

# take-home messages, follow-up actions and feedback

For the final task, Chun Lai divided participants into country groups (and a group for international partners) and asked them to identify the key messages from the workshop process; indicate follow-up actions; and provide feedback and suggestions for future events of a similar nature. This gave 'affinity groups' an opportunity to have discussions in their own language and context and then share their outcomes.

Specifically, the groups were asked to address the following questions:

1. What are the three 'take-home messages' from the workshop that you wish to share with your colleagues/other organisations/policy makers when you return to your country?
2. What next steps, follow-up activities would you propose?
3. As feedback and suggestions for the workshop:
  - What did you learn from/like the most about the workshop?
  - What can be improved for similar workshops in the future?

## Workshop Messages and Follow-Up Activities

Each country group gave a brief report-back, the key points of which are summarised here.

### Chinese group

Take-home messages

For colleagues

- Many people are doing similar things; there should be more communication and cooperation.
- Research cooperation could be based on regional topics or could provide a comparison across regions.

For organisations

- The mobile workshop approach can be used to enhance research orientation and develop a framework.
- The mobile workshop approach also provides a way of increasing internal capacity through exchange with other countries.

For policy makers

- Farmers need to be presented with more options to motivate them to change land use (rather than using the command/control approach).

- Farmers need more access to information, and participation in decision making/planning processes.
- Community networks can be an effective force for development.
- There is a need for a more regional perspective, with multi-stakeholder functional activities, as China integrates economically with MMSEA.

#### Next steps/follow-up activities

- Farmer visits
- Incorporation of learning from workshop into existing/future work (policy implications)
- Research cooperation on transboundary issues, particularly involving policymakers

### Lao group

#### Take-home messages

- Participants shared and exchanged lessons learned from neighbouring countries on land use, markets, livelihoods, and governance; and younger researchers gained valuable knowledge and experience from more senior participants.
- The informal MMSEA network supports and stimulates policy advocacy in managing natural resources in a sustainable manner.
- Participants learned about the different constraints and solutions employed in dealing with upland environments in diverse traditions, cultures, and conditions.

#### Next steps/follow-up activities

- Organise a post-workshop meeting in Laos for participants to present the outcomes of the mobile workshop to relevant senior staff.
- Set-up a network and working group/committee for MMSEA.
- Carry out research to address the research questions/topics identified during the mobile workshop.

### Thai group

The Thai group proposed several research initiatives for the future which may involve several country partners as well as international partners. They suggested that transboundary research work be conducted on the theme of: "Policy and market impacts on the sustainability of livelihoods and natural resources in MMSEA". Such research could be undertaken by selected national partners, with support from relevant international groups (e.g., ASEAN, GMS, APEC, WTO, FTA, and ADB). In terms of more specific research involving MMSEA country partners, the group targeted five questions for future inquiry.

1. What are the impacts of change in land use spatial patterns on ecological function and environmental service with feedback to human behaviour?
2. What are the comparative advantages of intensive upland agriculture & plantation?
3. What kinds of civil society organisations are useful in addressing natural resources management issues?
4. What is the relevance of 'watersheds' as a unit of environmental governance?
5. What are the roles and impacts of roads, markets and investment on livelihoods?

For some of the above research, the group felt that relevant international partners would include the East-West Center, ICRAF, and WRI.



**A participant presents his group's messages**

### **Vietnamese group**

The Vietnamese group summarised their three take-home messages as follows.

- The importance and relevance of the watershed management approach, incorporating participatory technology development, simple technologies, self-help groups, and community/village-based networks
- The potential for appropriate ecotourism development incorporating agriculture, forestry, culture, environmental policy, and market forces
- The need for land use planning based on market demands (long-term opportunities), access to markets, and local needs

The group also identified three research areas for follow-on work in Vietnam.

- The impacts of land use change policy since 1986 in northern Vietnam's mountainous areas in terms of the economic, environmental, and social aspects
- The impacts of cross-border trade with China in terms of the economic and social aspects
- The relationships between land use change, markets, and poverty reduction

### **Cambodian group**

The Cambodian group formulated three take-home messages for their organisation, the Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI).

- The need to develop GIS capacity further, and form an internal network
- The need to focus research attention in upland areas on
  - land use change, livelihoods and governance
  - research on cross-border trade in northeast Cambodia (Rattanakiri)
- The need to further develop institutional linkages in the northeast regarding natural resources and the environment

For follow-up activities, the group would like CDRI to consider using the MMSEA mobile workshop as a model for developing a similar workshop to examine cross-border issues and dynamics with partners from Cambodia and neighbouring countries.

### **International partners group**

The group of participants from international organisations provided some very interesting observations and suggestions.

The group shared these three take home messages from the workshop.

- The 'road' per se does not say very much about the dynamics of land use change. The type of road is important – a network of feeder roads has a different impact from one main highway with few access points. We are in fact talking more broadly about transport and communication corridors.
- What are the future opportunities in the MMSEA border highlands as the 'tropics' move south and the 'temperates' move north? For example, ecotourism and branding with certificate of origin are activities and strategies to take advantage of the region's unique cultural and ecological identity.
- Does scientific information inform policy and decision-making?

By way of suggested actions for the future, the group had these suggestions.

- Build a core group of people committed to continuing mutual learning through a combination of field and seminar-like discussions
- Set a goal to develop methodologies to combine spatial analysis and social sciences/socioeconomic information in ways that will inform learning and decision making in the future
- Find ways to link these processes to existing funded activities such as ICRAF programmes and East-West Center projects



**Traditional tea processing in Xishuangbanna**

## Feedback on the Workshop

The various country groups provided very constructive and useful feedback on the workshop.

On the question of what the participants learned or liked the most about the workshop, the groups expressed a high appreciation for the unique opportunity to traverse the heart of MMSEA, and to learn first hand about the diverse situation of upland communities, the dynamic drivers of their land use and livelihoods, and the evolving governance arrangements. High marks were also given to the frank interactions and open culture of learning among all participants, as well as the excellent programme and logistical support provided by the organising teams in all three countries.

More specific favourable responses included the following:

- learned about the role of rubber production in southern Yunnan and expansion to northern Lao
- gained a better understanding of the interface of state and local governance mechanisms
- gained a better appreciation of transboundary governance issues
- learned from the observation of different farming practices in relation to economic development
- learned to work with different research skills and experience and working cultures

On what could be improved for similar workshops in the future, the participants offered these suggestions:

- procedure and methodologies should be clarified to local organisers/coordinators
- more time is needed for working groups during the workshop
- more time is needed for reflection within and across thematic groups
- time management during the workshop could be improved
- the participation level of workshop participants, as well as from villagers at the sites visited, could be improved
- bring forward some of the case study presentations to an earlier point in the workshop

