Workshop Proceedings
On community forest management
in Yen Bai province
(17-18, April 2001)
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Brief description of the workshop
“Policies and strategies on community forest management in Yen Bai Province”

Management Unit of Vietnam-Sweden Mountainous Rural Development (MRDP) at Yen Bai Town, from 17-18 April 2001, organized the workshop “Policies and strategies on community forest management in Yen Bai”.

Objectives of the workshop are to assess the situation of 8 village/hamlet level models on community forest management, which have been tested and developed since 1988. Based on the model evaluation, policies and strategies on strengthening, and improvement of the models were proposed, and these improve community forest management sustainably.

Total workshop participants were 38 of which the majority were district officers, commune, village/hamlet leaders from the model sites of community forest management, staff, and adviser of the Program Management Unit, province project officers (enclosed list of the participants).

The following agenda of the workshop was arranged as follows:

1. Dr. Nguyen Duy Chuyen, Managing Director of the program delivered an opening speech. He informed that, the Vietnam-Sweden Mountainous Rural Development Program would be finished by June 2002. From now to that time, achievement and shortcomings of the community forest management models should be evaluated, then make a plan for model consolidation, improvement and try to avoid a staging situation when the program stops activities.

2. Mr. Nguyen Quy, Vice Director, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development of Yen Bai province had reviewed the achievements in forestry sector of Yen Bai in recent years, goals and solutions for Yen Bai forestry development in years to come. According to Mr. Quy, during the period from 2001-2005, Yen Bai province try to achieve the following goals.

- Try to maintain the existing forest areas, including: 135,237 ha of watershed protection forests and 123,681 ha of production forest
- Regenerate 50,000 ha of natural forest
- Reforest 40,000 ha of barren hill lands

In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, Yen Bai province will accelerate land allocation process, allocate forests and make contracts with household farms, as well as strengthen organizational institutions, state management responsibilities of local authorities for forests and forestry jobs as stipulated in the Decision number 245-1998/QD-TTg, then identify owners for every forest plot and forest owners have rights to get benefits from their forests.

1 Community forest management models were developed and tested by MRDP in following 8 villages/hamlets:
- Ma Lu Thang Hamlet, Ze Xu Phing Commune, Mu Cang Chai district
- Na Hang A Hamlet, Mo De Commune, Mu Cang Chai district
- Giang Cai and Nam Dich Hamlets, Nam Lanh Commune, Van Chan District
- Deo Thao and Dong Ke Hamlets, Tan Nguyen Commune, Yen Binh District- Village 7, 8, Tan Hong Commune, Tran Yen District
Mrs. Sheelagh O'Reilly, Program Adviser, she had emphasized the objectives of the workshop is to discuss the application of current policies into consolidation, and improvement of the existing community forest management models.

3. Mr. Vu Huu Tuynh, Short-term consultant on forestry policies, he had presented a report “Management of community forest-Current situations and Policies”. Based on the current status of the models on community forest management in Yen Bai, he introduced relevant policies and recommended ways for adoption of the policies.

4. Representatives from 5 communes, where models of community forest management have been tested, reported their own forest management situation and made recommendation (see attached reports). In these reports, the situation of forest management is described generally, the forest management models have not been assessed deeply in each village/hamlet. In section of recommendations, almost all villages/hamlets want the government to allocate more budgets for forest protection activities. These recommendation are not suitable to objectives of the community forest management, i.e. land, forest allocation to community to manage, protect and those people will get benefit from allocated forest, and are not given government fund as in previous period.

It is a pity that Nam Lanh commune has no report on implementation of forest management models in Giang Cai village. This village was selected by Yen Bai province to be a pilot site of other type of community forest management models.

