the Advisory Committee on the Ramsar Wetland Management of Beung Kiat Ngong; I also represent the villagers of Ban Kiat Ngong and another seven villages concerned with management and conservation in the Ramsar Beung Kiat Ngong Wetland. I feel greatly honoured to host this event and welcome all representatives travelling from overseas to attend this technical seminar on management strategies for wetlands in the Asia Pacific under the Ramsar Convention, including this one in Champassak Province. Beung Kiat Ngong Wetland comes under the Ramsar Convention, since 28 September 2010 (Lao PDR is the 160th member country). Here, it has been selected to be visited by representatives of various organisations concerned with wetland management.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Pathoumphone is a district of Champassak Province, located in the south of the province with the following borders: in the north, it shares borders with Bachieng and Paksong districts, in the south it shares borders with Khong district and Cambodia, in the east it shares borders with Paksong district and Sanamxay district of Attapeu province, and in the west it shares borders with Champassak and Soukhouma districts, which extends to the Mekong River. The district has a total area of 287,000 hectares and the administration has been divided into 9 village groups, which consist of 68 villages with 10,200 households, and a total population of more than 57,700 (with 29,200 female residents). Eighty percent of the population is living in rural areas and their main occupation is agriculture (plantations and livestock) which covers 95%. The average income is approximately US\$1,000 per person per annum.

Pathoumphone district is fertile with many natural resources covering 67% of the total area, with 2 protected areas and 1 production area that is considered to be of national level importance. The resources include forestry, non-timber forest products, herbal plants (the most well-known and economically lucrative for local people is *Mark Chong* (*Sterculia Lychnophora Hance*), fertile forestry and agricultural land, rivers and wetlands which are valuable for environmental services, support a variety of livelihoods and cultures of local people, especially in Beung Kiat Ngong. Given its importance and with technical support from the central level, the province and the district as well as village organisations, it was

proposed to the government and related international organisations for Beung Kiat Ngong to be a member of the Ramsar Convention, which is one of two Ramsar Sites in Lao PDR since 28 September 2010 when Lao became the 160th country in the world to become a signatory.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Ramsar wetland in Beung Kiat Ngong has a total reservoir area of 6,000 hectares (in the rainy season), of which the management area is 2,260 hectares. Two-thirds of the total area is under the Xe Pien National Protected Area, of which 12 villages are involved (with a population of 11,600 persons with 7,000 female residents). There are 8 villages sharing borders with the site (with a population of 7,600 of which 3,800 are female residents). In the area, the villagers depend on the available natural resources to make a living. Based on the data collection of IUCN in 2008, it is certified that this wetland has 3 potential values: (1) Economic value: It is estimated that the economic value of the area is around 7 billion Kip (fish and other aquatic animals cover 90% of this), while there are tourism values and livestock values, (2) Environmental services value: It provides habitat and food-stock for aquatic animals and wildlife, water preservation during the dry season and flood prevention, fertilizes the natural food chain and wetlands with dark soils, (3) Culture and livelihood value: In the area, the community has the Wat Phou-Asa festival, the temple being a holy place of worship for local people and also the annual elephant festival. It has more than 90 kinds of medical plants available (information from the National Traditional Herbal Institute); the most well known being *Mark Chong* (*Sterculia Lychnophora Hance*).

Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to maintain the fertility of the area, our district authority in cooperation with the vertical organisations at central and provincial levels, pays most attention in management and conservation through the implementation of a community-shared basis, in accordance with the laws of government as a foundation with some accompanying regulations also issued by the province and district. These are designed to preserve this area.

