



REPORT

JUNE

2011

THIS PROJECT IS
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ESTABLISHING A SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION SYSTEM OF
RATTAN PRODUCTS IN CAMBODIA, LAOS, AND VIETNAM

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Rattan Revival

A NEW APPROACH AIMED AT SWITCHING FROM OVER-EXPLOITED RATTAN RESOURCES TO A MORE SUSTAINABLE RATTAN SUPPLY CHAIN IS BEING INSTIGATED BY CONSERVATION CHARITY, WWF.

ITS OVERARCHING GOALS ARE TO MAINTAIN AND SUSTAINABLY MANAGE 50,000 HECTARES OF FORESTS IN THE GREATER MEKONG REGION, AND TO GET FSC (FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL) OR FAIR TRADE-CERTIFIED RATTAN PRODUCTS ONTO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET.

Map of the project area in the Greater Mekong region.

“That’s rattan”, says Bouaphet Bounsourath, Project Manager of WWF Laos, and points at a very long, thorny liana-like woody plant, clinging onto the trees. “The thorns can be quite nasty if you don’t know how to handle the plant. It doesn’t do any harm to the trees, but needs them to climb and grow.”

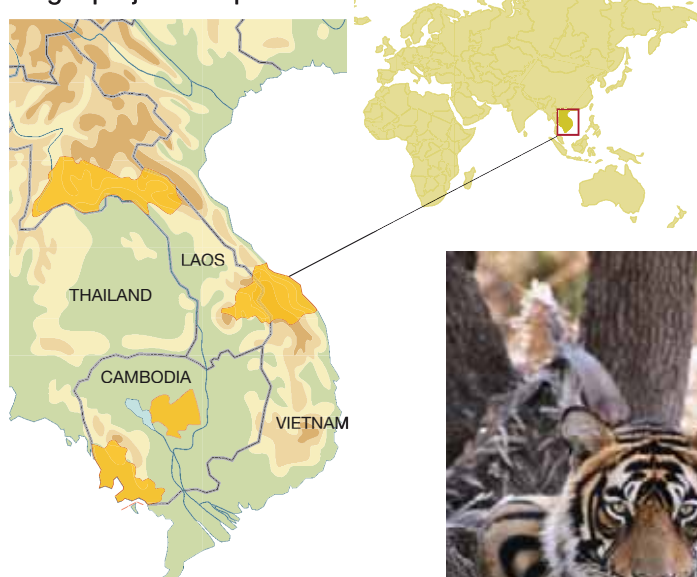
This part of the world, the Greater Mekong region, is one of the most diverse on the planet. Within the last decade, more than 1,000 new species have been discovered. The wet, dark and muddy tropical forests in eastern Laos are home to tigers, red-shanked doucs and a myriad of various bird and snake species. But this paradise is threatened by increasing pressure from unsustainable development, over extraction of natural resources, wildlife trade, and the devastating impacts of climate change.

The distinct woven mesh of rattan furniture is a familiar site in many homes, but few know where it comes from or what the plant actually looks like. Rattan is a multi-million dollar business, global trade is estimated at US\$2 billion (*International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, 2009*). It plays an important role in creating jobs and income for communities in the Greater Mekong and throughout Southeast Asia, as well as parts of China. Rattan may account for up to 50 percent of the cash income in a community.)

Forest cover in the Greater Mekong has fallen from over 55 percent in the early 1970s to 34 percent today. Unsustainable rattan harvesting leads to forest degradation and has a negative effect on rural people’s source of income. WWF wants to achieve a more sustainable rattan production that will ensure future rattan supply and prevent negative impacts on communities, companies, and nature.

Thus, WWF initiated a sustainable rattan program in Cambodia and Laos (in 2006), and Vietnam (in 2009) which led to the current project – “Establishing a Sustainable Production System for Rattan Products in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam” – with funding from the EU and IKEA. “The approach is based on switching from over-exploited rattan resources to a more sustainable rattan supply chain, addressing the whole chain, from

Target projects map



Rattan products in the making. The plant is an important source of jobs and income.

