

Call for Application

Learning Route

Managing Forests, Sustaining Lives, Improving Livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Groups in the Mekong Region

Lao PDR and Thailand, 12-19

November 2012



1. Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Groups in Southern Asia: land tenure and livelihoods

Throughout the world there are today over 370 million indigenous people living in some 90 countries. Asia hosts more than 70% (approximately with 231 million of individuals) of the world's indigenous peoples, of which about 50% live under the poverty line¹.

However, despite their lack of monetary income, indigenous peoples and ethnic groups are not necessarily poor in term of subsistence. Over time, they have developed highly diversified strategies to adapt to the conditions of their traditional territories. These practices can offer today appropriate solutions to deal with current challenges, such as those related to climate change, food security and land use. In this framework, the enhancement of tenure security – including security of communal tenure – can be regarded as a key tool to alleviate rural poverty and secure livelihoods (Andersen 2011)². Furthermore, in the frame of the current initiatives for Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD and REDD+), communal tenure can open up spaces for the development of climate change mitigation measures from which communities could benefit as main actors for the protection of carbon stock and/or the regeneration of degraded areas of the forests in which they live.

However, although the recognition of the value of indigenous peoples' environmental knowledge and practices in the conservation and management of natural resources has been growing during the past years, the role of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups in decision-making processes at national level still remains low. In the most of the Asian countries, indigenous peoples and ethnic groups are still amongst the most marginalised sectors of the national society. To revert this situation, the dialogue between indigenous and ethnic communities, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), governments and development institutions should be strengthened.

In Kingdom of Thailand and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), experiences of communal land tenure have recently emerged through the form of delegated management of specific common natural resources, such as land or forest. In this case, the State maintains ownership of the resources and delegates management to local groups for a specific period of time with the possibility of renewal (Andersen 2011).

These community management activities have demonstrated to be effective to help balancing the ecological system, enhance food security and improve communities' income generating activities and access to market for poor households.

2. The Learning Route

In this framework, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), PROCASUR Corporation and the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP) launch the Learning Route: Managing Forests, Sustaining Lives, Improving Livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Groups in the Mekong Region, with the purpose of sharing and scaling-up the best practices and innovations in indigenous community-based Natural Resource Management (NRM) in Lao PDR and Thailand among indigenous and local communities, their supporting organizations, public authorities and institutional partners. In this context, particular attention will be given to community forestry management regulations and practices, to the process of recognition of communal land titles over community lands and to alternative income-generating opportunities from natural resources. At the same time, the Learning Route intends to increase awareness on the role of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups in the sustainable

¹ World Bank, 2010, Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Development, World Bank, Washington D.C.

² Andersen K. Ewers, 2011, Communal tenure and the governance of common property resources in Asia. Lessons from experiences in selected countries, Land Tenure Working Paper 20, FAO, Rome

management of natural resources and promote their inclusion in policy making processes at national and regional level.

3. Learning Route's objectives

The main objective of the Learning Route is *to analyse and disseminate the best practices and innovations in community-based Natural Resource Management carried out by indigenous peoples and ethnic communities of Lao PDR and Thailand, in order to promote their scaling-up at larger scale in the Mekong Region*. In this framework, the Learning Route will focus particularly on community forestry management, its internal regulations and practices.

Specific objectives of the Learning Route are the followings:

- To identify best practices, innovative solutions and lessons learned in sustainable NRM and promote their dissemination and scaling-up at national and international level;
- To analyse sustainable community-forestry management and land use planning and their internal regulations in indigenous and ethnic communities, as efficient models to enhance food security, diversify livelihoods and promote income-generating activities for poor households;
- To recognize the interlinks between communities' internal organizations and the management of community forestry areas, as well as the intimate relation between cultural, spiritual and environmental practices within indigenous contexts;
- To extract lessons on the main strategic steps taken by communities in the process of claiming their communal land titles, including cooperation and negotiations with local governmental authorities and partner institutions;
- To strengthen policy dialogue to promote the inclusion of indigenous peoples and ethnic groups in decision-making processes for the conservation and sustainable management of their traditional territories.

