



PRESS RELEASE

FRAME PROJECT PARTNERS JOIN EXPLORE RESEARCH NETWORK AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE DEDICATED TO FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION GOVERNANCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Kasetsart, 18 March 2022 – FRAME project partners from Laos (Savannakhet and Souphanouvong University) and Thailand (Kasetsart University) were recently awarded a small grant worth about 15000 USD to develop a full research proposal on community participation in Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in Laos and Thailand as part of RECOFTC's [EXPLORE](#) research network.

“In Southeast Asia, few universities offer programmes on forest landscape governance and few researchers focus on governance issues. Collaboration between researchers is limited, as is their interaction with policymakers. Progress is also constrained by a lack of accessible data and information, and by limited understanding of the rights and interests of local communities” RECOFTC.

The aim of EXPLORE is to fill these gaps by supporting universities – like the ERASMUS+ FRAME partners – and strengthening the capacity of researchers in Southeast Asia by developing a research network and community of practice dedicated to expanding and applying knowledge on FLR governance. In addition to preparatory grants to develop research proposals, EXPLORE also supports research teams by organizing learning and mentorship opportunities, as well as peer review of draft proposals.

With the support of the ERASMUS+ FRAME's coordinating institution (VITRI, University of Helsinki), project partners from Laos and Thailand developed the successful research concept note entitled *“Governance of Forest Landscape Restoration in Watersheds of Lao PDR and Thailand – Barriers and Opportunities for Community Participation”*. To determine whether upstream forest changes have their foundations in forest governance and community participation, the proposed research aims to identify and understand barriers and opportunities based on the perception of government officers and local stakeholder's, especially women's groups. This research project is co-led by Dr. Damrong Pipatwattanakul from Kasetsart University, Thailand, Dr. Outhevy Vongmany from Savannakhet University and Dr. Vongpasith Chanthakhoun from Souphanouvong University, Lao PDR.

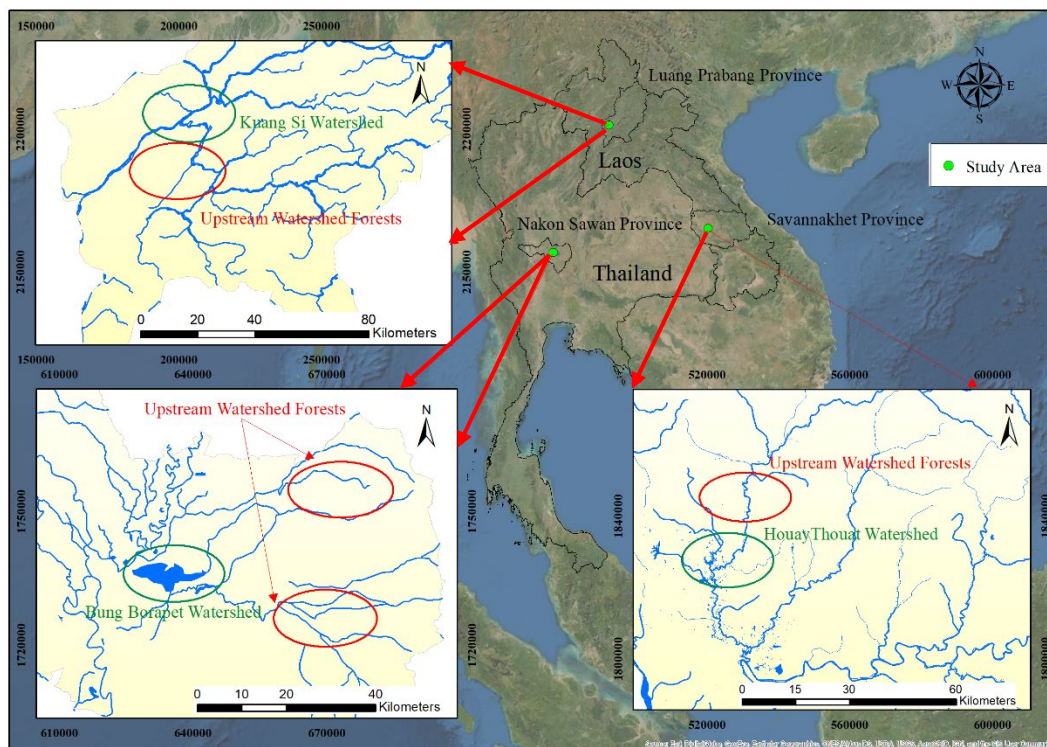


Figure 1: Potential study sites at Savannakhet Province, Luang Prabang Province in Lao PDR and Nakhon Sawan Province, Thailand.

“To improve the effectiveness of governance in FLR, it is essential to know the role of various factors and their impacts on community participation. However, these factors and their impacts remain poorly understood in Lao PDR and Thailand. In addition, FLR faces several governance challenges. For example, who decides what and where to restore? How are all stakeholders engaged? Who benefits? Who loses? How are benefits transferred? What institutions offer support?” Damrong Pipatwattanakul (Project leader from Kasetsart University)

Expected results will help FLR in upstream watershed forests and the livelihood of local people by means of integrating civil society rights into the governing and implementation process. And from the perspective of capacity building in higher education, ERASMUS+ FRAME partner’s engagement in the network and support for the development of the research funding makes a significant contribution to several of the ERASMUS+ FRAME project’s core objectives.

“The knowledge and experience we will gain about Participatory Action Research and governance in FLR will improve our teacher’s research and teaching capacity, and will strengthen the capacity of young researchers of partner universities, and local partner universities” Damrong Pipatwattanakul (Project leader from Kasetsart University)

Dr. Nick Hogarth (ERASMUS+ FRAME project Principal Investigator, University of Helsinki) went on to say, *“The EXPLORE Network and their support to develop a full research proposal is a unique and excellent opportunity for our partners to build research capacity, enhance North-South-South cooperation, improve internationalization, and develop capacity to access international funding for research and academic cooperation”*.



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The preparatory grant funding is to be used to develop a full research proposal during February – July 2022.

More information of the ERASMUS+ FRAME project can be found [here](#).

More information about the RECOFTC's EXPLORE Network can be found [here](#).