

From: NAFRI webmaster [noreply@nafri.org.la]
Sent: 09 July 2006 06:35
To: Philip Thomas
Subject: NTFP Newsletter #7 (July 08, 2006)

NAFRI SNV NTFP Newsletter
 July 08, 2006
 Issue No. 7

Welcome to the 7th NTFP newsletter!

This month's issue has come later than before due to initial lack of inputs. Each newsletter needs to have at least a handful of stories before it can be sent out, which means that some inputs maybe a little older than others, for this our apologies.

For future issues we would like to encourage the readers of the NTFP newsletter to send us their news. This can include a short update about their project or programme or any other interesting information of value for Lao NTFP stakeholders. We are especially interested to hear from our Lao readers and we encourage you to send in information and new to promote activities and introduce your organisation.

For any other suggestions on how to improve the newsletter (both content and format) please send an email to Martin Greijmans: mgreijmans@snvworld.org. For your information we will try to bring out a newsletter once a month.

All previous versions of the Newsletter can be downloaded from the NAFRI website at: http://www.nafri.org.la/05_news/news/SNV/snv.htm

Looking forward to your feedback.

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Features in this month's e-letter

1. Update on NAFRI, NUOL, SNV NTFP Handbook and Interest Assessment

We are currently carrying out an assessment to get a better idea of the your interest in purchasing/using the NTFP Handbook. The handbook is currently being finalized and is an easily readable guide for non-native English readers, well illustrated and attractively presented. The book is a result of a collaborative process and is a joint publication of FRC/NAFRI, NUOL and SNV.

The purpose of the handbook is to serve people and organisations that are:

- Developing potential NTFP business opportunities, like businessmen who can look up where certain NTFPs are found in Laos and where supplies are likely to be sufficiently available owing to sustainable management;
- Dealing with NTFP conservation concerns and aiming to improve local people's livelihoods. Development workers active in rural development and conservation projects will now be able to identify best practices to further promote improved harvesting and management of NTFPs.
- Involved in NTFP research and education. College and university students can be introduced in the basics regarding the roles and importance of NTFPs in rural communities' livelihoods, in the national economy and in natural resources management.

The NTFP handbook counts over 300 pages and introduces the role and importance of NTFPs in people's livelihoods and their development as well as for conservation. The main part of the book provides detailed profiles for over 100 NTFPs such as foods, medicines, fibres, extracts and ornamentals, including products used for local peoples own consumption or sold for cash. Each NTFP profile contains information on use, description of the NTFP/plant species, distribution and ecology, harvesting, processing, marketing, conservation issues and some propagation advice, and more. For mushrooms, rattans, bamboos and orchids a larger chapter is written as a large number of these products are collected have a similar use, ecology, harvesting and challenges.

For samples of toutiang, mak chong and orchids see pdf files on the NAFRI website at:
http://www.nafri.org.la/05_news/news/SNV/Lao_NTFP_handbook.html

To facilitate search for specific NTFP use or for Lao NTFP names multiple indices are included at the end of the book. For NTFPs included in the handbook please find these in the ntfp list.

Please be aware that first an English version will be available, but in the near future it is expected that a Lao translation of the book will also be developed. An interactive CD may also be developed to package the handbook. Considering these options, we would to know from you how many copies you need in your organisation of an English handbook or cd. Since production will ultimately be limited we hope you can provide us with realistic numbers. Further, to avoid disappointments we hope that you can coordinate this enquiry within your organisation as well as for your direct counterpart organisation.

We will do our utmost best to accommodate your wishes; however this also depends on the budget made available for publication and distribution.

Could you please fill in the details below and send it to Martin Greijmans at mgreijmans@snvworld.org.

Thank you very much for your cooperation and we look forward to the finalisation of the book and the distribution of it to your organisation.