Rattan

- ▶ Rattan belongs to the palm family (Arecales or Palmae) and is found in Asia, Africa, and Australasia up to 3,000 meters above sea level
- ▶ Around 600 species and 13 genera of rattan are known; commercially used are mainly eight species.
- ▶ Certain rattan species are known to grow more than one hundred meters long
- ▶ The bark of rattan strands is peeled off and used for weaving, while the "core" of the rattan can be used for various purposes in furniture making.



Example of a of a stylish rattan chair.

seed to shelf", says Bouaphet.

The objective of the project is to strengthen the rattan industry in the three countries, producing attractive, high-quality products for the international market, and thereby contributing to the socio-economic development of these nations, based on a more sustainable production and responsible forestry.

The overarching goals are to maintain and sustainably manage 50,000 hectares of forests in the Greater Mekong region, and to get FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) or Fair Trade-certified rattan products onto the international market.

"Responsible traders, retailers, and consumers in Europe, America, and Asia play a key role in securing the future for rattan producers and forest resources in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam", says Simone Stammach, Market Links Manager at WWF Switzerland.

Within only 10 years, sales of FSC-products – made by WWF Global Forest & Trade participants in Switzerland – went up from zero to US\$ 283 million in 2009. This increasing demand shows that customers in Europe want certified products that are cleaner, improve livelihoods, and keep forests healthy.

"This makes sense from every angle – people, profit, and planet wise", comments Stefan Mundwiler of the retailer Coop, "consumers want to do the right thing". Coop in Switzerland has committed to purchasing some of the FSC-certified rattan. This world's first FSC certification of rattan forests is expected in early 2011.

According to Swedish furniture trader and writer Jenny von Platen, the trend is that rattan is returning "by leaps and bounds" to the international market.

Poly or plastic rattan furniture may be practical but they do little to guarantee an income for natural rattan producers and secure thriving living spaces for animals like tigers, elephants, and rhinos.

So far, some 20 companies in Laos, Cambodia, and

Vietnam are participating in the project. Together with these companies and around 100 communities, WWF is developing forest management plans, training processors and traders in cleaner production practices, supporting better legislation, and promoting FSC and Fair Trade certification of the forests as well as of the products.

Companies interested in supporting responsible forest management come together in the Global Forest and Trade Network, an effort initiated by WWF to promote forest-based products from responsible forestry, and facilitate contacts between businesses. This network currently exists in 32 countries.

The first rattan products made from sustainable rattan are expected to reach the international market in 2011. By 2015 WWF aims for half of the rattan industry in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia is more sustainable which will lead to environmental improvements, enhanced competitiveness, and increased income for communities.

"With this project, it is becoming possible for villagers to craft rattan products and conserve the forest at the same time. Now it is important to increase capacity in the communities and develop the marketing aspect of their rattan products. The locals are learning from the private sector," concludes Ratanak Ou, Project Manager of WWF Cambodia.

Come and visit them at this year's spoga+gafa Fair. The WWF booth is located in passage 3/11. ■

To learn more about the WWF/EU rattan program visit www.panda.org/rattan, www.switch-asia.eu and www.rattancambodia.com

For more information about FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and Fair Trade go to www.fsc.org, www.fairtrade.net and www.wfto.com

To learn more about the WWF Global Forest and Trade Network visit www.gftn.panda.org

ຈຳປາໄອລິດ Champa Holidays

Issue 03 Jan-Feb 2011



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Sustainable Rattan from Laos Reaches International Markets

"That's rattan", says Bouaphet Bounsourath, Project Manager of WWF Laos, and points at a very long, thorny liana-like woody plant, clinging onto the trees. "The thorns can be quite nasty if you don't know how to handle the plant."

This part of the world, the Greater Mekong region, is one of the most diverse on the planet. Within the last decade, more than 1,000 new species have been discovered. The forests of Laos are home to red-shanked doucs and a myriad of various species. But this paradise is threatened by over-extraction of natural resources, wildlife trade, and the devastating impacts of climate change.

Rattan is a multi-million dollar business; global trade is estimated at US\$2 billion (INBAR, 2009). It plays an important role in creating jobs and income in Laos and its neighboring countries. Rattan may account for up to 50 per cent of the cash income in a community.

