

Does Decentralisation Meet the Needs of Local People? Implementing Land and Forestland Allocation In two Local Communities, Lao PDR

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Abstract

The Land and Forestland Allocation Policy of Lao PDR has been in effect throughout the country since 1996. The two main aims of the policy are to increase land tenure security in order to encourage farmer's involvement in intensive farming to result in more prosperous livelihoods, and to eliminate slash and burn cultivation in an attempt to protect natural resources and the environment. This paper examines the implementation of the policy in two communities, both of which are located along the foothills of Phou Khao Khouay National Protected Area. After the Land and Forestland Allocation Policy banned shifting cultivation, intensive farming was required, and the traditional tenure system was replaced by one codified in law. Lands were zoned for agriculture activities and distributed to villagers according to traditional tenure. In order to retain tenure, villagers must show some agriculture activity or intensive development on the parcels within three years or the land will be returned to the state. This paper analyzes economic conditions, livelihoods, land use practices, and food security, and recommends that the ironic effect of farmers returning to protected forests in order to invest in the land they have received from the Land and Forestland Allocation Program is due to the fact that they are not secure with the rights they have gained to use this land. Until the Lao government gives villagers secure rights to agricultural and forestlands that cannot be revoked in three years, villagers will continue to engage in illegal activities on protected forests.

Introduction

Laos is a mountainous country with a land area of 236,800 km² and a population of 5.2 million people, which is growing at a rate of 2.6% per year (State Planning Committee 2000). Approximately 80% of the country is mountainous, with forest coverage in 1982 of 11.6 million ha, or 49% of the country's total area. By 1989 this was reduced to 11.2 million ha, or about 47% of the total area (National Reconnaissance Survey, 1992, 1994), a very rapid rate of loss. Deforestation and forest degradation have continued at rapid rates. The reduction of forest coverage is the result of many phenomena, including slash and burn cultivation practices, forest fires, and logging without adequate oversight (Vilayphone, et al. 2002). Census data from 1990 indicated that 210,204 households, covering an area of approximately 245,877 ha, practiced shifting cultivation (Phanthanousy et al. 2003). This practice and uncontrolled forest fires have dramatically reduced the total forest area of the country.

As the destruction of forests has come to attention of the Lao PDR government, there have been many attempts made to reduce it. The government has issued numerous decrees and regulations in recent years, one of the most significant of which is the Land and Forest

Allocation Decree (LFA) – a national policy to arrest the rate of deforestation and to maintain the environment and welfare of local people now and into the future.

More recently, development in the forestry sector has emphasized conservation, land use planning, and resource tenure. These three aspects of forest management are not easily separated. At the moment, according to government policy, the Land Allocation System is a tool to stabilize shifting cultivation in order to conserve forest areas. However, after land has been allocated to communities there is no proper land use planning conducted at the community level. This has led to a situation where some villagers have tended to return to forest areas. Therefore land tenure and land use planning play important roles in supporting the government policy on Land Allocation.

In this paper I argue that while the policy framework of the Land and Forestland Allocation Act has been drawn beautifully in text, the process of implementing the Act at the local level has been uneven, and in some cases has failed. This is partially because the concerned organizations at the provincial level lack sufficient funding, time, and skilled staff members.

In this paper I examine two communities where land has been allocated to farmers with the goals of improving their living conditions and reducing incursion into forest protected areas. I analyze economic conditions, livelihoods, land use practices, and food security. I suggest that the ironic effect of farmers returning to protected forests in order to invest in the land they have allotted from the Land and Forestland Allocation Program is due to their insecurity with their new codified land tenure. Until the Lao government gives villagers secure rights to agricultural and forest lands, or rights that cannot be revoked within three years, villagers will continue to engage in illegal activities on protected forests.

Theoretical framework

In the past, forests were largely managed and controlled by central governments, not always successfully. Many nations with central government oversight of natural resources were the sites of the destruction and degradation of large areas of forest – and thus some scholars concluded that central governments were not the right agents to manage natural resources effectively. In response to this, the governments of many countries have begun transferring the management of natural resources downward from the central to local levels, with at least 60 nations undergoing this process at present (Agrawal 2001 cited in Ribot 2002). Proponents argue that this decentralization will increase efficiency and the equity of resource use and management. Agrawal (Ribot 2002) presents case studies where decentralization has produced positive outcomes, such as the sustainable management of forests for over 70 years in Kumaon. Pacheco (2002 cited in Ribot 2002) also shows that the local councils in Nicaragua and Bolivia have been successful in protecting forests from incursion by exogenous commercial interests.

