



## **CATCH-UP PROGRAM**

### **COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF TRAJECTORIES OF CHANGE IN THE UPLANDS**


**From research & development projects to a broad-based impact on livelihood systems and public policy**


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## **The Agrarian Transition in Lao PDR**

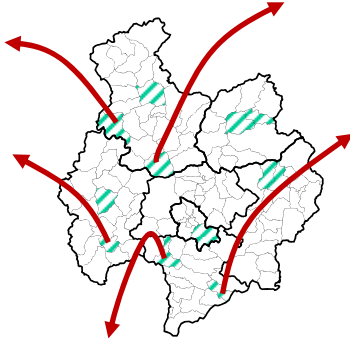
- Shift from subsistence agriculture to market-oriented production systems
  - A **policy push** aimed at reducing poverty and stabilising shifting cultivation
  - A **market pull** coming from increasing regional demand for agriculture products
- Big challenges for policy research and AFPRC
  - Design support policies for national and local stakeholders to adapt to the on-going changes,
  - Build the capacity of researchers to tackle new issues by designing and implementing new methodologies.







## Scientific challenges for Policy Research in Lao PDR

- High diversity of natural and human environments – **heterogeneity**





Diversity of resources endowment  
+  
Local institutions  
↓ **← Policy reforms**  
Diversity of local adaptation  
Diverse trajectories  
Complexity



## Scientific challenges for Policy Research in Lao PDR



- High diversity of natural and human environments – **heterogeneity**
  - There are as many local stories as local studies. Empirical evidences always available to support any assertion
  - No “one size fits all” policy
- **Managing diversity**
  - Network of case study sites to capture diversity
  - Need to build a comprehensive methodological framework for generalization of context specific research findings






## Scientific challenges for Policy Research in Lao PDR


- High diversity of natural and human environments – **heterogeneity**
- Rapid pace of change – **uncertainty**
  - History cannot be predicted, e.g. economic crises 1997, 2008, fluctuating prices of commodities, etc.
  - Research results already obsolete when released
- **Managing uncertainty**
  - Learning how to live with uncertainty is a major challenge in ecosystem and social science
  - Monitoring rapid changes - modeling for multi-stakeholders scenario analysis



## Scientific challenges for Policy Research in Lao PDR



- High diversity – **heterogeneity**
- Rapid pace of change – **uncertainty**
- External influences on development – **interdependency** (globalization)
  - Changes cannot be understood without knowledge of external drivers (e.g. market in China, global conventions on biodiversity, climate change)
  - Need to explore outside of the system: multi-scale and multi-sectoral approaches






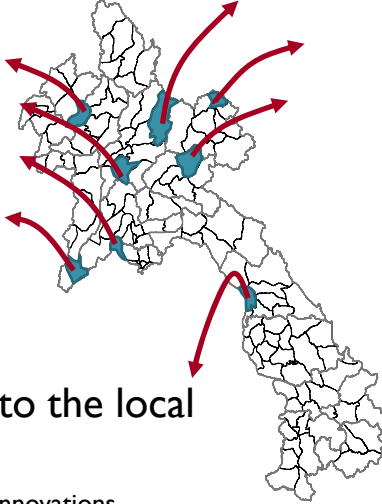
## Questions of method


- How can we efficiently study changing systems at multiple nested scales?
- How can we communicate the implications of trajectories of change - both past and future?
- How can we replicate success stories? Why are some pathways explored and others not?
- How can we scientifically assess the “roads not taken”?



## Hypotheses


- A typology of land use trajectory is feasible
  - Some villages evolve along the same trajectories, some on different trajectories
  - Differences due to the stages on an evolutionary path
- Policies can be adapted to the local trajectories of change
  - Target different sites with relevant innovations
  - Support policies adapted to local circumstance





