



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2013, Stuttgart-Hohenheim  
“Agricultural development within the rural-urban continuum”

## Sustainable Rubber Cultivation in Southwest China: Approach to Stakeholder Involvement and Dialogue

JUE WANG<sup>1</sup>, THOMAS AENIS<sup>1</sup>, LIXIA TANG<sup>2</sup>, FENG LIU<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Agricultural Extension and Communication Group, Germany*

<sup>2</sup>*China Agriculture University, College of Humanities and Development, China*

<sup>3</sup>*Naban River Watershed National Nature Reserve, China*

### Abstract

Natural latex is – for example as component of car tyres – a fundament of industrial, mainly urban development. Meanwhile rubber (*Hevea brasiliensis*) cultivation became the utmost important “driving factor” in many rural areas of the greater Mekong Subregion which is part of the “Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot”. In Xishuangbanna prefecture, Southwest China, the rapid expansion and intensification of rubber cultivation is coupled with dramatic losses of ecosystem functions and services.

The Sino-German project “SURUMER: Sustainable rubber cultivation in the Mekong region” is looking for an integrative, applicable, and stakeholder-validated concept for sustainable rubber cultivation, which can provide a wider application across the Mekong region. This implementation-oriented goal is demanding a high level of interdisciplinary integration, and transdisciplinarity, *i.e.* communication and cooperation of researchers and stakeholders from praxis.

The objective of this presentation is to discuss the concept and preliminary results of the SURUMER approach on stakeholder involvement with its interrelated measures of process facilitation on the one hand and stakeholder and communication network analyses on the other. Three key stakeholder groups have been identified so far, namely innovative rubber farmers (often the village heads), regional decision-makers from administration and rubber companies, and provincial politicians. Discourses amongst these groups – on future scenarios of rubber cultivation and on trade-offs of different land use strategies – will be facilitated by local and scientific partners of the consortium. Discourses are co-learning processes consisting of various elements such as information (exhibition, newsletter), informal talks, workshops and village meetings. Communication measures include a baseline survey on communal level, an in-depth analysis of stakeholders’ problem perception, their interests (goal conflicts and synergies), and their formal and informal communication networks.

**Keywords:** Discourse, participation, stakeholder, sustainable rubber cultivation, transdisciplinarity