Forest cover in the region has fallen from over 55 per cent in the early 1970s to 34 percent today. Unsustainable rattan harvesting leads to forest degradation and income loss for many people. WWF runs a sustainable rattan program to improve production, ensuring a future supply, and prevent negative impacts on people and the environment.

The design of rattan products is key for market access. The producers in the Greater Mekong region need to improve and develop attractive products that meet European market requirements. Therefore, WWF's rattan program has engaged with designers from Lund University in Sweden, one of the top three design schools in the world to help rattan entrepreneurs in the Greater Mekong region.



© Martin Harvey/WWF/Corbis



© Erik Kasper/WWF



© Therése Broberg

The Swedish designer, Ms Therése Broberg spent the past six months in Laos working with rattan producers, processors, and designers, to develop sustainable, clean, and innovative rattan designs.

"The rattan product designs from the Greater Mekong region need to improve if we want to be able to compete with China, Indonesia, and Malaysia," said Ms Sabine Gish-Boie, WWF's Rattan Programme Leader. The focus is on price, quality and design, she added.

The rattan entrepreneurs and Ms Broberg together have developed more than ten designs within six months. This includes different types of furniture, baskets, and accessories.



© Therése Broberg

"We have worked with simple, light shapes and tried to avoid nails, glues, and other materials. This is new in Laos as the traditional Lao design is "heavier". The reactions have been mixed but the interest is growing and many people want to buy the prototypes we have developed together with the factories", says Therése Broberg.

"What the designer has shared with us is knowledge and confidence that we can develop new attractive designs that meet our clients' requirements," says Mr. Xaykham Phetmanyong, the owner of Danlao Factory in Vientiane Province.

"It has been exciting to work both with European procurers and the Asian producers. In Europe, the deadlines are unreasonably tight. In Laos, the deadlines are unnecessarily long. From Laos, I have learned to stress less. To Laos, I have brought that design can lead to economic gains", Therése Broberg happily concludes.

WWF is working with local governments, communities, and entrepreneurs to sustain rattan resources, and to create links to the global market whilst the three designers' mission ended at the beginning of December.

This rattan project is co-funded by the European Union, KEA, and DEG.

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Nachhaltiges Rattan-Design aus den Mekong-Ländern

Sustainable rattan design from the Mekong countries



Die Mekong-Region ist eine der artenreichsten Regionen der Welt. Innerhalb des letzten Jahrzehnts sind mehr als 1.000 neue Spezies entdeckt worden. Unkontrollierter Rattan-Abbau und Klimawandel bedrohen dieses Paradies.

Rattan ist ein großes Geschäft. Der Welthandel wird auf 2 Milliarden US-Dollar geschätzt (INBAR, 2009). Rattan spielt eine wichtige Rolle bei der Arbeitsbeschaffung und kann bis zu 50 Prozent des Einkommens einer Gemeinde ausmachen.

Das nicht-nachhaltige Ernten von Rattan führt zu Entwaldung, Waldschäden und Einkommensverlust. Der **WWF** (World Wide Fund for Nature) betreibt deshalb **ein nachhaltiges Rattanprogramm**, das die **EU** und **IKEA** ko-finanzieren. Das Ziel: die Produktion verbessern und negative Auswirkungen auf Menschen und Umwelt vermeiden.

Das **Design** ist entscheidend für den Zugang zu den Märkten. Die Hersteller müssen attraktive Produkte entwickeln, die internationale Anforderungen erfüllen. Deshalb arbeitet WWF mit Designern von der Lund Universität in Schweden und Designern in der Mekongregion zusammen. Zu ihnen gehört die Designerin Clara Lindsten. Sie verbrachte die letzten sechs Monate in der Mekong-Region und arbeitete mit vietnamesischen Herstellern zusammen.

„Es gibt sehr viel Rattanabfälle, die für **innovative Produktdesigns** eingesetzt werden können“, sagt Clara Lindsten.

Möchten Sie Teil einer nachhaltigen Lieferkette in Laos, Kambodscha oder Vietnam sein? Besuchen Sie den WWF-Stand in Halle **10.1 FOY 01 + 03!**

The Mekong region is one of the most diverse on the planet. Within the last decade, more than 1,000 new species have been discovered. Sadly, this paradise is threatened by uncontrolled deforestation and climate change.