A conventional way of characterizing this process has become the decentralization of forests and natural resources management from central to local authorities. Many people believed that the decentralization process would help to empower local people to conserve environmental and natural resources, but many questions have been raised during the process. In order to understand the challenges posed by the implementation of decentralization practices, the following questions can be used to frame the study: Can cooperation work? Are local units capable? Are local units accountable? Finally, are local units committed? (Lowry 2002)

In the case of Laos,

...Implementation of these policies is constrained by many factors, including the remoteness of most upland areas, lack of roads, diversity in livelihoods and socio-cultural systems, a predominant barter economy, limited access to credit, and the continuing dangers of unexploded ordnance left from past military activities. (Pravongviengkham nd)

The Lao Government Policy on Land and Forest Allocation Program aims to transfer rights to use, manage, and protect environments to the local level as well as to individual households. The experience of Johnson and Forsyth (2002) suggests that the ability to claim community rights and benefits from these lands depends on the influence that communities can bring to bear on the political system, and on other actors who would challenge or undermine this influence (2002).

Policy background

The Lao Government's rural development strategy recognizes the need for site-specific approaches to development and environmental conservation. Thus, within what remains a centralized planning system by regional or international standards, the government is beginning to delegate various forms of land allocation and management to local governments and local communities. The Land Use Planning and Land Allocation Program (LUP/LA) was implemented in 1990, with Luang Prabang and Sayaboury provinces containing the pilot areas. There, in the districts of Xieng Ngern and Nan, the Lao-Swedish Forestry Program has provided funding and technical assistance in order to test the feasibility of the program for the nation as a whole.

The Land Allocation Policy (Degree 99, 1992) was developed through a series of decrees and instructions on forest and agricultural land management. In 1996, the instruction on Land and Forest Allocation for Management and Use was issued to provincial governors providing for the allocation of temporary use rights to farmers for agricultural and barren hilly land. The policy supports the government's goals of protecting vital remaining forest and reducing poverty, particularly in the uplands. It further promotes permanent farming systems and distinguishes resource boundaries. The government also aims to halt expansion of shifting cultivation by 2005 (Mairi 2002).

With the goal of allocating natural resource use rights to individuals as well as communities, on October 12, 1994, the government issued Decree No.186/PM, granting permission to business and private sectors and Lao citizens to invest in plantations or to support communities to develop plantations on their own land based upon common agreement. Details on afforestation and forest conservation have been subsequently added. Further, the policy has undergone a refinement process in order to help ensure suitability for nationwide implementation. The land allocation procedure follows seven principles and eight steps, including preparation and consultation with village committee; data collection; village meetings; field measurements; village land use plans; extension; and monitoring. From the insights gained from implementing the policy, in 2001 two more steps on land and forest allocation activities were added, including data storage and record registration.

One of the government's intentions in implementing this policy was to protect remaining forest resources from slash and burn cultivation. The policy allows villagers to participate in the detail steps of implementing the policy. The villagers were informed by authorities to participate and to be involved in the sub-processes of implementation, such as socio-economic data

collection, land surveying, and land measurement. Villagers were to be consulted on aspects of land allocation. Implementation of the policy was intended to protect natural resources within village boundaries and in adjacent areas. Natural resource utilization is an important priority for the government as shown by the 1993 Decree No. 169/PM of the Lao Government, entitled “The Management and the Use of Forest and Forest Land.” The decree sought to provide community collectives, individual farmers, and private-sector actors legal rights for agricultural and forest plantation activities on remaining fallow land. Various committees and organizations were set up to implement the decree with different translations and procedures. These committees were mainly responsible for ensuring that the act was implemented according to the actual conditions of each locality (MAF 1998).

There are two stages of implementing land allocation. The first is a simple process of reaching agreement upon the boundaries of forest and agricultural land in a village. The next step is a more detailed classification of land use types and the allocation of fields to households. District forest divisions have assumed the primary responsibility for land allocation, though teams also include Agricultural, Forest, Finance, Land Tax and other district officers. Villagers are meant to be involved in the mapping and land allocation processes through full consultation with the implementing officers. Typically, each village forms a village committee to oversee the process, which is led by the village head who is often popularly elected. Its members are village administrators who are government employees; representatives of livelihood groups within the village; and representatives of large organizations such as the farmer’s and women’s unions.