4. Host Experiences

A Learning Route is a continuous process of "training in the field" organized thematically around successful experiences and best practices on innovative rural and local development in which local actors themselves become trainers. Through workshops, interviews, conversations and other activities in the field, the Learning Route generates a space for individual and collective learning for visitors and hosts.

This Learning Route will be hosted by the following four experiences:

Lao PDR

Sustainable bamboo forestry management and communal land titles. The experience of Huay Hang and Napor villages, Sangthong district, Vientiane prefecture

This is the very first experience in the claim and official recognition of communal land titles in Laos PDR. Communities of the cluster of Ban Xor, Sangthong District, have elaborated sustainable practices for bamboo forestry management being able to sell bamboo handicrafts production through their association; this has improved the development of new income-generating activities in the villages. Women have been the most active participants. Bamboo user groups have been organized in each village, and in each village specific areas have been set aside as bamboo production areas.



Participants will be able to learn on: (i) land use planning and bamboo forestry management system; (ii) organization of management groups at village level; (iii) strategies to access markets through value-chain approach, with a specific focus on women; (iv) lessons learned on communal land titling.

Integrating gender perspective into value chain development. The Gender and Development Association (GDA), Vientiane capital

The Gender and Development Association (GDA) is acting as a platform for information and knowledge sharing on gender issues in Laos PDR. Since 2004 GDA is supporting the establishment of women saving groups and the participation of women in bamboo value chains in Sangthong district. Today there are seven women saving groups active in the district; women are producing bamboo handicrafts and furniture that are sold in the district and in

Vientiane capital. Women's contribution to the family economy evidenced positive impacts on gender relations within the household. GDA has been also actively involved in the process of recognition of communal land titles. From GDA's experience, Learning Route participants will benefit by learning on: (i) gender-related issues in Laos PDR, with particular reference to the situation of indigenous women; (ii) the development of pro-women value chains, as a strategy to both sustain livelihoods and promote gender equality at household level; (iii) challenges and opportunities in working with indigenous communities and with rural women in Laos PDR.

Kingdom of Thailand

Sustainable shifting cultivation as a self-sufficient system. The experience of the Karen community of Huay Hin Lad Nai, Chiang Rai province

Huay Hin Lad Nai considers its long-term practice of shifting cultivation as a sustainable and self-sufficient model to ensure food security. Being deeply embedded into the cultural context, it is also crucial for the protection and transmission of the local spiritual and cultural patrimony. The active inter-generational exchange at village level ensure that this bulk of knowledge and practices are transmitted from elders to youth. Furthermore, recent research on carbon footprint³ has shown that shifting cultivation activities are causing very little carbon emission. For the environmental service they are providing, the community has been recently awarded by the Thai government.



Participants will be able to learn on: (i) sustainable strategies for self-sufficiency, including diversification of local products and access to market; (ii) the intimate connection between environmental, social, spiritual and cultural practices; (iii) lessons learned in policy dialogue with local government for the support of community forest management.

Strengthening networking and policy dialogue in Asia. The Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), Chiang Mai city

With the purpose of strengthening solidarity and linkages among the indigenous peoples' organizations and movements in Asia and to foster the position of indigenous peoples in the region, the Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact was established in 1988 and located its secretariat in Thailand in 1992. AIPP is a membership-based organization with a network of 39 members. Among its objectives, AIPP maintains a strong focus on capacity building, organizational strengthening and advocacy, facilitating the establishment of linkages and communication between community-based indigenous groups in Asia and advocating for the recognition of their rights at national, regional and international level. Participants will learn on: (i) network formation, consolidation and strengthening; (ii) good practices in community mobilisation; (iii) strategies for fostering policy dialogue and advocacy processes at national and international level.