Even though we have a management plan, we still cannot avoid facing some challenges which pull back our implementation as follows:

- The fertility of the natural environment has reduced because of overutilisation, harvesting in destructive ways, lacking a full plan in implementation, and the increase of the population, which requires more production areas.
- The implementation of management is not continuing as planned; there are inadequate specific technical staff, the coordination amongst the village, district, provincial and central levels to solve any problems is not continuous, there is a lack of ownership among the villagers in the areas, and not enough data and record-keeping. There were many projects implemented and activities undertaken in the areas. However, when the projects ended, the activities also ended (they were not sustainable).
- Because of climate change, the water level in Beung Kiat Ngong tends to be less than usually normal (in the past, during the dry season 800 hectares of the lake had water, however, at present only 200 hectares of water is available).

Ladies and gentlemen,

Given the situation and the challenges, we realise that it is necessary to continue to preserve the natural environment of the Ramsar Kiat Ngong Wetland. This is our objective and it is also our obligation at the international level.

There is technical and funding support from the related technical sectors at the district, province and central levels and also support from projects such as those the World Bank (SUFORD project), the Asian Development Bank (BCI), and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (MWD/LLS) are implementing, which helps with the system management of the area, especially the Kiat Ngong Wetland which gets technical support and funding from IUCN. Through these initiatives, we accomplished some of the tasks as follows:

- The creation of an initial vision for making a plan for management and area allocation, by strengthening governmental organisations and the villagers in the areas: (1) We undertook a study tour for creating a vision for government organisations and related sectors in 2008, (2) established responsible committees at the village, district and provincial levels (with the Provincial Ramsar Secretariat as a core unit in coordination), and (3) campaigning and creating awareness and holding discussion forums for solving the problems at the village group level every three months for the secretariat technical level and every six months for the advisory level.
- Surveyed and defined the areas for management (dispute resolution in 8 villages, survey the whole area and define the conservation areas).
- Created regulations to manage the natural resources in Kiat Ngong Wetland.
- Completed the data collection of the areas and created the management and allocation plan to be completed in 2013, and are implementing the work based on the allocated area and management plan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Again, in the name of the district authority as well as the villagers in the areas, I would like to thank the government organisations and related technical sectors at all levels, villagers, and village organisations in 8 villages, who supported us by helping to seek funds for managing the areas mainly from international organisations, especially IUCN, to support the work in this area, helping in establishing the national protected areas, and being a Ramsar Convention member. We hope that you continue supporting our area, so that we are able to implement the management and allocation plan for 2013-2017 and hope for further cooperation in the future.

Finally, I would like to wish for your good health throughout your stay in Champassak Province, Lao PDR and for the success of the seminar.

Annex 6: Recommendation paper on transboundary fish trade



RECOMMENDATIONS

MARCH 2013

Can the Mekong fish trade be preserved as a source of rural jobs?

The fish trade is a key source of income for tens of thousands of people in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand, but this source of income is under serious threat. Results of a new trans-boundary study reveal that the size of the fish trade in this area has been previously underestimated, or has grown in recent years, compared to baselines. Results of this study also show that the trade is a major contributor to employment in the region. However, these vital fish stocks are threatened by destructive fishing methods, pollution from unregulated chemical use, rising demand, and development in the region.

IUCN research shows that these resources, and the livelihoods of the people who depend on them, could be maintained through the following measures:

- Stronger enforcement of country-level fishery laws
- Greater protection, and expansion, of existing fish conservation zones
- Increased transboundary communication and cooperation on trade regulation

Scope of the problem

The fish populations of the Lower Mekong Basin face imminent threats from irresponsible fishing methods, pollution from unregulated chemical use, rising demand for consumption, and development along the river (Mekong River Commission Technical Paper #10). IUCN participated in a three-country research project to investigate the fish trade along one of three major trans-boundary routes in the region—between Stung Treng, Cambodia; Champassak, Lao PDR; and, Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. This research estimates the fish trade from Cambodia to Lao PDR to be 530 tonnes per year, a trade that was previously estimated to be only 87 tonnes per year by LARReC (Phonvisay and Bush) in 2001.