Allocation teams map and distribute paddy and swidden farming lands to individual households and forest land to villages to be managed as common property. The size of the allocation is determined by each household’s available labour and resources. At the end of the process, the village committee and district authorities sign a land use agreement signifying that the village is responsible to monitor and implement it under supervision of the district authorities. The committee creates and posts land use maps in the village as a reference for ongoing natural management decisions. Village forest volunteers assist land allocation teams and farmers with forest classification and forest use planning. The village forest volunteer also serves as a channel of communication between the district Agriculture and Forest Office and the village, facilitating the collection and management of information. However, in practice, the follow-up steps of monitoring, assessing, and providing extension support remain high-priority challenges to the land allocation program (Viphakone 1999).

Of course there are many stakeholders concerned with land and forest allocation activities, including international agencies and internal authorities. To help build local capacity, the Lao-Swedish Forestry Program (Lao-SIDA), with the close cooperation of the Department of Forestry, has supported the development of an implementation manual. Lao-SIDA has also funded the Department of Forestry to train government staff at the provincial and district levels in both theoretical and practical methods. The expectation is that newly trained personnel will return to their local communities and their levels of governance to execute the implementation methods they have learned.

In addition to reducing slash and burn agricultural activities, this policy is attempting to create a feeling both of land tenure and food security for local people, thus helping to reduce poverty. Through confirming ownership and use rights over their land, it is hoped that local people will produce food for both household consumption and to sell on the market. This policy also encourages greater conservation of the environment. Local participation in the process has been emphasized, allowing for the decentralization of resource management responsibilities.

The current policy recognizes customary resource use rights, which include rights of inheritance and possession, and also allows village communities to claim communal property under their own use and management.

Methodology

Research questions

What are the impacts of the Land and Forestland Allocation policy on the local community in terms of traditional tenure systems and traditional use of their forest resources? This can be determined in part by the following questions:

1. How people in the community have used and managed land and forests before and after the Land and Forest Allocation Policy has been implemented;
2. How people have responded to land use adaptation and management practices due to the implementation of the Land and Forest Allocation Policy; and
3. How Land and Forest Allocation Policy has affected the traditional tenure system and the food security of local community.

Scope and definitions

Land use patterns and change were investigated both before and after land allocation procedures. “Sustainability” is a basic criterion for resource management to be supportive of both livelihood improvements and maintaining environmental quality; sustainability is often an elusive concept, however – hard to define and even more difficult to measure. Nevertheless, a number of indicators of sustainability in livelihoods and agricultural production can be measured in different ways. Basic indicators include: availability of subsistence foods, availability of land, productivity trends, and in the case of upland cultivation, trends in rotation cycles.

The research components consisted of three parts, including socio-economic characteristics, the process of Land and Forest Allocation, and the state of food security. All these components were ascertained as follows:

1. Socio-economic characteristics – Baseline information influencing tenure and land management systems was analyzed and assessed. Socio-economic data were collected to determine household incomes before and after Allocation implementation.
2. Land use planning – Field surveys of land use practices were made using participatory methods. Transect walks lead to mapping, which in turn helped clarify land tenure arrangements and the different levels of involvement by villagers and the allocation team – particularly in the sustainable use of forest resources and land management.
3. State of food security – A food security study was conducted in relation to the status of the resource tenure of different household classes within the community. The study also analyzed the impact of land allocation practices on the traditional living conditions and diets of villagers. It was conducted by observations and in-depth interviews with selected households.

Study site description

According to Decree No. 119, Management and Use of Forest and Forested Land which was declared in 1989, no land in the Lao PDR can be held privately; it is the property of the national community which is held by the state. However, this principle is not applied in Hatkhai and Yang-Khoua villages, where customary rights were used before the implementation of land allocation in 1999. All of the paddy fields in the village were acquired by encroachment.

Despite a lack of legal standing, these acquisitions were recognized with clear boundaries by village communities.

Shifting cultivation systems were practiced in the villages since the land in the area was settled. Cultivation was rotated in 10 to 15 year cycles in the past, which prevented soil vitality from quickly being depleted. Since the implementation of land allocation, villagers cannot use shifting practice as before, but are only allowed activities that they choose and that have been approved by an allocation team. Most of the allocated land in these villages has been converted to permanent upland rice, which is mainly planted for household consumption.

