Nong Lom Wetlands Management Plan Development



Introduction

The Nong Lom (NL) wetlands contain approximately 20 ha of a permanent freshwater lake that are mainly used for fishing and irrigating rice and seasonal crops in the lake's immediate surroundings. However, the lake is no longer sufficient to meet the increasing demand for irrigation, and there are now very little fish in it because of unsustainable fishing practices and the degraded and fragmented habitat. No written management plan has ever been put in place for the wetlands. In mid-2000, a regional project extended limited financial and advisory support for management actions on the ground. But when the project ended in 2007, management was ceased, and no management has taken its place since.

Rationale

Transformational Agroecology across Food, Land, and Water Systems is a CGIAR Initiative that aims to harness nature's goods and services while minimizing adverse environmental impacts and improving knowledge co-creation and inclusive relationships among food system actors. To that end, improved management for the NL wetlands was selected to pilot some agroecological principles in different components of the local food system.

Approach

The Initiative used a demand-led participatory approach to the co-design and co-development of the management plan.

Management plan

1. Promote more sustainable multiple use of NL water: 3 actions and 14 activities.
2. Mitigate potential pollution from agriculture run-off: 3 actions, 14 activities.
3. Ensure sustainable fishing practices: 3 actions, 14 activities.
4. Restore ecological functions of the NL lake and its surroundings: 2 actions, 10 activities.
5. Develop and operationalize local management mechanisms: 3 actions, 10 activities.

Relevance to the Initiative's principles

Recycling; input reduction; soil health; biodiversity protection; synergy among plant, soil, animals and water; co-creation of knowledge; land and natural resource governance; participation of all relevant stakeholders, both state and non-state actors, including a balanced representation of men and women.

Process

Relevant stakeholders were engaged to identify relevant components of the food system for the innovation. Both government and non-government actors shared their knowledge on the resources, issues and challenges, and ultimately proposed options for the management objectives and actions. The Initiative's team from WorldFish Cambodia and the International Water Management Institute in Laos play primarily a facilitating role in steering the process and getting the outputs written up and presented back to them for validation. The development process for the plan took stakeholders/communities 9 months to develop, even as stakeholders were busy with their regular activities.



Outputs

The draft management plan consists of two main parts:

1. Nong Lom: Its resources and environment
2. The Nong Lom management plan.

The first parts provides an overview of the biophysiological environment, socioeconomics, and resource use and governance (both past and present) of Nong Lom. The second part includes a long-term objective and five management objectives, as well as an implementation arrangement that includes annual actions, a budget breakdown, evaluation and adaptive planning.

Stakeholders in the co-design/ co-development process and people consulted:

- Village chiefs (Hom and Thamaleuy), Lao Women Union (LWU), Village Youth Group (VYG), Village Land Use Unit (VLUU), local fishers, and local rice and cash crop producers
- Samakhysai District Office of Agriculture and Forestry (DAFO)
- Attapeu Provincial Office of Agriculture and Forestry (PAFO)
- Co-design and co-development team of 15–20 people
- More than 60 participants in the initial awareness and consultation



Progress

September 2023:
- Presentation and video screening to raise understanding and interest of the need for improved management of the NL wetlands
- Consultation started to understand the resources at stake and also threats and challenges

December 2023:
- Presentation and validation to the co-design team on progress made since the previous period
- Consultation on past management and challenges, and overall governance in place

February 2024:
- Presentation and validation to the co-design team on progress since the previous period
- Consultation to formulate management objectives and actions, a proposed management structure and teams, prioritization of actions, and budget estimates

May 2024:
- Presentation and validation to the co-design team on progress made since the period
- Elaboration on duties and responsibilities for the management committee and thematic groups
- Selected activities implemented, including providing initial capacity building and establishing a management committee and four thematic groups

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To learn more about this Initiative, please visit www.cgiar.org/initiative/agroecology.

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