Survey information

Name of Organization:

Contact Person:

Address:

Email:

Tel:

How many copies of the handbook would you be interested in (Lao/English):

How many copies of the NTFP CD would you be interested in?:

Remarks:

[Back to top](#)**2. Notes on Aquilaria species in Lao P.D.R.**

The genus *Aquilaria* belongs to the family Thymelaeaceae, a cosmopolitan family with about 50 genera and over 700 species, the majority of which occur in Australia and Africa.

There are 17 species of *Aquilaria* distributed from NE India to Indonesia and Papua and New Guinea. Four species have been recorded from Thailand and four, including the recently described *Aquilaria rugosa* K.Le.Cong & Kessler, from Vietnam and Cambodia. Only one species (*Aquilaria crassna* Pierre ex Lecomte, *maiketsana*, *mai dam* or *mai hom*) has been recorded from Lao P.D.R. This species is highly valued for agarwood, and natural stands have been heavily exploited throughout its range. *A. crassna* is listed as critically endangered on the IUCN Global Redlist and the whole genus has recently been listed under Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The increasing rarity and continued high demand and value of agarwood has also led to a marked increase in interest in plantation establishment. As part of this process provenance trials have been established since 2002 by the Forest Research Center (FRC) at their research station in Nam Xuang. These trials include seed collected in Thailand and Vietnam as well as several provinces from within Lao P.D.R. One of the provenances used was sourced from the Pak Kading area in Bolikhamxai. Young trees grown from this seed started flowering for the first time in June 2006. Specimens from these trees were collected by FRC staff working on the Darwin Initiative project *Taxonomic Training in a Neglected Biodiversity Hotspot in Lao PDR*. This project is training researchers from FRC and the National University of Lao PDR in botanical identification; one of its aims is to produce a Preliminary National Checklist and Threatened Plants List by March 2007. Closer examination revealed that the specimens were *Gyrinops vidallii* Pham Hoang Ho and not *Aquilaria crassna*.

Gyrinops is a small genus that is closely related to *Aquilaria*. Difficulties in distinguishing the wood of *Gyrinops* from that of *Aquilaria* led to the inclusion of all species from both genera on the CITES Appendix II. Nine *Gyrinops* species are known, one from Sri Lanka and seven from Indonesia and New Guinea. *G. vidallii*, described in 1986 from specimens collected in two areas of Vientiane Province, is the only species known from mainland SE Asia and is endemic to Lao P.D.R. The main difference between the genera is that *Gyrinops* flowers have 10 stamens whereas *Aquilaria* has only 5. A more complete description of the differences is due to be published soon in the Lao Journal of Agriculture and Forestry of NAFRI.

Authors: Philip Thomas, Coordinator, *Taxonomic Training in a Neglected Biodiversity Hotspot in Lao PDR*; Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh; P.Thomas@rbge.org.uk

Banxa Thammavong, Forest Research Center, NAFRI.

[Back to top](#)**3. Results of the PoSa Sub-sector Workshop, Luang Prabang**

For more information and the workshop report, contact: Souvanpheng Phommasane, sphommasane@snnworld.org

The first *Posa Sub-sector Workshop* was held at Luang Prabang, 19 May 2006. The workshop was organized by the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute (NAFRI), with support from CIAT, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and SNV the Netherlands Development Organization.

43 persons participated in the workshop: trading companies, government staff in Luang Prabang, farmers and development projects. Participants came from: Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, Bokeo, and Sayaboury, also a small number of participants from Vientiane.

The workshop's objective was to give the opportunity to the *Posa* trader to exchange ideas, experiences and trade information. Secondly was to identify key issues and develop strategies to develop the *Posa* sub-sector in Lao PDR. The specific objectives of this workshop were:

- Provide opportunity for interested parties to meet, be informed about the *Posa* market chain, thus developing a common understanding for improving the sub-sector.
- Additional information is provided so that a full and correct understanding of the *Posa* market chain is gained, which will then opportunities to be accurately identified, and action to achieve these.
- Identify strategies and an immediate action plan to improve the *Posa* sub-sector that benefits all actors in sub-sector.