Cultivation of Mark Euk (*Solanum Ferox*) has become the main source of income for the villagers, although pineapple, banana, and papaya are also grown as cash crops. The popularity of Mark Euk has resulted in land use pattern changes – fields used for rice cultivation in the past have been converted into Mark Euk farms. Despite increases in production, the price has still increased each year. Villagers have earned more money from this kind of cultivation than any other. Livestock in these two communities also plays an important role in the provision of household income. After the implementation of land allocation, the number of livestock decreased as villagers sold their animals to raise capital to invest in their land.

Off-farm activities provide an important source of food and income for the villagers of Hatkhai village. These activities include collecting forest products, fishing, hunting, wage labour, and handicrafts. Among these activities, the collection of non-timber forest products, including mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and vegetables, is important for the household income and food security. Of these activities, only hunting is forbidden in protected areas – all other activities are allowed for household consumption.

Villagers in Yang-Khoua earned more than their neighbours in the past due their skill at hunting, which has been sharpened from a dearth of land for upland rice cultivation. Shifting cultivation has played an important role in household consumption. Slash and burn activities are no longer allowed in Yang-Khoua, especially in the National Protected Area (NPA), and district authorities have followed the government policy. However, hunting still remains hidden in the communities due to dark market demand, and villagers feel that is their own custom. From my observations, the number of those who still practice is small.

Natural resources status

The two communities have a long history of utilizing and managing natural resources. The time since the communities' settlement can be divided into three periods. The villagers in this area have been practicing shifting cultivation since they settled in, at which time the populations were small and there was a wealth of forest and natural resources. Villagers accessed the forest freely, with no restrictions or control and with no boundaries delineated, without conflicts and with shared common property between neighbouring villages. The rotation of the shifting cultivation period was 10-15 years. In 1982 State Forest Enterprise No. 3 started logging in the area, and hectares of precious trees have been heavily logged by the state enterprise.

Before *Phou Khao Khouay* was declared a protected area (now called a National Park), the villagers were informed of the projected boundaries and the proposed limitations on activities within it. These restrictions included a total ban on hunting and shifting cultivation within the protected area, which was set at the 200 metres above sea level contour line. This boundary included both villages within its area. Later, villagers had the opportunity to negotiate the boundary with protected area officials.

After land and forest allocation had been implemented, a clear delineation of land use and village boundaries was made according to agreements reached by both villages and approved by the allocation team. There were two kinds of allocation: 1) allocation of land for agricultural purposes; and 2) allocation of forestland to the community for management and use within the newly established community boundaries. Since then, villagers have not been allowed to practice cultivation in areas that are not designated for this use. People in the community can access the forest and designated parts of the protection area to collect forest products for daily household consumption. It is legal to harvest some kinds of valuable products, like rattan, from the protected area with the appropriate permits, but villagers do not have the permits required – their extraction of rattan is illegal and done without the knowledge of officials.

Results and discussion

Household food and income sufficiency

Data collected from focus group discussions show that there are three main groups of households according to their rice and income sufficiency. The least sufficient group includes households who only have rice or income to buy rice for less than seven months of the year. The moderately sufficient group includes households who have enough rice or money to buy rice from seven to eleven months a year. The most sufficient group includes households who have a minimum of rice or money to buy rice for eleven or more months, and may have a surplus.

The *least sufficient groups* in both communities consist of households whose main sources of livelihood are from forest products. All households in this group face food shortage. Usually, households in this group in Hatkhai have a small paddy land area, while households in Yang-Khoua have upland rice fields. People in this group have to supplement the rice they grow with rice they buy. To afford this, they must sell their labour to others, while many sold non-timber forest products or possibly the limited amount of Mark Euk they were able to grow on their small plots.

The *moderately sufficient group* comprises households whose paddy land is large enough to provide stable food for families in Hatkhai, while in Yang-Khoua households cultivated large upland rice fields due to a lack of lowlands for wet rice cultivation. To supplement the rice all of the households in this group grow Mark Euk for sale. Many sell non-timber forest products, while some sell poultry, handicrafts, fish, and services such as selling and buying bamboo shoots.

The *most sufficient group* generally has diverse income sources. Households in this group are the families of the first settlers in Hatkhai, who have maintained their properties from income obtained from cut timber and investments in land and business improvements, like tractors or other equipment. In Hatkhai families in this group usually have large areas of wet rice paddy land. In Yang-Khoua, these households have saved their income from past hunting and reinvest their fluid capital in trading locally grown and harvested products to outside markets, while they purchase goods from these markets that are not available locally to sell in the village. Animal husbandry, mostly cattle, is an additional source of income for these households.

