

DRAFT First Interim Report NTFP sustainable management mission
GIZ Hin Nam No Project, 12-24 May 2013.

1 Background

A technical assistance mission is fielded by the GIZ/MONRE Project for “Integrated Nature Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Hin Nam No National Protected Area” from May-July 2013. The aim is to build capacity of district/province staff and villagers to co-manage Non Timber Forest Product (NTFP) resources in a sustainable manner with positive impacts on livelihoods. This report summarizes the first two weeks of this mission.

2 Implementation of planned activities

One international consultant and two international consultants implemented five activities according to the work schedule attached to the TOR. The international consultant spent two more days than foreseen, as traveling to and from Thakek was not accounted for in the original work plan.

Table 1: Implementation of planned activities compared to work plan

No	Activity	Planned Dates	International Consultant		National C.	
			Planned	Done	Planned	Done
	May 2013					
A	Review Villager's Interest in NTFP development	May	5	7	10	14
1	District Workshop to select villages, review plans		1	3	2	6
2	Village workshops in 3 villages		3	3	6	6
3	Short report on outcomes		1	1	2	2
B	Market research	May-June	5	1	24	6
1	Identify and interview traders in Khammouan		2	1	8	6
2	Identify and interview traders outside province				8	
	TOTAL			8		20

Besides the planned activities, the consultant team also spent half a day joining a project workshop on co-management in Bualapha district.

Table 2: Itinerary of the mission 12-17 May 2013

Date	Destination	Activity
Sunday 12 May 2013	Vientiane-Thakek	Travel 1 day
Monday 13 May 2013	Thakek-Bualapha	Meetings with province team, travel
Tuesday 14 May 2013	Bualapha	District training workshop
Wednesday 15 May 2013	Bualapha-Nong Ping	Workshop, Village consultation, travel
Thursday 16 May 2013	NongPing- Nyavet- Bualapha	Village consultation, travel
Friday 17 May 2013	Bualapha-Thakek-Vientiane	Travel 1 day
Monday 20 May 2013	Vientiane	Writing workshop report
Tuesday 21 May 2013	Vientiane	Planning market survey work
Wednesday 22 May 2013	Vientiane-Thakek	Travel to Thakek 1 day
Thursday 23 May 2013	Thakek	Market survey training workshop
Friday 24 May 2013	Around Khammouan province	Start implementing market survey

3 Outcomes from District Level Training Workshop

A one day training workshop was organized at the Agricultural Office of Bualapha district. There were a total of 20 participants (4 village leaders, 10 district staff, 4 province staff and 2 project staff). An overview was presented on the NTFP management systems development approach. Participants were also trained in the application of rapid appraisal tools. They worked in small groups to review products as to their suitability for market development according to criteria. The participants selected Ban Nong Ping and Ban Nyavet as target villages in the Nong Ping cluster where the NTFP development work will focus on. The main steps of the consultant’s mission were reviewed and a plan for implementing key steps was made in agreement with all participants (see table 3 below).

Table 3: Detailed planning of activities NTFP mission May-July 2013

Step	Activities	Timing
1	Review PRA 2011 with villagers to shortlist products	15-17 May 2013
2	Market survey	22-29 May 2013
3	Setting up producer groups	03-07 June 2013
4	Study tours to meet traders and consumers	10-15 June 2013
5	Resource inventories	24 June-5 July 2013
6	Group meetings to set up sustainable harvesting rules	8-12 July 2013
7	Developing business plans, further group training	15-27 July 2013
8	Implementing the plans	As of August 2013



Picture 1: Participants of the NTFP Training Workshop



Picture 2: Group work during workshop

4 Outcomes from participation in Co-Management Workshop

The NTFP consultants were invited to join a district level workshop organized by the project to review the co-management plan. The consultants noted that the plan talks mainly about wildlife management and monitoring. There is a gap in terms of defining how the stated objective of “sustainable use” of the park will be worked out, especially for the use of NTFPs. They proposed that the project could benefit from working out a process for updating the management plan (dated 2010). Perhaps a committee should be set up charged with this work and ways should be developed to involve the 22 communities living around the park in this process. This could become the start of developing a park management board, which should consist of representatives of all stakeholders around the park, as a more permanent vehicle for implementing a co-management approach.

5 Outcomes from Village Consultation Meeting in Nong Ping village

On Wednesday 15 May 2013, a team of 6 district officers, 1 province officer and the consultants traveled to Nong Ping village and stayed overnight there. In the afternoon of that day a meeting was held with a group of around 50 villagers (30 women and 30 men).

The national consultants introduced the NTFP activity plan and showed a video on the activities of an already existing bamboo handicraft group in Vientiane Province. They then asked groups of men and women to work in separate groups. Each group reviewed the top 10 products they had ranked as most important during an earlier PRA study in 2011. They ranked these products in terms of their viability for raising income, using criteria such as market demand, social importance (how many people are involved), technical feasibility and environmental feasibility.

The outcome is represented in the table 4 below. Villagers selected bamboo shoots and bamboo for handicrafts as the products with most potential. They also gave high ranks to orchids, but promoting their sales is not compatible with the project objective to conserve biodiversity. There could some merit in exploring a project aimed at cultivating orchids, but this would be a long term exercise. For now, two other products were shortlisted: “khaem” broom grass and rattan canes.

