

PRESS RELEASE

MASSIVE ROAD NETWORK THREATEN FOREST RESOURCES IN VIETNAM – LAO BORDER

By HCE Team

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Introduction

ASEAN Development Bank promoted a project to build 1,450 km road crossing four countries, including Vietnam, Lao PDR, Thailand and Myanmar, cutting down forest areas.

This study was implemented by Hue College of economics - Vietnam, National Research Institute in Laos and Asia Development Research Institute in Myanmar.

It soared to collect related information in 2005 and 2015 of forest dependent villagers with majority of ethnic minority in Quang Tri province - Viet Nam, Savanakhet - Lao PRD - Lao PRD and Myanmar

Key findings

- EWEC has made significant contribution to cross-border trading with mainly in the case of natural resource-related products, such as timber, gypsum and copper.
- EWEC also contributed in transport system improvement and social welfares allocation.
- *"Under the operation of EWEC, many products have changes to trade to market not only domestic but also export market. Given jackfruit tree wood as a good example, over last 10 years , it mainly served for the purpose of burning to cook, but at present, it can be an important material for producing furniture product that brings high economic value for households. Not only this, other products such as banana and ginger tend more changes to sale to export market"*. Said Mr Tuong, an officer of Huong Hoa district, Quang Tri province.

Key findings (Cont...)

- EWEC has also caused negative drawbacks on livelihoods of forest dependent villages and dramatically decline in natural forest resources.
- The reasons of forest resource decreasing came from the illegal logging to forest for timber product trading, forest land conversion for cash-crop development, and inequity in access to social welfares and natural resources between local residents and migrated households.
- *"There was no doubt that planning EWEC reaching and bringing various benefit for households but the give plan did not pay attention to forest management, this is a big gap that need to consider in next term"*. Said Chairman of Quang Tri province.
- with developing cash-crops with mono-crop farming model, forest - dependent villagers put more pressure on forest resources while dealing with more risks challenging their sustainable livelihoods such as international market price fluctuation, climate change risk and production risk.

Recommendations

- First, action plan for the EWEC should have included provisions to protect forest resources.
- Second, government should involve the local participation in forest resources management as well as application of Payment for environmental service in order to increase the local responsibility in forest resource protection.
- Government should also control free migration in forest-dependent villages in order to reduce pressure on natural resources, particularly forest resources.
- Finally, it is also important to encourage forest dependent villager adopting less forest dependent practices.

Planning for upcoming events

To announce our findings to boundary partners, we will plan to organize a meeting at 20 Sep 2016 in Thua Thien Hue province. At this meeting, it will welcome the attention of three research teams from Viet Nam, Lao PRD and Myanmar; policy implementers, policy makers and households among three countries.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR LISTENING