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Synergies between water valuation and livelihood assessment: An example of project interaction for greater impact in the Mekong Basin

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Session: Learning to Innovate

Key Message

Within the context of rapid changes due to hydropower development, an integrated approach for identifying potential livelihoods improvement - incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods - is necessary for designing livelihood alternatives that can mitigate impacts and maximize benefits from the new water access regime resulting from dam construction. Mekong Projects 1 and 2 joined their efforts in order to achieve a greater impact, with similar study sites and household samples, sharing information and data sets to have a better understanding of livelihoods and value of water resources at these target sites.

Summary

Understanding trade-offs and livelihood changes in areas affected by water storage infrastructure development is complex. It requires both qualitative and quantitative assessments with substantial amount of time, effort and budget investment that are often intractable at a project scale. Mekong Projects 1 and 2 decided to develop a common methodology, selecting overlapping study areas and sampled households whenever possible, to conduct an integrated analysis of water resource uses.

This simple exchange of information and regular, open communication between the two research teams have enabled collection of a comprehensive data set that: allows integrated analysis of the role of water resources in local livelihoods; supplies data inputs for the development of Decision Support Models; and helps to characterize trade-offs and impacts due to hydropower development.

This type of cooperation between projects within the same river basin is possible without impeding individual project methodologies and individual objectives and requires minimum effort or “platform” development. Greater interactions between projects can also lead to more accurate and in-depth analysis and triangulation of the results. In a complex research program that tries to integrate environmental, economic, and social sciences, simple but efficient interaction between projects can generate new knowledge for limited cost.

Module E: Livelihood Activities											
		Which month? (1-12)	Which month(s) is peak labor?	Relative importance of effort in dry season	Relative importance of effort in rainy season	Income (in Lao Kip, VN Dong, KH Riel)	Who received the income	Who control /decide how it is spend	Relative importance for total HH income	Relative importance for subsistence	Main constraints
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Farming											
A	Upland rice										
B	Lowland irrigated Rice										
C	Lowland Rainfed rice										
D	Upland crops										
E	Perennial crops										
F	Garden										
G	Aquaculture										
Fishing											
L	Nets, Trap, Brush park & lines (other devices)										
M	Gleaning Aquatic										
* migration outside village											
Code for Q 3 & 4						Code for Q6 & Q7		Code for Q8		Code for Q10	
1: spend most amount of time on average during the season						1: Husband		1: Highest income		1: labor	
2: spend second most amount of time on average during the season						2: Spouse		2: second highest		2: Capital	
3: spend third most amount of time on average during the season						3 = Son/Daughter		3: third highest income		3: water	
4: spend fourth most amount of time on average during the season						4 = Son/Daughter -In-Law		etc...		4: knowledge	

MK1 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ILLUSTRATING THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH, WITH QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FISHERIES RELATIVE TO OTHER ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE EFFORT, THE TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND IMPORTANCE FOR SUBSISTENCE