

Formulation of Participatory Monitoring on Land and Water Quality for Land-use Planning Program in Laos

Summary

Land use planning (LUP) is believed to be able to increase biodiversity, agriculture production and livelihood in remote areas. But until recently, it is eminent that in many developing countries that apply the LUP, environmental degradation continues and much of people living in rural and forested areas remain the poorest of the poor. The impact of LUP is poorly evaluated and understood. The objective of this study is to formulate an effective and applicable participatory monitoring system in the context of LUP in Laos. Participatory Action Research (PAR) was used to accommodate different stakeholders, i.e. communities, local government and researchers, in developing the monitoring system and integrating both scientific and local knowledge. The research was carried out from 2009 to the end of 2010 at seven villages and one sub-village in Khumban Muangmuay, Viengkham district, Laos. The results show that participatory monitoring could inform management decision in LUP by showing what trends are happening in the productivity of land for rice field agriculture and in the quality of drinking-water. Participatory monitoring provides alternatives for local government to cope their lack of human and financial resources by sharing the activities at village level to the communities and by reducing the cost. Integration of scientific and local knowledge brings more accurate, faster, cheaper and applicable system of monitoring to the impact of LUP on land productivity and drinking water quality. Participatory monitoring able to facilitate all stakeholders' perceptions, knowledge and responsibilities in informing decisions of land management, in the context of LUP, that will conserve environment, alleviate poverty and reduce negative impacts on local livelihoods.

Keywords: participatory monitoring, land productivity, drinking water, land use planning.