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Using evaluations to measure trade-offs in forestry related decisions

Are there win-wins?

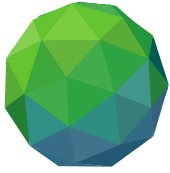
Dr. Jo (Jyotsna) Puri

Head

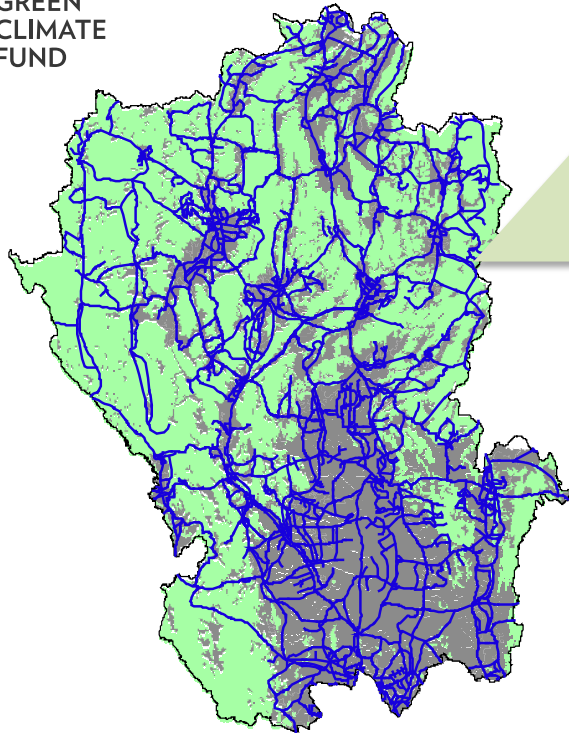
Independent Evaluation Unit (IEU)

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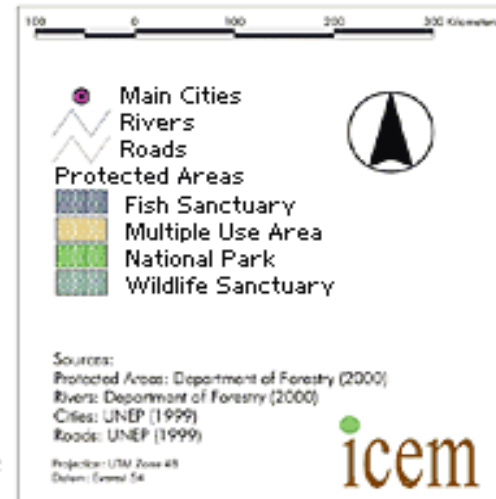




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Does increasing access into forested land mean a trade-off must be made between incomes and forest cover?




A scenic view of a valley in Northern Thailand. In the foreground, there are lush green trees and foliage. A river flows through the valley, with a small village of traditional houses with red and green roofs situated on the bank. The background shows rolling hills covered in dense green forest under a clear sky.

In poorest areas, road building is an important government strategy.

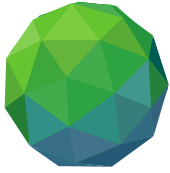
In Northern Thailand, during the study period this increased by 57%.

A scenic view of a forest reserve. In the foreground, there are terraced rice fields filled with young green rice plants. The fields are arranged in a series of steps that follow the contour of the land. In the background, a dense forest of tall, green trees covers a hillside. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. A utility pole is visible on the right side of the image.

Three main types of crops
grown in forest reserves:
Paddy,
Upland rice and
Soybean.



Upland rice area was growing increasingly over the ten year period.
Grown on slopes, with thin soils.

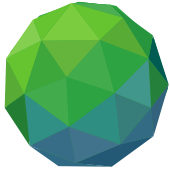


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The trade-off question

- To alleviate poverty, increased access (road building).
- Is this going to increase deforestation?



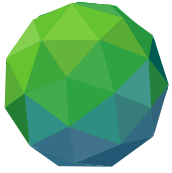


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Mixed Methods

- Panel data for 11 years (1986-1996); Village level data on main crop grown, fallow land, socio-economic characteristics.
 - Econometric regressions
 - Disaggregated by crop-type
- Used historical information on changes in land legislation.
 - *Perception of land title different from legal land rights.*





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Main result

A 10% increase in access

- 4.5% reduction in upland rice.
- Increases soybean area by 0.8%;
- Small increases in overall agricultural area

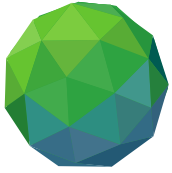




Results

- Overall, ease in access led to a substitution between upland rice and paddy rice
- Upland rice area *decreased*.
- Environmental AND livelihood benefits are possible!



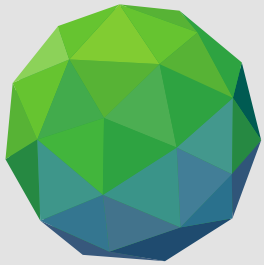


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Conclusions

- For assessing choices, measuring magnitudes is clearly important.
- Measurement and evaluation needs to be built into programmes at the beginning.





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