5. Group discussion: The participants split into 3 groups to discuss specific subject:

- The group of participants who are commune chairmen, forestry officers, DARD officers was assigned to discuss on current situations and policies related to land allocation and forest contracts to household farms and communities.
- The group of participants from Tran Yen and Yen Binh districts discussed on roles and activities of inhabitants community participating in community forest management. The benefits they got and will get or what benefits should be given to farmers when they are allocated production forest or locally watershed protection forest.
- The group of participants from Mu Cang Chai and Van Chan districts discussed on roles and activities of inhabitants communities participating in forest management when they are allocated or made contracts for watershed protection forests in very important and important areas. The benefits they got and will get or what benefits should be given to farmers.

6. The groups presented their group work at the meeting hall and discuss together. The result of general discussion is summarized in the enclosed group synthetic reports.
7. Mrs. Le Thi Hiep, Yen Bai Project Coordinator presented a plan on consolidation of community forest management models in the province (find the enclosed report)
### List of participants attended the Workshop

**“Policies and Management strategies of community forest management In Yen Bai (From 17-18, April 2001)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nguyen Duy Chuyen</td>
<td>Managing Director, Vietnam-Sweden Mountainous Rural Development Program</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Mr. Than Van Long</td>
<td>Planning Officer, Program Management Unit</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mr. Pham Hung Thang</td>
<td>Technical Officer, Program Management Unit</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mr. Pham Hung Thang</td>
<td>Accountant, Program Management Unit</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mrs. Sheelagh O’Reilly</td>
<td>Natural Resources Adviser of the program</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mr. Le Ry</td>
<td>Interpreter</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mr. Vu Huu Tuynh</td>
<td>Short-term Consultant on Forestry policy</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mr. Ngo Van Tu</td>
<td>Program Adviser</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Quy</td>
<td>Vice-Director, Yen Bai DARD</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Mrs. Le Thi Hiep</td>
<td>Project Coordinator, Yen Bai MRDP</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mr. Vu Thuong Toa</td>
<td>Project Officer, Yen Bai MRDP</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Mr. Trang A Lu</td>
<td>Chairman, Ze Xu Phinh Commune PC, Mu Cang Chai</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Mr. Giang Vang Tong</td>
<td>Project staff, Ze Xu Phinh Commune</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Mrs. Giang Thi Chu</td>
<td>Universalized staff, Ma Lu Thang Hamlet, Ze Xu Phinh Commune</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mr. Ly A Cau</td>
<td>Project staff, Ze Xu Phinh Commune</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Mr. Mua A Pao</td>
<td>Chairman, Mo De CPC, Mu Cang Chai District</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Mr. Cu Cho De</td>
<td>Project Staff, Mo De Commune</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Mr. Thai Mao So</td>
<td>Universalized staff, Mo De Commune</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Viet Phan</td>
<td>Vice Director, Pu Luong State Forestry Farm (Mu Cang Chai)</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Mr. Ha Tan Tien</td>
<td>Vice-Head, District Extension Station of Van Chan</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Mr. Ly Huu Hin</td>
<td>Extension Officer, Van Chan District</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Mr. Ban Thuong Chieu</td>
<td>Project staff, Nam Lanh Commune, Van Chan District</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Mr. Nong Cong Chinh</td>
<td>Chairman, Tan Nguyen CPC, Yen Binh District</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Mr. Ban Trung Kien</td>
<td>Officer, Tan Nguyen Commune</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Mr. Tran Trong Hanh</td>
<td>Head, Deo Khao Hamlet, Tan Nguyen Coomune</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Trong Quy</td>
<td>Officer, Dong Ke village, Tan Nguyen Commune</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Mrs. Nguyen Thi Hoa</td>
<td>Head, Forest Protection Station, Yen Binh District</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Mrs. Nguyen Quoc Tuan</td>
<td>Project Staff, Yen Binh District</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Mrs. Hoang Van Tien</td>
<td>Project Staff, Yen Binh District</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Van Thang</td>
<td>Chairman, Tan Dong CPC, Tran Yen District</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Van Tin</td>
<td>Head of Forestry Board, Tan Dong Coomune</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Van Thong</td>
<td>Head, Village 7, Tan Dong Commune</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>Mr. Ha Chi Thanh</td>
<td>Staff, Provincial Forestry Protection Sub-Department</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>Mr. Pham Doai</td>
<td>Vice-Head, Van Chan State forestry farm</td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Mr. Tran Trong Hanh</td>
<td>Head of Forestry deivation, Yen Bai DARD</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Mr. Bien Quang Tu</td>
<td>Provincial Project Officer.</td>
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In this workshop, the participants were split into three groups to discuss the following 3 topics:

- Land use rights, forest allocation and contraction with the communities
- Plans of the communities for forest management and protection
- Forest benefits, which the community come in for.

For each topic, the participants mentioned two parts: current status and recommendations. After group discussion, the participants discussed together in the meeting hall. These are general findings from each above-mentioned topics.

1. Land use rights, forest allocation, and contraction with the community.

1.1 Current situations

- Almost all households were allocated forestry lands for making gardens or integrated agro-forestry production. Land allocated to the households generally are lands nearby households farms, convenient for production, management and protection. Land sizes allocated to the households depend on land funds of the locality as well as willingness and labor capacity of the households. In the area like Tan Dong (Tran Yen district), Tan Nguyen (Yen Binh district), where land fund is limited, each household was allocated from 0.5-3 ha. In other areas such as Mu Cang Chai, and Van Chan district, land size allocated to a household even reach tens ha.

- The majority of land allocated to the households are provided land use right certificate (red book), this makes farmers feel assured, and willing to invest labor and capital in reforestation, natural forest regeneration allocated, even they are not given any supports or minor assistance from the government, since they understand that they are owners of their land, allocated forest plots (as in Tan Dong, Tan Nguyen).

- However, households are allocated land with no forest or regarded as not projected for production forest area. For lands belonging to watershed protection forests are not allocated to the households, but contracted with them on annual basis (in Mu Cang Chai, Van Chan districts), but were not allocated for long term use to the households as stipulated in Circular Number 02, and Circular 163 or contracted for long term period of 30 to 50 years as stipulated in Circular number 01.

- There are a few households who are allocated natural forestland to manage, protect and get income from the forests. The households are only assigned lands without forest, they have to plant trees or regenerate forests, it takes some tens years for this land to become forest. During the first years, the farmers have no harvests of any considerable benefits from the forests, so the government assistance is considered as a necessary condition to support forestry farmers.
In almost 8 model sites, the local authorities have assigned to village/hamlets to manage those forested land, which are not allocated to farmers (Van Chan district assigned to Nam Lanh Commune People Committee (CPC) to allocate Giang Cai village to manage 1,000 Ha of forested lands of different types. In Tan Nguyen and Tan Hong communes, commune PC assigned village/hamlets to manage and protect from 300 to 700 ha of poorly forested areas. In Mu Cang Chai district, Phu Luong state forestry farm signed a contract with Ma lu Thang hamlet (Ze Xu Phing Commune) for protection of 75 ha of restored forest after cropping.

However, in above mentioned villages/hamlets, only Giang Cai model site had a written decision on allocated forests of Van Chan District People Committee (DPC), the other model sites have no written decision of DPC, so the community forest management models are not sustainable.

Nam Dich hamlet, Nam Lanh commune has been tentatively assigned 350 ha of forested land to the community since 1998, but it is not settle and must be discussed further for this forested land to be a pilot community model or not.

The community forested areas in Ze Xu Phinh and Mo De communes (Mu Cang Chai district) are forested land owned by Pung Loung state forestry farm contracted with the communities to protect, regreen on a yearly basis, it is not stable.