The trans-boundary trade of fish between Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand directly generates substantial employment for fishers, traders, and exporters. Over 20,000 people are directly employed in the fish trade along the Stung Treng to Lao PDR route alone, and fishers rely on the sale of fish for a substantial portion of their household income—23%, 70%, and 50-100% for fishers in the Cambodian, Lao, and Thai study areas, respectively. For traders and exporters, the fish trade makes up an even greater portion of household income. It also indirectly supports truck drivers, ice sellers, fishing gear makers and others.

Most people who work in the fish trade are economically disadvantaged rural villagers with limited alternative employment options. This being the smallest of the three major trade routes (the other two exporting fish from Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia to Thailand), the thousands of people identified in this study provide a representative sample of the many rural people living in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand who stand to lose their livelihoods if a decrease in fish stocks occurs.

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Implications

- The study results establish the fish trade as a major source of rural employment. A healthy fish population in the Mekong River is vital to maintaining economic prosperity among the people of the Lower Mekong Basin.
- The fisheries legislation passed by the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Thailand individually to regulate and police the trade and transportation of fish is positive but incomplete, and has not been strongly enforced. Fishers, traders, and even officials interviewed were not always aware of what the laws are and therefore compliance is still low.
- The threats to the Mekong's fisheries are international.
 - The fish trade sector is not well regulated or standardized among Lao PDR, Cambodia and Thailand. This leads to administrative arbitrage, trade inefficiencies, unfair practices, and a lack of a coordinated response to difficulties or environmental threats.
 - Legislation at the individual country level alone is inadequate—regional cooperation is required.

The research team makes the following key recommendations, detailing how best to ensure the continuing abundance of fish in the Lower Mekong Basin, based upon this study:

Key recommendations

For Lao PDR, Thailand, and Cambodia:

- Strengthen and simplify law enforcement through capacity building for the fish trade stakeholders and the local officials.
- Consider a trans-boundary fish trade agreement between the three countries.
- Raise public awareness about the economic importance of fisheries through mass media.
- Improve trans-boundary information sharing.
- Improve multi-sectoral collaboration within the different ministries in each country.
- Encourage the creation of Fisher and Fish Trader Associations at national and trans-boundary levels.
- Include the employment and incomes generated by the fish trade sector and the vulnerability of stakeholders in the cost-benefit analysis of development projects for the river.

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Annex 7.1: Opening remarks of Dr Akhom Tounalom, the Vice Minister of MoNRE, Lao PDR

Opening Remarks

By His Excellency Dr Akhom Tounalom, Vice Minister,
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
At the Workshop on Wetlands Governance in Asia organized by IUCN under the Mekong
Water Dialogues and the Ecosystem for Life projects
“Improving wetland governance for better management”

Mr Somsanith Boutivong, Vice Governor of Champasack Province, Chairman of
Champassak Ramsar Wetland Committee,
Dr Robert Mather, Southeast Asia Group Head, IUCN ARO,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Minister of MoNRE of Lao PDR, I am pleased to deliver this message on the occasion of the opening of this very important workshop on wetland governance in Asia organised by the IUCN.

Wetlands are important ecosystems in our region. In Lao PDR, major wetlands like Beung Kiat Ngong, Siphandone or Xe Champhone host incredible biodiversity, including some of the most rare and threatened species in the Mekong basin such as the Irrawady dolphin or the Siamese crocodile.

But wetlands are also very important for livelihood by providing water, fish and diverse natural products which support the daily life of many thousand people. Most of our wetlands also play a key role in climate change and hazard mitigation by regulating the Mekong floods, buffering against droughts, and providing important carbon storage opportunities like in the Beung Kiat Ngong peatlands.

Moreover, these locations are one of the specificities of the Lao landscape and host several sacred places and have an important cultural value for local people.

I hope you enjoyed a taste of this during your field visit yesterday in Beung Kiat Ngong and Khone Phapheng.

But, as in everywhere in the world, wetlands in Lao PDR are under threat from unsustainable uses, undesirable effects of mainstream development and climate change.

