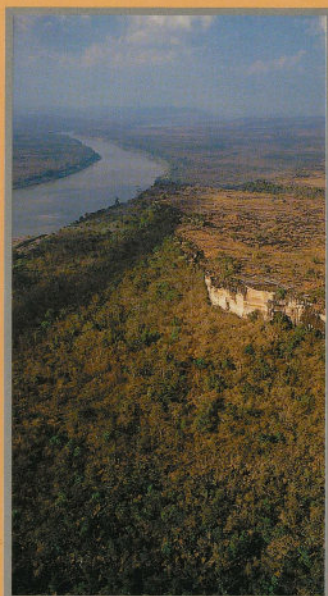
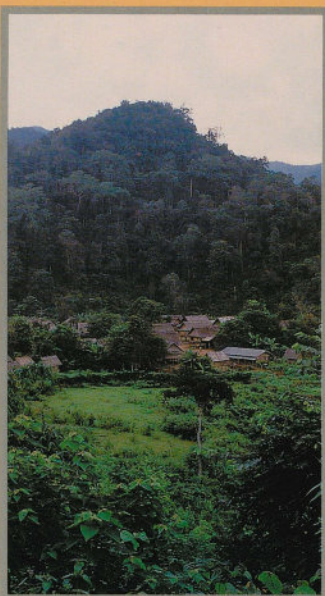

The IUCN Programme in Lao PDR



IUCN
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Front Cover Photo

Three elements of IUCN's assistance to the Government of Lao PDR: management of Dong Hua Sao NBCA (left); Ban Tatmoun, an NTFP Project pilot village in Oudomsai Province (centre); management of Phou Xiang Thong NBCA on the Lao PDR - Thailand border (right).

Back Cover Photo

Lao PDR retains one of the highest levels of biodiversity in SE Asia. Its extensive forests and other ecosystems provide habitat for a wide range of wildlife, including Tiger (photo: A. Lynam/WCS). However, wildlife is under intensive hunting pressure.

The IUCN Programme in Lao PDR

May 1998



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Foreword



I never knew how many shades the colour green could have until I visited Lao PDR. Perhaps it has something to do with the light of Southeast Asia and the luminosity of the unpolluted air in Vientiane. The brown of the sluggishly rolling Mekong outside the IUCN office brings into sharp relief the soft shades of green along its banks.

One is acutely aware of the responsibility an organisation like IUCN has to the Government and people of Lao PDR. That is, to assist with maintaining the balance between the need for the country to provide a quality of life to its people that allows them to enter the next century with equity within the nations of Southeast Asia, and to nurture their most precious natural resources - the forests, waters, land and biodiversity - while they do so. IUCN's programme in Lao PDR is committed to working with our partners in the country to defining that balance, and in helping to ensure that it can be achieved. This programme document describes our activities, current and future, which show that while much remains to be done, much has already been achieved. It is an endorsement of the good work of our partners and the staff of the programme, under Stuart Chape's leadership.

Perhaps of all the lessons, based on our experience in the region, that IUCN brings to its work in Lao PDR, one is more important than others, and it is this: in Lao PDR, there is still a chance to show that preventive care can avoid the high economic and social costs that other countries have paid by neglecting the lessons of good environmental management. Here, there is a chance, and the opportunity to do it better. We have a small window in time that we are all looking through and while other countries in the region missed it, Lao PDR has the chance to use the opportunity wisely.

It is clear the Government of Lao PDR recognises this in its actions. By putting into place a comprehensive protected areas system, in addressing the issues of hydropower, community and ecosystem management of the Nakai-Nam Theun area, and in some of the cutting-edge programmes in non-timber forest products, and poverty reduction and the environment in the remote watersheds of the Greater Mekong sub-region, they have demonstrated innovative leadership for conservation.

Our work in collaboration with our partners reflects the priorities of the country, and these in turn reflect the priorities agreed in the World Conservation Congress in Montreal in 1996, by all countries and members of the Union. The programme, office and staff have developed in consonance with these priorities, and their growth reflects the increasing emphasis given to the issues of good governance and resource management.

The IUCN programme in Lao PDR is linked closely to work in the sub-region (Vietnam and Cambodia), and has special oversight of project work in Cambodia. The lessons derived from it, in turn, are fed into the larger programme of the South and Southeast Asia region which covers a total of 17 countries and 82 member institutions. The Country Representative and his team in Lao PDR are part of the Asia Regional Directorate, and have management responsibility, together with the Representatives from other countries in the region, to ensure that IUCN's work is consistent with the priorities of its members, its commissions and its networks. Thus the programme and office in Lao PDR form one important node in a powerful network of States and member institutions in Asia which work together to ensure that the voice of the Asian region is reflected within the global Union.

I look forward to the wide dissemination of this document, and to my next visit to Vientiane, when I shall try again to count the many shades of green.

Aban Marker Kabraji
Regional Director *a.i.*
South and Southeast Asia

Preface



1998 marks the 50th anniversary of IUCN, founded on 5 October 1948, and the 10th year of IUCN work in Lao PDR. It is therefore an appropriate time to produce this summary of IUCN's programme and activities, which defines IUCN's role, existing and potential, in the sustainable development of Lao PDR.

IUCN works with the Lao Government, as the State Member of IUCN and principal partner. As our supporting programme has widened its scope so too has our interaction with the various components of the Government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs holds the State Membership of IUCN, but the main partner for many years has been the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (specifically, the Department of Forestry). More recently, IUCN has also been working with the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, the Science, Technology and Environment Organisation and the Ministry of Communications, Transport, Post and Construction. On major projects, such as the Nakai-Nam Theun National Biodiversity Conservation Area (NBCA) and catchment project implemented in 1997, an even wider interaction takes place through the establishment of cross-sectoral steering committees set up to oversee project implementation. This broadening of scope can be seen as a natural progression as environmental management and conservation concerns and needs become more widely understood and accepted throughout Government and the community.

IUCN's assistance to the Government and people of Lao PDR would not be possible without the support of IUCN's international members and partners. The Governments of Sweden and the Netherlands presently fund our major projects in Lao PDR, with discussions currently taking place with the Government of Denmark. In the past, the Government of Australia has also provided some support. All of these countries are also State Members of IUCN. In addition, IUCN works closely with its global partners, such as UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank. This highlights the unique attribute of IUCN: its members, partners and secretariat work together to achieve common goals. In the case of Lao PDR it is to assist the country achieve sustainable development through wise use and management of its economically and ecologically valuable natural resources.

This programme summary explains the scope of IUCN's Lao PDR programme. *Why* IUCN works here, the *role* that we believe that we can perform, and the *contribution* that we believe we have made, and can make in the future, to the country's development. The IUCN goal and objectives for the Lao programme are given, along with examples past and present, of the kinds of projects and activities which we believe help to achieve these objectives.

The beginning of the programme document also gives a brief synopsis of IUCN as a global organisation. We briefly answer some questions that are often asked about IUCN's history, structure and function.

It is the nature of this kind of document that it will be out-of-date almost as soon as it is printed, as projects and activities are completed and new ones are started, and even programme emphasis may change if the Government should request a change of direction. In this sense, the programme should be seen as a dynamic and evolving process. Indeed, the measure of the programme's success over the long term will be that elements of it will actually become redundant as objectives are achieved. However, in the context of Lao PDR's current human development and

conservation management needs it is likely that the present goal and objectives will remain valid for some time to come. In many ways, the work to assist the Government and people of Lao PDR attain sustainable development has just commenced. Support for sustainable development and nature conservation in a country that has the kinds of developmental constraints which exist in Lao PDR, must be designed and implemented on a long term basis if it is to be successful.

Over the last 10 years the Lao Government has taken major steps to conserve and manage its natural resources sustainably. In terms of biodiversity conservation alone, Lao PDR now has one of the most representative protected area systems in Asia. However, considerable support is required for effective management and capacity building to ensure the long-term viability of the system. This is a major task for any country - let alone one of the most undeveloped countries in the world. IUCN wishes to continue to work with the Government and people of Lao PDR to help further develop and implement such important initiatives.

Finally, I would like to thank the IUCN staff working in Lao PDR, past and present, who have all contributed to the development and implementation of the programme over the last 10 years. I also extend IUCN's appreciation to the dedicated Lao nationals, both within Government and in the community, who have shared the vision of a country that *can* retain its natural and cultural heritage while striving towards equitable and sustainable development.

Stuart Chape
IUCN Representative - Lao PDR

A photograph of a dense forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a dappled light effect. The text is overlaid on this image.

What is IUCN ?

The Mission

"The mission of IUCN,
the World Conservation Union,
is to influence, encourage and assist societies
throughout the world to
conserve the integrity and diversity of nature
and to ensure that any use of natural resources
is equitable and ecologically sustainable."

IUCN-The World Conservation Union was founded in 1948 by the Government of France, UNESCO and the Swiss League for the Preservation of Nature. The IUCN head office is in Gland, Switzerland.

Membership and Governance

IUCN is a unique global union. It is one of a very few international organisations where governments and non-governmental agencies work together as partners. The programme of work of the Union is agreed to and adopted by the membership at the World Conservation Congress, previously known as the

IUCN is a unique global union. It is one of a very few international organisations where governments and non-governmental agencies work together as partners.

General Assembly, which is held every three years. The World Conservation Congress also elects the governing body, the IUCN President and Council, from the membership.

IUCN's present membership stands at:

- State Members 73
- Government Agencies 109
- Non-governmental agencies
 - ♦ National 636
 - ♦ International 58
- Affiliates - non-voting 37

Total: 913

Countries: 138

In Asia, IUCN has:

- State members 10
- Government agencies 14
- Non-governmental agencies 60
- Affiliates 3

Commissions

The IUCN Statutes provide for the establishment of six technical commissions, or expert networks, organised around themes particularly relevant to the IUCN Mission (see previous page). The six commissions are:

- Species Survival Commission (SSC)
- World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA)
- Commission on Environmental Law (CEL)
- Commission on Education and Communication (CEC)
 - Commission on Ecosystems Management (CEM)
 - Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy (CEESP)

Chairpersons appointed by the World Conservation Congress head the Commissions. Membership in the commissions is voluntary. Of these Commissions, four are particularly active in Asia, boasting a regional membership of some 1,000 persons. The four Commissions active in Asia are: SSC, WCPA, CEC and CEL.

