

# **Project Title: Conservation of aquatic resources in northern Vietnam through promotion of community co-management**

## **Social Assessment (including Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework) for CEPF**

### **1. Background**

The project was developed based on the findings of our Thai Baan researches in Da Vi commune and Na Hang town, Tuyen Quang province, Vietnam. Da Vi is a commune of Na hang district with total population of 4,862 people (950 households), of which 72.6% is Tay ethnic people<sup>1</sup>. The rest is Dao and Hmong. There is only one ethnic Kinh family (4 people) in the commune. The fishing community in Na Hang is ethnic minority Tay. They have been living along the Gam and Nang rivers in Tuyen Quang and Cao Bang provinces for generations. Their livelihoods still depend on the fishing production in these rivers. Our researches show that since the fish production has been reduced significantly, recently, people tend to use more environment-unfriendly fishing tools, hoping to catch more fish each time. The overexploitation of these resources by using electric fishing gear in the past few years has significantly contributed to damaging the richness of the ecosystem and biodiversity of the rivers. Similar to our other researches, the research in Na Hang town found that 55% of fishing gear was traditional and environment-friendly, while the remaining of 45 % include electric fishing tools and other forbidden tools. These destructive fishing tools destroy young and small fish and ruin the river-bed vegetation. This rate in Da Vi commune (our current project area) is 58 % and 42 % for friendly and unfriendly fishing tools, respectively. The statistical data has indicated that destructive fishing practices are becoming very common both in fishing and non-fishing communities. That tendency seems to be out of control.

Our research also reveals that even though this community has been living on fishing for generations, they do not have their own village regulations related to fishing practice. Since 2008 when we conducted our Thai Baan research in the area, the local research team in Na Hang town has proposed a model for community-based aquatic resources management.

Our proposed project aims to contribute to preventing the decline in aquatic resources in the area. The project objective is to phase out destructive fishing tools by promoting the co-management of river aquatic resources model.

### **2. Impact assessment**

We assume that the project may not bring adverse impacts to the local communities. However, there are potential difficulties for people who are currently using destructive fishing tools, because their income is likely to be reduced. Thus, in order to address this problem, WARECOD plans to facilitate change from within the community by facilitating discussions with the whole community, ensuring that views of all groups are taken into account during the formulation of village-level regulations on aquatic resources management, proceeding on a consensual basis, recognizing that consent must come from the community as a whole, not simply from outsiders.

There are a number of steps to be done to support the plan. We will start first with a baseline socio-economic assessment. We will consult with the community and have a survey to determine which fishing practices are adopted by which household, and how much income they receive from different activities. As a result, we will find out how many households whose income will be reduced by not using destructive fishing tools. This will create a baseline against which we could identify negatively affected households later on in the project and make informed decisions about what form and level of compensation would be appropriate. After the introduction of the village-level regulations, there are a few things can be done to support adversely affected people : 1) Together with other fishermen in the community, they will participate in the training course on community-based eco-tourism which may help to raise their income in the near future; 2) Their destructive

---

<sup>1</sup> Data provided by the Head of the Commune's People Committee in 2009

fishing tools will be repurchased by the project and they can use the money for buying new environmental friendly fishing tools or invest in other businesses; 3) They will also be given priority in our other projects in the region if there will be any; and 4) We will work with the local authorities and the communities to see if it's possible to have an agreement that affected households would be prioritized for support under government programs. If this will be the case, WARECOD will be monitoring implementation process of the agreement.

Training and communication activities are expected to raise people awareness and build their capacity in developing fishing regulations, actively participating in protection of the natural resources that their lives and livelihoods depend on. By raising the awareness of local people and other stakeholders on the importance of aquatic species in the lives and livelihood of river's dependent communities, the project has good impacts for local communities from a social perspective. As a result, the model, if successful, will significantly contribute to recovering aquatic resources in the area and accordingly sustaining local people livelihoods.

### **3. Free, prior and informed consultations with affected communities**

Community meetings will be held to present about the project and get people comments, feedback and suggestions on how to develop a model and fishing regulations. During our previous and existing Thai Baan researches, community meetings have already been undertaken Na Hang town and Davi commune to discuss about fish production decline, destructive impacts of electric fishing tools and the need to develop a co-management model for river water protection. Additional meetings will be held to get more local opinions in this issue. These are structured to be informative and participatory with discussions on aquatic resources conservation. Where necessary a translator will be used for community meetings to ensure it is clearly discussed in local language.

### **4. Grievance mechanism**

The project will create grievance mechanism, where any persons who are dissatisfied with the project or have a disagreement with any member of the project team are able to raise these concerns. We will produce posters, in the local languages (Vietnamese and Tay) containing a brief summary of the project's objectives and providing contact details of the WARECOD senior management in Hanoi and the CEPF-Regional Implementation Team at BirdLife. These posters could be displayed in prominent locations, such as the commune people's committee building and village leaders' houses, so that anyone who has a grievance that they do not want to discuss with the project team can raise it with staff in Hanoi.