

Participation and Community Engagement of Water Resources Management: A Case Study of Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project, Phaoudom District, Bokeo Province, Lao PDR

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Abstract

This study is about community engagement in irrigation water resources management. It describes the socio-demographic and economic profile of the respondents in the study area; it documents the household and community level activities that the farmers and farmer-leaders practices are engaged in the Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project; it determines the level of participation of farmers in managing water resources in the Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project; and it recommends an action plan for community engagement in water resource management to improve the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation scheme of the Water Users Group (WUG) in the village.

The study was conducted in Phaoudom Village, Phaoudom District, Bokeo Province, Lao PDR with 66 survey respondents and nine (9) key informants. The results of the survey were analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e. frequency, percentage, mean, and range). Results from key informant interviews (KII) were noted and discussed.

The respondents were adults, dominantly males, moderately educated, natives in Phaoudom, and have medium households. They are farmers by occupation; considered as poor, and in subsistent level in rice production despite having the irrigation system. At the household and community levels, the respondents have practices that are helpful towards attaining community engagement in water resources management of the Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project. For instance, they are responsible water users and managers. They had high level of participation in all stages when the project was firstly established, and also during monitoring, and evaluation stages. This indicates that they are responsive to the improvement of the operation and management of the Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project. The respondents stated some recommendations on monitoring and evaluation approaches of the Nam Haad Left Irrigation Project in the village — this points out that the operation and management of the project needs improvement. This study proposed an action plan that has expected outputs of setting up the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation schemes that will eventually become positive for the WUG of the village. Particularly, the action plan, when implemented, can be expected for budget for a cropping season, guidelines on election of officers, implementation plan for a cropping season, monitoring and evaluation tools, and vision-mission-goals of the Phaoudom Village WUA.