



# REDD+ in Lao PDR: also a “plus” for forest dependent communities?

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# Outline

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- I. Introduction
- II. NEPL REDD+ project
- III. Further ensuring land security





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# INTRODUCTION

# REDD+ in Lao PDR



- Lao PDR a priority country for REDD+ implementation
  - High carbon stocks, 41.5% forest cover, 0.5-1.4% deforestation rate
  - Rural communities highly dependant upon forests for livelihoods
  
- Lao PDR taking steps to prepare for REDD+ implementation
  - Participant under FCPF and FIP
  - Established a REDD+ Taskforce (January 2011)
  - Plans to establish a REDD+ Office (late 2011)
  - Selected four official REDD+ demonstration sites



# Customary rights in Lao PDR



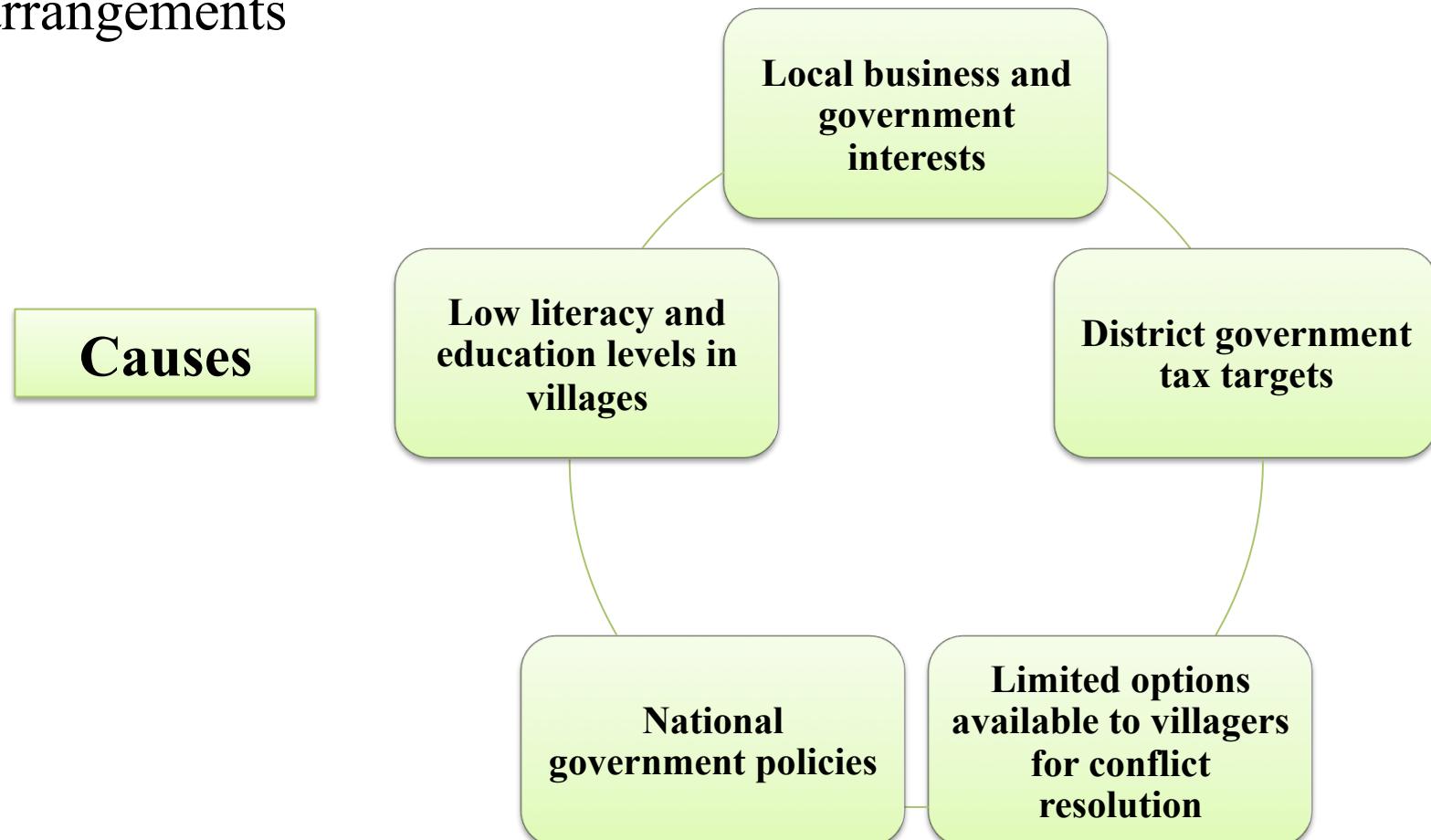
- 2007 Forestry Law
  - Recognizes customary rights to forests; however must be in accordance with existing laws and regulations
- 2003 Land Law
  - Does not appear to recognize customary agricultural practices
- 2007 Ministerial Instruction NLMA 564
  - Allows for titling of communal lands (right to protect and use)
  - Not all communal lands can be titled
  - Limited communal titling to date