A range of presentations were made including:

- Production and collection at village level, new options of *Posa* plantation and method of collecting, benefits and impact for villagers
- Market-chain system in Lao, markets in Thailand and China, stakeholders involved, tax and fees system, with new statistic from traders:
 - Phongsali selling to Luang Prabang 500 t
 - Oudomxay selling to Luang Prabang 150 t
 - Huaphane selling to Luang Prabang 100 t
 - Luangprabang sold to Thailand 3,000 t
 - Sayaboury selling to Thailand 500 t
 - Bokeo selling to Thailand 20 t
 - Selling to China 600 t
- Marketing and value-adding in Laos, volumes and trends of paper production in Laos
- Value-adding in Thailand, opportunities for grading and paper production in Laos
- Opportunities and improving quality supply in Luang Prabang
- Selling graded *Posa* to Thailand, Europe and Japan, advantages and disadvantages, standards, demands and past experiences
- Experiences of setting up farmer groups in Sayaboury province, selling corn to Thailand

Discussions were held with businessmen and traders, a farmer group and government staff group with regard to experiences in growing, drying and boiling of *Posa*.

Key outputs of the workshop included:

- Identification of the key actors in northern provinces for the *Po Sa* sub-sector
- Data and information sharing with the attempt to complete mapping of stakeholders including all functions, trends, seasonality and the main requirements of the sub sector.
- The participants see diverse opportunities and demand for the next actions e.g. more detailed market chain study, domestic absorption, creating differentiated chains by (a). Existing product penetrating the new regional markets and (b). Diversified products.
- Development of an action plan.
- Trader will further discuss and try to find ways to set up a Posa association
- Set up quality standards according to market demand
- Grading of Posa, example: A,B,C
- Selected representatives of traders do a market survey in Thailand in 3rd week of June
- Agreed for another workshop in Vientiane after the survey

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4. Review and action plan Meeting on Rice Research 2006-2010

A Review and action plan meeting on rice research was organized on 25-26 May 2006 at Soil Survey and Land Classification Center's meeting room which is located inside National Agriculture and Forestry Institute (NAFRI) in Vientiane, Lao P.D.R.

The purpose of this meeting was to review three years of outputs and the 5 year action plan on rice research and capacity building within the National Rice Research Program's networks such as the Agriculture Research Centre (ARC), the Northern Agriculture Research Centre, Luang Namtha, the Agriculture Research Station, Houykhoth, Luang Prabang, the Thasano Seeds Multiplication and the Rice Research Station, Savannakhet, and PhonNgam Agriculture Research and the Seeds Multiplication Station, Chapasak. The two day meeting brought together more than 21 participants from various stations, centers and NAFRI.

The results on rice research undertaken throughout Laos from 2003 to 2005 showed that varietal improvement program has become a vital part of National Rice Research Program's activities, there are such 122 crosses for both wet and dry seasons have been developed from ARC and there are 310 fixed lines for rainfed lowland environment and 100 fixed lines for irrigated lowland environment. In addition, TDK 6 and TDK 7 have been released. Since 2005 three new rice varieties have been released from Phon Ngam Agriculture Research and Seeds Multiplication Station such as PNG 3 glutinous rice is a non-photo sensitive variety with 130 -135 maturity days, PNG 5 glutinous rice with 125 -130 maturity days, it is vigor plant, suitable for fertile soil and PNG 6 glutinous rice with 130 -135 maturity days, it is aromatic, soft and high yielding in dry season. Since 2003, TSN2, TSN 3 and TSN4 have been released from Thasano Seeds Multiplication and Rice Research Station. In addition, nine non-glutinous promising lines with 120-130 maturity days and one aromatic non-glutinous line have also been developed.

Under NRRP's frame work, rice research activities have been concentrated on three environmental ecosystems such as rainfed lowland environment, rainfed upland environment and irrigated lowland environment which being conducted in five regional research centers and 17 provinces in Laos. During the wet season, there had been more than thousand successful demonstration sites of promising lines and improved varieties in farmers' field, more than two hundred demonstration sites in dry season for continuous dry and rainfed seasons during 2003 to 2005.

