Innovative learning process for building sustainable bamboo value chains.

The case of the Bamboo Project in Houaphan Province, Laos

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Houaphan bamboo project since 2010

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1. Overview of the Houaphan Bamboo sector: achievements and potential
Natural bamboo forest in Houaphan as opportunities for value chains development

Source: NuOL 2008
Four value chains based on village bamboo forests

1. Handicraft products for domestic market
   Different species of bamboo

2. Slats and sticks for export to Vietnam
   Mai Kouane: *Dendrocalamus longifimbriatus*
Four value chains based on village bamboo forests

3. Fresh bamboo shoots for domestic market
Mai Khom: *Indosasa sinica*

4. Dried bamboo shoots for domestic market and export to Vietnam
Mai Hok: *Dendrocalamus hamiltonii*
Promising results in Viengxay, Sam Neua and Sobbao Districts

In 4.5 years implementation, substantial results have been achieved.

More than 70 villages of three districts are today involved in the development of sustainable bamboo value chains.

22 villages have been allocated 4000 ha natural bamboo forests for use and trade, within Communal land registration and titling in experimentation (PONRE/GiZ)

25 villages have more than 300 ha bamboo plantation.

In 2014, 60 village producer groups collected, processed and sold bamboo products for a total value of 400,000 USD, representing an average of 5,700 USD/village or 225 USD/hh.

40 Village Service Providers are being trained to offer services to the producer groups.

Dry bamboo shoot value chains in process of getting Organic and PGS certification (MAF/IFOAM).
**Benefits from value chains based on sustainable use of village bamboo forests**

Bamboo contributes to:

* *Poverty alleviation* and *livelihoods* improvement (complementary cash income)

* *Resilience to climate change and market changes* (preservation of NTFP and food reservoir for the population)

* *Forest preservation*
Opportunities provided by value chains based on sustainable use of village bamboo forests

Bamboo is an opportunity for:

* Securing **land rights of small holders on village forests** through communal land titling

* **Strengthening the village and producers groups organization** (capacities and negotiation power in the market value chains)

* Promoting the **emergence of village small scale private actors** (Processing units, Service providers)

* **Develop PGS on bamboo sector**, according to national policies (MAF/DoA) in order to access to a bigger and sustainable market.
2. A collective learning process for building a sustainable bamboo sector (participatory innovation development)
The Huaphan Bamboo Strategy with support of the Bamboo Project

The “Bamboo Provincial Strategy 2011-2015” has been approved by Governor of Huaphan Province. The “Bamboo Provincial Strategy 2016-2020” is on work.

Objectives 2011-2015:

1. Sustainable bamboo resource management (natural communal forests & individual plantations)
2. Bamboo Business Development
3. Enabling environment (Policy & Organization)
Government facilitates the learning process, with support of the Bamboo Project.

The Bamboo Project plays a role of «facilitator» of the collective learning process since 2010.
A value chain approach: linking forest management & market

A value chain approach has been adopted for supporting the development of the bamboo sector, linking sustainable management of bamboo forests and business/market, from the villagers to the traders and consumer, with the government.
Support provided along the value chain

- **Land Management**
  - Bamboo forest allocation
  - Land allocation for bamboo plantations
  - Land titling Communal & Individual

- **Forest Management**
  - Forest Management Plans
  - E&D Experiment on FM techniques
  - Forest monitoring

- **Plantation**
  - Nurseries
  - Plantation

- **Business & trade**
  - Business model
  - Marketing
  - Processing
  - Trader networking

- **Enabling environment**
  - Producers’ organization
  - Village Service Providers
  - Policies
A collective learning process on Forest Management
(participatory innovation development)

1. Allocation of communal forest plots to village
   (method approved by DONRE, DAFO, D. Governor)

2. Agreement for sustainable forest management & use by village
   (FMP - approved by DAFO or D. Governor)

3. Research on best practices to manage bamboo forest E&D
   (FSRC/NAFRI)

   - Full responsibility of villagers on forest plots governance
     (Communal Land Title – approved by P/DONRE)

   - Annual Forest Monitoring of communal forests by villagers
     (Village Bamboo committee, check & approved DAFO)
A collective learning process on Business Development
(participatory innovation development)

Field work, analyses of the situation, lessons learned and opportunities

Experimentation of business models

Annual Value Chain Workshop, with all value chain stakeholders

Putting into practice the best business models based on lessons learned

Villager → Fresh shoot → Company → dried shoot → Vietnam or China

Villager → Grade B Sun dried shoot → Trader / collectors company → Sun dried shoot → Vietnam or China

Villager → Fresh shoot → Village Processing Unit → Grade A dried shoot Dryer → Vietnam Company
3. Linkage between practices and policies
Fresh bamboo shoots (bamboo species: mai Khom) for domestic market

Field experimentations in Huaphan: input for national policies

- **FSRC NAFRI**: Experimentation and demonstration on forest management techniques
- **GiZ LMRD**: Experimentation on Communal land title
- **MAF/DoA & IFOAM**: PGS certification on dry Hok bamboo shoot
- **Working group at National level**: Presentation of study case and lessons learned sharing to:
  - SSWG on Farmers and agribusiness
  - Land issue working group
  - SSWG Communal land titling
Regional cooperation of the Houaphan bamboo sector

- **WWF Laos & Cambodia**: Study tour from WWF cambodia Policy brief
- **RECOFTC**: Build project proposal focusing on developing bamboo sector
- **CRD Vietnam**: Collaboration with CRD in Than Hoa Vietnam
- **PGS Vietnam**: Collaboration with IFOAM, ADDA, and Vietnamese company
4. A Bamboo Service Center
Proposal: The creation of an autonomous Bamboo Service Center for:

- **Providing local services** in Huaphan Province and in the Lao PDR (could be extended to other regional countries in the future)
- Sustaining the **development and organization of the bamboo and NTFP value chains** and sector
- Promoting and **facilitating the exchanges** between experiences, knowledge and lessons learned at national and regional level
Proposal: The creation of an autonomous Bamboo Service Center to facilitate provision of technical services to...

- Provincial Governor
- Provincial BBTF
- Dist BB Committee
- Village Bamboo Committee

- Other projects
- Bamboo service center (BSC)
- Private sector
- Houaphan Bamboo producer group organization (association or cooperative)
- 2nd level PG organization
  - Village PG
  - PG
  - PG
**Challenges to strengthen the organization of the sector:**

- Strengthen the **capacities of the village administration** to ensure a fair and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Strengthen the **capacities of the producer groups** to ensure an efficient and sustainable trade.
- Strengthen producer group organisation in a **2nd level organisation, Association or Cooperative, link to the national policy of MAF/DEAC.**
- Set up a **provincial system for offering sustainable services** to the bamboo sector stakeholders for consolidation and expending value chains.
- Strengthen the **local services providers** to deliver services.