Rattan is big business. Global trade is estimated at US\$2 billion (INBAR, 2009). It plays an important role in creating jobs and may account for up to 50 per cent of the income in a community.

Unsustainable rattan harvesting leads to deforestation, forest degradation and income loss. The **WWF** (World Wide Fund for Nature) runs a **sustainable rattan programme**, co-funded by the **EU** and **IKEA**. Its aim is to improve production and prevent negative impacts on people and the environment

Design is key for market access. Producers need to develop attractive products that meet international requirements. That's why the WWF is cooperating with designers from Lund University in Sweden and designers in the Mekong region. Clara Lindsten is one of these designers. She spent the last six months in the Mekong region, working with producers in Vietnam.

“There is a lot of rattan waste, which could be used for **innovative product designs**,” says Clara Lindsten.

Do you too want to be part of a sustainable supply chain in Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam? Come and visit the WWF-booth located in **hall 10.1 FOY 01 + 03!**

WWF – for a living planet

WWF – for a living planet



WWF SUSTAINABLE RATTAN PROGRAMME
IN THE GREATER MEKONG REGION



Switch to Sustainable Rattan

“The Mekong region will soon deliver the first FSC certified rattan” said Ms Sabine Gish Boie, WWF’s Rattan Project Manager. “Few people know about incredible and beneficial material for both people and environment if produced, processed, and traded in the smarter way. Unfortunately deforestation and overharvesting are leading to declining rattan in the wild”.



© David Hulse/WWF-Canon

Healthy environment provides a safety habitat to biodiversity and people in this region



© Noy Promsouvanna

Involvement of community in rattan supply chain helps improvement on FSC and CoC approach.



© Clara Lindsten

New designs provide an opportunity for local rattan companies to draw European market interest.

The Mekong region is one of the most diverse places on the planet. More than 1,000 new species have been discovered within the last 10 years. Laos and Vietnam are the only homes to endemic mammal Saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) and a myriad of various species. Now this place is threatened by unsustainable human practices, over-extraction of natural resources, wildlife trade, infrastructure, and the devastating impacts of climate change.

In the Mekong region rattan plays an important role in creating job opportunities and income for local communities and rattan entrepreneurs. Up to 50 per cent of the cash income of communities derives from selling rattan handicraft products.

Unsustainable harvest of rattan leads to forest degradation and affects overall forest ecosystem. The use of toxic chemicals and petrol in the processing of rattan does not affect only soil, air and water resources, but also people’s health.

To ensure good forest management in the Mekong region and to address the great potential of rattan, it is necessary to change the current ways of production into a more sustainable long-term approach.

To achieve this, WWF is implementing the project “Establishing a Sustainable Rattan Production System in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam”. To ensure responsible forest management credible forest certification (Forest Stewardship Council) is implemented. WWF and its partner Vietnam Cleaner Production Centre (VNCPC) support rattan companies to make their production more sustainable through Cleaner Production techniques.

WWF is working with local communities and the

government of Laos to get more than 1,200 ha of rattan forest certified in Khamkeut District, Laos.

In Vietnam, the project is working with more than 33 rattan companies that have been committed to engage with cleaner and more sustainable production.

“Our goal is to keep our material sources everlasting, that’s why we think that the idea to develop a green supply chain is simply great and we are trying to establish a cooperation with companies in Laos, member of this project, that are going to produce for the first time ever controlled and sustainable rattan,”

*said Mr. Le Thai Tinh
Vinh Long JSC’s Sales Director.*

Besides sustainability key factors for access to global markets are quality and design.

WWF has engaged with Swedish designers from Lund University to improve rattan product design, encourage ecological design and to build local design capacities in order to meet global market requirements.

