Session 1: Alternative Futures in the Lao Uplands: Multi-function or Mono-function?

Looking back to better understand the future
Competing visions for the uplands

Sustainable/green Agriculture
- Small holder driven
- High value niche market products
- Builds on local diversity

How can these co-exist and negative impacts be managed?

Industrial development
Industrial Agriculture: Rubber, Bannas, Cassava, Maize
Large-scale infrastructure development: train, hydropower, mining
Visions are not new – similar questions 10 years ago? From 2008

Farming typology
- Tradition Swidden cultivation
- Paddy rice cultivation

Policy push
- Shifting cultivation stabilisation
- Opium eradication
- Forest and land allocation
- Focal site development
- 4 Goals & 13 measures

Push

Push-Pull
- Fixed rotational cropping
- Intensified production of large ruminants

Pull
- Cash crop monocultures
- Industrial tree plantations

Market pull
- Cross border trade
- Extractive development with little added value
- Contract farming & agriculture investments
- Mining and hydropower investments

Outcomes
- Greater market opportunities for some
- Unsustainable production (i.e. maize monoculture)
- Forest encroachment & landscape level changes
- Greater food insecurity
- Extractive development

## Scenarios that were identified in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stay the course</th>
<th>Crisis situation</th>
<th>Sustainable Scenario</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Large FDI investments with few regulations</td>
<td>• Rising fuel prices and recession in world economy impact on food prices and food availability</td>
<td>• Regulation and management of foreign investments reduce negative environmental impacts and result in more equitable development</td>
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<td>• Watershed level impacts because of industrial agriculture (rubber, maize)</td>
<td>• Inflation increases</td>
<td>• Adaptive policy allows for specific interventions in different locations</td>
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<td>• The development of a hydropower and mines impact availability of agricultural land.</td>
<td>• Lack of investment from regional countries (i.e. Vietnam, Thailand, China) lead to decrease in FDI</td>
<td>• Coherent land use planning system used for strategic decision-making at province and district levels</td>
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<td>• Continuing consolidation of villages leads to out-migration to other provinces</td>
<td>• Labour migrations from China and Vietnam to work as labourers lead to conflicts in the North</td>
<td>• Farmers have better access to government services, production inputs and more on- and off-farm options</td>
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<td>• Land use planning and allocation still problematic</td>
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What vision do we have for the uplands and Lao food systems?

Healthy, resilient landscape
Outcome: Balanced diet, high nutrition based on local biodiversity

Monoculture cropping system
Outcome: Imported, processed, mass produced, low nutritional value food
Session purpose

• Take a macro look at drivers of change and potential scenarios in the uplands:
  • What is driving change within Agriculture and NRM sector?
  • What are external drivers of change?
  • How will these impact agriculture development and small holder farming in the Uplands?

• What does “green growth” potentially mean in practice for the uplands?

• How can competing visions be managed
  • What are the trade-offs?
  • How can negative impacts be mitigated
Session outline

• Three presentations:
  1. Green Growth and Upland Development in Lao PDR, Syviengxay Oraboune, NIER
  2. Contexts of large scale investments in lands, Mr. Vong Nanthavong, and Dr Michael Epprecht, CDE
  3. Informing the multi-functional/mono-functional debate: Insights from the northern uplands, Dr. Micah Ingalls, CDE/TABI

• Questions using Slido

• Panel discussion to present variety of perspectives