

Co-management (shared governance) of natural resources in the coastal area



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Published: 13 August 2015

Last edited: 19 June 2018

Summary

This solution aims to create a better governance (shared governance) of natural resources in the coastal zone of Soc Trang Province, Mekong Delta, Vietnam to protect its first line of coastal defense (mangroves) and to improve the livelihood of local communities through resource conservation.

Classifications

Region

[Southeast Asia](#)

Scale of implementation

[Local](#), [Subnational](#)

Ecosystem

[Coastal forest](#), [Mangrove](#), [Marine and coastal ecosystems](#)

Theme

[Adaptation](#), [Ecosystem services](#), [Sustainable fisheries and aquaculture](#)

Aichi targets

[Target 6: Sustainable management of aquatic living resources](#) , [Target 14: Ecosystem services](#)

Location

Soc Trang Province, Vietnam | Au Tho B village, Soc Trang Province, Mekong Delta, Vietnam

Challenges

Years of centralized resource management has resulted in alarming degradation of Vietnam's natural resources, especially at the coast. Local communities have turned passive as they are not interested/allowed to make any decision for resource conservation. Coastal resources therefore are used in an unsustainable way including mangroves – the very important element for coastal protection.

Beneficiaries

Poor communities living along the coast and authorities.

Building blocks

A negotiation process

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Co-management agreement

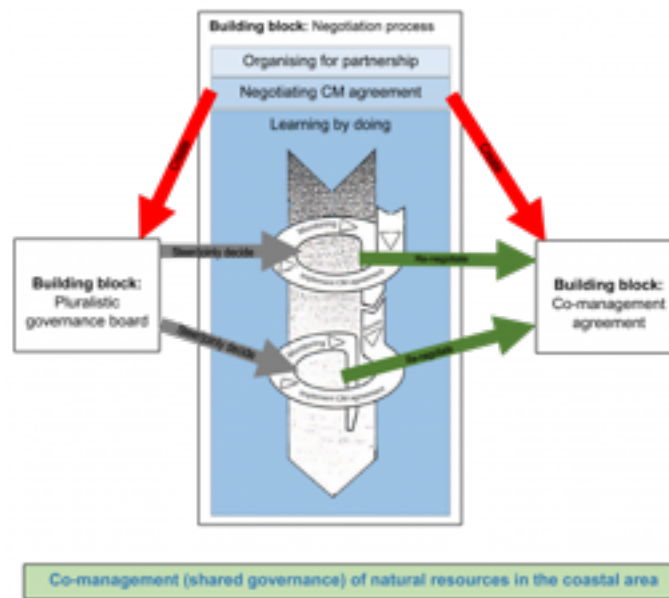
Co-management (shared governance) of natural resources in the coastal area

Pluralistic governance board

Co-management (shared governance) of natural resources in the coastal area

How do the building blocks interact?

The three building blocks are a negotiation process, co-management agreement and the pluralistic governance board. The negotiation process describes continuous loops of the learning by doing process in which the co-management agreement and the pluralistic governance board are essential elements. The first version of the co-management agreement, the result of initial negotiation cycles, should be jointly enhanced over time by the pluralistic board to better reflect and resolve what all stakeholders involved consider common challenges in their attempt to achieve more effective natural resource conservation. The continuous learning by doing among partners of the pluralistic board constitutes a key part of the negotiation process. The positive results of the partnership in terms of resource conservation and thus poverty reduction will, over time, create more momentum and a spirit for closer collaboration among stakeholders.



Impacts

Co-management helps to conserve mangroves in Soc Trang. The mangrove area in front of Au Tho B village has increased from 70 ha in 2008 to 118 ha in 2014. Local people involved in shared governance of natural resources have developed stronger resource ownership and have become more aware of the needs for and benefits of mangrove conservation. Governance of natural resources has been improving steadily. Local authorities and people are becoming partners working together and making joint decisions for natural resource conservation. Additional initiatives have been suggested to deal with local issues as the results of discussion among these actors.

Story

6 years ago, no one in Au Tho B could ever imagine the kind of work they are carrying out now in their forest such as setting up a mangrove snail farm. It has been a long process, starting with the establishment of co-management group in Au Tho B in 2009. Co-management (or more appropriately shared-governance) of natural resources is a setting in which local communities take part in the resource management decision-making process together with local authorities. It implies sharing power, responsibilities and accountability among key actors. This is very different from other attempts that the government of Vietnam tried in the past to ensure people's participation in natural resource conservation. Instead of a fixed benefit sharing scheme which is often used to give incentives to people such as the right to use forest land for aquaculture or a list of resources allowed to be collected, co-management focuses on dealing with issues recognized by all key parties through negotiation and learning by doing. For example, regulations to protect young seedlings at the seaward edge of the mangrove were jointly developed based on the understanding that healthy forests provide more aquatic resources which in turn provide additional income for all people in the community. These regulations ensure that people do not go that area during high tide and limited the size of fishing nets. Another example is who is in charge and what are the responsibilities of local people and forest rangers when dealing with illegal activities. All regulations have been negotiated and written down in the co-management agreement. The growing partnership between local people and authorities has recently allowed them to jointly address the topic of how to develop aquatic resources directly from the mangroves without harming trees. Coming back from a field visit sponsored by GIZ to a nearby province, local people started dreaming about growing mangrove snails in the forest. But instead of making individual farms, the group decided to work together and create a common farm for the benefit of the whole group. The local authorities also got inspired by the plan and helped to turn it from idea to reality. The farming can still go wrong, but the spirit of collaboration for a better life through natural resource conservation among local actors is becoming the local asset.

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Resources

Links

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Lloyd, R. (2010) Co-management in Au Tho B Village: A pilot Test for the Coastal Zone of Soc Trang Province. Deutsche

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Schmitt, K. (2011) Effective Mangrove Conservation through Co-management in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, pp 89-102. In: Spelchan,

Schmitt, K. (2012) Mangrove planting, community participation and integrated management in Soc Trang Province, Viet Nam. pp. 205

Organisations involved



On behalf of

BMZ



Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
and Development

Portals

This solution is published in the **Marine and coastal** and [Ecosystem-based Adaptation](#) portal.