So how to conserve and protect these natural wonders in an ever changing and evolving region?

How to ensure that the conservation and management of wetlands benefits all layers of society?

Well tested approaches and methodologies for management, conservation and restoration exist, and have been implemented to some extent by Lao government agencies in charge. Many past projects provided feedback and lessons learnt regarding institutional and technical aspects of wetlands management.

But the best planning remains weak if not properly supported by effective governance which is able to make the right choices and make things happen.

How do we also ensure that the decision making process is transparent to all stakeholders and thus more efficient?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Governance is a key component for all kinds of management, from central and national policies to the very local level, when implementing the management plan for a site or developing an associated village level plan. This is the daily challenge of wetlands managers; be it government officials, NGO staff, or members of a local community.

Only through the vehicle of effective governance will we be able to contribute to improve wetlands conservation and sustainable use of all the benefits and values that these ecosystems provide.

As part of our strategy to improve water and wetlands governance in our country, the government of Lao PDR took important steps. One of them has been to become a member of the Ramsar Convention on International Wetlands in 2010 and designating 2 sites under this Convention. We decided to give a strong structure to Ramsar governance in our country by creating several committees at site, district, provincial and central level. This multilevel management approach on Ramsar Site conservation ensures an efficient understanding of all steps of the management process, following our slogan on “Rich Wetland, Good Ecology Service, and Good Life”. This also contributes to strengthening the Rights Based Approach to conservation of wetlands. This is something I believe Lao government representatives will present in more detail in the upcoming discussions today.

We are also working on strengthening our general national policies and strategies on water and wetlands by developing a specific strategy for wetlands, which will serve as a master plan for wetlands management in our country.

But as said earlier, governance is also to be understood as a local process and it must ensure local ownership of central level processes such as Ramsar. Based on this idea, we worked on a co-management approach for the Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Site by involving the different Ramsar Committees as well as the communities and wetlands users in the decision making processes. Dialogue platforms and workshops have been provided, with support from IUCN’s Mekong Water Dialogues project.

We learnt a lot through this process, and we were able to design guidelines and recommendations to improve wetlands governance that can be applied to other wetlands in Lao PDR and, I believe, everywhere else in Asia.

Distinguished Guests,

The Mekong Water Dialogues project, with support from IUCN, has facilitated the opportunity for our departments to discuss ideas, share and disseminate information among all sectors and levels of Lao society. All these experiences have been extremely useful and contributed to the improvement of water and wetland governance in Lao PDR

We are very well aware that improving governance is a learning process and further steps are to be taken for this. Lao PDR appreciates the participation in peer-learning processes on wetlands management with other countries. For that reason, I am very pleased to see

representatives from all the Mekong countries as well as from India and Bangladesh here today. We all need to learn from each other and share lessons learnt and past experiences. In this sense, I hope you will learn from us and that the Lao participants here will also gain new ideas and perspectives on wetlands governance through the various experiences shared by countries represented here.

Finally, please allow me to express my sincere gratitude to IUCN for supporting this process and to the participants from all over Asia who came to attend this workshop.

I hope you will enjoy this opportunity for dialogue; and I hope you will also get a bit of time to discover our rich country. I would also like to take this opportunity to wish the workshop to be a success and to wish all of you, our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good health and success in your respective countries.

Dear participants, I officially declare this workshop open and I wish you a fruitful discussion.

Thank you again and, as we say in Lao for good luck, *Sok dee der*.

Annex 7.2: Opening remarks of Mr Somsanith Boudtivong, Vice Governor of Champassak Province, Lao PDR

Welcome Speech

For the technical seminar on management strategies of wetlands in the Asia Pacific region, dated 22-23 August 2013, at Champassak Grand Hotel of the Vice Governor of Champassak Province, who is ALSO the president of the Advisory Committee on Ramsar Kiat Ngong Wetland Management.