## Research principles

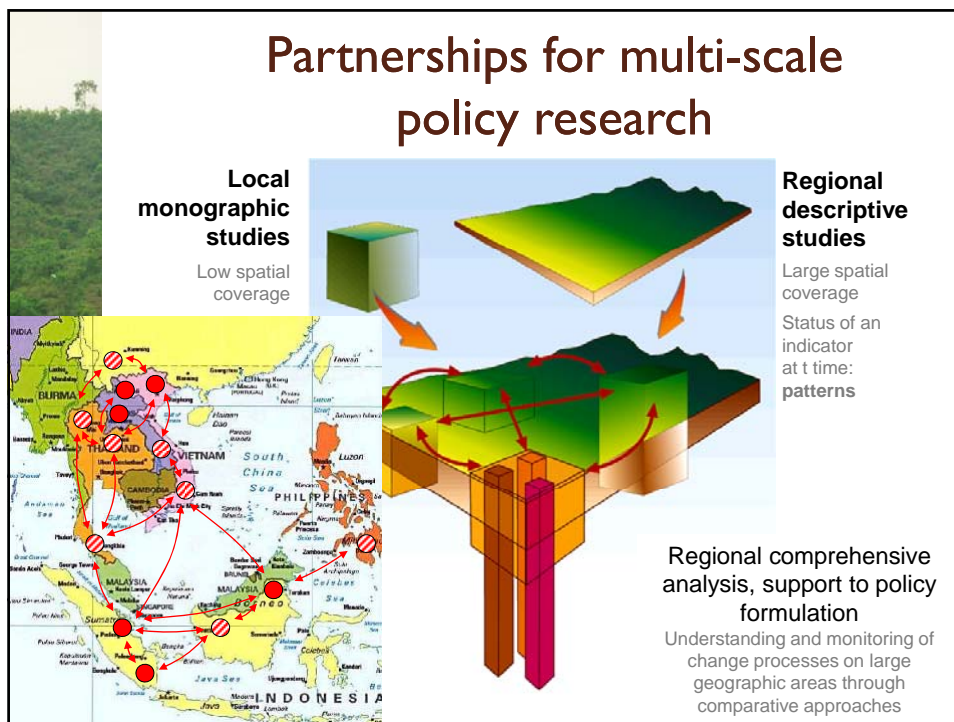
- **Systems approach – interdisciplinary team**
  - Coordinators NAFRI / IRD-CIFOR(2): agricultural systems specialists
  - Research staff NAFRI-PRC (3): geographer, agronomist, economist
  - Support staff CIFOR (1): agronomist
  - Students Intern'l: MSc geography (1), ecology (1), forestry (2)
  - Students Laos: BSc agronomy (3)



## Research principles


- **Systems approach – multidisciplinary**
- **Partnership mechanisms (model for PRC)**
  - Very limited financial and human resources => rely on partnerships for field activities: consultancy work or joint project proposals (Catch-Up is not a project but a program = set of small projects)
  - Learn lessons from other people's experiences => knowledge capitalization about agroforestry, community development, conservation agriculture, etc. from other projects
  - Allows larger geographic coverage and multi-scale analyses

