

Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

CBRM Database

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Case Study Name:	Is adaptive co-management ethical?		
Author:	Fennell, D., Plummer, R. & Marschke, M.		
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Region:	Southeast Asia		
Country:	Cambodia		
Ecosystem Type:	Forest; lakes; rivers; floodplain; seasonal tropical forest; mangroves		
Social Characteristics:	Other		
Scale of Study:	National		
Resource Type:	Fisheries; forestry; NTFPs		
Type of Initiative:	Development project, Government initiated; Development project, international NGO initiated		
Community Based Work:	Resource management; conservation; development planning		

Keywords:	Ethics; Adaptive co-management; Collaboration; Environmental governance; Cambodia; Uncertainty
Summary:	'Good' governance and adaptive co-management hold broad appeal due to their positive connotations and 'noble ethical claims'. This paper poses a fundamental question: is adaptive co-management ethical? In pursuing an answer to this question, the concept of adaptive co-management is succinctly summarized and three ethical perspectives (deontology, teleology and existentialism) are explored. The case of adaptive co-management in Cambodia is described and subsequently considered through the lens of ethical triangulation. The case illuminates important ethical considerations and directs attention towards the need for meditative thinking which increases the value of tradition, ecology, and culture. Giving ethics a central position makes clear the potential for adaptive co-management to be an agent for governance, which is good, right and authentic as well as an arena to embrace uncertainty.