The WWF Sustainable Rattan Programme receives 80 percent of the programme’s total budget of € 2.4 million from the EU SWITCH-Asia Programme of the EuropeAid Development and Cooperation. SWITCH-Asia aims at scaling-up environmentally friendly production and consumption practices. The Sustainable Rattan Programme is successfully serving this purpose by reaching-out to all actors along the rattan value chain and encouraging certification. IKEA co-finances the WWF Sustainable Rattan Programme.

www.panda.org/rattan



This Project is co-funded by the European Union

WWF BRINGS DESIGN TO THE GREATER MEKONG

Words ALYN GRIFFITHS

WWF (formerly the World Wildlife Fund) has collaborated with graduates from Sweden's Lund University on a range of furniture and products that make use of sustainable rattan harvested in the Greater Mekong region of south-east Asia.

Clara Lindsten, Per Brolund, Thérèse Broberg and Susanne von Ajkay (image shown is from the Greater Mekong Collection by Broberg and Ajkay) worked alongside local entrepreneurs and small businesses to help them improve production processes and develop products that will appeal to the international market.

Rattan has been used for centuries to produce furniture and interior accessories but the over-harvesting of the raw material — a vine that grows naturally in the sub-tropical and

tropical forests of south-east Asia — is having a devastating affect on the people and resources of the region. Over the past five years, WWF has been working with small and medium-sized enterprises in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to improve awareness and understanding of sustainable harvesting and production techniques — a vital step in maintaining the livelihoods of people living in rural villages, where rattan sales account for about 30-50 per cent of cash income.

The Sustainable Rattan Project aims to demonstrate to businesses in the region that design can help them to create beautiful, functional and desirable rattan products while reducing material usage and transportation costs and increasing capacity.



Thibault Ledecq, WWF sustainable rattan project manager, believes that the use of design expertise can help to secure the future development of rattan production in the region. 'Sustainable rattan only has a chance if there is a market for it and if the forests where the rattan grows are still standing.

With credible forest management, responsible trade and consumer awareness we can ensure that this fascinating natural raw material has a future,' he says.

By focusing on the natural qualities of the rattan, the designers were able to propose pieces that would encourage a switch to cleaner processing, removing the need to treat the material with toxic chemicals and improving safety for the workers. They also attempted to remove the need for nails, screws or other materials, resulting in products that are made

from 100 per cent rattan.

The designs — which range from doormats made of rattan waste to foldable baskets and a unique rattan lounge chair — were presented at Ambiente in Frankfurt and received a positive response from a number of international buyers.

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Rattan To Splendour

It's a type of a weed, a prolific, winding weed that wraps itself around other things to grow. Some varieties of rattan grow more than 100 metres. The WWF has set up a fund for the sustainable production and processing of rattan in Asia's Mekong region. "Forests with such a wide variety of flora and fauna, which have disappeared in other regions of the world, still exist in the Mekong region," says Thibault Ledecq,



WWF sustainable rattan project manager. The WWF has asked graduates from the Lund University in Sweden to come up with a series of rattan products. The students, along with Swedish designer Per Brönlund and Cambodian painter and designer Em Riem, have come up with some great designs which utilise this abundant, sustainable and natural resource. www.wwf.org



Archidex 11

The 12th Malaysian Architecture, Interior Design and Building Exhibition, Archidex 11, will be held in Kuala Lumpur from 30 June to 3 July and will again have a strong green focus. As well as presenting the Green New Product Award the event will host a Green Building Forum, demonstrating the growing interest in sustainability in this part of the world.

www.archidex.com.my

Treasure Dome

Created for the Shenzhen Hong Kong Biennale, the Taiwanese architectural group WEAK!, consisting of Hsieh Ying-Chun, Roan Ching Yueh and Marco Casagrande, describe themselves as both "lazy" and "flexible". They pride themselves on consulting both children and grandmothers on construction advice.

As part of the theme "loosing the countryside" they brought workers from southern China to Shenzhen as part of the performance, celebrating the skills of rural workers.

Like a big weaver bird nest, or an insect hive, the "bug dome" is constructed from bamboo and weak concrete made out of cement mixed with soil. All of the building materials were gleaned from the site where the dome was erected, and will be left there as the dome slowly degrades. During the Biennale, the bamboo dome was used as an event space for poetry readings, discussions, bands and workshops for children. It was also taken advantage of by a camp of illegal workers who used it as a lounge room both during and after the event.



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