

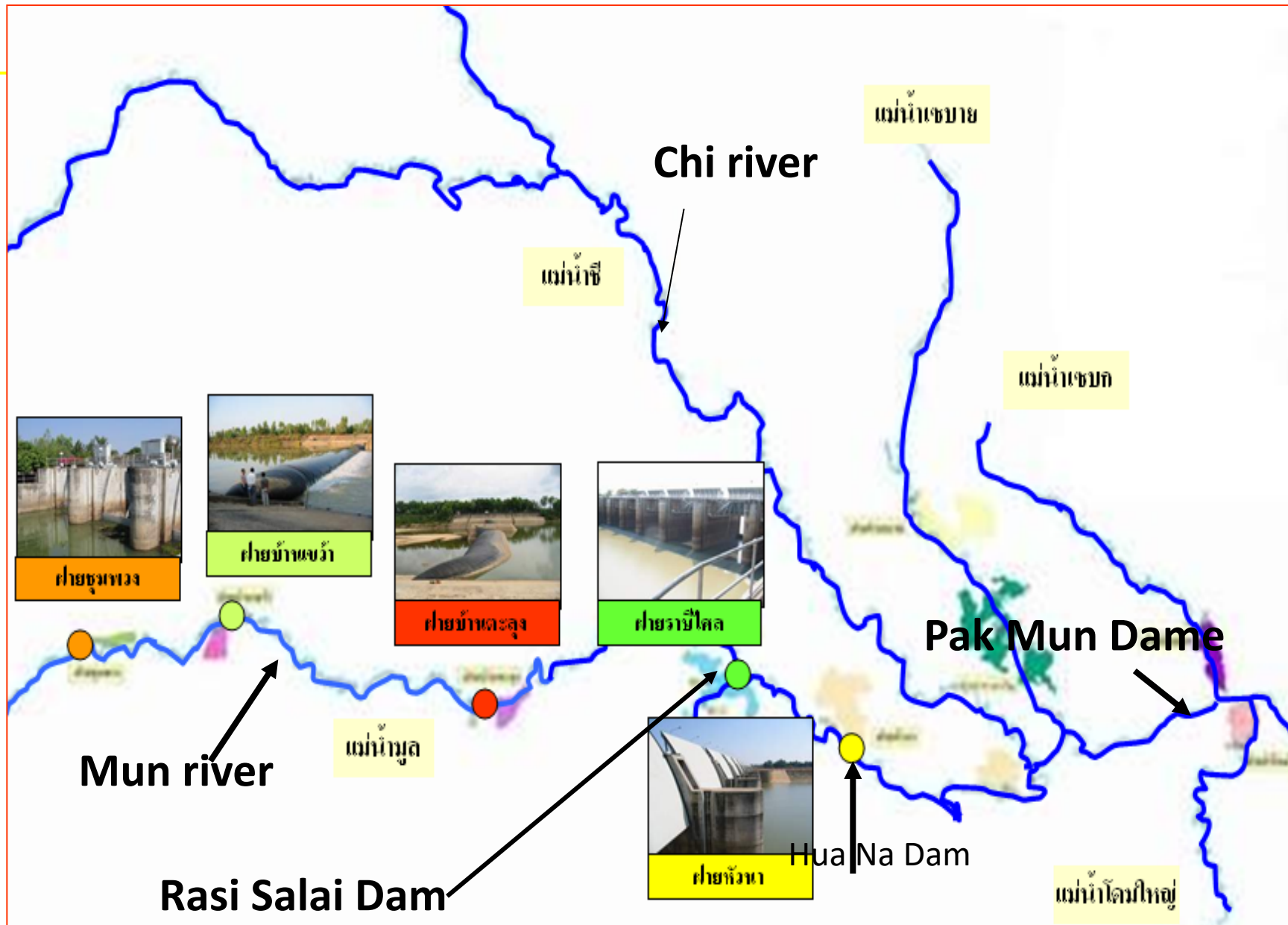
**Co-production of knowledge on wetlands as
agro-ecological systems for conservation and
development: A case study of Rasi Salai Irrigation
project in Si Sa Ket Province, Thailand**

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SUMERNET program and Tracking Change Project



*Rasi Salai Irrigation
project in Si Sa Ket
Province, Northeastern
region of Thailand*



Knowledge co-production” processes that catalyze interaction amongst researchers and multiple state and non-state actors can create usable knowledge for action towards inclusive and sustainable development (van Kerkhoff and Lebel, 2006)

Knowledge coproduction is understood as both a governance strategy and a research strategy, the latter also known as transdisciplinary research (Schuttenberg and Guth, 2015).