In 2000, ten families of Yang-Khoua village moved to a new location in the district to search for lowland wet rice cultivation. Other villagers attempted to follow those families because they found it difficult to produce enough food for their consumption. They did not only want to find land, but were also looking for a community with greater infrastructure like roads,

health care, education system or something closer to what they called “*civilization*”. In the meantime, there was only one family who moved to another place from Hatkhai in 2000.

Land use practice

Shifting cultivation was the dominant system of agriculture in both Hatkhai and Yang-Khoua villages in the past, due to a lack of sufficient lowland for wet rice cultivation. In general, there is no major difference between the communities in terms of land use practice. Hatkhai has a bit more paddy land than Yang-Khoua, but when looking at the map of paddy fields in Yang-Khoua, it appears that most of them are lying along the streams and flooded every year.

In 1999, the Land and Forestland Allocation was implemented; clear boundaries were made; and the traditional tenure system was replaced by state law. All forests have been zoned within the communities. Farmers are now forced to practice more intensive farming – like cash crop gardens, paddy rice fields, cyclical upland rice practices, and orchards. The land that has been provided from the authorities is not available for them to use as collateral against which they can borrow money from the banks. These intensive farming practices sometimes cause problems for villagers because they have not received any support from officials in terms of technical assistance, or the marketing or promotion of agricultural products. Those kinds of agricultural and commercial activities need to be supported.

Since the area is topographically undulating with limited fertile soil, paddy fields are mainly confined to narrow bands along the banks of rivers and streams. Forests generally cover the hilly terrain to the west and northwest sides of the village.

While traditional land use practice has been replaced by new methods of land allocation and formally recognized by law, some formerly used transactions, such as transferring land from parents to children or from relative to relative, are still occurring. These kinds of transformations are practiced surreptitiously within the community; otherwise villagers can lose their rights or ownership of the lands. Despite the change in legal status and the need for documentation of land tenure, attitudes are slow to change. The reality is that villagers do not feel insecure without legal documents, due to their belief and trust in their customary land tenure practices.

In order to obtain their right or ownership to the land provided, it seems that villagers are encouraged to have a more intensive farming system. This intensive farming has also pushed villagers to be enterprising in their pursuit of more money for investing on their land. The three year period to develop an agricultural land strategy is too short for most farmers, since they can not access credit from the banks. Thus, some villagers have to return to their former illegal forest practices secretly, especially within NPA.

Household Economic Changes

Land and Forestland Allocation has been just implemented only about three years so it is difficult to say that household incomes have increased because of the implementation of the policy. Further, there was no control group against which to compare the experience of Hatkhai and Yang-Khoua, and thus to isolate the variable of this policy as related to household income. Given these limitations, however, still the case can be made that household economics have increased or decreased due to this policy. Land and Forestland Allocation is a powerful incentive that can push farmers to escape poverty. Data collected in focus groups show that respondents’ household income increased when comparing periods of time before and after land allocation (Table 1, below).

TABLE 1

Group	Hatkhai		Yang-Khoua	
	1996-99	2000-02	1996-99	2000-02
Least sufficient	759,300	2,543,000	875,000	2,331,000
Medium sufficient	2,635,000	9,561,000	2,710,000	6,916,000
Most sufficient	5,425,000	14,747,000	7,350,000	15,384,000

Household income given in Lao kip/year – 10,500 kip ≈ \$1.00 US

As can be seen by the data shown above, the household income of participants in the focus groups has increased. Not shown is the fact that the more their income increases, the more their expenses also increase – especially those expenses related to agricultural activities. Some examples that show the high range of expenses is the cost of hiring a hand tractor, which is 70,000 to 85,000 kips/rai. The price also depends on the difficulty of plowing, previous land use and the land elevation.

This research also found that there is more trade occurring within the community. This is likely due to villagers producing surplus agricultural products, especially Mark Euk, from which they can earn more than other kinds of products. It cost approximately 18,000-25,500kip/mun (1 mun = 12 kg) during 1996-99, and 39,000-48,000 kip/mun during 2000-02.

Food Security

The information from the study sites shows that in Yang-Khoua, where most of the area is mountainous and there is a lack of lowland for wet rice cultivation, the number of households which ran out of rice in 2002 was only six families, or 2% of the total. At the same time in Hatkhai, where there are more hectares of paddy fields, the rate of villagers who ran out of rice is higher. Only 41% of the total population have enough rice for consumption; while 7% of this group have surplus products (Village Report 2002). The reason why there is such a difference in these numbers on rice shortage is likely that farmers in Hatkhai cultivate wet rice and their rice fields were flooded and destroyed by insects. Yang-Khoua has less lowland rice and so was not as affected by the floods – consequently they have a greater yield of rice than the lowland areas.

