Hoa Binh Department for Agriculture and Rural Development

Report
on the Results of Land Allocation and
Land Use after Forest Land Allocation
in Hoa Binh Province

I. General abstract

Hoa Binh is a mountainous province in the North West, situated 76km from Ha Noi. It borders Phu Tho in the North, Thanh Hoa and Ninh Binh in the South, Ha Tay and Ha Nam in the East and Son La in the West.

The natural area of Hoa Binh province is 474,942 ha, and includes:

- Forest land: 303,680 ha, accounting for 64%
  - Land with forest coverage: 147,639 ha
  - Land without forest coverage: 156,041 ha
- Agriculture land: 72,437 ha, accounting for 15.2%
- Others: 98,825 ha, accounting for 20.8%
- Forest coverage percentage: 30%

The province has 9 districts, 1 township, 212 communes, precincts, 1,896 villages, 136,761 households (farmers make up 80%) with more than 750,000 persons from different ethnicities such as Muong, Kinh, Thai, Tay, Dao, H'Mong and Chinese.

It is more than 10 years since the beginning of the renovation policy implementation in the poor mountainous region, in which very many inhabitants’ life depends on shifting cultivation. Nowadays the social, cultural, economic environment and the living standards of the population in Hoa Binh province have considerably increased. Income per capita in 1996 is up to 160 USD. The economic growth rate is 7.6% in the period of 1991 - 1995 and 8% in 1996.

But because of the province’s low starting point -- due to a previous division of the province, poor infrastructure, low intellectual standard of the people, and slowness in developing natural advantages -- the potential of land, mineral, tourist and labor resources has been insufficiently developed. Like other North-West provinces, mountainous Hoa Binh plays a vital role in conserving the ecological environment for the whole region and Northern, Central Northern Deltas, as well as supplying materials for timber processing, sugar-cane, fruits, industrial trees, milk, meat for domestic consumption and export. Hoa Binh forests continue to be essential in assuring a stable supply of water to Hoa Binh lake, in order to generate a considerable amount of electricity for the country’s industrialization and modernization.
II. The results of Forest Land Allocation

From 1969 up to now there have been 29 years of Forest Land Allocation implementation in Hoa Binh province. Because of many different reasons, the Forest Land Allocation prior to 1993 had little effect on forest protection activities. Since 1994 Forest Land Allocation following the instructions provided by 02/CP Government's Decree dated 15/1/1994 has been carried out in a more effective way.

Up to 15/9/1997 the Forest Protection Department of Hoa Binh Province has applied Forest Land Allocation with the assistance of the Department of Land Administration and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development as follows:

1. Completed Forest Land Allocation activities in 197/212 communes, precincts with 64,326 households throughout the province.

2. Forest Land Allocation area is 244,818.04 ha
   includes allocated land 118,418.91 ha
   Bare land 95,455.30 ha
   PAM forests 18,239.44 ha
   Plantation 4,668.34 ha
   Fruits 35.83 ha
   Contracted land area 126,399.13 ha
   includes primary plantation 3,089.34 ha
   Forests of IC class 9,762.79 ha
   Forests of II class 42,289.90 ha
   Forests of III class 2,619.69 ha
   Forests fix 13,208.17 ha
   Forests in mountains 45,422.24 ha

3. The area of allocated land in communities, communes, villages: 37,761.02 ha

III. Impacts of Forest Land Allocation to Land Use

1. The protection of existing natural and replanted forests, and afforestation have considerably increased both in quantity and quality.

   - Before 1993 the inhabitants paid little attention to natural and planting forests once the state investment had been finished. Because forests were not allocated to households (excluding some PAM forests) or if allocated, did not receive investment of any Project, households and local authorities did not take protection activities seriously.
   - The greater portion of that area that was allocated or contracted out to households, and which did enjoy the investment of projects and preferential policy, was well protected.
   - Annually the Province’s 327 Program covers 43,446 ha of forests, which are seriously protected for regenerative improvement.

2. The newest protection activity is: projects and households pay much attention to protect forest plantations with careful seedlings and land preparation for agroforestry activities. This is in order to develop plantations,
resulting in most of plantation area, with the total of 10,304 ha from 1993 to 1996, gaining a good growth rate.

Alone in 1997 the plan is to 3180 ha plantation will be established with survival rates of 85% or above.

3. Most of land fields, riverside, hillside etc. – has been allocated to households with stable utilization policies for beneficiaries. This has reduced farmer’s previous sense that they could enter freely into forests for illegal extraction. This forces farmers to think carefully of how to intensify production on their own land, which has greatly reduced shifting cultivation.