5. Location and dates

The Learning Route will start on the 12th of November 2012 in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, and it will end on the 19th of November 2012 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Within these dates, the Learning Route will be organized as follows (for more detailed information, please consult the [Schedule of the Learning Route](#) attached to this document):

- Arrival of the participants in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, on Monday the 12th of November, opening of the Learning Route and welcome dinner;
- From Tuesday the 13th to Thursday the 15th of November, visits of communities in Lao PDR (Vientiane capital and Sangthong District);
- Travel from Vientiane to Chiang Mai, Thailand, on the morning of Friday the 16th of November;
- From Friday the 16th to Monday the 19th of November, visit of 6 communities in Northern Thailand (Chiang Mai city and Chiang Rai Province);
- Certification delivery and closing of the Learning Route on Monday the 19th of November, dinner time.

Before and after the Learning Route participants will have to undertake preparatory and follow-up on-line activities as integral components of the Learning Route itself.

³ Northern Development Foundation, Climate Change, Trees and Livelihoods: a case study on the carbon footprint of a Karen Community in Northern Thailand, Northern Development Foundation and the Huay Hin Lad Nai community with the support of Oxfam-GB, available [online](#)

6. Participants' profile

The Learning Route is open to actors from Cambodia, Laos PDR, Myanmar and Thailand. Participants must belong to:

- Indigenous Peoples (IPs) and Ethnic Groups;
- National and Local Governments, agencies, programmes and projects;
- Civil Society Organizations working with/or supporting IPs;
- International Development Institutions working with IPs.

Participation of women and youth is strongly encouraged.

7. Conditions and Services

Each participant will have to:

- Cover (fully or partially) the training fees of USD 1700;
- Cover her/his travel expenses from her/his own place of origin to Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR on the 12th of November and from Chiang Mai, Thailand, to her/his place of origin on the 19th of November;
- Obtain the entry Visa for both Lao PDR and Thailand, if required. Assistance will be provided.

The Training Fee includes all the technical and operational services required between the 12th and the 19th of November 2012, as follows:

- Technical and operational assistance before, during and after the training;
- Services of experts, trainers and translators;
- Burmese, Cambodian, Lao, Thai and English simultaneous translations;
- Accommodation in three stars hotels in Vientiane capital and Chiang Mai city (single or shared rooms, 4 nights);
- Accommodation in host families of Huayhang and Huay Hin Lad Nai communities (shared rooms, 3 nights);
- Three daily meals (no-alcoholic beverages);
- Land and air domestic transportation within Laos PDR and Thailand;
- Travel insurance.

Organizers established a limited Scholarship Fund that might partially cover the training fee of those that cannot afford it completely. Interested candidates to benefit from the Fund are encouraged to apply accordingly, providing supporting documentation to their requirement.

8. Application and Information

For more information on how to apply please contact us by email or phone:

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DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: October 10th 2012

We remain at your disposal for any assistance you may need!

