



# How community based management of rattan contributes to conservation



Ban Soppouan is a village in Khamkeut district, Bolikhamxay province, central Laos. The area lies within the Greater Annamites mountain range, which is considered one of the world's biodiversity hotspots. 80 per cent of the village rely on forest resources (Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP)) for their livelihoods and for medicinal use.

## Land Use Planning of Soppouan Village, Khamkeut District Bolikhamxay Province, Lao PDR



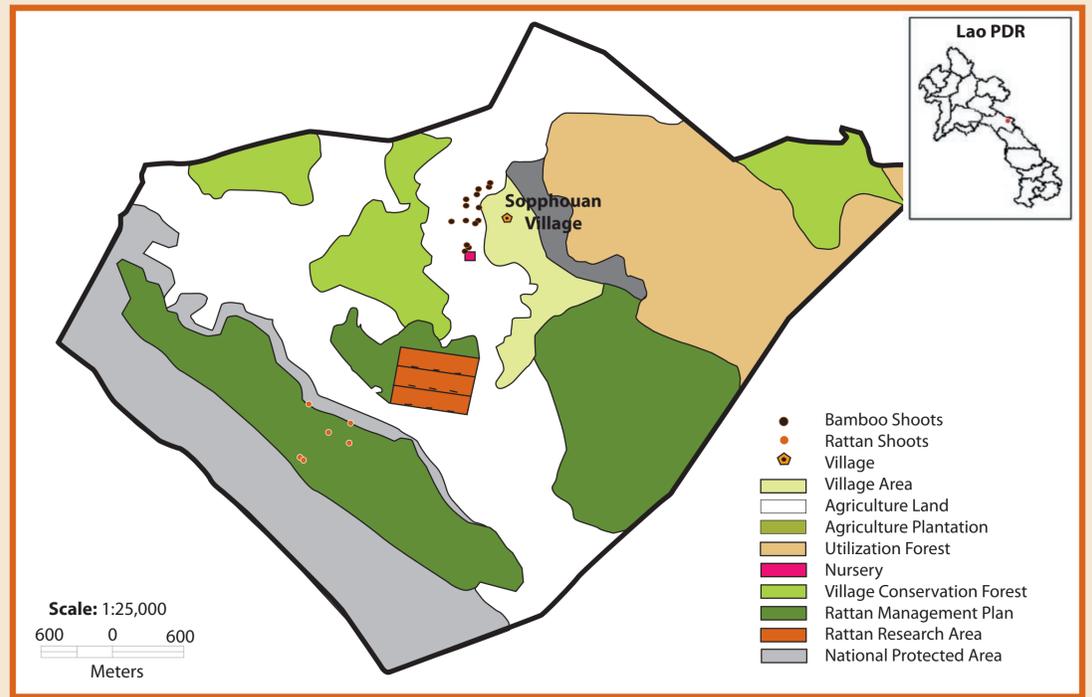
A rattan tree is, a climbing palm, in the forest



Non-timber Forest Products that local communities rely on collected from the forests



A villager's house that built from natural resources



Before the start of this project, wild rattan (main NTFP) was harvested in an anarchic way. After less than 2 years of support by WWF and local authorities, though, the village has made progress in solving both sustainability and commercial issues.

On the sustainability side, local people have built their own capacity to manage forest resources, and have adopted techniques for sustainable wild rattan harvesting. Ban Soppouan was the first village in which local communities have successfully set up and managed. The forests are managed to be FSC certified by 2011.

On the commercial side, the village set up a business structure and organised community members into enterprises for harvesting, producing and commercializing rattan. They have also built capacity among community members to improve the quality of production, so as to obtain higher returns.

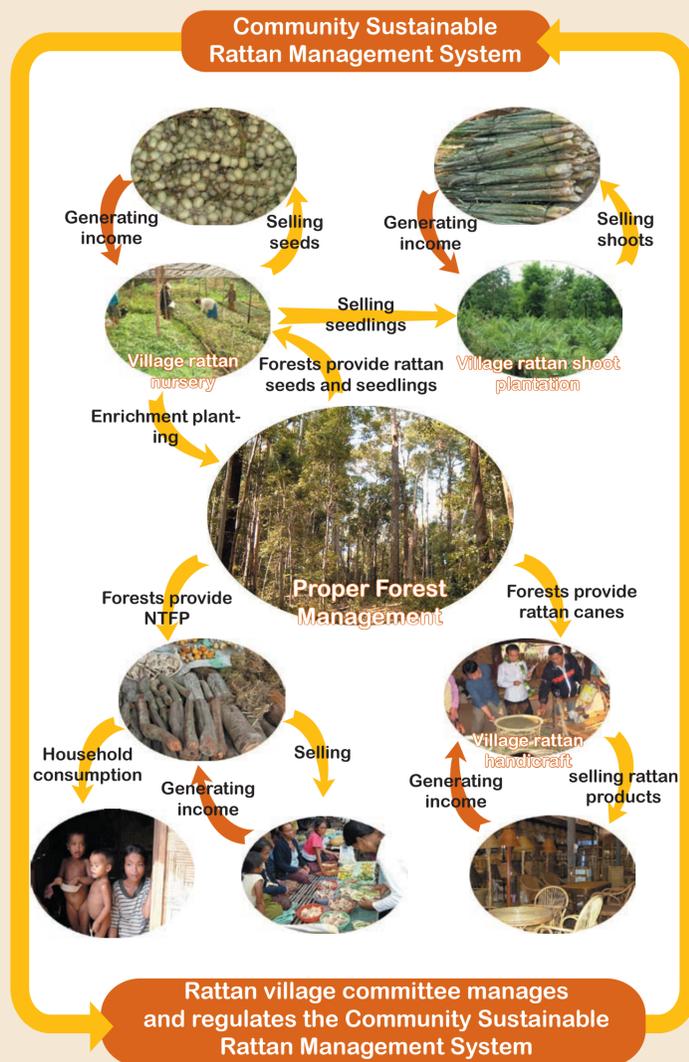
From biological surveys by the Société d'Histoire Naturelle Alcide d'Orbigny, 42 species have been identified, with a new species for the country.



Wildlife found in the rattan management area



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**“ After running this rattan project, I can see more wildlife moving in our forests. I can also see the starting point of forest restoration, tree seedlings are growing without any disturbance. ”**

said Mr Linthong La Intong, Head of Rattan Harvesting Group, Soppouan Village.

**Sustainable rattan harvesting functions as a safeguard against forest degradation. It provides long-term livelihood security to local people and adds value to natural forests, thus making local people good stewards and guards of their forestland and biodiversity.**

After applying a sustainable forest rattan management and harvesting plan for the first time, Ban Soppouan showed enthusiasm at seeing more animals in the forest just 12 months after the start of the project.

With this approach, incentives have been created for local communities to conserve the forest ecosystem where rattan is available. By conserving rattan resources within the forest, communities are able to conserve the forest ecosystem as a whole, and sustain local biodiversity.



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