Administrative and Political Participation

The process of Land and Forest Allocation has a framework linking it from the central level downward to the local level. The policy has attempted to include participation from diverse stakeholders at different levels of government and also from local communities. Currently, the real forest managers are community members who use and manage the land in their everyday lives, so forest management and land-use planning must involve communities in the planning process and provide incentives for long-term sustainability (Pravongviengkham nd).

Local participation in decision making has been repeatedly talked about in the process of implementation, yet participation should be extended to and pursued by all members of the community. This research found that villagers were involved in only those activities conducted in their villages, while they were meant to have joined all steps of implementation. The reality on the ground was a compromise between the villagers' needs and the policy aims. All agreements made during the process were based on the requests of the villagers, and the policy

goals and the villagers' needs should be seamless. The following steps record what actually happened in two study sites:

- Prepared all tools needed for land and forest allocation (District Team).
- Disseminated Central Policy on Land and Forestland Allocation at village meetings.
- Established village Land and Forestland Allocation Committee.
- Collected data on socio-economic, labour, income, food security, and others
- Analysed and summed data
- Met with all village authorities from the vicinity to discuss village boundaries
- Surveyed and allocated boundaries based on topographical maps and landscapes, as well traditional landmarks, based on inter-village agreements
- Classified land use based on land survey
- Created village's land use map
- Drafted rules on land use and other resource use
- Reported the completed results of Land and Forestland Allocation to stakeholders

Looking into the participation of local communities in implementation process, this research noticed that all decision making actually happened in the village, while most of the ideas on boundary clarification, land use type, and all land use rules are from the villagers.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research has analysed the different characteristics of the two communities on land use practice, livelihoods, socio-economic characteristics, and the participatory process of the communities during the Land and Forestland Allocation implementation. It seems that there has been very little movement of progress or change in the communities except for the indicator of household income, which has significantly increased.

Natural resource management has changed significantly due to the clarification of boundaries that has been made between villages and the National Protected Area. This makes communities lose control over forest and natural resources, which they have held for years. Villagers retained rights to access forest and forest resources, which offer them opportunities to collect products from those forest resources to supplement their incomes.

The traditional tenure system has been replaced by state law, which means that all of the villager's agricultural lands are officially recognized, offering so called "good security", but customary land tenure practices actually remain hidden in the community. In these two study sites I found that the feeling of land security has not changed, and that villagers do not feel insecurity without legal documentation.

Since the responsibility of natural resource and forest management within their community has been transferred, this research observed that villagers have yet to have an emotional sense of empowerment over this management responsibility. Some of them thought they are "sample people" that have no need or capacity to manage the resources. What is clear is their own and their households' needs, and they look to see how their lives will improve. They have not really understood the aims of the policy.

This paper suggests a set of recommendations for further improvement of plan development at the district level, as well as for other rural development planners. The following recommendations are based on the information obtained from the findings of this research:

First, during the process of Land and Forestland Allocation, clearer land use planning research should be conducted before allocating land to villagers. During the survey, this research

found that some areas are not suitable for agriculture activities – due to poor soil, for instance. The three years period to develop the agriculture land is too short for farmers, since they need to improve the poor condition of the soil.

Second, the participation of villagers in the process is such that they sometimes feel that they are merely informed about what is going on with the project; to ensure full participation requires that villagers have a very clear definition of land use planning.

Third, all relevant organizations should provide more support to the activities of those implementing this policy – especially the agricultural movement. Related stakeholders, like the Agricultural Promotion Bank, should give farmers an opportunity for credit based on their proposed land use plan as farmers cannot currently use a temporary document as collateral to borrow money from banks. An agriculture product promotion plays a very important role in increasing household income, so it needs additional support in many ways, such as technical assistance, capital, and market development for selling their products.

I well understand that all of the recommendations mentioned above are not easily achieved, due in part to a lack of budget and a lack of skilled staff. However, I do believe in the importance of these recommendations. If the identified elements are not improved, the implementation could force villagers to return to the forest to conduct some illegal activities such as hunting or logging, to gain money for investing on their newly provided land in order to gain permanent rights to it.

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