

DM2009 Project Summary

Project Number: 3616 Booth Number: 37

Floating Gardens and Granaries Seen as Solution for Flood-Prone Communities

COUNTRY: Laos

ORGANIZATION: SEDA-Laos

FUNDING REQUEST: \$200,000

OBJECTIVE: To empower local communities, allowing them to mitigate the worst effects of the annual floods by providing storage for food and floating garden agricultural design. Food storage and preservation will allow stocks of food to be stored to supply the hardest-hit families with essential calories; floating cultivation will mean that crops will not be lost for the next harvest. Cultivation of palm oil and vetiver grass will strengthen riverbanks against future erosion, and training will equip local farmers and community members with the expertise to implement a sustainable response to the increasingly unpredictable Mekong flooding.

RATIONALE: Sang Thong district is within the Mekong flood plain. Communities here lose food stocks, soil fertility, safe drinking water, and future crops due to annual flooding, which is worsening with climate change, and communities are becoming less able to respond to the changing nature of their environment. Lack of access to clean drinking water is an increasing health risk and economic burden on Sang Thong communities. Flooding of cultivated land damages cultivated crops, further exacerbating the situation. Soil erosion damages crops, and communities enter a cycle of hardship.

INNOVATION: This project uses clay water filters already successful in the Dominican Republic, Cambodia, and Lao PDR, and integrates them into a holistic project for sustainable adaptation to climate change. Prevention in the form of palm oil and vetiver grass cultivation on Mekong riverbanks will protect soil and provide income-generation once mature. Floating bamboo gardens will allow cultivation during floods, and food-storage facilities will enable food to be stored safely during risk periods. Innovative food-preservation techniques will result in a secure store of emergency food and also create income through food sales.

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