Table 4: Ranking of NTFPs to their potential for marketing by villagers of Ban Nong Ping, 15 May 2013

Product	Women's score	Men's score	Total score	Women's rank	Men's rank	Overall rank
Bamboo shoots*	42	34	76	1	1	1
Bamboo poles*	24	34	58	2	1	2
Dok Pheung Orchids	18	30	48	3	2	3
Khaem broomgrass*	18	8	26	3	3	4
Vai rattan canes*	5	8	13	5	3	5
Mak tao palm fruits*	2	6	8	7	4	6
Vai/thoun rattan shoots	7		7	4	6	7
Boun/san shoots	3	2	5	6	5	8
Cardamom	2	2	4	7	5	9
Kheua hem medicine	0	2	2	8	5	10
Total	121	126**	247			

*) Products shortlisted for market development

*) Original scores totaled 68, values were doubled to be more comparable to women's.



Picture 3: National consultant Mr. Souvanpheng shows a video on bamboo producer groups around Vientiane



Picture 4: Villagers of Nong Ping thinking about NTFP development

6 Outcomes from Village Consultation Meeting in Nyavet village

On Thursday 16 May 2013, the same team conducted the same type of meeting in Nyavet village. The methods were the same as applied as described for Nong Ping village. The meeting was attended by 15 villagers (5 women and 10 men). Villagers prioritized similar products as in Nong Ping village (see table 5): bamboo poles and shoots, broomgrass, mak tao fruits and cardamom.

Table 5: Ranking of NTFPs to their potential for marketing by villagers of Ban Nyavet, 16 May 2013.

Product	Women's score	Men's score	Total score	Women's rank	Men's rank	Overall rank
Bamboo poles*	40	18	58	1	2	1
Khaem broomgrass*	15	14	29	2	4	2
Mak tao palm fruits*	10	16	26	3	3	3
Bamboo shoots*	15	10	25	2		4
Cardamom*		22	22		1	5
Boun/san shoots	5	6	11	4	5	6
Kisi resin	5	6	11	4	5	7
Total	90**	92**	182			

*) Products shortlisted for market development

*) Original scores totaled 18 for the women's group and 43 for the men's group. To make them comparable, women's scores were multiplied by 5 and men's scores by 2.



Picture 5: NTFP consultation in Nyavet village

Picture 6: Ranking results

7 Wrap-up meeting in Bualapha district: shortlisting 4 products

On Thursday 16 May, the team reviewed its findings during a short wrap-up meeting in Bualapha district. Comparing the results from the two villages, four products stand out (see table 5).

Table 6: Summary comparison of the top five products selected in both villages

Product	Nong Ping rank	Nyavet rank	Nong Ping score	Nyaveth score	Total score	Final Rank
Bamboo shoots for eating	2	1	9	10	19	1
Bamboo Poles for Handicraft	1	4	10	7	17	2
Broom grass	3	2	8	9	17	2
Mak Tao Palm Fruits	5	3	6	8	14	3
Vai rattan canes	4		7		7	4
Cardamom		5		6	6	5

These four products are: (1) Bamboo shoots , (2) Bamboo poles (3) Broom grass and (4) Mak tao sugar palm fruits. The remainder of the NTFP management consultancy will focus on these four products. Two other products, cardamom and rattan, scored much lower and will not be pursued this time. They may be pursued in the second phase of the GIZ Hin Nam No Project.

8 Preparing the NTFP market survey

On Tuesday 21 May 2013 consultants met with Mr. David Lutz in Vientiane. Together they prepared a questionnaire format for interviews with traders. They prepared an agenda for a one-day training workshop for selected district staff who will join the NTFP market survey. This workshop was held 23 May 2013, 6 district staff and 2 province staff participated. On 24 May, national consultants and district staff commenced the market survey, which is expected to be finalized by 29 May 2013.

9 Other observations

As reported by an earlier mission in 2011 and confirmed talking to villagers during these visits, it is clear that most of the economically important NTFPs are collected from forests that are relatively close to the villages, which are outside of the boundary of the Hin Nam No National Park. This is an important observation. The difficult terrain inside the Park deters villagers from entering there as long as it is easier to collect NTFPs outside the Park.

So there is justification for supporting sustainable NTFP management systems even if these are collected outside of the boundaries of the Hin Nam No Protected Area. Such systems would not only improve livelihoods and motivate villagers to take an interest in managing biodiversity resources. They may also reduce the pressure on the Park. Forest access rules developed here may also become a model for developing sustainable access rules that may be developed for the Park later.

Secondly, the consultants observed that there seems to be a difference in the wealth levels between the two villages. In Nong Ping village there are structural rice shortages, a greater level of poverty and less experience in “entrepreneurship”. Nyavet village is more wealthy with much more paddy fields, less rice shortages and more people already engaged in buying and selling. From this, it would seem that the conditions for setting up a successful NTFP producer group are better in Nyavet. The team will set up NTFP producer groups in both villages and continue to observe the differences.

Thirdly, the team observed a feeling of “tiredness” among the villagers with regard to the project. Villagers are tired with project teams coming to collect data again and again and not starting any activities that bring tangible benefits to villagers. So the team decided to reduce the data collection to a minimum and concentrate on (a) providing a perspective to villagers that NTFPs producer groups are a realistic option and (b) showing that the process consists of clear steps that will be implemented immediately over the next two months or so and with full participation of villagers.

10 What we missed

The team was not able to get much information on villager’s interest in managing NTFPs in the forest or planting them outside of the forest. At this stage, there is little interest in such activities. These options will be revisited after the market survey and the resource inventory exercise. For now, it is clear that the exploitation of wild orchids will need to be addressed as it directly threatens the biodiversity in and around the Hin Nam No Protected Area.