Secretariat

A Director General appointed by the IUCN Council heads the Secretariat of IUCN.

In addition to its headquarters in Gland, Switzerland, the Secretariat has some 27 regional and country offices throughout the world. In Asia, the Secretariat has offices in Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Cambodia, Lao PDR and a regional co-ordination office

in Bangkok, Thailand.

A Regional Director for South and Southeast Asia, presently based in Pakistan, heads the programme in Asia. In line with the Union's policy of decentralisation, it is the intention of the Director General that a regional office for Asia should be established in the current triennium (1997-1999). Discussions are currently underway with a number of partners for this purpose. Relations with China, Japan and Korea are managed, for the time being, directly from Headquarters.

IUCN's Global Strategy

Since its founding in 1948, IUCN has sought to build its conservation action on a strong scientific basis. This has been reflected in IUCN's contributions to agreements of international importance, such as the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar), the World Heritage Convention and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) in the 1970s, and the Convention on Biological Diversity in the 1990s. The 1980 World Conservation Strategy, co-authored by IUCN with UNEP and WWF, introduced the concept of sustainable development to the international political community and helped bring environmental considerations into the mainstream of development concerns.

Conservation and ecologically sustainable development are now recognised as major challenges of today's society. No single organisation or country can respond adequately on its own. Co-operation is essential - at the

global, regional, national and local levels. IUCN, as a Union, exists as a co-operative effort of its members and partners to address these challenges.

Members at the IUCN 19th General Assembly in 1994 adopted the *Strategy for IUCN*. As well as a redefined Mission, the *Strategy* makes important statements on the need for integration of environment and development as a basis for sustainable development. In particular:

- *"the conservation goal cannot be approached directly; its attainment depends on the achievement of ways of living (that is, development) that are consistent with conservation";*
- *an integrated approach to conservation and development "recognises the human dimension, both in creating the principal threats to the global environment, and through humanity's dependence upon nature and natural resources. No organisation*

Conservation and ecologically sustainable development are now recognised as major challenges of today's society. No single organisation or country can respond adequately on its own. Co-operation is essential - at the global, regional, national and local levels.

can succeed in achieving nature conservation unless it recognises that conservation is itself a foundation for, but also must be advanced within, development"; and

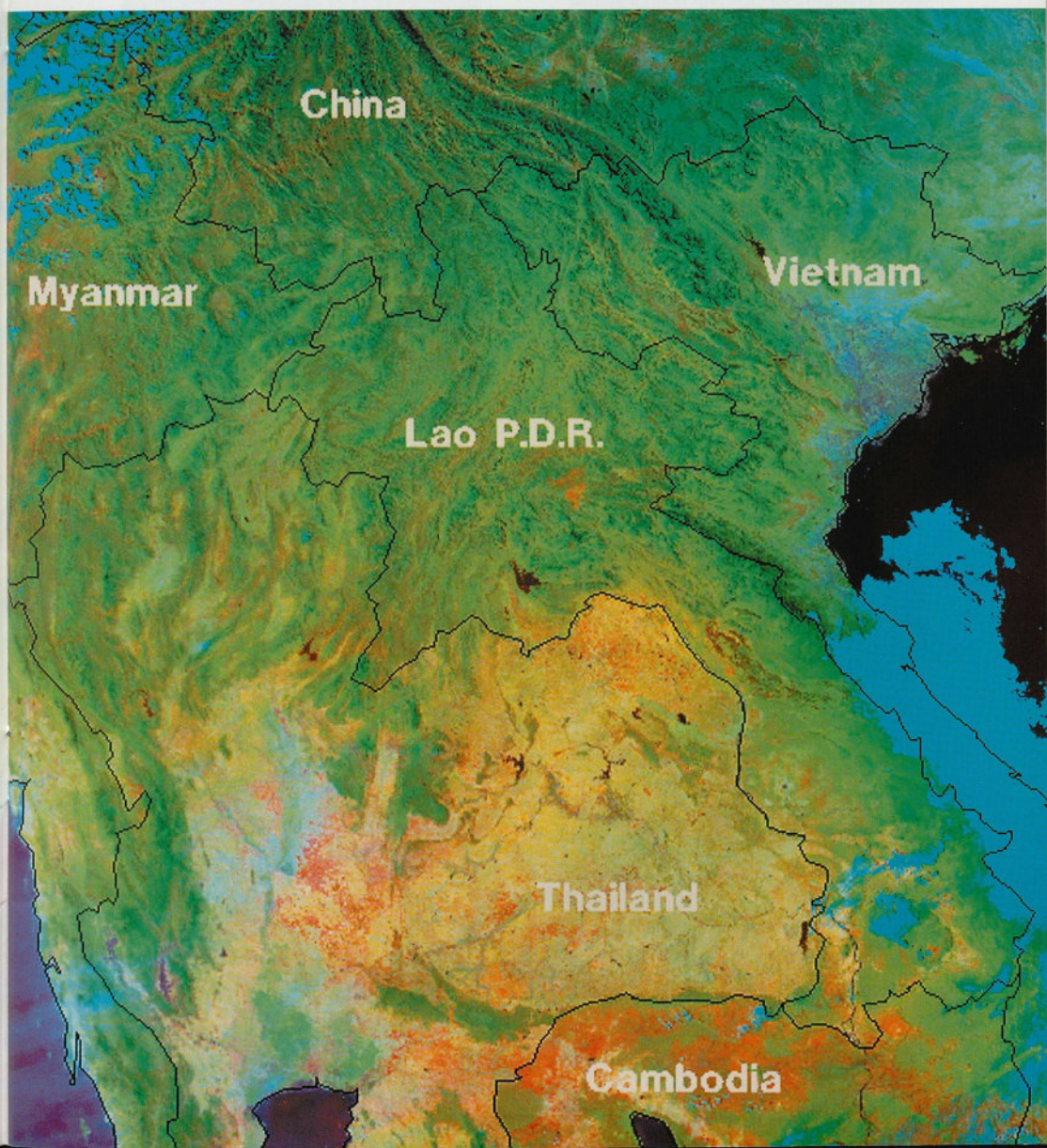
- *"a very complex, interlocking set of economic, ecological and social relationships is encompassed in the concept of sustainable development".*

- operation.
- Facilitate contacts on transboundary issues identified by the IUCN constituency at their national and regional fora.
 - Address conservation issues relating to protected areas, habitats and species in selected countries in the region.
 - Formulate and implement resource and habitat management interventions.
 - Integrate environmental planning and assessment, and environmental education and communication into national and local development objectives.
 - Encourage and advocate, at the appropriate level, sustainable use of natural resources under participatory planning and management regimes.

It is within this evolving global and regional framework that IUCN's programme in Lao PDR has been defined. In addition, IUCN is implementing region-wide projects that have specific components in Lao PDR.



IUCN in Lao PDR



History of IUCN Involvement in Lao PDR

The Lao Government has been a State Member of IUCN since 1969. In 1988 IUCN established its presence in Lao PDR by providing the conservation technical assistance to the Lao-Swedish Forestry Cooperation Programme (LSFP) funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). This key policy support for development of the national protected area system continues until the present, while IUCN's programme of activities has continued to expand beyond this ongoing assistance. IUCN also contributed to the development of Lao PDR's Tropical Forestry Action Plan in 1990 and assisted in preparation, through UNDP, of the country report to the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. In 1992, IUCN opened a project office and appointed a full time representative. In October 1996, at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Montreal, the Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs and the IUCN Director General signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Lao PDR and IUCN. This MoU formalised the recognition of an official IUCN representative office in Lao PDR.



Mr Soubanh Srithirath, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs (front left), and Mr David McDowell, IUCN Director General (front right), sign the MoU between the Government of Lao PDR and IUCN in Montreal, October 1996. Looking on are Mme Sengchanh Soukhaseum (standing, centre), then Director - Department of International Organisations, and Mr Khampheuan Kingsada (standing, left), Director General - Department of Forestry.

Key Conservation and Development Issues in Lao PDR

IUCN's assistance to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, while based on IUCN's global Mission and Strategy and its Regional Programme Objectives, also recognises the following national issues:

- The major challenges facing the Government result from Lao PDR's status as a "least-developed country" (LDC). These include: severe poverty and difficulty in meeting

basic human needs throughout the country; high population growth rate; limited developmental infrastructure; limited skilled human resource capacity; newly emerging policy and institutional mechanisms dealing with environmental and conservation issues; and the low level of environmental awareness at all levels.

- The importance, and limitations, of the natural resource base in providing development options to provide sustainable development. Specifically, the limited area of arable land available for agricultural development and dependence on exploitation of the primary natural resource base of forests, rivers and other wetlands.
- The high biological diversity and landscape conservation values in Lao PDR, many of which are of regional and global importance.
- The need to protect and manage critical habitats and species.
- The high cultural diversity of Lao PDR, the varying responses and attitudes of different cultures and societies to managing their environments, and the need to involve people in collaborative management of conservation areas and activities.
- Trade and consumption of natural resources, including the dependency of local people on these for basic subsistence - as well as recognition of the high values of, and demand for, wild animal and plant products in regional and global markets.
- International transboundary natural resource and ecosystem management issues which affect Lao PDR, which has borders

with five surrounding countries, and also shares the Mekong River system with those countries.

- The need for the Government to comply with the various international environmental treaties which it has ratified, especially the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Role for IUCN

Lao PDR is at a critical point in its national development, seeking to provide social and economic benefits for the Lao people. Much of the proposed development in Lao PDR is dependent on sustainable use of the country's natural resources and, on the basis of existing policy decisions, includes provision for forest and watershed conservation mechanisms. IUCN aims to assist the Government in developing and implementing its conservation and sustainable development policies. As a State Member of IUCN, the Lao Government can participate not only in the development of the global and regional programme of IUCN, but also in setting the priorities for assistance at the national level. In this way IUCN works as a partner of the Government to achieve common objectives. The contributions which IUCN can make, include:

- Providing an objective and sound scientific basis for dealing with the major conservation and development issues. For example, IUCN can apply the knowledge and experience gained

Much of the proposed development in Lao PDR is dependent on sustainable use of the country's natural resources.

through 50 years of implementing "best practices" throughout the world in nature conservation. This includes: planning and establishing protected areas; assessing the status and management requirements of threatened and endangered wildlife, and the ecosystems, that support them.