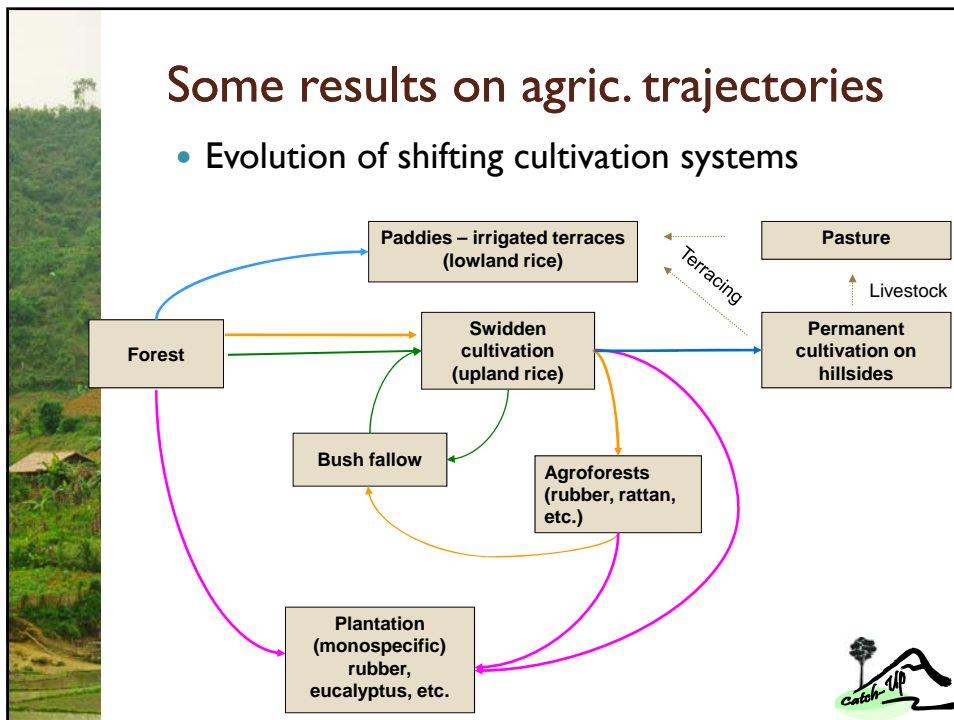
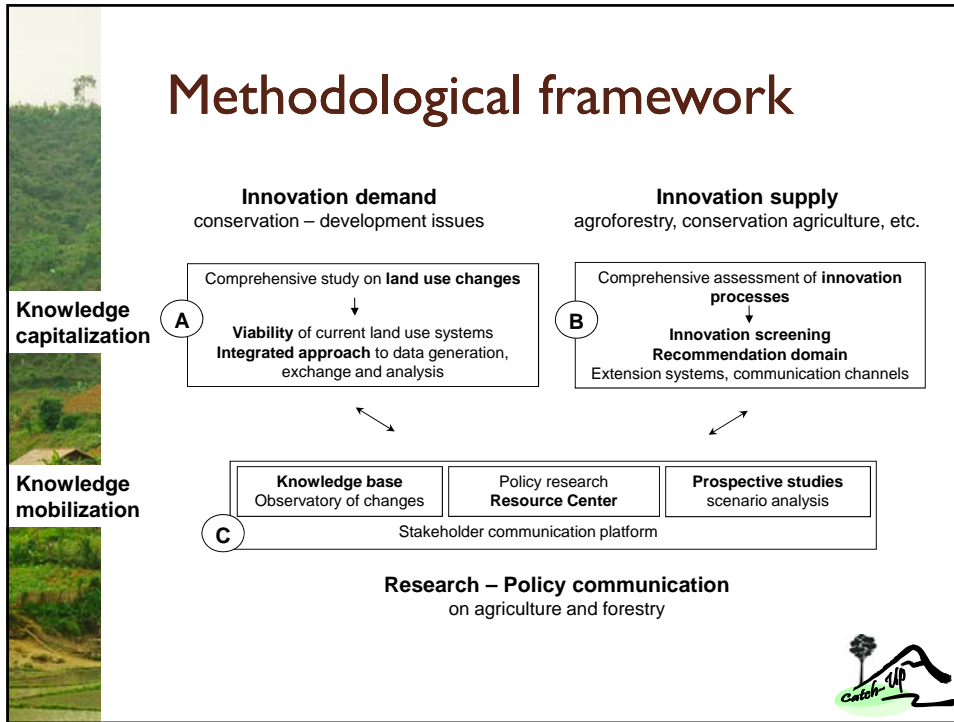




### Research principles

- Systems approach – multidisciplinary
- Partnership mechanisms
- Action-research
  - Active participation of local and regional stakeholders in the research process
  - Participatory monitoring methods, scenario analysis, negotiation platforms, etc.





## Some results on agric. trajectories

- What is the fate of forests along the different trajectories?
- Should we wait until primary forests have vanished before proposing livelihood alternatives?
- Or accompany the on-going agrarian transition along desirable pathways?

Forests

PES

Hydro-power

Ecotourism

Agriculture


Off-farm

Time

## Some preliminary results presented today



- Dynamics of rubber expansion (market pull)
  - High uncertainty – collective learning process => lessons for policy research
  - Emergence of rubber regimes as a result of local negotiations (need to empower local people for equitable negotiation)





## Some preliminary results presented today

- Dynamics of rubber expansion (market pull)
- From farmers' groups to agricultural cooperatives (policy push)
  - Lessons from farmers' groups experiences in Laos: keys for successes and failures
  - Empowering stakeholders through capacity building



## Some preliminary results presented today

- Dynamics of rubber expansion (market pull)
- From farmers' groups to agricultural cooperatives (policy push)
- Development – conservation issues in a period of transition
  - Knowledge integration (multi-scale & multi-sectoral) over large geographic areas
  - Need a shift from village based policy making to meso-scale policies (i.e. kumban, district)

