Co-learning & capacity building in companion modeling processes for resilient water management at the catchment scale in the Mekong Basin

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Session: TWG on Spatial Analysis and (participatory) Modeling (SAM), TWG on Learning to innovate, Share Fair
Summary

Companion Modeling (ComMod) was used at nine sites (from Mekong Delta to the Himalayan highlands through rainfed lowlands and uplands) to examine various water management issues at the catchment scale (1 to 14 villages) with diverse arenas of stakeholders. Similar participatory gaming and simulation methodologies and tools (role-playing games associated with agent-based computer models) were used and the iterative and evolving ComMod processes lasted from 1 to 5 years. Highly interactive field workshops were held, separated by surveys and modeling activities, to tailor the simulation tools to the changing needs of stakeholders. The diverse effects of ComMod on the participants were evaluated. Important ones deal with learning and capacity building: understanding the problem, adoption of technical practices, understanding others, negotiation of rules and agreements, self-organization and mobilization for collective action. The comparative analysis shows the key roles played by a NRM policy truly supporting decentralization, and continuity of the process to achieve concrete impacts in the field.

Key Message
Local stakeholders benefit from highly interactive simulation tools co-designed with them to share knowledge, perceptions, and to explore and agree upon rules for sharing water resources at the catchment scale.