- Providing input in the area of social policy as it relates to conservation and natural resource management issues - bringing social scientists together with biologists and ecosystem managers to provide the kind of integrated approaches to environment and development which are essential if benefits are to be lasting.
- Working at all levels in society, from small communities to senior government level.
- Working with global partners at the national level. IUCN's agreements with UNDP, UNEP, The World Bank and the Global Environment Facility not only influence decisions made at the global level, but also enable effective working relationships at the national level for the benefit of the country.
- Providing input from the network of Commissions and their members.
- Working across boundaries. Globally, IUCN has considerable experience in bringing countries together to address regional conservation issues, such as establishing transfrontier national parks or assessing an ecological problem that affects a number of countries. In Southeast Asia, IUCN has offices and activities in Viet Nam, Cambodia and Thailand all of which have borders with Lao PDR.

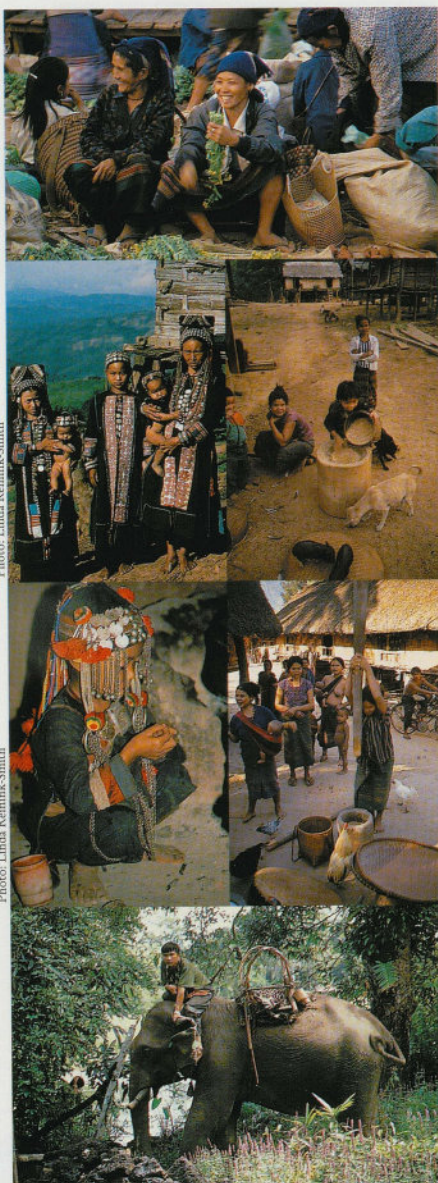
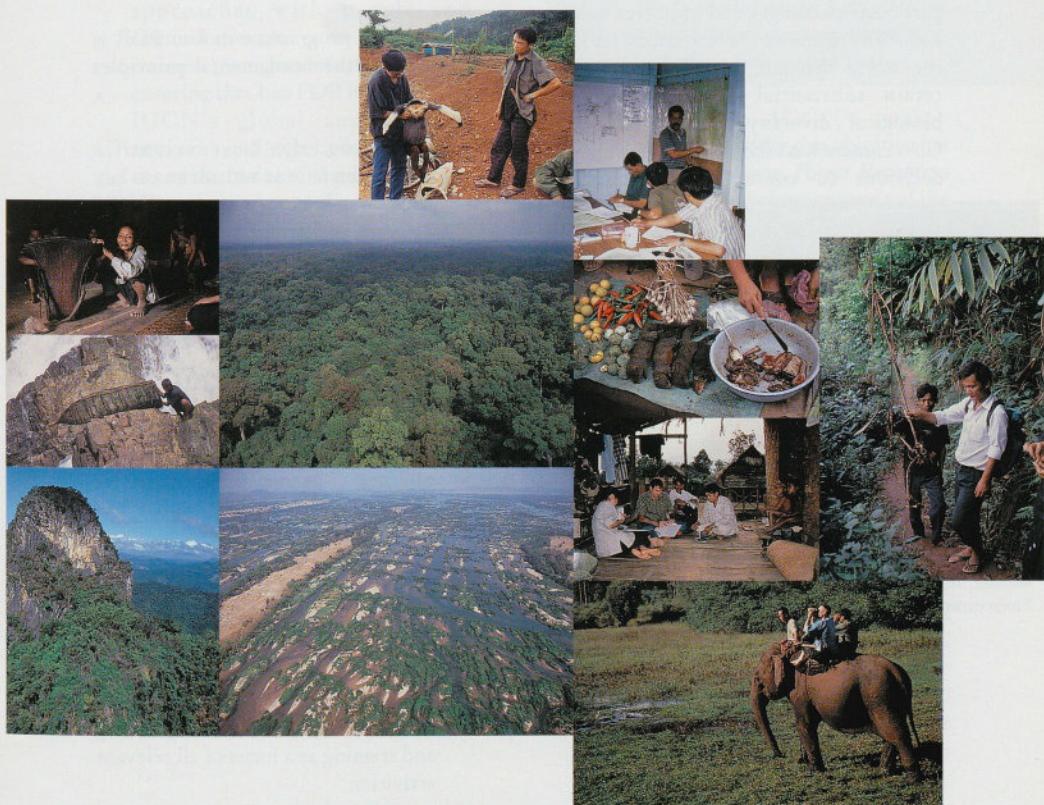


Photo: Linda Reinink-Smith

Photo: Linda Reinink-Smith

Lao PDR has one of the most ethnically diverse populations in SE Asia

IUCN's Programme in Lao PDR



Foundation of the Programme

The objectives of the IUCN Lao PDR Programme, while based on the triennial programme objectives for the Asia region, have been adapted to the particular needs of Lao PDR. The critical dependence of the country on its natural resource base for implementation of its development options provides the Government and IUCN, as a supporting partner, with particular challenges and opportunities. Lao PDR is one of the few countries in the world that still has the option to retain substantial elements of its biological diversity assets, and the Government has taken important policy decisions to conserve these assets.



IUCN engaged the Wildlife Conservation Society to do the wildlife survey components of the Nakai-Nam Theun Environmental and Social Management Plan Project in 1997

However, at the same time, if the country is to generate much-needed income to support human development initiatives then it must look to sustainable use of its natural capital, at least for the foreseeable future. This will require long term natural resource management and conservation assistance from the international community, and

IUCN is well placed to be the catalyst to ensure that this assistance is delivered effectively and consistently.

Lao PDR is one of the few countries in the world that still has the option to retain substantial elements of its biological diversity assets, and the Government has taken important policy decisions to conserve these assets.

The IUCN programme in Lao PDR is built upon the fundamental principles of:

- providing the best scientific recommendations and advice on key issues, and ensuring that IUCN projects and activities maintain the highest standards of quality and integrity;
- ensuring that IUCN projects are regularly monitored and evaluated, that counterpart agencies participate in this monitoring and evaluation, and that projects and activities are improved as a result of this process;
- offering objective, unbiased advice on matters which fall within IUCN's global range of knowledge and expertise, including not only nature conservation issues but also IUCN's expertise in environmental planning and management in urban and industrial environments - which are newly emerging issues in Lao PDR;
- including institutional strengthening and training as a focus of all relevant activities;
- providing long term support and commitment to achieving sustainable development and nature conservation at national, provincial

IUCN Programme Goal

To assist the Government and people of Lao PDR in achieving long term sustainable development through wise use and management of their natural resources and unique biological diversity.

- and local levels;
- implementing participatory planning and co-management approaches with people and communities in conservation and resource management activities;
- ensuring that Lao PDR benefits from IUCN's global and regional networks and experience, including transboundary and regional conservation issues;
- working with members and partners to achieve programme objectives for the benefit of Lao PDR (this has included: the Governments of Sweden, Germany and the Netherlands; Wildlife Conservation Society; UNDP/GEF; UNEP; and the World Bank).

Objectives and Activities

Objective 1

Assist the Government of Lao PDR in defining and implementing its policies on biological diversity conservation.

- Since 1988, IUCN's major contribution under this objective has been its long term *Forest Resources Conservation Subprogramme* of the Sida-funded Lao-Swedish Forestry Cooperation Programme within the Department of Forestry. The work has focussed on the development of a national system of protected areas, termed National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCAs). The Government of Lao PDR's determination to create a national protected area system, supported by IUCN technical assistance, led to the declaration (through Prime Ministerial Decree 164 in 1993), of 10% of the land area of the country for conservation. The work continues, and there are now 20 NBCAs covering about 12.5% of the country. Additionally, the technical assistance has provided input to the development of conservation regulations under the new Forestry Law established in 1996.
- In 1995, the Netherlands-funded *Biodiversity Conservation Project* was commenced, due for completion

in 2000. This project seeks to build institutional capacity, mainly by way of introducing sound management practices in two protected areas: Dong Hua Sao and Phou Xiang Thong NBCAs in Champassak and Saravane Provinces. It is hoped that the methodologies that are being developed can be applied in other NBCAs. A phased approach is being followed, from information gathering to problem analysis and problem solving, with participation by local people and authorities. The project has, among other things, carried out land registration, developed rules for use and management, and established "guardian villages". The project has also surveyed and secured funding for the proposed Dong Khanthung NBCA in the southwest of Champassak Province.

- Through the BMZ (Germany)-funded regional project, *Programme to Build Capacity to Support Biodiversity Conservation in Tropical Asia*, IUCN is implementing activities in 1998 to strengthen Lao PDR's capacity to comply with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In particular, it will provide support for development of a National Biodiversity Action Plan, as required under Article 6 (a) of the CBD. Our principal partners in the project are the Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management (CPAWM) and the Science, Technology and Environment Organisation (STENO).
- IUCN prepared issue papers on *Conservation of Forest Ecosystems and Land Use* as a contribution to

the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, which was adopted by the Government in 1991 and provides a framework for the future sustainable management of all of Lao PDR's forests.