Integrated Farming Systems

There have been on-farm demonstrations on the rice production technologies, on-farm integrated farming practices e.g. fish ponds, pigs, ducks, and non-rice crops, and farm economics of production of alternative crops in the dry season irrigated environment.

Integrated pest management

There had been two trials such as a screening of promising lines for resistance to main pests and diseases, and a study the effectiveness of botanical insecticides to control rice bug, gall midge and golden apple snail.

Upland systems

Lao Gene bank has collected over 7,300 upland varieties, observation Nursery 1 (200-300 varieties), observation Nursery 2 (22-45 varieties), multi-location trials (2-16 varieties), and on-farm testing (3-6 varieties).

Participatory Varietal Selection (PVS)

An introduction of PVS system to farmers in Northern provinces has been widely developed, which researchers and farmers have evaluated rice varieties in both on-station and on-farm activities by including Integrated Upland Agriculture Research Project (IUARP) as a key site for varietal evaluation. Since 2001, there have been over 100 IUARP farmers involved in varietal evaluation activities.

Fallow improvement

To address the problems of declining soil fertility and weed pressure due to shortening fallows; pigeon pea, soybean and paper mulberry have been selected as cover crops and an economic aspects.

Capacity building

It is a vital part of project component which has been assisted to development of research capacity as well as human resources. There are currently 5 Ph. D students doing their research, 2 MS.c and 4 BS.c students have already completed their degree, which have been funded by Lao-IRRI project and collaborative sectors. In addition, there have been more short series training courses conducted such as training in country/outside country, on-job training including Statistics, Scientific writing, Rice production for researchers, Rice production for extension, English language training and Nutrient management, workshops and conferences.

The effect of increasing lowland area on upland rice cultivation

Development of 1 ha of rainfed lowland paddy can lead to a 7 ha reduction in upland rice area. In addition, development of 1 ha of irrigated lowland paddy can lead to a 14 ha reduction in upland rice area.

Strategy action plan in 2006-2010

Overall objectives of five years plan for varietal improvement will be to improve rice production technology to increase rice productivity, maintain rice self sufficiency and develop rice production technology for processing/commerce. Quality improvement (taste, seed technology) will be concentrated on rice quality for food, processing and export (definition of quality standards will be developed by NAFRI). Eating quality will be looking at aromatic rice, black rice nutrient content and chemical characterization. Breeding program will focus on seed purification of traditional aromatic rice varieties such as Homnangnounge, Chaosameua, Kainoileuang, homphouthai, homethong, khaoleumpoua and will then look at early and medium maturity, which will expect to achieve cold tolerant varieties, pest resistance such as Gall midge, Brown plant hopper, and disease resistance such as bacterial leaf bright, blast and Bakanae.

Crop protection

1. Determine economic thresholds for the most important pests and diseases in Lao P.D.R.
2. Assist breeding unit in screening for pest and disease resistance and improve lab screening methods.
3. MeungNga and MakYe will be used as a genetic source in the breeding program for pest and disease resistance.
4. Identify effectiveness of botanical insecticides to control pests and diseases.

Nutrient management

1. Sustain productivity of soil nutrients.
2. Develop high yield technology package.
3. Diversify rice-based cropping system.
4. Define the methodology of organic rice production.

Farming Systems

1. On-farm demonstrations of rice production technologies.
2. On-farm demonstrations of integrated farming practices.
3. Dissemination research output to farmers' community through different extension media.
4. Farm economics of agricultural production.
5. Alternative crops in the dry season irrigated environment.
6. Intercropping / multiple cropping systems.
7. Develop post harvest technology.

Human resource development

1. More training will be conducted in Lao language for farmers, extensionists and entrepreneurs.
2. More BS.c, MS.c and Ph.D degrees will be supported.
3. On-Job training will be conducted in country and outside country (IRRI head quarters, Philippines).
4. Provide training to institutional organizations.