# Land security in Lao PDR



- Numerous examples of rural poor suffering hardships due to displacement, appropriation of their lands or unfair contractual arrangements



# National policies affecting land security



- 1990s: stabilizing shifting cultivation became a major GoL policy goal
- Initiated Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUP-LA) program
  - Designated specific village areas to varying degrees of use and protection
- Much criticism lodged against this program
  - Limited government capacity to implement
  - Not participatory
  - Poor coordination with other policy initiatives (e.g. village relocations)
  - Intentionally reduced agricultural land in upland areas
  - Led to appropriation of “non-productive” village lands

***It is justifiable to be concerned whether REDD+ implementation will benefit local communities***



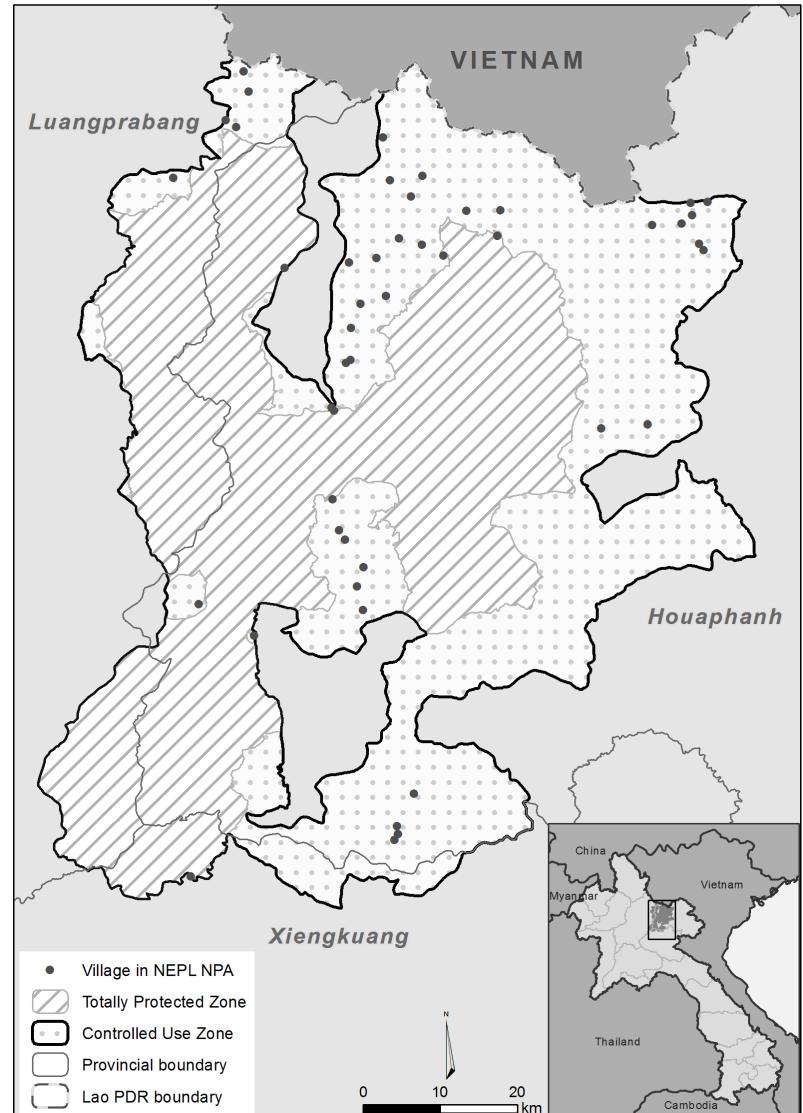
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# NEPL NPA REDD+ PROJECT

