



Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme

A summary brief of the regional training on economic valuation

Economic Valuation in Relation to Wetlands Management: Concepts, Methods and Techniques

A Regional Training-Workshop

10-15 October 2005
Place: Vientiane, Lao PDR
Venue: Novotel Hotel



MWBP organised a six day regional training-cum-workshop in Vientiane, Lao PDR from 10-15 October 2005, which was attended by over 30 participants from the four Lower Mekong Region of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The participants were programme staff of MWBP, government staff from each of the four countries, and representatives from partner agencies in the region (NGOs and INGOs), university professors (economists), and socio-economists and analysts working in conservation and rural development sectors. This was a kind of Trainers Training (TOT) type of training-workshop on the economic valuation of wetland resources.

The main purpose of the workshop was to strengthen the in-house capacity of the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP) and its partner-agencies regarding economic assessment and economic valuation of wetlands resources. In addition to presentation of basic concepts involved in valuation of wetland resources, and the key valuation methods and techniques used in past studies; five real-world case studies on wetland valuation were also presented and discussed at the workshop. These studies were carried out in the Mekong region earlier.

Valuation of non-marketed products and services of wetlands is a complicated process and it is not well understood by all wetland professionals (multidisciplinary experts) working in the conservation sector. Due to

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CAMBODIA



LAO PDR



THAILAND



VIETNAM





this, the workshop elaborated in details on selected methods and techniques used in the past, opportunities provided and limitations set by the economic valuation of wetland resources. Then, the facilitators also discussed on implications of information on economic valuation of better conservation and sustainable uses of the wetland resources.

In addition to the discussion on selected techniques and tools of economic valuation, the training participants were also taken to the That Luang marsh and a real-world application of the valuation methods was applied for evaluating the products and services of the That Luang marsh, a wetland location in sub-urban of Vientiane city. This was done using a rapid valuation assessment techniques and dividing the participants group into five separate groups. Later on, each of the groups presented the finding of the rapid valuation exercises.

On the sixth day of the training, detailed discussions took place about methodologies and analytical techniques of a new planned project on socio-economic assessment of small holder irrigation impacts on wetland resources. This is a regional scale project with field sites in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

This workshop was successful in fostering networks of partners and experts on economic assessment and economic valuation of wetlands in the Mekong region, which will facilitate for effective implementation of MWBP's activities in the subsequent days.

The importance of economic valuation of wetlands and other environmental resources, and level of curiosity of practitioners in the wetland and conservation sector, resulted in the training coordinators asking a senior professor of natural resources economics from Asian Institutional Technology (AIT, Bangkok), Dr. Ganesh P. Shivakoti, and other regional researchers working on wetland valuation exercises, to lead some of the critical methods and techniques on economic valuation related components of the training-workshop.

On the final day of the course (15 October 2005), Peter-John Meynell, Team Leader of MWBP, distributed certificate of attendance to each of the participants.

PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING

1. To strengthen in-house capacity of the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP) and its partner-agencies on economic valuation of wetland resources.
2. To illustrate basic concepts, methods and state of the art techniques and tools on economic valuation of the wetland resources.
3. To revisit and practice methods and techniques adopted in the selected case studies carried out in the Mekong region.
4. To enhance economic analysis and economic valuation capability of the practitioners who can later implement valuation exercises, and can also train and transfer skills to other fellows and staffs in the MWBP project sites in each of the four countries.



PROGRAMME

The training-workshop programme agenda was divided into three components:

- a) **Component A-** included illustration of basic concepts and techniques of economic valuation of wetland resources;
- b) **Component B-** included a field trip to a near by That Luang Marsh in Vientiane city and carrying out a rapid assessment of the wetland value and function, taking the marsh as a case study laboratory.
- c) **Component C-** included a detailed discussion on economic valuation and economic assessment component of a project on "irrigation impacts on wetlands"; a joint project between IUCN/MWBP and IWMI/Sri Lanka.

PARTICIPANTS

In total, over 30 participants attended the training-cum-workshop, which included 6-7 participants from each of the four country, Cambodia, Lao, Thailand, and Viet Nam. In addition MWBP staff, and partner government agencies, participants of the course were also from universities, INGOs and NGOs in the region.

TRAINING FACILITATORS

1. Dr. Madhusudan Bhattarai, Environmental Economist, MWBP, Vientiane, LAO, PDR.
2. Dr. Ganesh Shivakoti, Prof. of Natural Resources Economics, AIT, Bangkok, Thailand.
3. Mr. Phin Sopheap, Regional Training Coordinator, MWBP, Vientiane, LAO PDR.
- 4 Other guest lecturers such as Pauline Gerrard from WWF/Lao, Usman Iffithikar from REEP/IUCN-Sri Lanka, Richard Friend from MWBP.