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5. International Conference on "Sustainable Sloping Lands and Watershed Management"

International Conference on "Sustainable Sloping Lands and Watershed Management" (SSLWM 2006)

Date 12-15 December 2006

Venue: Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

The main purpose of this conference is to explore different strategies to promote environmental sustainability and enhance livelihoods of rural communities that inhabit upland areas. SSLWM 2006 will highlight emerging planning and management strategies for the sustainable management of upper catchments. A particular focus of the conference will be on strategies that both promote environmental sustainability and address the socio-economic circumstances of marginalized rural communities that inhabit these areas.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

- Encourage sharing of recent research findings regarding sustainable management of upland farming system to enhance local livelihoods and environmental sustainability
- Better understand the range of policy support interventions to promote the adoption of sustainable practices in upper catchments
- Improve networking and learning between researchers, development practitioners and policy-makers in the region.

The conference welcomes both papers and presentations. Deadline for submission of abstract is September 15, 2006

For more information, see http://www.nafri.org.la/05_news/workshops/sswm2006/sswm2006.htm

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Events and news from partners**6. New report: Study on State Land Leases and Concessions in Lao PDR**

Title: Study on State Land Leases and Concessions in Lao PDR, Land Policy Study No. 4 under LLTP II (in English and Lao)

By Gunda Schumann, Pheuphanh Ngaosrivathana, Bouakham Soulivanh, Somboun Kenpraseuth, Khamdeng Onmanivong, Khamthanh Vongphansipraseuth
And Chithasone Bounkhong

To get a copy contact. Florian Rock at: Florian.Rock@gtz.de

This document, the fourth study on relevant land policy issues funded by the Lao-German Land Policy Development Project (part of Land Titling Project II), reviews the background of this dilemma, while presenting options for transforming state land into capital. This study has been conducted by a team of five national consultants from GoL line departments (DSA, DoNLUPaD, DoL, DGM, and LD) supported by two GTZ consultants (one national, one international).

The objectives of this study are to provide advice to the Government of Lao PDR to help clarify options and alternatives for leases and concessions, further develop the procedures and review the legal framework, make policy recommendations, and draft sample contracts.

In recent years, Lao PDR has experienced an increased demand for its main national resource, the country's land. Vast areas of agricultural and forest land, rich in natural resources, give Lao PDR a special position compared to its neighbours. Investment in hydropower projects, mainly because of Nam Theun II, rose from US\$ 5.5 million in 2004 to US\$ 1,065 million in 2005, while mining, agriculture, and forestry investments peaked in 2004 accounting for US\$ 312 million, decreasing to US\$ 76 million in 2005. Very low earnings from state land leases and concessions indicate that GoL has not yet fully developed this income source. In 2004-2005, total revenues from state land assets amounted to US\$ 7.2 representing only 0.24% of GDP. To benefit from foreign capital inflows to the greatest extent possible, a sound investment regime - regulations on entry, land tenure and contracts, market oriented mechanisms for price setting, and monitoring mechanisms - have to be in place and managed well.

Without these, foreign capital inflows will remain low and impede development. Data and information gathered on the government's investment and monitoring regimes indicate that both need improvement. Regarding entry regulations, the 'one-stop-service' as intended by the Law on Promotion of Foreign Investment, seems not to be designed for investments needing state land because more than three permits are required to start a business. In addition, powers to conclude lease and concession agreements in agriculture and forestry are spread among various state authorities. LDSC and LPA might further exacerbate this problem in future. Furthermore, the allocation of different ceilings (financial investment and land size) for both investment approval and leasing and concession contracts to central or local authorities do not seem to be compatible.