4. Nowadays there are no ‘ownerless’ land available for free extraction as before, and investment policies have been put into practice with the assistance of agriculture and forestry extension system, and the IPM technology transfer program. In recent years Hoa Binh province is shifting to silvopastoral production patterns. During 1 year, from 6/1996 to 6/1997 it has reached the following results:

4.1. Total food production yield converted to paddy is 177 000 tones, equivalent to 103.3% over 1995. It is 14 000 tones higher than the output in 1992, the first year of the shift to new cultivation patterns, while the crop area for inefficient crops such as upland rice and cassava was simultaneously reduced 4,459 ha compared with 1995 and 19,930 ha compared with 1992.

- Due to stable paddy area of 40-41 thousands ha and the application of new seeds, the yield of rice has increased from 24.4 quintal/ha in 1992 to 34 quintal/ha in 1996.
- Corn: the total cultivation area is 15,499 ha, equivalent to 105.4% compared with 1995. As new seeds (Bioseed, TSB2, LVN 10) are applied, the output has increased from 10.7 quintal/ha in 1992 to 14.6 quintal/ha in 1995 and up to 18 quintals/ha in the spring crop 1997. This the highest yield yet obtained.
- The area of short term industrial trees is 12.977 ha, 6.6% higher compared with 1995, 5062 ha higher against 1992.
- Sugar cane: the recent area is 6062 ha, increased 1186 ha. A material supply region has been established to offer sugar cane to Hoa Binh Sugar Factory. Some areas plant ROC sugar cane such as Hao Ly - Da Bac District, Dong Xuan - Luong Son District that will provide a yield of 90 - 120 tones/ha.
- Area of vegetable of all kinds is 5909 ha, 13.7% higher against 1995.
- By 5/1997 the area of fruits is 11,655 ha, increasing by 1600 ha in comparison with 1996 and 9755 ha compared to 1992.

Orchard regions have been established in the province.

- Forest Land Allocation is accompanied by the trend of mixed horticulture. Thousands of households have carried out forest - orchard mix with RVAC pattern. Many of them have been able to gain an income of 20 - 30 millions/year from such activities.

4.2. Husbandry

There are 113.570 buffaloes, increasing 3.3%; 43 43,235 cows, increasing 2.4%; 229,964 pigs increasing 3.3% over the same period of 1996.

Forest Land Allocation is carried out at the same time with improving quality of buffaloes, pigs and goats, increasing rate of industrial and Tam Hoang chicken breeding. The husbandry pattern whereby livestock wander around has been sharply decreased.

- Fish breeding in cages and ponds is in development.

5/ These optimal results in land use and new cultivation - animal husbandry patterns have been achieved
following Forest Land Allocation. In the two last years the People's Committee of Hoa Binh Province and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have invested more than 1 billion VND to organize 400 training courses. The training has the aim of transferring cultivation and husbandry technology, managing and establishing patterns to improve professional and technical skills of commune/village staff and farmers.

IV Causes, remaining matters and proposals

1. Causes:

Recently Hoa Binh province has finished the Forest Land Allocation and gained some optimal land use results through shifting to new cultivation patterns due to following causes:

- Ministries and People's Committee of Hoa Binh District have financed projects, Forest Protection Department, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Land Administration in order to carry out Forest Land Allocation activities, projects implementation, agroforestry extension programs and IPM.
- Forest Protection Department guides projects, District People's Committee and involved institutions to put these policies into practice with high degree of consensus from farmers.
- Above mentioned results are achieved with the assistance of International Organizations including Swedish SIDA. Since 1993 Tu Ne - Tan Lac district was selected as a pilot commune for Forest Land Allocation to learn lessons for broad implementation in a larger area.

2/ Remaining matters and proposals:

a/ As limited capital can not meet demands of the approved feasible project, the growth of plantation and forest contracted for restoration, and the improvement in people's living standards, has proceeded only very slowly. This has greatly limited the impacts following land allocation. We propose that the State invest appropriately in these activities.

b/ While the region does have related investment projects, for households or organizations receiving land 'barren land' as production forest is not included in the objectives of the Program 327. Farmers households are very poor. State policies on preferential loans exist, but the relevant institutions have not applied them yet. For these reasons the households lack capital for plantation, so the results of Forest Land Allocation are still limited. We propose the State carry out the Government policies following instructions provided by 960 TTg Decision of Prime Minister, dated 24/12/1996. Prime Minister's Decision No 404, dated 11/6/1997, approved project feasibility for a plantation providing raw materials for MDF Timber Processing Factory in Hoa Binh.

c/ Increase investments in eco-forestry works of 327 projects in order to intensify people’s positive participation in project activities.

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