- IUCN has also contributed significantly to the level of knowledge of biological diversity in Lao PDR. Through its own advisors, as well as by working with NGO members, such as the Wildlife Conservation Society, and IUCN Commission members, several wildlife surveys in remote areas of the country have been undertaken over the past 10 years (see Annex 2). Surveys of key endangered species have included: Saola; Kouprey and other wild cattle; and water birds such as the Giant Ibis. In 1994, the publication *Status of Wildlife in Lao PDR* was produced, which will be revised and updated in 1998.
- In 1995, IUCN and TRAFFIC SE Asia assisted CPAWM in convening a workshop on CITES, funded by AusAID. The purpose was to provide an understanding of the CITES for key sectors of Government which would be responsible for implementing the convention. Other workshops have included a discussion on IUCN's system planning and international categories for protected areas held in 1997.

Future Priorities and Directions: Protected Area System Development and Management and International Cooperation

In accordance with the policies and requests of the Government of Lao PDR, IUCN will continue to provide support

Protected Areas System Development: Providing Support at the National Level

This is an exciting time for the development of protected areas in Lao PDR, because in the last three years there has been a tremendous increase in donor support and activity in the field. Some 15 out of 20 legally gazetted NBCAs and another three proposed areas are now the subjects of some form of externally funded field project, with two further proposals under development. While there is agreement on the necessity to involve local communities in protected area management, projects vary greatly in scale and more subtly in their approach. They are also scattered throughout the country working with the provincial authorities, which in Lao PDR have direct responsibility for protected area management at the field level. The challenge at national level within the Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management (CPAWM) is to coordinate all this activity, draw out the lessons learned and build up the supporting institutional and legal framework.

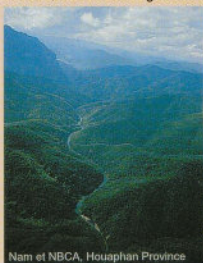
Take legal needs, for instance. The Forestry Law, which was passed by the National Assembly in November 1996, lays out a framework for all aspects of forest management and conservation, and for their administration, but only in general terms. We have now begun to draft *Regulations for Protected Area Management* that will translate these broad policies into a workable system that defines, for example, the powers of protected area heads and their staff, criteria for delegated management rights and responsibilities to villages, procedures for adjusting boundaries and so on.

Process here is just as important as the product. We have had meetings and workshops at several levels within Government and at village level to explore what these Regulations would mean in practice and to solicit feedback. Development of the legal basis for conservation is also being linked to the development of a basic *Manual on Protected Area Management* for field staff.

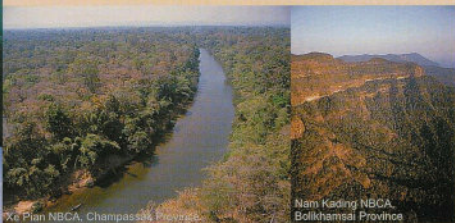
Cooperation with neighbouring countries is another area requiring coordination at central level. Transfrontier reserves are particularly important in a small country, like Lao PDR, because much of its biodiversity adjoins international borders. To date, a formal mechanism for cooperation has been established only with Viet Nam, with which Lao shares its longest border and some of its most important protected areas. Technical level meetings have also been held with Thailand and with Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture of Yunnan Province, China. In coming years these and other contacts will be form a basis for protocols on management of adjoining lands, wildlife trade control, staff exchanges ecotourism and so on.

Clive Marsh
IUCN

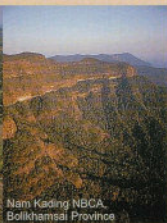
Senior Conservation and Protected Areas Planning Adviser



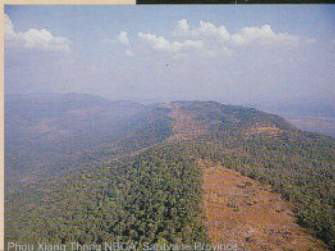
Nam et NBCA, Houaphan Province



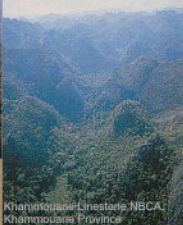
Xe Pann NBCA, Champassak Province



Nam Keoing NBCA, Bolikhamxai Province



Phou Xiang Theng NBCA, Saravane Province



Khanhouang Ecosystems NBCA, Khanhouang Province

on a broad spectrum of issues related to biodiversity conservation. This will include the ongoing support to develop an effective protected areas system - the heart of the country's strategy to conserve and sustainably use its biological resources. As well as support at the central level, where national coordination and policy development is essential, IUCN will continue to develop and implement specific protected area (NBCA) management projects, focused on capacity building and integrated approaches to conservation and

Transboundary cooperation is a critical element of any strategy to effectively conserve biodiversity in Lao PDR.

community development. Several existing and proposed NBCAs remain in need of management support. At the present time, DANIDA is assessing an IUCN proposal to implement a major integrated community development and conservation project for Nam Et and Phou Loei NBCAs in Houaphan Province. Also, this year IUCN will be assisting Champassak Province and Mounlapamok District undertake preparatory planning for the proposed Dong Khanthung NBCA on the Lao PDR-Thailand-Cambodia border, supported by Netherlands Government funding.

Transboundary cooperation is a critical element of any strategy to effectively conserve biodiversity in Lao PDR and IUCN will continue to assist the Government and other organisations in facilitating cooperation. In late 1998, the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas will convene its second Southeast Asia Regional Meeting in Pakse. The main theme of that meeting will be

international transboundary cooperation for biodiversity conservation, with the aim of developing suitable approaches for SE Asian countries. Cooperation will continue with the programmes and projects of other organisations that are also working towards this goal, such as the UNDP/WWF Subregional Biodiversity Project. IUCN will also continue to provide support to the Government for implementation of its obligations under international treaties. This will include cooperation with UNDP and DANIDA for the preparation of a Biodiversity Action Plan as required under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Support will also



Lao officials from the central and provincial levels of Government participating in the first transboundary biodiversity meeting in Viet Nam in January 1997, supported by the UNDP/WWF Subregional Biodiversity Project.

Dong Khanthung: A Prime Candidate for Addition to the National Protected Area System

A Special Area

Mounlapamok District in Champassak Province, in the extreme southwest of Lao PDR bordering Cambodia and Thailand, carried a question mark in the 1995 status report on national protected areas system planning. It was one of the few locations yet to be examined for its potential to become a National Biodiversity Conservation Area. The area is contiguous with Phou Jong Naoj National Park in Thailand. It is named after Dong Khanthung, the local name of an extensive forest in the district.

As a result of surveys carried out since 1996 by the Biodiversity Conservation Project, Wildlife Conservation Society and the International Crane Foundation we now know much more about the area. All surveys confirmed the presence of key mammal and bird species. Notable features of Dong Khanthung are its wetlands, seasonally flooded forests and scattered pools. Many provide suitable feeding sites for large water birds, such as two species of Ibis, Woolly-necked Stork, Lesser Adjutant and White-winged Duck.

Forests in the area range from tall evergreen gallery forest to mixed deciduous and dry dipterocarp forest. Dong Khanthung supports substantial populations of Elephant and Banteng, as well as most of the other mammals one would expect to find. Credible village reports indicate the presence of a remnant population of Eld's Deer, while previous reports of Kouprey and wild water buffalo could not be confirmed.

Integrating Conservation and Development

Dong Khanthung is sparsely populated, with only eight villages in an area of some 1,500 km². Because of its remoteness and its location along the international border, Mounlapamok District has the status of a Special Development Zone. Private companies and State development corporations have expressed their interest to invest in agriculture. However, apart from 30 kilometres of dirt road, no major infrastructure development has yet taken place and no land has as yet been committed to agro-business or tree plantations. This enables action to be taken to examine planning options for the area, and Dong Khanthung provides favourable conditions for integrating conservation and development. Towards this end, the Netherlands Government has provided \$30,000 from its local environment fund to cover the costs of gathering essential information as well as establishing a basic conservation capacity at Mounlapamok District. The IUCN Biodiversity Conservation and NTFP projects, and the Wildlife Conservation Society, are the district's partners in implementing the project, which consists of three major activities:

- ❖ establish a conservation unit within the District Agriculture and Forestry Office and support small scale development work directly related to conservation objectives;
- ❖ obtain data on the presence and distribution of key wildlife species and acute threats to their survival;
- ❖ obtain details of land use and livelihood of the villages and their feelings towards establishing a protected area in their "backyard".

Information obtained will allow us to pinpoint locations and activities where conflicts between development plans and conservation interests arise. Once the nature and extent of a potential conflict are clear, it can be discussed. We hope that development plans and conservation needs can be compatible, and that the current small project will lay the foundations for establishing another nationally and internationally significant biodiversity conservation area in Lao PDR.

Klaus Berk Müller
IUCN Project Advisor - Biodiversity Conservation Project



The swamp forest of Nong Saming is a place for the spirits - a permanent wetland free of extractive use
(K. Berk Müller)

be provided for Government accession to relevant conventions, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. IUCN will continue to assist the Government in the coordination of donor activities relating to biodiversity conservation, and to work closely with its international members such as the Wildlife Conservation Society.

Objective 2

Assist the Government of Lao PDR in achieving the integration of conservation and environmental management with national and local development.

- IUCN is providing technical assistance to the Lao Government and the World Bank to develop effective management of the Nakai-Nam Theun (NNT) NBCA, which provides the catchment for the proposed Nam Theun 2 hydropower dam. By working with the Government, as an IUCN State Member, and the World Bank, an IUCN partner (formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding in 1995), IUCN aims to achieve "best practice" in the integration of conservation and environmental management, and community needs, into a major national development initiative. In 1997, IUCN implemented Phase 1 of the project, which produced an *Environmental and Social Management Plan for Nakai-Nam Theun Catchment and Corridor Areas*. IUCN's contractual arrangements were with the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, and day-

to-day interactions were with STENO, Department of Forestry, provincial and district staff, and others. The NNT NBCA is probably the most important protected area in Lao PDR, and one of the most important biodiversity areas in SE Asia, if not the world. As well as conserving a diversity of tropical forest types along the Sai Phou Louang Range (Annamite Range), the area is habitat for hundreds of bird and mammal species, including newly discovered genus and species of large mammals such as the Saola and Giant-Antlered Muntjac. Culturally, the area is one of the richest in Lao PDR and SE Asia but also one of the poorest. Three main management goals have been recommended: making the area effective in conserving biodiversity; bringing sustainable and equitable livelihoods to communities; and protecting natural watershed values.