Too restrictive ceilings like the rule on permissible land size for leases and concessions induce provinces to exceed their powers. A comprehensive land inventory is missing. Such an inventory should contain *inter alia* relevant data on existing lease and concession contracts and details on land that could be leased. Instead, bits and pieces of information about state land are with a number of line ministries, departments and divisions at central and local levels. Since these shortcomings slow down investment approvals, investors might have to search for suitable land on their own or to give up their investment plans in Lao PDR altogether.

Model agreements meeting international leasing standards are currently available only for concessions on hydropower. Other contracts for

leases and concessions using state land lack clarity and consistency. While 'lease' and 'concession' are not clearly distinguished terms, rights and obligations of both parties seem not always to be balanced. All contracts reviewed lack clear and enforceable clauses on breach of contract, compensation for damage, penalties, termination, and dispute settlement.

Furthermore, concession fee rates, usage charges for natural resources, and royalties set by law are not based on supply and demand. Different approaches applied in the provinces to determine fee rates do not seem to meet market standards. Granting land free-of-charge should be restricted to joint ventures when the land offered constitutes the GoL contribution to the project, but is entirely dispensable in the case of other domestic or foreign investments because the prospect for reasonable profit is deemed to be a sufficient incentive and enterprises should not be subsidised.

This study is part of a series of Land Policy Studies conducted in preparation of a coherent and comprehensive "National Land Policy Statement for Lao PDR" by 2007.

The following studies have already been published in this series:

No. 1: Study on Land Allocation to Individual Households in Rural Areas of Lao PDR; December 2004

Authors: Bouakham Soulivanh, Anothai Chantalasy, Phounsavat Suphida, Florian Lintzmeyer, Florian Rock

No. 2: Study on Land Markets in Urban and Rural Areas of Lao PDR; March 2005

Authors: Bouakham Soulivanh, Anothai Chantalasy, Phounsavat Suphida, Florian Lintzmeyer, Florian Rock

No. 3: Study on Land Tax and Fees Policy in Lao PDR; February 2006

Authors: Simon Keith, Pheuiphanh Ngaosrivathana, Bouakham Soulivanh, Onsy Phimsomphou, Chanh Denuthai

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7. Juth Pakai and UN development research award opportunity

The UN Country Team in the Lao PDR supports the production of a development journal called Juth Pakai, Perspectives on Lao Development. *Juth Pakai ('new thinking' in Lao) aims to stimulate dialogue on all issues* related to development in Laos. The journal disseminates knowledge and serves as a forum where debate and analytical thinking can be shared, while also promoting the goals and commitments embodied in the Millennium Declaration.

The journal, published around three times a year, seeks voluntary written contributions from the development community, including national and inter-national development practitioners, government officials, staff from bilateral and multilateral agencies and NGOs, journalists, academics, researchers or anyone with a keen interest in Laos. The journal is printed in English and Lao and is also available on the web at: www.undplao.org and www.unlao.org.

The UN in Laos sees this as an exciting opportunity for development practitioners and organisations to disseminate reports, studies and opinions on any aspect of the state of the development agenda in this country. All material submitted for the consideration of the Editorial Board should be in English or in Lao. Articles should be no longer than ten pages of A4. Brief opinion pieces and letters to the editor are also welcomed. Manuscripts should include a short summary (100-120 words) of the issues addressed and the most important findings, and a list of references where appropriate.

For full guidelines on writing for Juth Pakai, see www.undplao.org or e-mail laodevelopment.journal@undp.org, or write to: **The Secretariat, Juth Pakai, c/o UNDP, PO BOX 345, Vientiane, Lao PDR.**

Issue 6 covers:

- Community-Based Tourism in Laos: Challenges and Opportunities for Local Communities, Corinne Neudorfer
- Economic Integration and Social Development of Ethnic Minority Communities in Laos: Case Studies from Luang Namtha and Savannakhet, Andrew Wells-Dang and Buasawan Simmla
- Promoting Soybean as a Cash Crop: Determinants and Possible Impacts, Blesilda M. Calub, Daniel Talje and Khampou Phouyyavong
- The Lao PDR: Certified Organic? Rick Dubbeldam

Also:

The UN development research award opportunity is open for all Lao national who are interested in development issues and want to shape the future of the development in Lao. For more information please click on the link below and for more detail about the selection criteria and award please see the attached file

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8. New rubber policies needed

By Keutkhuanchai Malychansy

Source: 10/May/2006 KPL; May 11, 2006:

For more information on the Rubber Workshop Organized by NAFRI, NUOL and NAFES please go to http://www.nafri.org.la/05_news/workshops/rubber/rubberworkshop.htm

Rubber tree plantation areas in Laos are dominated by eight domestic and foreign companies with an average investment total of more than US \$800 million, according to Mr Sounthone Keptanh, Deputy Director of the Forest Research Centre, speaking during a workshop on Effective Rubber Development, which officially opened yesterday.

More than 150 representatives from China, India, France, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Cambodia and Laos met in Vientiane Capital at the Laos-Japan International Co-operation and Training Centre to discuss trends in the development of rubber production in Laos.

It was expected that all participants would take the opportunity to share their skills, ideas and experiences with Lao rubber producers concerning the processing of latex, and the improvement of the quality and standards of rubber production, as well as rubber plantation methods and market surveys.

The objective of the workshop is to gain a better understanding of the trends and issues in rubber development in Laos and the region, to identify technical options to strengthen smaller rubber production plants in Laos, and to develop areas of follow-up for both research and extension.

Participants would also gain more insight into issues related to identifying appropriate areas for planting rubber based on-ecological parameters, and to improve policy and institutional support for smaller rubber production plants.

The rapidly increasing demand for natural rubber is the result of world economic growth in heavy and light industry sectors in producing car tyres, electricity wire, and computer and household equipment products.

According to Mr Sounthone, foreign investors have flocked to Laos because of its tropical climate, suitable for planting industrial trees, especially rubber, eucalyptus, teak, sugarcane and agar wood trees.

He also said that most Lao territory was linked with many countries in south East Asia, including China, with similar social and cultural issues, conditions which have created a good environment for investors.

The Lao government was formulating new policies to meet the needs of foreign investors. According to the results of an informal survey on rubber tree plantations in Laos, disclosed yesterday, foreign investors dominated 70 percent of rubber tree plantation areas, with the remaining 30 percent still in the realm of domestic investors.

This influx of foreign investment has benefited the industrial tree plantation sector, however Laos was still facing a lack of human resources and experts to contribute knowledge and expertise in relation to sustainable rubber development for local rubber farmers in Laos.

The three-day workshop will run until 11 May and is being organised to assist Lao policy makers and agricultural officials at the national and provincial levels, by drawing on the experiences of other countries in South and South-East Asia.

9. IRRI Rice Knowledge Bank

Dear Colleagues,

We have more than 90 pieces of CD-Rom "Rice Knowledge Bank" version 4.2 2006 Jan 16. They are available for free. If you would like to get this CD-Rom simply contact Lao-IRRI Project (Sone Mosky)

Sone Mosky
Lao-IRRI Project
P.O. Box 4195,
Vientiane, Lao PDR.
Tel/Fax: 770082, mobile: 5519441
Email: laoirril@laotel.com

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10. Ecologie et productivité du mûrier à papier (*Broussonetia papyrifera*)

Quentin Rouveiroles completed a traineeship with IRD and has written a report (in French) on the ecology and productivity of Paper mulberry near Ban Lak Sip and Nam Ou in Luang Prabang. This paper can be downloaded from the NAFRI website at:

Summary:

A major objective of the Lao government is to reduce the need for shifting cultivation in upland areas. As a consequence alternative agricultural practices are being investigated. One study is trying to understand the role posa can play in improving soils in upland rice areas. Through a literature study and interviews the added value of posa in shifting cultivation areas is being investigated in Luang Prabang and Pak Ou districts, in Luang Prabang province.

