

Preface

The Civilian Controlled Zone (CCZ) and the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea are the only one of its kind found throughout the world. These areas provide an opportunity for the conservation of the ecosystem and the stimulation of cooperation between disputing regions. The area has been virtually uninhabited by humans since the Korean War, and its inaccessibility allowed damaged ecosystems to rehabilitate and return to its natural state.

Recently, however, the western part of DMZ has been put under serious developmental pressure. There had been rapid changes in land use and such was the conversion of reed fens and wetlands into agricultural land, particularly in CCZ. If this was allowed to continue, the aftermath would have had tremendous devastating impact on the natural resources of the affected areas. In light of the situation, it was by then imperative to develop mid- and long-term land-use strategies that incorporate Environmentally Sound and Sustainable Development (ESSD) principles.

Based on international recommendations and sustainability criteria, the UNDP, Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Seoul National University (SNU), and Korea Land Corporation (KOLAND) formed a partnership to develop an ESSD model for the regions affected by agricultural development. The developed model, in turn, was applied to the western CCZ (Paju) and DMZ area since these areas are the most developed before the division of the Korean Peninsula and, that are still under greatest pressure for development today.

The outcome of this twenty-year study is a long-term plan with an implementation strategy that will allow the central government, Kyonggi province and Paju city to manage the area based on sound local ecosystem principles.

The long-term plan cannot be simply put into practice without support from relevant policies, both domestic and international. Therefore, the strategy offered in this study should be understood and aligned with domestic and international efforts for sustainable development. Those who are involved in natural resources management should participate in setting priority action plans like that of what is being laid out in this study to bring them into action. I firmly believe that the long-term sustainability of CCZ and DMZ will be ensured when new challenges are met with creative solutions from all participants.

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