- In 1997, IUCN implemented the Sida-funded *Road Sector Environmental Assessment and Training Project* for the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction and the Khammouane Provincial Government. The one month project achieved a number of outputs, including training of MCTPC's Environment Unit staff, an EIA document for the proposed Panam-Boulapha Road in Khammouane Province and an *EIA Manual for Road Projects in Lao PDR*.
- In 1997, IUCN also prepared a *Preliminary Environmental Inventory of Khammouane Province* through funding provided by Sida and initiated as part of the Lao-

Nakai Nam Theun: A Test Case for Integration of Conservation and Development Objectives

The Nakai-Nam Theun National Biodiversity Conservation Area is the largest protected area in Lao PDR, currently over 3000 km² in area and more than 4000 km² when the proposed northern extension is added. In many ways, the NNT area symbolizes the challenges facing biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in Lao PDR. It is an area of outstanding biodiversity conservation significance and natural beauty along the Sai Phou Louang (Annamite) Range bordering Viet Nam in Khammouane and Bolikhamsai Provinces. The area's montane forests provide habitat for most of the mainland SE Asian fauna, including tiger and elephant. But the area is now best known for the discovery of one new large mammal genus, the Saola, and a new species of Muntjak deer in the past four years. In addition, new species of small mammals have been discovered and the known range of others extended. The NNT NBCA is also an area of remarkable ethnic diversity, with more than 20 languages identified. However, many of the people are impoverished and face annual food shortages.

Increasing pressure is being placed upon the conservation values of the area through shifting cultivation, gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and hunting. In the latter case, the illegal trade in high value wildlife and NTFPs is increasing, especially across international borders. For example, the shell of the Golden Turtle is reputed to be selling for US\$700/kg. There is an urgent need for effective management action that addresses not only biological conservation but also the human development needs of the resident communities.

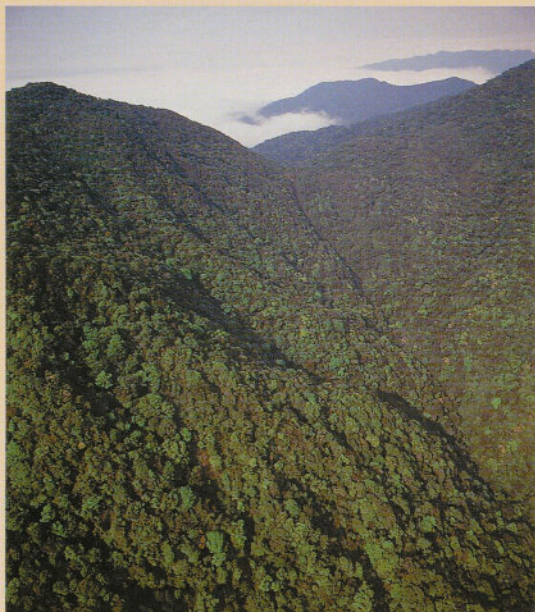
The NNT NBCA is also playing a role in the Government's national development plans, specifically with respect to using the catchment waters for hydropower development. In March, the Theun-Hinboun Dam was commissioned and planning has been underway for a number of years for the Nam Theun 2 (NT2) Dam. In the case of NT2, IUCN was approached by the World Bank in 1995 to undertake management planning studies of the NBCA to assist in the Bank's deliberations on providing international loan guarantees for the development consortium. Before accepting, IUCN undertook an independent review of the relationship between conservation management and the proposed NT2 dam and was satisfied that provided commitments were fulfilled by the various parties involved that the conservation area and the people living in it could benefit from the proposed development.



**Top left, Giant-Antlered
Muntjak; top right,
Saola; bottom, Clouded
Leopard**

(W.Robichaud/WCS)

Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA



The underlying principle for IUCN was that dams are not necessarily incompatible with conservation goals. Of course, the fact is that often dams are incompatible with these goals and there are many examples where environmental degradation and social disruption has been unacceptable. However, in the case of NT2, the adherence to the standards and procedures established by the World Bank in the planning and assessment of the dam, and the commitment of the Government and the development consortium to channeling hydroelectric revenue back into management of the conservation area, provide the opportunity to develop a positive link between major infrastructure development, environmental conservation and social benefits. In 1997, IUCN prepared the *Environmental and Social Management Plan* for NNT for the Government and in 1998 will commence implementation of "on-ground" community development and conservation management activities.

Nakai-Nam Theun is, many ways, one of the most important test cases for integration of conservation and development objectives not only in Lao PDR but also in SE Asia. Its success will depend on the implementation of commitments by all players.

Stuart Chape
IUCN Country Representative

Swedish Road Sector Project managed by the Ministry of Communication, Transport, Post and Construction (MCTPC). Preparation of the inventory has highlighted the importance of environmental and social analysis as a basis for long term development planning. Unfortunately, it also identified the current lack of environmental data available for development planning in Lao PDR.

Future Priorities and Directions: Integrating Conservation and Development

Integrating conservation and environmental management with national development plans and activities is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development. IUCN will continue to assist the Government, donors and

Integrating conservation and environmental management with national development plans and activities is fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development.

partners in this integration by providing technical input to sectoral and cross-



Khammouane Province contains some of the most outstanding and varied landscapes and biodiversity in Lao PDR

sectoral development planning. A new phase of activities has commenced for management of the Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA. This will not only start urgent "on-ground" conservation management and community development activities, but will also provide additional support for the Government and World Bank decision-making processes in relation to the proposed Nam Theun 2 hydropower dam. The issues associated with management of the Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA and the proposed construction of the Nam Theun 2 dam highlight the need for an integrated approach to environment and development throughout the country - not only this particular location and proposal.

There is a pressing need for regional and provincial level environmental planning as part of an overall strategic development planning process. An integrated and cross-sectoral approach is essential if economic and environmental benefits are going to be sustained. Comprehensive environmental evaluations (survey, data collection and analysis) and guidelines need to be prepared to provide the basis for such planning. The preliminary inventory work done for Khammouane Province should be continued and undertaken for other provinces in the country. The information gained will not only contribute significantly to national and provincial development planning but also to the support programmes of donors.

Objective 3

Assist the Lao Government and people in the management and sustainable use of critical habitats.

- Between 1989-1991, IUCN

implemented the Sida-funded *Shifting Cultivation Project*. The overall objective of the project was to contribute to the stabilisation of shifting cultivation practices in Lao PDR. The specific objectives included determining the extent of shifting cultivation in the north of the country, and to evaluate its impact on forest resources, agricultural potential and watershed protection. The project developed and tested potential sustainable agricultural and forestry systems for upland areas in the seven northern provinces of Lao PDR.

- In 1995, the Netherlands-funded project *Sustainable Use of Non-Timber Forest Products* (NTFPs) was commenced, scheduled for completion in 2000. The goal of the project is to conserve forest biodiversity by promoting sustainable economic exploitation of NTFPs at the community and provincial levels. "Economic exploitation" in this context is defined as including the production, collection, processing, distribution and consumption of goods for subsistence, barter and income generation purposes. The project aims to develop effective models for forest conservation and community development through sustainable use of NTFPs. It applies best practice to the development and implementation of agreements with local people for pilot NTFP projects, and has refined the implementation of PRA and RRA to achieve this objective. The head office of the project is in the Department of Forestry, Vientiane. Pilot activities are being designed and implemented

NTFPs: a Key Factor in the Livelihood of Rural Communities

The NTFP Project supports sustainable use of Non-Timber Forest Products. What do IUCN staff and their Lao counterparts find important and challenging about working with NTFPs? **Sounthone Ketphanh**, National Project Coordinator, working in the Department of Forestry, says: "What I like about NTFPs is that they are so important in the daily life of Lao people. We eat so many products from the forest: bamboo shoots, fish, vegetable leaves, even wildlife. The problem now for Lao people is that some of these products are getting depleted. That is why we are setting up trials to determine sustainable harvesting regimes. I have just returned from a trip to Oudomxai. The women of Ban Nam Peng have set up a trial on harvesting of edible "bitter" bamboo shoots. They depend very much on these bamboo-shoots to get income and also to feed their families."

Rachel Dechaineux, IUCN Field Advisor in Salavan Province, adds: "The dependency on NTFPs for income closely related to food scarcity. We work closely with village groups around the Xe Bang Nouan Protected Area. Last year, rice yields were disastrous because of poor rainfall. Many poor families who ran out of rice got into debt to buy rice. They can only pay back these debts by extracting products from the protected area, e.g. damar resins and pandan leaves to weave mats. We assisted these villagers in setting up rice banks. We found that this not only reduced indebtedness, but there was also a direct reduction of illegal hunting, logging and over-harvesting of NTFPs."

"What intrigues me is that the Lao PDR exports large amounts of NTFPs to surrounding countries every year", says **Joost Foppes**, IUCN Project Advisor to the NTFP Project: "But Lao PDR exports only low-value raw products: the potential for increased income from processing should be enormous. Increased income from these forest products could be a very good incentive for local communities to safeguard their forest resources. A real constraint in identifying feasible processing opportunities is the lack of marketing information in the NTFP subsector. We hope to overcome this difficulty by networking with other NTFP projects in the region through IUCN's NTFP network."

"For people to take real interest in the conservation of forests, they need to be sure of their access rights", says **Viloune Soydara**, IUCN Field Advisor in Oudomxai: "We put a lot of effort into assisting communities to divide their land into land use categories. For each type of village and forest land, specific use rules are then discussed and agreed upon by the village community. This is a vital first step towards sustainable village forest management. NTFPs were a key element in all these decisions".

