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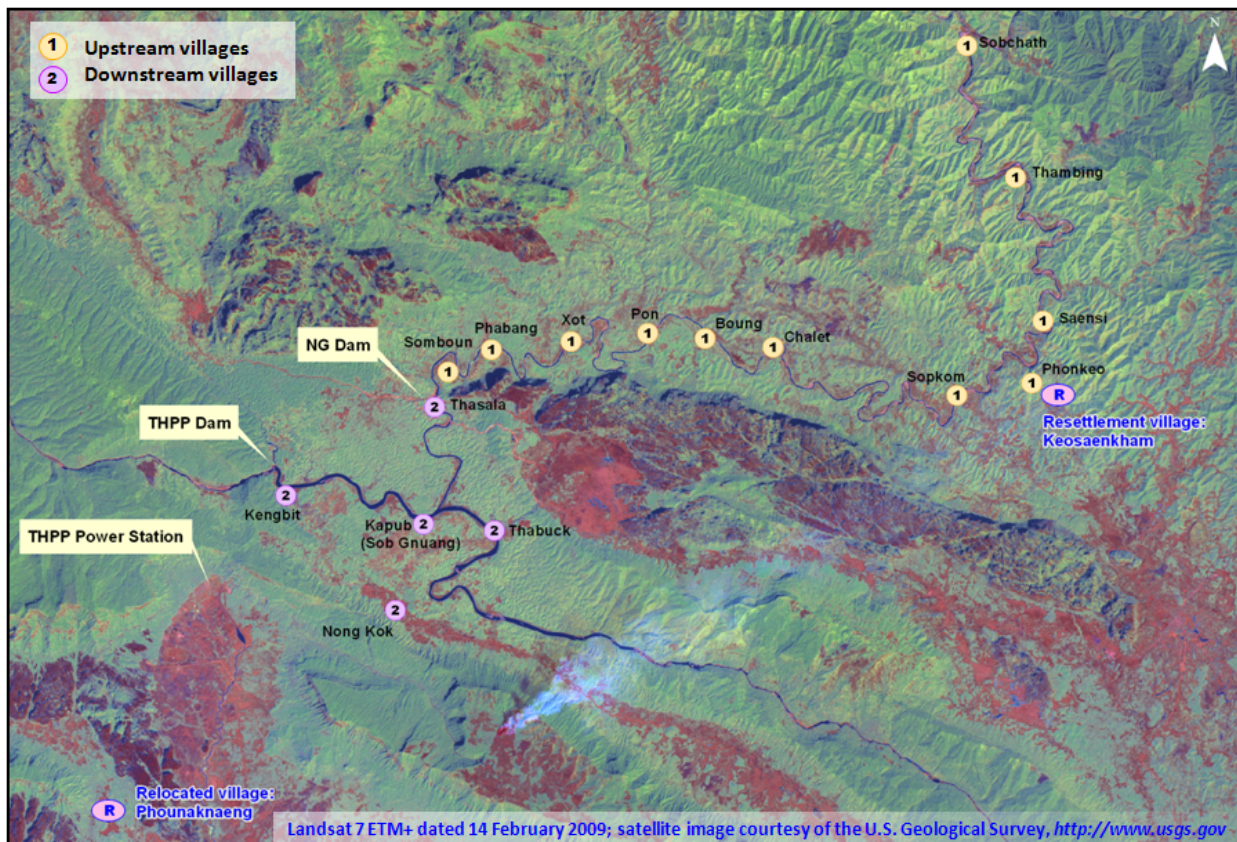
Diversification of livelihood opportunities of communities impacted by hydropower dam: A case study of THB reservoir, Lao PDR

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Session: Mekong, Learning to Innovate, Share Fair Lunch (livelihood changes and diversification of livelihood)



STUDY AREA LOCATING VILLAGES IMPACTED BY THE THEUN HINBOUN HYDROPOWER DAM

Key Message

Communities living both upstream and downstream of a dam and reservoir are impacted in various ways and to varying degrees. In terms of livelihoods, an understanding of the emerging livelihood opportunities, and how these can be harnessed, are important to ensure the well-being of the affected communities. Furthermore, piloting livelihood options that have potential can provide constructive measures of assistance.

Summary

Under the Theun Hinboun expansion project in Lao PDR, the Nam Gnouang dam is being constructed to double the capacity of the Theun Hinboun power station. As a result of the reservoir, livelihoods of the communities in both the upstream and downstream are being impacted in various ways and to different degrees. Through our research we aim to gain an understanding of what the emerging livelihood opportunities are and how these can be harnessed. Preliminary results based on a reconnaissance survey suggest that for the upstream resettlements, new opportunities may include development of community-managed enhanced fisheries system in the reservoir, vegetable gardening in drawdown area of reservoir and the introduction of bio-intensive home gardening. For the downstream villages, there emerge some possibilities of diversification of livelihoods by switching to new cropping system such as rice (in dry season), fish (in rainy season) and introduction of all-year-round vegetable production in home gardens. The in-depth household survey will reveal more details on potential livelihood options and we plan to pilot option(s) that are promising.