



Rethinking Laos' Protected Areas: Strategies for a Sustainable Future

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*"Biodiversity is the greatest
treasure we have..."*

~ Thomas Eisner



Outline

- Setting the Stage
- Criteria for Analysis
- Policy Options
- Discussion
- Conclusion



Setting the Stage

- Laos' National Protected Area System
- Development Context
- Threats to Biodiversity and NPAs



<http://www.wcs.org/media/image/endangereditiger.jpg>



Criteria for Analysis

Policy interventions must meet four criteria:

- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Political Acceptability
- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Feasibility



Option 1: Status Quo

- Current and planned activities will proceed as expected
 - minimal levels of management, minimal funding, and lack of distinct management objectives
- Current efforts provide "inadequate technical and financial management resources [for] preventing an on-going and probably increasing deterioration of important PA values" (PAD 2003)

Option 2: Participatory Management



- Enhance efforts for participatory management and planning
- Falls under GoL's mandate for participatory approaches to PAs
- Is participatory management really a "magic bullet"?
 - What is participation?
 - Is participation really possible in Laos?
- Harnesses the motivation of self-interest of people to affect change on the ground

Option 3: Sustainable Financing



- Develop sustainable financing framework to address short- and long-term financial needs across all levels of governance for PAs
- Innovative mechanisms include:
 - Debt-for-nature-swaps (DFNS)
 - Payments for Environmental Services (PES)
 - Others: ecotourism, NTFP programs, etc.
- Conventional mechanisms include:
 - Taxes, fees, and fines
 - Shifting budget priorities

What do you do with the money if you don't have staff capacity to effectively use the money?

Option 4: Clarified Management



- Developing methodology for assigning Laos' NPAs to management categories
- Some scholars argue that categories should be based on conservation outcomes, not management objectives
- IUCN management categories provide flexibility for meeting conservation objectives
- Provides strategic framework from which to leverage funding for biodiversity conservation

Summary of Policy Options

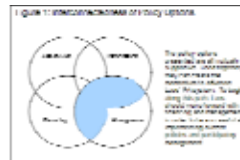


	Sustainability	Political Acceptability	Adaptability	Feasibility
1. Status Quo	+	++	+	+
2. Participatory	+++	++	+++	++
3. Financing	++++	+++	+++	+++
4. Management	++	++++	+++	+++

Discussion



- Each option has strengths and weaknesses
- NPA system requires attention to both human and financial capacity development
- Need to focus on efficiency, effectiveness, and equity!



Moving Forward



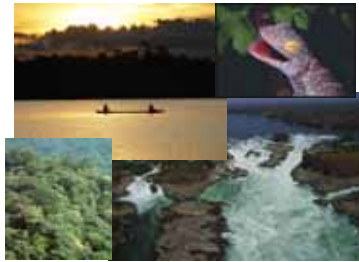
- Joint PA Review
- Implementation of Convention on Biological Diversity Programme of Work on Protected Areas
- Begin to "rethink" protected areas in Laos



“Until you dig a hole, you plant a tree, you water it and make it survive, you haven’t done a thing. You are just talking.”

- Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Winner,
Speech at the Goldman Awards, San Francisco

Thank you!



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Resources



[Can Lao PDR Afford Not to Invest in Conserving its Biodiversity?](#)
Available at: www.iucn.org/lao

[Consuming the future: the real status of biodiversity in Lao PDR](#)
Available at www.iucn.org/lao