Participation
of village
communities is a
key component of
the NTFP Project
(Joost Foppes)





Large areas of northern Lao PDR have been deforested as a result of intensive shifting cultivation

in Oudomxai, Saravane and Champassak Provinces, where project Field Advisors are based full time. The project also aims to provide credible and useful information and analysis to Government policy makers on NTFPs and the issues associated with their use.

- In 1996, IUCN produced (with funding provided by UNEP) a *Wetlands Inventory of Lao PDR*. This was the result of two years work to identify and survey the major

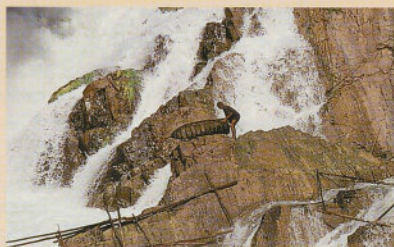
wetlands of Lao PDR. Wetlands play a very important role in the livelihood of Lao people, and a large proportion of the population is dependent on wetland products for subsistence and income generation. The inventory provides a general overview of wetlands in Lao PDR, including discussions of some of the major benefits that they provide. Significant issues are examined which threaten the survival or sustainable use of some wetland areas. The major component of the

Wetlands: A National Ecological and Economic Resource

Lao PDR is intimately associated with one of the world's major wetlands the Mekong River system. The Mekong runs for some 1,700 km through Lao PDR, forming much of the country's western border with Thailand and Myanmar. There are 14 major tributaries in Lao PDR, as well as hundreds of smaller streams. As well as the Mekong River, there are a number of wetland areas which are of international significance, including the Xe Piane-Xe Khampho-Bung Nong Ngom complex, and the Khone Falls-Siphandon cataracts.

The major national significance of the country's wetlands probably lies in their role as the most important source of protein for the majority of the population. In most rural parts of the lowland plains, as well as in much of the uplands, fish and other aquatic animals provide between 70-90% of the animal protein in people's diet. For many of these people, not yet or barely in the cash economy, there is no affordable substitute source of protein.

Unlike Thailand, Lao PDR still contains large areas of natural and near natural vegetation and its associated wildlife. Unfortunately, this is not necessarily true of wetland areas. Large parts of the lowland wetlands are among the most densely settled areas in the country and unsustainable hunting and habitat modification is widespread. The hunting includes migratory waterbirds, and also for the purposes of wildlife trade. Unless wildlife management controls are implemented and enforced urgently in key areas losses may be irreversible. Nevertheless, in some wetland areas there are still populations of wildlife, often as a result of traditional controls or management by local people.



Gordon Claridge
An Inventory of Wetlands of the Lao PDR

Traditional fishing techniques used at Khone Falls



Three species of Egret, as well as a number of other bird species, have been identified at this locally protected wetland 60 km from Vientiane.

inventory is a series of descriptions of individual wetlands or wetland groups. Previously, very little information was available on the

The forests and wetlands of Lao PDR are more than raw materials of timber and water, they are complex ecosystems that provide a wide range of benefits to local people and the national economy.

wetlands of Lao PDR. The 1989 *Directory of Asian Wetlands* only listed four wetlands sites, whereas the inventory lists over 30 sites. The intention is to prepare a strategic National Wetlands Action Plan to build upon the inventory work.

- In 1997, IUCN produced the publication *Community Fisheries in Lao PDR: A Survey of Techniques and Issues*. The information presented in this publication on traditional fishing techniques was gathered during the preparation of the wetlands inventory. Traditional knowledge and technology is often the basis for sustainable resource use, and loss of this knowledge or use of alternative "modern" techniques (such as large scale netting, use of poisons or explosives) can lead to depletion of wetland resources.
- In 1998, IUCN will start implementation of the regional GEF-funded *Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme*. The 1998 phase is supported through a GEF PDF Block B grant. The purpose is to develop a full GEF Project. Brief for conservation and sustainable management and use of wetland biodiversity in the Mekong

River Basin, with an expected value of US\$20 million. The project will involve Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam, and will have four interlinked types of activity. Specifically, models of participatory management and sustainable use of wetlands in specific sites of high biodiversity value; policy development and capacity building at national and regional levels; and support to the Mekong River Commission in developing a multilateral framework for a strategic wetlands action plan; and project specific transboundary environmental impact assessment. Both at the regional and national levels the Mekong River is a vital resource, the effective management of which will determine the sustainable livelihood of millions of people. IUCN partners in the Lao PDR component are: Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management; Lao National Mekong Committee and STENO.

- In 1998, IUCN has been asked by the Asian Development Bank to assist the ADB's Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Working Group on Environment (WGE) to coordinate the 30 month Regional Environmental Technical Assistance (RETA) *Poverty Reduction and Environmental Improvements in Remote Watersheds of the GMS*. The RETA is co-funded by the ADB and the Government of Finland, also an IUCN State Member. The GMS comprises Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China. Project

Gun Handovers: an Outcome of Rules Formation and a Symbolic Step Towards Participatory Management

Early on in management implementation the Biodiversity Conservation Project had sought local people's opinion on rules and regulations for the protected areas in their backyard. The idea was to find out what kind of restrictions people would accept and support and those they would not. A list of proposed rules was circulated first because we had noted in previous trials that free ranging discussions yielded few tangible responses. Some time after receiving the list, representatives from villages sharing the same use area would meet and come to a consensus decision with respect to each of the proposed rules, the options being: *adopt*; *do not adopt*; or *adopt with adjustments*. A fourth option was to *suggest a new rule*. The results from such village cluster meetings allowed us to evaluate people's views on specific restrictions and draft a rules catalogue accordingly.

We were surprised to learn that the majority of the people were in favour of outlawing guns entirely. Ban Saming, in Dong Hua Sao NBCA, was the first village to take the logical next step. A celebration marked the day when 21 muzzleloaders were handed over to the district chief. The authorities, in turn, acknowledged the gesture as one in support of Government policy. Buddhist monks administered blessings to those who renounced the use of firearms to kill wildlife. The project reciprocated by donating sheets of corrugated iron and several kilos of nails for the extension of the village school. Other villages have since followed Saming's example.

Mr Padith Vannalathsamee
Field Director
Dong Hua Sao NBCA

**Guns handed over to
officials at Saming
village (Klaus
Berkmüller)**



coordination will be based in Vientiane and implemented with STENO, the Lao Government WGE member. The RETA has two main objectives. Firstly, to assist the GMS governments to develop a framework of mutually consistent policies, strategies, standards and guidelines to deal with deforestation and environmental degradation. Secondly, to prepare investment projects to address the interrelated issues of poverty reduction and environmental protection in communities in three remote watershed areas of the GMS.

Future Priorities and Directions: Cooperation for Sustainable Development

How effectively governments and local people manage and use natural resources will determine whether or not sustainable development can be achieved. The forests and wetlands of Lao PDR are more than raw materials of timber and water, they are complex ecosystems that provide a wide range of benefits to local people and the national economy. Support needs to be provided to develop the key linkages between national level natural resource policies

Environmental education and awareness is the key for long term community commitment to conservation.

and provincial and local level understanding and mechanisms for compliance. IUCN will continue to build upon its current work in collaboration with national and provincial Governments and local communities. There is scope for further activities in the development of the

potential of NTFPs in other areas of Lao PDR and with other products, in particular their development for alternative income generation as part of poverty reduction strategies. Donor support will be sought for a Wetlands Action Plan, as an essential follow-up to the inventory work that was completed in 1996. This will complement the regional GEF project, which will be undertaken in 1998. The IUCN global and regional programmes for forests, species and wetlands will continue to provide benefits to Lao PDR through the local office.

Objective 4

Assist the Government in developing environmental education, communication and awareness programmes and activities.

- In 1992, in collaboration with WWF-UK, IUCN undertook an initial scoping study that identified opportunities for increasing public awareness of environmental issues and for environmental inputs to formal and non-formal education. An *Environmental Resources Centre* was set up in the IUCN Office in Vientiane, which provides public access to printed materials and videos. Currently students and teachers are the main users of the Centre. The IUCN Programme has also produced a number of reports and publications over the last 10 years and the principal documents are listed in Annex 2.
- In 1997, IUCN assisted CPAWM and the Wildlife Conservation Society in implementing the

Field Training: An Essential Component of Protected Area Management

There are three major aspects of protected area management: wildlife, habitats and the people who use them. To formulate an effective management approach for a protected area, it is essential to obtain data on these three major aspects. Hence, training of protected area staff in data collection techniques is an important step towards realistic, long-term protection and conservation of Lao PDR's rich and diverse National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCAs).

To achieve these goals, training was carried out both in the classroom and in the field over a period of several weeks in a number of NBCAs during 1997-98. Prolonged and repeated on-the-job field training is possibly the only way to equip protected area staff with the basic skills and experience required to carry out surveys and patrols. So far, training has focussed on developing their skills in large mammal surveys, human/habitat impact assessments, developing patrolling routes and monitoring.

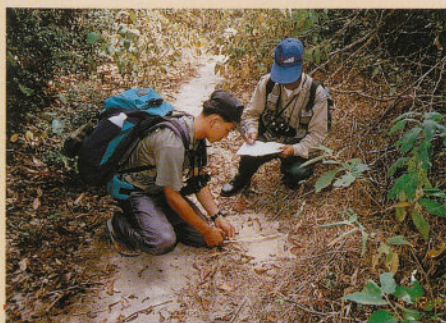
Specific training topics comprised the basics of conservation biology, map reading and compass use, wildlife and human/habitat impact observations, note taking and recording techniques, camping and field equipment, data compilation and report-writing, planning and monitoring. The training was so designed to enable the field staff to plan their field trip efficiently, to make correct observations and record these accurately, and to clearly report their findings in a simple but effective format.

Capacity building was not only limited to the NBCA staff but also extended to include other agencies with interests and involvement in the NBCA. These included staff of the Department of Forestry's Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management (CPAWM), District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFO), the military, and village-based forestry volunteers.

Ramesh Boonratana
IUCN Protected Areas Management Consultant



Mr Padith Vannalathsamee, Director of Dong Hua Sao NBCA, measuring Gaur tracks at a mineral lick (Ramesh Boonratana)



Staff of Phou Xiang Thong NBCA recording a tiger scrape along a major animal trail (Ramesh Boonratana)

inaugural *National Wildlife Day*. This assistance included producing a poster for distribution to schools and sponsoring a thematic painting/drawing competition by schoolchildren.