Wetlands: Important to local resource users including for: food security, water security, sustain NTFPs, and are the foundation of the cultural calendar, maintain biodiversity, and provide various ecosystem services



Rasi Salai Dam built in 1993 on the Mun river, the major tributary of the Mekong



- Without an EIA, reservoir of 10,000 hectares inundating farmland and wetlands.
- communities' livelihoods and culture were intimately tied to the Mun River's wetlands
- In total, between 15,000 and 17,000 people affected by the project
- NGOs and villagers began to organize to oppose the project

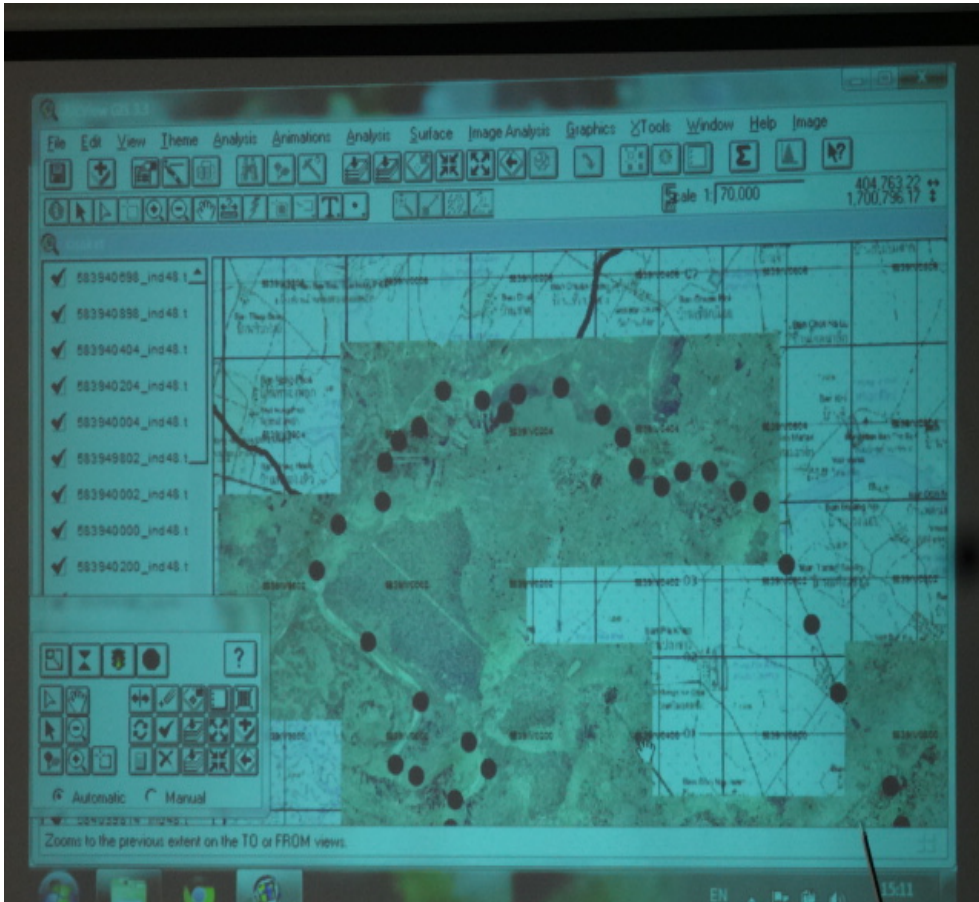
Conflict resolution through knowledge co-production

In 2015: my research project

- exploring individually with boundary partners, their visions and priorities for wetland recovery.
 - Tam Mun Association (TMA), villager's association
 - NGOs
 - Sub-district Administrative Organizations (Or Bor Tor)
 - Village heads
 - Provincial Royal Irrigation officers (RID)
 - Provincial fishery officers
 - Office of Natural Resources and Environment
- shared ideas, and identified common ground upon which to build collaboration.



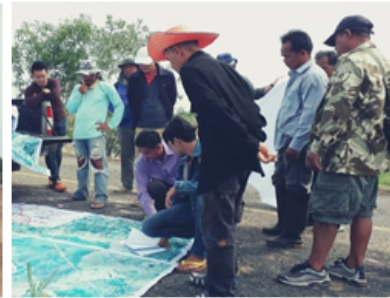
Co-produced Wetland Zoning in Northeast Thailand



- 1) wetlands have been dramatically declining both in terms of quantity and quality;
- 2) there is a lack of coordination between potential partners to manage and recover wetlands;
- 3) there is still a knowledge gap about baseline data on the wetland both in terms of bio-physical and socio-economic data;
- 4) there remain challenges on how to manage and recover wetlands that have been compensated by RID, as many villagers have continued to use the areas

Agreed to do one pilot area: Nongkae Sub-District

- worked together with boundary partners to undertake the resource mapping. Three zones were mapped
- 1) upstream of the dam, in the flooded zone and non-flooded zone;
- 2) downstream of the dam; and
- 3) beyond the Sub-district area where villagers utilize natural resources.



What are successful stories and lesson learnt?

Given the past history of conflict in the area (more than 2 decades)

- **Proud** to be part of the research project
- **Learning** about their own stories and their resources
- **Reduce** tension over the past years
- **Turn conflict** into cooperation through research
- **Contribute** to provide third space for development
- **Co-design** between boundary partners a participatory action research project.
- **Degree of cooperation** may be “shallow”, “medium” or “deep” depending upon the level of trust and commitment amongst boundary partners.