Spontaneous growing or inter planted posa in upland rice areas has both agronomical and economical advantages. It improves the soil (nutrients, water holding capacity), soil structure. On humid and sandy soils it does not suffer any ecological stresses and can easily outcompete weeds, and does not like teak cause soil erosion. The report also touches a little on the marketing aspects of posa, but realizes that much more work needs to be done, especially on added value of the processed bark.

To download the file go to: http://www.nafri.org.la/05_news/news/SNV/snv.htm

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11. Weekly News Bulletin on Medicinal Aromatic & Dye Plants (MADP) Sector by MAPSCON (Medicinal Aromatic and Dye Plant Stakeholders' Consortium), New Delhi, India

MAPSnews is an initiative by MAPSCON (www.mapscon.com) a multi-stakeholder, membership-based umbrella organisation meant to serve the relatively undeveloped but hugely promising sector of medicinal, aromatic and dye plants, to provide latest contextual information across the world on the happening in the MADP sector. Our associated publication MAPSprofit, provide weekly market information from across India on current market prices and MAPSfin, a monthly information bulletin on financial opportunities in the sector. Subscribe now to get yourself updates on the sector.

MAPSCON's principal aim is to constructively, creatively and sustainably explore and utilize the abundant natural wealth that medicinal, aromatic and dye plants represent, with a view to providing a strong base to this sector and helping it find a firm footing on the global map.

So write to us to subscribe or advertise with us or to know whether the market you deal with features in our list of editions (for details refer to MAPSnews - Issue 04)

For general information on the newsletter, list and administration of your subscription, Please write to us at info@mapscon.com or visit us at: http://mapscon.com/mailman/listinfo/mapsnews_mapscon.com

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12. The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR)

The International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) is an international organization dedicated to improving the social, economic, and environmental benefits of bamboo and rattan. INBAR connects a global network of partners from the government, private, and not-for-profit sectors in over 50 countries to define and implement a global agenda for sustainable development through bamboo and rattan.

You can also subscribe to INBAR News at: <http://www.inbar.int/>

13. Website on bamboo and rattan in crafts making

For your information have a look at this website for **bamboo and rattan in crafts making**:

<http://www.royalroads.ca/programs/faculties-schools-centres/non-timber-resources/resources-publications/conference-workshop-proceedings/Conference-NTFPVictoria-2005-Symposium.htm>

14. Other links (also mentioned in previous newsletters)

ELDIS (development, environment, global): <http://www.eldis.org/biodiversity>

FAO (forestry, NWFP, agriculture, global): www.fao.org/forestry/

Overstory (agroforestry, global): <http://www.overstory.org>

MekongInfo (participatory natural resource management, Lower Mekong Basin countries): <http://www.mekonginfo.org/>

NAFRI (agriculture, forestry, Lao PDR): <http://www.nafri.org.la>

RECOFTC (community based natural resource management, training, SE Asia and Pacific): <http://www.recoftc.org>

SNV (capacity building, NTFPs, governance, tourism, marketing, Asia): www.snvworld.org

- <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/snv/snv-asia-forests/>
- <http://www.dgroups.org/groups/snv/snv-asia-marketaccess/>

The Rainforest project (conservation, development, global): <http://www.therainforestproject.net/>
WWF (sustainable forestry, conservation, global): <http://www.panda.org/>
Vietnam IUCN NTFP project: network@ntfp.org.vn

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About the NAFRI-SNV NFTP Newsletter

The NFTP newsletter was established to improve the sharing and exchange of information regarding NFTP development in Lao PDR. It is part of NAFRI's and SNV's overall goal to stimulate partnerships and cooperation to assist better in different development activities in Lao PDR. The aim of the newsletter is to provide a forum to inform, or make requests from interested stakeholders in the field of rural development and conservation in Lao PDR, and with a particular interest in NTFPs (livelihood, development and conservation).

For more information contact:

Martin Greijmans
NFTP Adviser
SNV
Northern Agriculture and Forestry Research Center
Huay Kot, Luang Prabang
Email: mgreijmans@snvworld.org

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