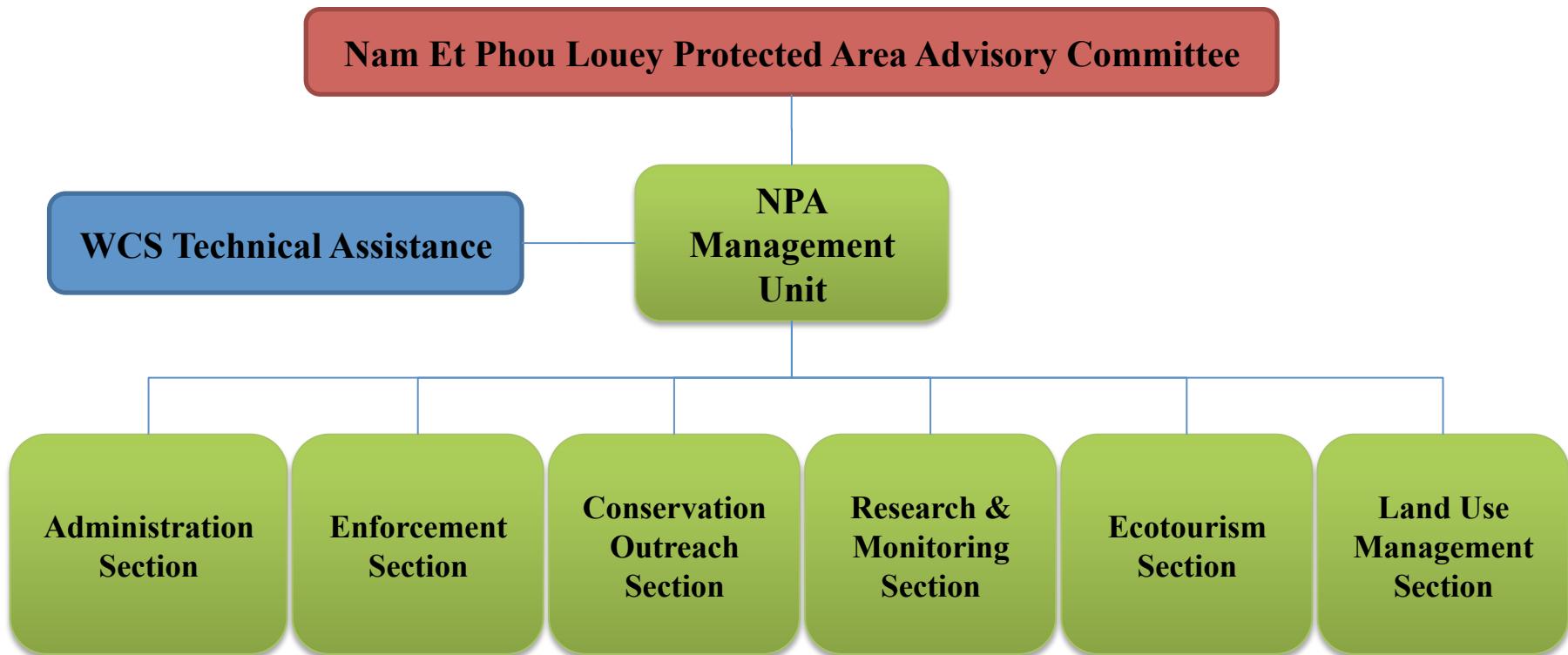
# Nam Et Phou Louey NPA



- 595,000 ha
- High biodiversity values
- Established in 1993, WCS technical and financial assistance since 2003
- Zoned into a core zone and controlled use zone as per 2007 Forestry Law
- Illegal hunting, unsustainable harvesting & habitat destruction are main threats to NEPL's biodiversity



