

Agroforestry as Alternative Sloping Land Conversion in Yunnan, P.R. China



World Agroforestry Centre
TRANSFORMING LIVES AND LANDSCAPES

世界混农林业中心云南办公室

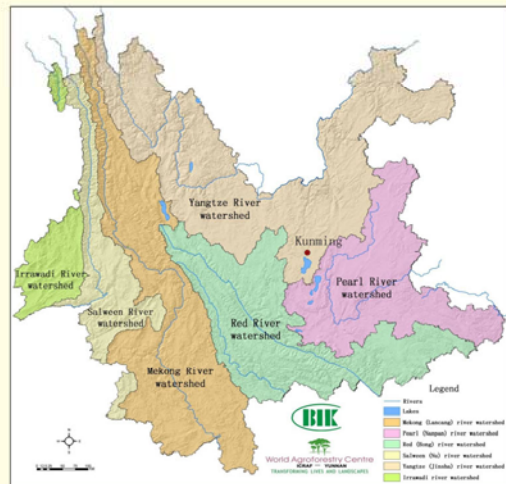


He Jun
(ICRAF-China),
Horst Weyerhaeuser
(ICRAF-China),
Zhou Zhimei
(Baoshan Forestry Bureau),
Yang Yanping
(Baoshan Forestry Bureau)

Background

In Yunnan province, 94% of the land is classified as mountainous. Yunnan is located as critical upstream watershed of six major national and international rivers which include Yangtze River, Pearl River, Mekong River, Red River, Salween River and Irrawadi River. Relatively low agricultural productivity in the uplands restricts rural communities to benefit from large-scale agricultural development. Meantime, cultivations in those steep sloping land also lead to the major soil erosion and environmental degradation. In response to huge flood in Yangtze in 1998, the national government had launched National Forest Protection Program and Sloping Land Conversion Program (SLCP) aimed to improve upstream watershed of Yangtze and Yellow River.

For Sloping Land Conversion Program (SLCP), to reduce erosion and soil loss, and promote more sustainable agriculture, the national government has banned agricultural conversion of forests with slopes exceeding 25 degrees. In contrast, the cultivated slopes should be converted into forest with the compensation provided by central government. The compensation is consisted of free tree seedling, grains as well as cash subsidies. However, problems in policy implementation cause a number of social and environmental uncertainties. Mono-culture, prohibition of intercropping, poor seedling, limited options of tree species, lack of technique support, lacking link to market and so forth are most concerns by scientists in the implementation of Sloping Land Conversion Program.



Agroforestry Approach

With the Sloping Land Conversion Program, the national government has ignored both social and ecological diversity and complexity of Yunnan. Therefore, ICRAF-China is promoting Agroforestry Approach as more adaptive approach for alternative Sloping Land Conversion Program. As the same goal as the SLCP, Agroforestry is applied to reduce soil erosion and increase farmers income. The Agroforestry models had been implemented respectively for the Program Land and Non-program Land.

1. As the land which are part of SLCP, intercropping of agriculture practice is prohibited. Together with forestry department, ICRAF-China is helping farmers to do experimentation of domestication of herb medicine in converted land so as to improve land management and use as well as diversify and increase cash income from converted land.



2. For those lands which are not delineated as SLCP, ICRAF-China is working with farmers to improve the upland use by promoting valuable tree-species and it's intercropping with agriculture crop, such walnut and maize. After two years, tree on farm (agroforestry practices) has been widely accepted and applied in the project site.

Further Activities

Successes from alternative Sloping Land Conversion practice have been recognized by province government as well as grassroot communities. It formulates a new approach for mountainous community to improve their livelihoods and protect the upstream watershed simultaneously. The agroforestry approach for alternative upland management thus need further fostered and widely applied. Several strategic and activities is needed.

- Policy advocacy is crucial to get national government recognitions and expending recent successes. It also would be contributed to policy formulation and improvement.
- Community participation should be well applied in project expansions. The more adaptive agroforestry practice in fact come from local farmers knowledge and practice. Participatory Technology Development as the key of community participation would be widely used.
- Strengthening the collaboration with forestry department will help us to scaling up our success and the department also will serve for technique support for project expansions.