Lao PDR’s freshwater fisheries, unlike other countries marine fisheries, cannot move to waters beyond the Mekong River Basin if fish stocks collapse. Is Lao PDR’s fishing industry secure?

The proposed challenge: The Mekong River and People.

The proposed solution: Community Fisheries – ComFish: Supporting Food Security and Aquatic Biodiversity.

The People and the Biodiversity: Lao PDR is rapidly growing and large urban population results in high levels of water and groundwater abstraction to provide food and make fish accessible to up to 80% of households. Aquaculture provides 15% of the nation's protein. Lao PDR can sustain approximately 40 million fish if each family has access to 200 square meters of fish ponds. The 8 million households have a total of 300 million chickens. The government and the World Bank has estimated 80% of households participate in fisheries, accounting for around 20 percent of household income.

The Challenge: The Mekong River is the second largest river in the world. The Mekong River supports fisheries and aquatic biodiversity. The river system, especially in the lower Mekong Basin, is critical for food security, livelihoods, and biodiversity. The Mekong River and its tributaries provide life-sustaining benefits for local communities. The river is critical for local communities' livelihoods, providing food security for millions of people.

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Project Activities and Contacts.

COMMUNITY FISHERY (ComFish)
Supporting Food Security and Aquatic Biodiversity

The Mekong River and People.

The Mekong River and Its Tributaries: Lao PDR's freshwater fisheries, unlike other countries' marine fisheries, cannot move to waters beyond the Mekong River Basin if fish stocks collapse. Is Lao PDR's fishing industry secure?

The People and the Biodiversity: Lao PDR's rapid growth and larger population result in higher demands for food and fish. Lao PDR has access to 188 species of freshwater fish, 18 species of marine fish, and 136 species of freshwater invertebrates. The forests and rivers of Lao PDR are the source of livelihoods for over 20 percent of the population.

The Challenge: In support of a growing market demand, catch and trading is expanding with fish stocks. Lao PDR needs to ensure that people and livelihoods benefit from the expansion of aquaculture activities. The government has set a target of doubling fish production to 1,800,000 t and adding 1,000,000 ha of new fish ponds by 2030. Despite these efforts, the country's fishing capacity is limited by the lack of infrastructure and technology, and the need for improved management and planning.

The Proposed Solution: Community Fisheries, supported by a local community-based biodiversity initiative, can help secure the Mekong River Basin's fisheries. WWF is working with local communities to develop sustainable management plans for fisheries, focusing on the conservation of关键 aquatic species and their habitats, the sustainable use of natural resources, and the development of new income sources. The project aims to improve the livelihoods of local communities and conserve the biodiversity of the Mekong River and its tributaries.

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Project Activities: Community Fisheries III is currently under development, a new program focused on helping local communities manage their fisheries sustainably. The project aims to improve the management of local fisheries and support the development of community-based fishing networks.

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The Mekong River and its Tributaries: Lao PDR is one of the few countries in the world that is rich in freshwater biodiversity. It has over 200 species of freshwater fish, including many rare and endemic species. The river is a vital source of livelihood for many people, especially in rural areas. However, the Mekong River is facing significant threats from land clearance and deforestation, which are leading to a loss of habitat for fish and other species.

The People and the Biodiversity: Lao PDR has a high percentage of people who depend on fishing for their livelihood. However, the collapse of fish stocks is a concern, as it can lead to food insecurity and poverty. The government and NGOs are working to combat this issue through initiatives such as community-based fishing management and fish conservation projects.

The Challenge: In order to address the challenges facing the Mekong River and its tributaries, a comprehensive approach is needed. This includes the implementation of effective management strategies, such as community-based fishing management, as well as efforts to protect the natural habitat of fish and other species.

The Proposed Solution: Community-based management of fisheries in Lao PDR can help conserve and protect the river’s biodiversity. This approach involves involving local communities in the management of fisheries, which can lead to more sustainable practices and increased participation in conservation efforts. By working together, communities and stakeholders can develop effective solutions to protect the Mekong River and its ecosystems.
Project Activities and Contacts...

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**The Mekong River and its Tributaries**
- Lao PDR is the largest rice producer in the region. Lao PDR’s rice exports contribute about 15% of the country’s export revenue.
- Lao PDR is also the largest producer of rubber in the region. Lao PDR’s rubber exports contribute about 10% of the country’s export revenue.
- Lao PDR is also the largest producer of tea in the region. Lao PDR’s tea exports contribute about 5% of the country’s export revenue.

**The People and the Biodiversity**
- Lao PDR is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna, including many species that are found nowhere else in the world. The country’s biodiversity is threatened by habitat loss and degradation, as well as illegal wildlife trade.
- Lao PDR’s forests and other natural areas provide habitat for many species of plants and animals, including many that are threatened with extinction.

**The Challenge**
- Overfishing is a major threat to the country’s marine fisheries, which are an important source of food and income for many people in the country.
- Lao PDR’s forests and other natural areas are also under threat from deforestation and illegal logging.

**The Proposed Solution**
- Community fisheries management: By involving local communities in the management of fisheries, Lao PDR can help ensure that these valuable resources are protected and used sustainably.
- Mangrove restoration: By planting and protecting mangroves, Lao PDR can help restore important habitats for many species of plants and animals, and improve the country’s biodiversity.

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**COMMUNITY FISHERY (ComFish)**

**Supporting Food Security and Aquatic Biodiversity**

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**The Mekong River and People**

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