Honourable representatives at this seminar,

Technical staff from related sectors travelling from Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet and Champassak Provinces

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I represent the authority of Champassak Province, as President of the Advisory Committee on Ramsar Kiat Ngong Wetland Management and as the host province, feel honoured to cooperate with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to welcome all representatives to attend the technical seminar on management strategies of the Ramsar wetlands entitled 'Strengthening Management and Cooperation with the Region'.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Champassak is located in the southern most part of Lao PDR, with a total area of 1.5 million hectares, and a population of more than 600,000. The main occupation of the population is agriculture (plantation and livestock). It is rich in natural resources, and forest covers 54% of the land, it is also rich in water resources (the Mekong River runs through the province over a distance of more than 200 kilometres) and there are also main Mekong branches such as the Xe Done, Bang Lieng and Champee. It also has many important wetlands and fertile soils such as the four thousand islands area, Bolaven plateau, Xe Don plain, Champassak-Soukouma plain and especially the Ramsar Convention site Beung Kiat Ngong, which is one of two Ramsar wetland sites in Lao, declared on 28 September 2010 when Laos became the 160th member country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Champassak Province is rich in natural resources and as the saying goes, it has 'Dark soil, rich water'. This means we have rich land for agriculture (rice production for food security and coffee production for trade) and efficiently utilise water resources for agricultural production, energy, transport and famous tourist sites such as Khon Phapheng waterfall, which supports the livelihoods of the local ethnic people.

Regarding the potential water resources (rivers and lakes), Champassak authorities with technical support from related sectors as well as technical and funding support from international organisations in Lao, also provides support in the management and conservation of water resources as shown:

- We have a water law, forestry law, aquatic and wildlife law, fishery law, land law, and environmental law as well as others aiming to enhance management and conservation (all are based on basic state legislation).
- We also define and allocate the management areas as well as the classification of forestry types based on purposes such as conservation forest areas, protection forest areas and production forest areas. Our province, with the agreement of local villagers, especially established water conservation reservoir areas, which cover an area of 60 reservoirs, and also create the regulations to manage the reservoirs, especially in Khong district, Mounlapamok district, Beung Kiat Ngong, and Pathoumphone district.

Through these targets, it was noticed that the overall implementation was quite successful, as it is shown to contribute to the conservation of natural resources, especially water resources.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As you know, Beung Kiat Ngong Ramsar Wetland is an important and valuable site for the livelihoods of the people in the area and it was accepted to be part of the Ramsar Convention. The implementation of conservation efforts is one of our obligations to the international community as this contributes to the conservation of our natural resources. I strongly believe that this technical seminar will facilitate an exchange of knowledge and experience amongst the representatives.

Again, in the name of Champassak authorities, I would like to honestly thank the government organisations and related sectors at all levels, and local villagers for providing the support to seek funding, providing technical staff for natural resources management, mainly international organisations, especially IUCN who has been working with us to establish Beung Kiat Ngong as a Ramsar member, and has also supported us with funding and technical advice. This gave us a foundation in our present allocation and management. I also hope that many international organisations will continue to provide support in the implementation of sustainable management plans in this area and ensure the livelihoods of local people.

Finally, I would like to wish all of you good health throughout the duration of this seminar in Champassak province and wish this technical meeting to be a success.

Annex 8: Guidelines for the group discussion

Slide 1:



Improving wetlands governance in Asia

From discussion to action/ Defining guidelines for an effective wetland governance
23rd August 2013

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Slide 2:




Agenda

- Group discussion : 9:00-10:30
- Coffe break : 10:30 – 10:45 (Slideshow on Siphandone “4000 islands”)
- Presentation per group and discussion : 10:45 -12:00
- Wrap up and closing : 12:00 – 12:15
- Lunch: 12:15-13:30
- **Movie screening : 13:30**

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Slide 3:




