Rattan Supply Chain

Background - Rattan, a climber from the palm family and a valuable Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) available in forests throughout the Greater Mekong region. Its stems are used for a variety of purposes, including food, shelter and making furniture.

Village communities in Lao PDR, Cambodia and Vietnam rely heavily on the rattan trade, with sales accounting for up to 50 percent of cash income in some rural areas.

More than 90 percent of rattan processed in the Greater Mekong originates from natural forest and is being depleted at an unsustainable rate. This overexploitation depletes an important source of income (from NTFP) for local people, which decreases incentives to protect forests from conversion and other unsustainable land use.

Approach - The WWF approach is structured in such a way that involves all actors of the rattan supply chain, from village producing groups to traders and processors to buyers (national and international).

Village - At the village level, much action is taken to strengthen the position of rattan harvesters and pre-processors. This is done through the development and implementation of sustainable rattan management plan with focus on rattan FSC certification, as well as through more efficient and value adding processing.

This approach provides a good entry point to engage with the governments more broadly on sustainable forest management.

Processing/trading - At the level of rattan Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the aim is to engage them in achieving cleaner production, leading to more efficient use of raw material, compliance with international product quality standards and ultimately strengthened competitiveness of the rattan sector. By producing green and clean product, SMEs will be able to access wider and more international markets.

Result in one site - With support from WWF, a rattan production group was set up in 2007 in the Community Protected Area of Preak Not (Kampot Province, Cambodia). More than 20 families are involved, and the group had set-up nursery, been trained on sustainable rattan resource management, and on processing techniques that can allow them to earn between 150 to 300 USD per year per family. The group was trained on handicraft production by a rattan processing SME member of the newly established « Cambodian Rattan Association ». This link between local communities and SME has been a win-win collaboration, in which harvesters and their families are now getting increased income from final rattan sales.

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.

WWF Greater Mekong Programme
P.O.Box. 7871
Tel. +856 21 216 080
Fax. +856 21 215 883
Thibault Ledecq, Rattan Programme Manager
thibault.ledecq@wwfgreatermekong.org
www.panda.org/greatermekong

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