

Dr Peter Messerli, CDE  
**From governance landscapes to landscape governance:  
analysing spaces of public sector influence in rural areas  
of Lao People's Democratic Republic**

NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Series

Wednesday, 17 March 2010, 12.15 – 13.45

Anna Nussbaum Auditorium, World Trade Institute, University of Bern  
Hallerstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

### Invitation

Dear Madam,  
Dear Sir,

It is a pleasure to invite you to the NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Seminar on **“From governance landscapes to landscape governance: analysing spaces of public sector influence in rural areas of Lao People's Democratic Republic”** by **Peter Messerli**, Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern.

#### Abstract

Rural areas of developing countries are currently undergoing rapid transformations related to global change and globalisation. A key characteristic of this process is that decisions and interventions on land management emanate from actors at higher levels and in distant places. Conversely, the differential impact of such spheres of influence reshapes and fragments landscapes in terms of problems and opportunities for future development.

Such governance landscapes were studied by an NCCR North-South research project in Lao PDR conducted between 2006 and 2009. It analysed development interventions and public sector actors (governmental agencies, multi- and bi-lateral development partners and NGOs) in terms of their mutual interactions as well as in terms of their spatial manifestation using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This allowed an understanding of the reach of public actors and regulatory institutions within Laos in terms of space and level to be gained. Patterns emerge from remote and almost autonomous regions to highly globalised centres, where villages are confronted with more than 50 development actors from all levels claiming stakes in their future development. As these

patterns are not congruent with the accessibility to and from markets and private investors, regions may be identified where market forces remain completely unregulated and vice versa, regions under strong political pressure often have no economic options to implementing the requested changes. Such regions were then further characterised in terms of natural resources and poverty.

### **Biography of the Speaker**

Peter Messerli is a Human Geographer and a Senior Research Scientist at the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) at the University of Bern. His research interests lie in the sustainable management of human environment systems in developing countries. He focuses on poverty and environment interactions, which are increasingly shaped by interventions and decisions from multiple actors from local to global levels. Issues of space, scale, and knowledge-based decision-making thereby play an important role. Currently he is leading a research project on the contextuality of sustainable development in Southeast Asia. Prior to this assignment he was the coordinator of the Swiss National Centre of Competence (NCCR) North-South. Peter Messerli holds a PhD in Geography where he specialised on strategies aimed towards sustainable development in a slash-and-burn context on the eastern escarpment of Madagascar.

Please feel free to forward this invitation. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us.

More information related to the event can be found at: <http://www.nccr-trade.org/>

Participation is free of charge, no registration is needed.

We warmly welcome you to join our seminar at the World Trade Institute!

Yours sincerely,

François Rossé

Junior Research Fellow

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*NCCR Trade Regulation Brown Bag Seminars are informal 45-minute presentations, given by external or in-house researchers. The presentations are followed by a 45-minute Q&A session and/or group discussion. Everyone is welcome to join and, in general, it is not necessary to sign up. The Brown Bag concept comes from the US; it means that people bring their own lunch (in a brown bag...) and eat it during the presentation.*