Group discussion

- 1 What are the key elements to achieve an effective governance of wetlands ?
- 2 What are the main challenges/constraints to be addressed ? How to address these challenges ?
- 3 How can the regional cooperation can be further developed ?
- 4 Priorities actions in the next 1-3 years

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Slide 4:



Organisation/guidelines

5 groups/ 5 tables
Please make sure that :

- all countries are represented in your group (and that everyone participates !)
- all type of wetlands are discussed (base your discussion on examples presented yesterday)
- one rapporteur takes **detailed** notes of the discussion on a word document (what is discussed and who says what).
- another rapporteur writes the main ideas on a paper board (support to presentation to the rest of the audience)

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Annex 9: Presentation of key elements from group discussions

Annex 9.1: Large freshwater lakes

Slide 1:

Large freshwater lakes: Tanguar Haor and Tonle Sap

August 23, 2013

Vulnerabilities in Tanguar Haor

- Low self-confidence after 150 years of elite capture, continued threats
- Interest of district commissioner
- Parallel structures at union (sub-district) level
- Need professional to manage \$1 million
- Fisheries can't support 56,000; must diversify

Slide 2:

Key elements in Tanguar Haor

- Management system
 - Elaborate 4-level management system
 - Clear TOR
 - Elected and links to the appointed THMC
 - THMC chaired by powerful district commissioner
- Financing
 - SDC provided \$5 million over 10 years
 - \$1 million accumulated
 - Financing patrols and offices

Slide 4:

Comparisons with Tonle Sap

- Population density very similar: 4/hectare
- Tonle Sap much larger, six provinces
- TSA established in 2009 but not operational

Annex 9.2: Chilika/Songkhla

1) Key elements

- Political commitments: to follow the set targets (budget and human resource)
- Public awareness/participation
- Institutional arrangement (clear authorities/mandates)
- Respect of cultural/religious aspects of wetlands
- Customary laws and traditional knowledge for management
- Strategic and operational planning
- Benefit sharing/incentives among stakeholders
- Sufficient information/data for scientific-based planning and decision making

2) Main challenges/constraints

- Competition on resource utilisation
- Conflicting interests
- Investment efficiency for governance
- Transparency and accountability
- Limited knowledge/misunderstanding on wetlands and their benefits/functions/values
- Stakeholder dialogues
- Strengthening of CBOs/CSOs
- Involvement of CSOs
- Advocate/communication on importance of wetlands for livelihoods and social lives

3) Regional cooperation

- Dialogue and sharing of technical information
- Make use of international agreements
- Promote awareness of the regional decision makers/information readiness for decision makers
- Develop a regional networking/dialogue pilot project
- Study tours/experiences and lesson exchanges

4) Priority actions

- Better coordination of the efforts on wetland governance (a coalition between actors)
- MWD can create a platform for wetland governance/regional networks for wetland governance
- Regional working group for preparing workplans/proposal concepts and facilitate trans-boundary collaboration
- Fundraising (mobilise funds from different sources) for on-the-ground activities
- A focal person/organisation to follow up recommendations from this event

Annex 9.3: Delta Group

Slide 1:

Group : Deltas

Effective Management and Challenges

- Ecosystems approach → basin management → Integration of all sectors
- Institutional and financial commitment
- Organic approach (learning from the failure of RBOs in Vietnam)
- Political engagement (planning dominated by sectoral technocrats)
- Community consultations (challenge in Vietnam)
- Internal capacity building (political level needs capacity to understand the science)
- Bridge building between scientists, policy and decision making (politicians)

Slide 3:

Priority Actions

- Formation of advisory body (to SWSC (Vietnam)
- Develop comanagement policy for conservation and development
- Exchange visit between deltas (eg. MFF/MCC link with BCR in Vietnam)
- Sundarbans delta – implementing MOU and protocol between Bangladesh and India

Slide 2:

Strengthening Regional Cooperation

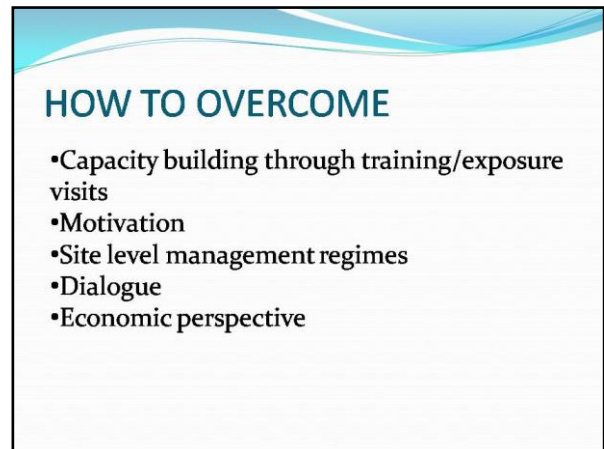
- Political commitment to ecosystems approach (eg. MRC still not using an ecosystem approach → minimum flows but no minimum water quality)
- Strengthening bilateral cooperation – complimenting regional level
- Strengthening dialogue at community level (people forum)

Annex 9.4: Inland Wetlands Group

Slide 1:



Slide 4:



Slide 2:



Slide 5:



Slide 3:



Slide 6:



Annex 10: Press release



PRESS RELEASE

For more information, please contact:

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For immediate release

Asian countries share lesson learned and strengthen regional link on wetlands governance

Pakse, Lao PDR, 22 August 2013—The importance of wetlands are globally recognised. It is not only an important ecosystem, but also contributes to the livelihoods of people who depend on them. In Asia, wetlands are a source of water, food, medicine, shelter and much more for thousands of people. They are home to numerous flora and fauna species.

"To sustainably manage the wetlands, we need to have a good governance in place. This means, governments at all level ranging from national to local need to have inter-linked wetland management policies and plans. Besides, it will not be a top-down approach but instead adopt participatory approaches", says Dr Robert Mather, Head of IUCN Southeast Asia Group.

Through a collaboration between the Foreign Ministry of Finland funded Mekong Water Dialogues, Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands funded Ecosystem for Life, Ramsar and Lao Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, 60 representatives from south and southeast asian countries are gathering in Pakse, Lao PDR, to share and learn from each other about wetlands governance and management in their respective countries. Furthermore, the collaboration aims to strengthen the links and cooperation on this issue at a regional level.

Case studies presented include community-based participation in wetland management from Tanguar Haor, Bangladesh, story of Chilika Lake and wetlands governance mechanisms for Himalayan high altitude wetlands from India, experiences on wetlands governance from Tonle Sap in Cambodia; Mekong Delta in Viet Nam; Songkhla Lake in Thailand; and Sunderbans in India-Bangladesh Delta, and lessons learned from Lao PDR.

In Lao PDR alone, major wetlands like Beung Kiat Ngong, Siphandone or Xe Champhone host incredible biodiversity including some of the rarest and threatened species in the Mekong basin such as the Irrawady dolphin and the Siamese crocodile.

"As part of our strategy to improve water and wetlands governance in our country, the government of Lao PDR has taken important steps already. One of them has been to become a member of the Ramsar convention on international wetlands in 2010 and designating 2 sites under this convention", says Dr. Akhom Tounalom, Vice Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR.

About Mekong Water Dialogues (MWD)

MWD is coordinated and facilitated by IUCN and supported by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland. It was initiated to work with countries of the Mekong Region – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam – to improve water governance by facilitating transparent and inclusive decision-making to improve livelihood security, human and ecosystem health.

About IUCN

IUCN, International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. IUCN's work focuses on valuing and conserving nature, ensuring effective and equitable governance of its use, and deploying nature-based solutions to global challenges in climate, food and development. IUCN supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world, and brings governments, NGOs, the UN and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice. IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental organization, with more than 1,200 government and NGO Members and almost 11,000 volunteer experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 staff in 45 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. www.iucn.org

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