- Most IUCN projects have some component of education, communication and awareness raising. Effective communication with local people is a critical part of all IUCN field projects. Over the years, a number of Lao people have also benefited from IUCN sponsorship to seminars, workshops and short courses on a range of natural resource and conservation topics.

Future Priorities and Directions: Promoting Conservation Education and Awareness

Environmental education and awareness, from curriculum development for schools to the use of various media for widespread awareness raising, is the key for long term community commitment to conservation. IUCN will continue to work with its existing partners in Government to assist in the preparation and dissemination educational and awareness materials, especially those linked to special events. However, an effective programme needs to do more than support annual occasions and closer linkages need to be developed with the formal education sector, from primary through to tertiary. IUCN will be seeking dialogue with this sector and encouraging interaction between Lao education specialists and the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication. Further opportunities for formal and informal training of Lao

nationals will be provided, both through specific project activities and also through other mechanisms. At the technical level, IUCN will aim to continue to produce and distribute reports and discussion papers generated by its projects and other activities. An increased emphasis is required in producing this material in the Lao language.

National Wildlife Day: An Important Step in Raising Awareness of Conservation

In July 1997, the Government of Lao PDR celebrated inaugural National Wildlife Day. IUCN contributed to this event by organising a school drawing competition within Vientiane Prefecture. The drawings were put on display for a week following which cash prizes were given to the winners and other participants ranging from 3,000-70,000 Kip. The competition showed that children are very enthusiastic and curious about conservation ideas. They related three key issues to the impoverishment of wildlife: deforestation, hunting pressures and wildlife trade. Such understanding needs to be widely promoted through formal and informal education. While rules and regulations are crucial tools, environmental education to promote conservation attitudes towards a more sustainable future is essential. We need to create the understanding in seeing wildlife and other natural resources not only in terms of their direct use values, but also in terms of the indirect uses and the co-existence between people and the natural environment.

Additionally, IUCN also produced a large poster, in collaboration with the Centre for Protected Areas and Watershed Management and the Wildlife Conservation Society, to celebrate the inaugural National Wildlife Day. The poster reproduced a painting of Lao wildlife by locally based artist Afra O'Shea, with the slogan: "our national wildlife heritage - let's protect them and let them live in nature". Three thousand copies were reproduced for distribution throughout the country.

Xiong Tsechalicha
IUCN Programme Officer



Drawing by
Vongsadeth
Phommavong, Grade
11 of Don Noun High
School, Vientiane
Prefecture, which won
first prize in the 1997
competition



Mr Southchai Vongsaly,
Deputy Director of Xe Sap
NBCA, handing National
Wildlife Day posters to Ban
Tahuak villagers, Ta-Oy
District, Saravane Province.

Looking to the future



Over the last 50 years IUCN has evolved and adapted as the world's knowledge base of conservation and environmental management has expanded, and as global conservation issues have grown. In 1948, concepts such as sustainable use, participatory management, environmental accounting, positive links between business and the environment, environmental law, and biological diversity did not exist or were little known. Since then, the world population has grown enormously, demands on natural resources are exceeding availability, and the physical limitations of our planet have become poignantly clear. We are now very much aware of the dependency of human survival on achieving sustainable development, and that conservation of the diversity of life with which we share the planet is closely linked to our survival.

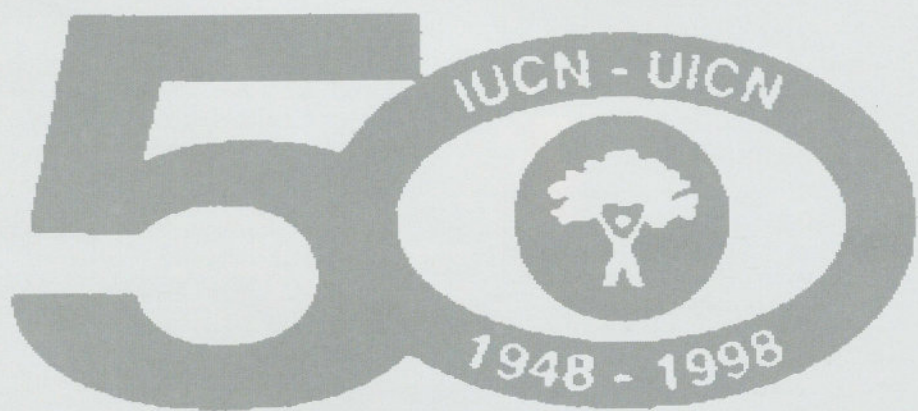
In Lao PDR, there are clear examples of this critical linkage. The forests, which still cover about 40% of this mountainous country, provide basic commodities for rural communities, especially in rice deficit years when the forest becomes a buffer against hunger. Similarly, the country's numerous rivers and other wetlands provide protein and edible plants. In terms of future development, the forests are protecting vital watersheds for sustainable use of water resources for drinking, agriculture, fisheries, and energy supply, and they provide a genetic pool of valuable timber species and non-timber forest products. As time goes by, the value of this natural wealth will increase exponentially. Unfortunately, as evidenced in many countries, sustainable development is not easily achieved especially when basic human development needs are as pressing as they are in Lao PDR. Nevertheless, in recent years, the Government has taken important steps in terms of policy development and

implementation with regard to conservation of natural resources and environmental management - the foundations of sustainable development. In view of the scale of the sustainable development challenges facing Lao PDR, IUCN recognises that international support for Government policies is likely to be required for some time. As a partner of the Government, IUCN can provide that support as long as it is required.

IUCN is a learning organisation, and will continue to evolve and adapt its approaches and methods for achieving the most effective implementation of services to Lao PDR. Globally, IUCN is developing a monitoring and evaluation system. The aim is to develop an evaluative culture within the Union's Secretariat and eventually to extend it to its members and partners. In this process, IUCN will increase its capacity to learn from experience through more focused and reflective monitoring and evaluation of its activities, projects, programmes and

Sustainable development is not easily achieved especially when basic human development needs are as pressing as they are in Lao PDR.

policies. The benefit to Lao PDR will be more effective and efficient support. Monitoring and evaluation processes are already being applied to current projects such as the Sustainable Use of NTFPs Project. This project and the ongoing technical support to assist the Government implement its conservation policies are regarded as important models within the global IUCN community. Through its future assistance, IUCN intends to further develop and refine its support to meet the needs of the people and Government of Lao PDR.



Annexes



ANNEX 1: IUCN PROJECTS AND PARTNERS IN LAO PDR (at March 1998)

National Projects	Main National Partners	Donor	Other Partners	Value (US\$)	Time Frame
<i>Forest Resources Conservation Project – LSFP</i>	CPAWM - Department of Forestry Provinces and Districts	Sida (Sweden)	Population & Development International	500,000 (Phase IV: 1996-2000)	1988-2000
<i>Sustainable Use of Non-Timber Forest Products</i>	Department of Forestry, Oudomxai, Saravane and Champassak Provinces, Districts	DGIS (Netherlands)		3 million	1995-2000
<i>Biodiversity Conservation: Dong Hua Sao and Phou Xiang Thong NBCAs</i>	Saravane and Champassak Provinces and Districts CPAWM – Department of Forestry	DGIS (Netherlands)	German AgroAction Population & Development International	1.1 million	1995-2000
<i>Integrating Conservation and Development in the Dong Kanthung Region of Mounlapamok District</i> (Project administered on behalf of District Government)	Mounlapamok District and Champassak Province	Netherlands Embassy – Bangkok		30,000	1998
<i>Protected Areas Management Manual</i>	CPAWM	Netherlands Embassy – Bangkok		15,000	1998
<i>Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA and Catchment Management</i>	Ministry of Industry & Handicrafts STENO CPAWM – Department of Forestry Khammouane and Bolikhamsai Provinces	Phase 1 (1997): GoL Phase 2 (1998): WB PHRD Grant	World Bank Wildlife Conservation Society	540,000 (Phase 1) 435,000 (Phase 2)	1997 (Phase 1) 1998 (Phase 2)
<i>Road Sector Environmental Assessment and Training Project</i>	Ministry of Industry & Handicrafts Khammouane Province	Sida (Sweden)		23,000	10/97
<i>Environmental Inventory of Khammouane Province</i>	Khammouane Province Ministry of Industry & Handicrafts	Sida (Sweden)		38,000	11/97

National Projects	Main National Partners	Donor	Other Partners	Value (US\$)	Time Frame
<i>Inventory of Wetlands of Lao PDR</i>	CPAWM – Department of Forestry	UNEP Netherlands Embassy – Bangkok IUCN		60,000	1993-96
<i>Shifting Cultivation Project - LSFP</i>	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry	Sida (Sweden)		1.3 million	1989-91
Regional Projects	Main National Partners	Donor	Other Partners	Value (US\$)	Time Frame
<i>Mekong River Basin Wetland Biodiversity Conservation & Sustainable Use Programme</i> (coordinated by IUCN Bangkok)	CPAWM – Department of Forestry Lao National Mekong Committee STENO	GEF PDF Block B Grant (+ bilateral co-financing)	UNDP MRC	452,600 (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, Viet Nam)	1998
<i>Programme to Build Capacity to Support Biodiversity Conservation in Tropical Asia</i> (coordinated by IUCN Sri Lanka)	CPAWM – Department of Forestry STENO	BMZ (Germany)		1.2 million (approx.) 50,000: Lao PDR	1998
<i>Poverty Reduction and Environmental Improvements in Remote Watersheds of the GMS</i> (ADB RETA coordinated by STENO and IUCN Lao PDR)	STENO	FINNIDA (Finland) Asian Development Bank		3.8 million (IUCN coord. assistance: approx. 150,000)	1998-2001

