

## **International CBNRM Workshop, Washington D.C., May 1998**

### **Case Study Information Sheet**

---

Region: East Asia and the Pacific

Country: Lao PDR

Title: Community-Based Natural Resource Management and Watershed Resource Conflicts: A Case Study From Nam Ngum, Lao PDR

Authors: Philip Hirsch, Khamla Phanvilay and Kanengnit Tubtim

Other Information: (i) Original language: English; (ii) Partner: International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Abstract: This is a case study on the institutional approaches adopted to deal with intensified resource use conflicts in the Nam Ngum Watershed, Lao PDR. The authors suggest that resource use, intensification/change, competition and conflict must be examined in sequence and that an understanding of this sequence is also a pre-requisite to developing alternatives through cooperative solutions, whether community-based or otherwise. The unique feature of conflict management in this case is the “multiple use of watershed resources (water, land, forests, fish) for subsistence and commercial production in the context of rapid change”. The case study shows the difference in perception between national policy makers and local communities regarding the causes of deteriorating resource base, which in turn gets reflected in the generalized approaches to watershed management that is usually adopted. The authors were the leaders of a 4 year (1992-1996) applied research project investigating the changing resource base, emerging conflicts and cooperative solutions to resource management within the watershed. While the first phase explored the socio-economic conditions and resource management systems, the second phase made more intensive studies and limited interventions in four pilot areas. Project interventions were defined within the broad framework of the forest land allocation policy, based on the hypothesis that different local circumstances require different measures and need to be developed by the concerned local communities in consultation with District level authorities. The outcome of the study was the promotion of community involvement in protected area management and in several other new projects initiated in the region.

Themes (prioritized): 4, 3

Subsistence Practices (prioritized): Shifting cultivation, Fishing, Agriculture, Gathering

Resource Types & Ecosystems (prioritized): Water, Forest, Land, Fish

Key Terms: Community consultation, Conflict management, Forestry, Land use management, Multi-ethnicity

Contact Person: Mr. Philip Hirsch, Senior Lecturer

Contact Address: Department of Geography, University of Sidney, New South Wales 2006, Australia

Telephone: + (61 2) 9351 3355

Fax: + (61 2) 9351 3644

Email: [Hirsch@mail.usyd.edu.au](mailto:Hirsch@mail.usyd.edu.au)