Learning Route Schedule Lao PDR- Kingdom of Thailand, 12- 19 November 2012			
Date	Place	Time	Activity
Monday 12/11/2012	Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR	Morning	Arrival of LR participants and check in at the Hotel
		15:00-16:30	Presentation of the Learning Route
		16:30- 19:00	Experience Fair
		19:30: 21:00	Welcome dinner
Tuesday 13/11/2012	Vientiane Capital	07:00 - 08:00	Breakfast and hotel check out
		08:30 - 9:00	UN House, Registration of Participants
		09:00 -10:15	Introduction to Lao PDR (Panel session on Land Tenure, Forestry Reform and IPs in Laos by IFAD, Government, Inter. Dev Organizations)
		10:15 - 10:30	Tea break
		10:30 - 12:00	Introduction to Lao PDR (continuing previous session)
		12:00 - 13:30	Lunch
		13:30 - 15:30	Travel to Sangthong District
	Sangthong District	15:30 - 17:00	Meeting with District Government
		17:00 - 18:00	Travel to Huay Hang village
		18:00 - 18:15	Reception by the community
		18:15 - 19:00	Welcome dinner (community)
		19:00 - 21:00	Cultural night
		21:00	Accommodation of participants in their host families
		Wednesday 14/11/2012	Sangthong District
08:00 - 09:00	Presentation: The experience of Huay Hang village in bamboo forestry management		
09:00 -11:00	Field visit to the Communal Land		
11:00 -11:30	Field visit to the Conservation of the Mekong area (watershed)		
11:30 -13:00	Lunch		
13:00 - 14:00	Women' Saving Groups		
14:00 - 15:00	Travel to Napor village		
15:00 - 16:30	Visit to the bamboo handicraft production		
16:30 -17:30	Travel back to Huay Hang		
17:30 - 19:00	Time to rest		
19:00 - 21:30	Dinner and Basi Ceremony		
Thursday 15/11/2011	Sangthong District	07:00 - 7:30	Breakfast with the host families
		7:30 - 10:00	Travel back to Vientiane
	Vientiane Capital	10:00 - 10:30	Registration of participants at UN House and coffee break
		10:30 - 12:00	Workshop Analysis
		12:00 - 13:30	Lunch
		13:30 - 15:00	Introduction to the Innovation Plans
15:00 - 15:15	Tea break		

		15:15- 17:00	Roundtable discussion with CSOs and institutional partners (GDA and their guests)
		17:00 - 17:30	Wrap up of the day
		18:00	Dinner
Friday 16/11/2012	Vientiane capital	Morning	Hotel Check out and travel to the airport
	Chiang Mai, Thailand		Travel to Chiang Mai and check in at the hotel
			16:00 - 18:00
		18:00	Dinner
Saturday 17/11/2012	Chiang Mai	07:00 - 08:30	Breakfast and hotel check out
		08:30 - 9:00	Registration of participants
		9:00 - 10:15	Introduction to the Kingdom of Thailand (panel session)
		10:15 - 10:30	Tea break
		10:30 - 12:00	Introduction to the Kingdom of Thailand
		12:00- 13:30	Lunch
	Chiang Rai Province	13:30 - 16:00	Travel to Huay Hin Lad Nai
		16:00 - 16:15	Welcome speech and village's rules by the community
		16:15 - 17:30	Cultural reception: sword dance, traditional songs and music
		17:30 - 18:30	Presentation: Lessons Learned from advocacy for our land rights
		18:30 - 20:00	Dinner with products from the shifting cultivation fields explained by the women
		20:00	Accommodation of participants to their host houses
	Sunday 18/11/2012	Chiang Rai Province	07:00 - 08:00
08:00 - 10:00			Field visit: Learning trek on the way to the shifting cultivation fields. Thematic learning stops in the forest.
10:00 - 12:00			Understanding Shifting Cultivation Explanation of the process, socio-cultural component and practical demonstration
12:00 - 13:30			Lunch in the field (talking about food security)
13:30 - 14:30			Walking back to the village
14:30 - 16:00			Time to rest
16:00 - 17:30			Workshop Analysis
Chiang Mai		17:30 - 19:30	Travel back to Chiang Mai
		19:30 - 20:00	Check in and installation at the Hotel
		20:00	Dinner
Monday 19/11/2012	Chiang Mai	07:30 - 09:00	Breakfast
		09:00 - 10:15	Roundtable discussion with AIPP and their partner organizations
		10:15 - 10:30	Tea break
		10:30 - 12:00	Roundtable discussion and open floor debate
		12:00 - 13:00	Lunch
		13:00 - 15:00	Working at the Innovation Plans
		15:15 - 15:30	Tea break
		15:30 - 17:00	Presentation of the Innovation Plans
		17:00 - 17:45	Closing meeting
		19:00 - 21:00	Delivery of certificates and Cloture of the Learning Route/ Dinner