# NEPL NPA management structure



# NEPL REDD+ project



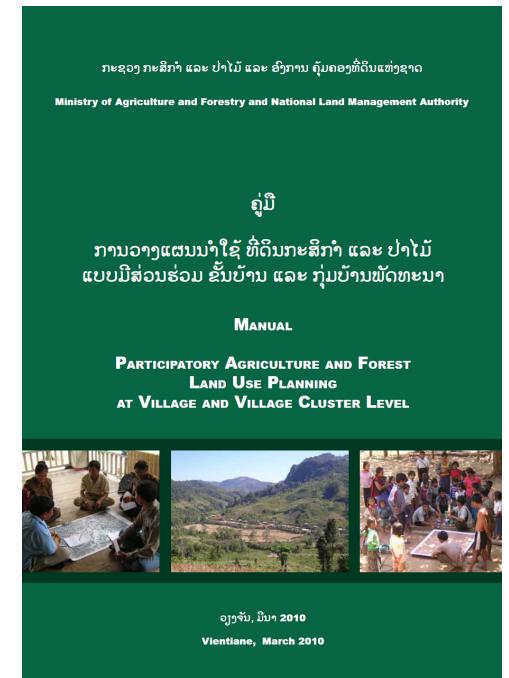
- Currently assessing the feasibility of a REDD+ project in NEPL NPA (VCS & CCBA)
- Project aims to increase community land security and decrease loss of forest carbons stocks
- Project expects to deliver a diverse set of incentives at the community level
  1. Participatory land-use planning (PLUP)
  2. Agricultural extension
  3. Conservation agreements
  4. Capacity building on land and resource rights



# NEPL REDD+ project incentives – 1



- Participatory Land Use Planning (PLUP) will be implemented in REDD+ target villages
  - Conducted according to GoL issued 2010 PLUP manual
- PLUP is expected to result in improved land security
  1. Clearer boundaries
  2. More realistic land allocations
  3. Establishes village level monitoring teams
  4. Grants communal land titling



# NEPL REDD+ project incentives – 1 (cont.)



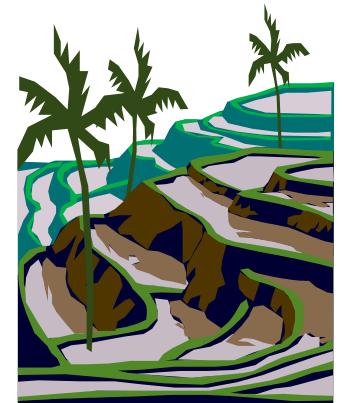
- Challenges to making PLUP fully effective
  - 1. Land Law (2003) is prescriptive about the amount of land allocated for agricultural purposes
  - 2. PLUP plans receive low legal recognition
  - 3. Communal titling is limited to only certain types of village lands



# NEPL REDD+ project incentives – 2



- Agricultural expansion is the main deforestation driver affecting NEPL NPA
- More sustainable forms of agriculture are essential
  - E.g. biochar, no-till agriculture, crop diversification, minimization of soil erosion and small livestock production
  - Agricultural intensification has proven challenging in Lao PDR to date
- Project expects increased time and financial investment to result in more active management, monitoring and protection of lands



# NEPL REDD+ project incentives – 3



- Establish conservation agreements with REDD+ target villages
- Agreements outline conditions under which community will receive compensation for forest protection
  - Developed as part of FPIC
- Community receives payments for performance
- Further incentivizes communities to manage and protect their land
- Revenue distribution % and mechanism is yet to be determined
  - Depends upon GoL decisions



# NEPL REDD+ project incentives – 4



- Conduct outreach and education campaigns to increase community understanding of land and resource rights
- Increased understanding will result in more informed decision making and promote greater engagement





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## FURTHER ENSURING LAND SECURITY

# REDD+: project vs. national approach



- NEPL REDD+ project has integrated community benefits and land security from the earliest stages
  - WCS priority and requirement of the CCB standard
- No guarantee that GoL will take the same approach
  - Likely dependent upon UNFCCC safeguard requirements
- Lao PDR REDD+ demonstration projects play an important role informing the design of the national REDD+ framework
  - Show that improved land security can deliver REDD+ goals

# Recommendations

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In the immediate term, the NEPL REDD+ project and other REDD+ demonstration projects in Lao PDR should support the following:

## ***1. Ensure titling of collective lands is completed***

- Promote greater urgency to title agricultural and forest communal lands
- Attempt to expand communal titling to all village communal lands

## ***2. Establish a conflict resolution process***

- Official channels through which land conflicts can be addressed
- Establish third party channels in case government is cause of conflict

## ***3. Clarify carbon rights***

- Eliminate possible competing claims to carbon and therefore land
- Ensure benefit distribution mechanism reflects carbon ownership



Thank you