ANNEX 2: IUCN PROJECT & PROGRAMME PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS FOR LAO PDR

Title	Author/s	Year
Forest Resources Conservation Project		
<i>The Protected Area System in Lao PDR and Building Capacity for its Management</i>	Clive Marsh	1997
<i>A Consultancy to Support Management of Phou Xang He and Xe Bang Nouan NBCAs</i>	Tom Evans and Vannalack Sengsavanh	1997
<i>Field Training in Wildlife Conservation Research Techniques and Large Mammal Survey at Nam Phui NBCA</i>	Ramesh Boonratana	1997
<i>Potential for Cooperation with the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in the Development and Management of Transfrontier Protected Areas: the Lao Perspective</i>	CPAWM/IUCN	1997
<i>Research Needs and Contributions of the Protected Area System to Biodiversity Conservation in Lao PDR.</i>	Chanthaviphone Inthavong, Clive Marsh and Venevongphet	1996
<i>Concept Proposal for an "Annamite Rainforest Lodge" at Nam Phao, Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA, Route 8, Bolikhamxai Province</i>	Clive Marsh	1996
<i>Protected Area System Planning and Management in Lao PDR – Status Report to Mid-1995 (including Annex: Protected Area Fact Sheets)</i>	Klaus Berk Müller, Sangthong Southammakoth, Venevongphet	1995
<i>Acute Concerns for Protected Area Management in Lao PDR (for Forestry Sector Planning Seminar, 1994)</i>	Klaus Berk Müller	1994
<i>Protected Area System Planning and Management in Lao PDR – Status Report to Mid-1993</i>	Klaus Berk Müller, Bouaphanh Phanthavong, Venevongphet	1993
<i>A Wildlife and Habitat Survey of Dong Hua Sao Proposed Protected Area, Champassak Province</i>	R.J. Timmins, T. D. Evans and J.W. Duckworth	1993
<i>A Wildlife and Habitat Survey of Xe Pian Proposed Protected Area, Champassak Province</i>	R.J. Timmins, T. D. Evans and J.W. Duckworth	1993
<i>Draft Management Framework for Phou Xang He</i>	B. Phanthavong and R.J. Dobias	1993
<i>Accession of Lao PDR to CITES and other Convention Treaties</i>	S. Nash and S. Broad	1993

Title	Author/s	Year
<i>Conservation Issues at Nam Theun Protected Area, Lao PDR</i>	R.J. Dobias	1993
<i>A Wildlife and Habitat Survey of Phou Xang He Proposed Protected Area</i>	J.W. Duckworth, R.J. Timmins, and K. Cozza	1993
<i>A Preliminary Survey of the Birds and Mammals of Houei Nhang Forest Reserve, Vientiane Province</i>	J.W. Duckworth, T. D. Evans, S. Souliyavong, B. Mounsouphom, G. Anderson, K. Cozza, R. Thewlis and B. Sounthala	1992
<i>Planning and Development of a Protected Area System in Lao PDR: Status Report to Mid-1991</i>	R.E. Salter, Bouaphanh Phanthavong, Venevongphet	1991
<i>Short Course for Field Staff in Protected Area Management – An Evaluation</i>	David Ebbutt	1991
<i>Forest Resources Conservation Project, Phase I: 1988-91 – Summary Report on Project Activities</i>	R.E. Salter and Venevongphet	1991
<i>Needs and Priorities for Conservation Legislation in Lao PDR</i>	Zdenek Madar and R. E. Salter	1990
<i>An Assessment of the Current Status of the Kouprey and other Wild Cattle in Southern Laos</i>	R.E. Salter, B. Phanthavong, S. Sawathvong, X. Souriyakane and K. Louanglath	1990
<i>Needs and Priorities for a Protected Area System in Lao PDR</i>	R.E. Salter and Bouaphanh Phanthavong	1989
<i>Training Consultancy for the Forest Resources Conservation Project – Final Report</i>	Klaus Berk Müller	1989
<i>Houei Nhang Forest Reserve Management Plan 1988-90</i>	R.E. Salter and Venevongphet	Revised 1989
<i>Short Course for Field Staff in Protected Areas Management (Training Manual)</i>	Klaus Berk Müller	1988
Biodiversity Conservation Project		
<i>Wildlife Survey Training at Dong Hua Sao and Phou Xiang Thong NBCAs – Final Report</i>	Ramesh Boonratana	1998

Title	Author/s	Year
<i>Integrating Conservation and Development in the Dong Kanthung Region of Mounlapamok District</i>	Klaus Berkmüller	1997
<i>Proposed Rules for the Dong Hua Sao NBCA</i>	Klaus Berkmüller	
<i>Proposed Rules for the Phou Xiang Thong NBCA</i>	Klaus Berkmüller	1997
<i>Results of Rules Consultations in Villages near the National Biodiversity Conservation Areas Dong Hua Sao and Phou Xiang Thong</i>	Klaus Berkmüller	1997
<i>Analysis of Land Claims Registration in Dong Hua Sao and Resulting Management Recommendations</i>	Klaus Berkmüller	1997
<i>Protected Areas and Key Species in Champassak Province</i>	Klaus Berkmüller and Bounsay Saphanthong	1996
<i>A Rapid Wildlife and Habitat Survey of Dong Kanthung and its Environs</i>	Klaus Berkmüller and Vilawong Vanalath	1996
<i>A Wildlife and Habitat Survey of the Dong Hua Sao NBCA</i>	T. Evans, A.J. Stones, R.C.M. Thewlis	1996
<i>A Wildlife and Habitat Survey of the Phou Xiang Thong NBCA</i>	T. Evans, A.J. Stones, R.C.M. Thewlis	1996
Sustainable Use of Non-Timber Forest Products		
<i>Supporting the NTFP Subsector in Lao PDR</i>	J. Foppes and S. Ketphanh	1998
<i>The Use of Non-Timber Forest Products in Lao PDR</i>	J. Foppes and S. Ketphanh	1997
<i>Research and Development for Supporting the Sustainable Use of NTFPs in Lao PDR</i>	A. Ingles and S. Ketphanh	1996
<i>Some Options for Sustainable Use of NTFPs in Champassak Province, Lao PDR</i>	Joost Foppes	1996
<i>National Level Market Survey of NTFPs: Part 1 – Vientiane Municipality, Lao PDR</i>	K. Sengdala, V. Vongkhamsoo And B. Sengkhamyong	1996
<i>Methodology for Collecting Environmental Information for Supporting Baseline Monitoring and Evaluation of Project Impacts</i>	D. McKone and P. Phaengsintham	1996

Title	Author/s	Year
<i>Background Information for Gender in Development Practice in NTFP Project in Lao PDR: Gender Sensitive Forest Use</i>	Hermien Rodenburg and Chansamone Phengay	1996
<i>Methodology for Collecting Environmental Information for Supporting Baseline Monitoring and Evaluation of Project Impacts: Background Information and Issues</i>	D. McKone	1996
<i>Socio-Economic Baseline Survey and Evaluation Methodology</i>	R.J. Fisher, Rachel Dechaineux and Kheung Kham Keonuchan	1996
<i>Plan of Action for Improved Integration of Gender in Development Practice in the NTFP Project: Wearing Gender Spectacles</i>	Hermien Rodenburg and Chansamone Phengay	1996

Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA and Catchment Project

<i>Environmental and Social Management Plan for Nakai-Nam Theun Catchment and Corridor Areas</i>	IUCN	1997
<i>Cultural Diversity and Socio-Economic Development in the Context of Conservation</i>	J. Chamberlain and C. Alton	1997
<i>Saola Conservation Action Plan for Lao PDR</i>	William Robichaud/WCS	1997
<i>Nakai-Nam Theun Conservation Area Socio-Economic Technical Report</i>	C. Alton and Latsamay Sylavong	1997
<i>Technical Report of the Botanist-Plant Ecologist</i>	James Jarvie	1997
<i>Report of the Wildlife Survey</i>	Joe Tobias/WCS	1997

Road Sector Environmental Assessment and Training Project

<i>Environmental Impact Assessment: Panam-Boulapha Road, Khammouane Province</i>	Gordon Claridge, Xiong Tsechalicha, Bounmy Souksavath, Somsanouk Komany	1997
<i>Manual of EIA Procedures for Road Projects in Lao PDR</i>	Gordon Claridge	1997

Title	Author/s	Year
Shifting Cultivation Project		
<i>Agricultural Programme 1990-1991: Technical Report</i>	IUCN	1992
<i>Forestry Programme Technical Report</i>	Paul Anspach	1991
<i>Technical Report on Agricultural Aspects of the Shifting Cultivation Project, Luang Prabang</i>	Eric H. Hoogland	1991
IUCN Country Office		
<i>Preliminary Environmental Inventory of Khammouane Province (funded by Sida)</i>	Gordon Claridge	1997
<i>Community Fisheries in Lao PDR: A Survey of Techniques and Issues</i>	Gordon Claridge, Thanongsi Sorangkhnun, Ian Baird	1997
<i>Biodiversity Conservation, Protected Areas and the Development Imperative in Lao PDR: Forging the Links</i>	Stuart Chape	1996
<i>Biodiversity Conservation and Integrated Community Development in Nam Et and Phou Loei Protected Areas, Lao PDR: Project Proposal (funded by AusAID)</i>	Stuart Chape and Klaus Berkmüller	1996
<i>Nakai-Nam Theun NBCA, Lao PDR: An Integrated Conservation and Community Development Program</i>	Clive Marsh	1996
<i>Inventory of Wetlands of the Lao PDR (produced by IUCN Wetlands Programme – funded by UNEP)</i>	Gordon Claridge (compiler)	1996
<i>Wildlife in Lao PDR – A Status Report</i>	R.E. Salter (compiler)	1994
<i>User's Guide to Planning and Implementing a National Conservation Strategy</i>	R.E. Salter	1993

ANNEX 3: IUCN MEMBERS AND PARTNERS WITH RESIDENT MISSIONS AND/OR ACTIVITIES IN LAO PDR

State Members	NGO Members	Global Partners
Australia	Wildlife Conservation Society	The World Bank
Canada	World Resources Institute	UNDP
Denmark	WWF-International	UNEP
Finland		
France		
Germany		
India		
Japan		
Malaysia		
Netherlands		
New Zealand		
Norway		
Peoples' Republic of China		
Russia		
Sweden		
Switzerland		
Thailand		
United Kingdom		
United States of America		
Viet Nam		

Note: Brunei, Indonesia, Philippines and Republic of Korea have Government Agency membership



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