- The procedure of signing contracts on protection, afforestation and plantation between the state forestry farms and other parties is still not appropriate to regulations of the current legislations

Pung Luong state forestry farm signed contracts on an annual basis with Commune People Committees for forest protection. The commune people committees then assigns the contracts to villages/hamlets to implement. The leaders of the state forestry farms reported that, if the contracts signed with the commune people committees, the contracts could be put into effect, if the contracts signed with individual household farm, terms of the contracts could not be effective, since limited knowledge of farmers, they are interested in benefits they can get, their responsibilities committed in the contracts are not fulfill properly.

Van Chan state forestry farm signed contracts with individual household and groups of households, there are not confirmations of the commune people committees, so in cases, the two parities have controversy, it is difficult for local authority to resolve the disputes

1.2 Recommendations:

Based on the discussion on clarifying the current status of the community forest management in above-mentioned models, the participants proposed the following solutions:

- The Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development with the Department of land administration and districts should check
forested areas and forested land managed by Pung luong and Van Chan state forestry farms. For the forested areas and forested lands that are being managed by the state forestry farms, but they have not enough staff to manage or the management and use are not effective, it is recommended that Provincial People Committees should issues decisions on withdrawn those areas and lands and transfer these areas to household farms or other organizations to manage.

- Regulations on forest management attached decision No. 08 of the Government (abbreviated as QD 08) defined: watershed protection forests is divided into two categories: very important and important, there is no less important categories. The previous less important watershed protection forest is managed, and used as production forests, this means that production is a primary purpose, while protection is the minor one. Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is requested to provide a guideline to district and commune local authorities to identify where are protection forests and production forests and where are less important protection forest considered as production forest nowadays.

- It is proposed to apply the decision 08: Establishment of management committee for only protection forest with total area of more than 5,000 ha, for the areas of less than 5,000 ha, for local protection forests important for village, commune or district level, households, organizations are eligible to be allocated and provided red books. For the forested areas, which can not be allocated to individual household (as far from inhabitance areas, each household could not protect forests which are important for whole community, majority of inhabitants do not agree to allocate those areas to individual household), it is requested commune people committees to propose district people committee to make decision to deliver those forested areas to inhabitant community at village/hamlet level to manage, protect, and use for whole community as stipulated for each forest categories.

The workshop participants also agreed that forested areas and lands should not be allocated to groups of households, since weak structure of group of farmers, there are no agreement between households in the groups on modalities of management of forested lands and areas.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is requested to instruct state forestry farms, protection forest management committees, project management 661 in rechecking contracts on protection, afforestation and transfer annual contracts into long-term contracts with duration of 50 years. Contractees have benefit from forests and any supports (if there is)

2. Community activities in forest management.
2.1 Current situations

In order to answer the question: What did your villages/hamlets do and what did you do to attract farmer’s participation actively in forest
protection activities? The workshop participants reported that in almost models sites the following activities have been done.

- Village/hamlet meeting to understand objectives of community forest model establishment, to discuss plans on management of village/hamlet level forests.
- Conducted assessment of land and forest situation, identification of boundaries between community forest and household forests.
- Formulated regulations on village/hamlet forest protection and their enforcement

However, during the process of implementing the above-mentioned activities, different results have been achieved in various models sites: In model site like Giang Cai, Tan Dong, Tan Nguyen, the level of takeholder participations was high, in some model sites, only commune and hamlet officers discussed and villager participation is very limited, formal and cursory.

The regulation contents on management and protection of village/hamlet community forests are still cursory, which do no include necessary items mentioned responsibilities and benefits of the community members and concerning parties (Regulations of village 7, 8, Tan Dong commune did not stipulate responsibilities and rights of the specialized protection group and the commune people committee for community forests. That why in some cases, the commune people committee allowed farmers from other villages to exploit the forest managed by village 7, 8 without advanced announcements.)

The draft regulation on community forest management prior to submit to District people committee for approval has not been discussed widely by commune people council members. In some cases, the approved regulations have not been gained agreement and support from farmers of neighboring hamlets. There is also inappropriate mode of dissemination of the regulation to farmers, so contents stipulated in the regulations are not adopted into real local situation. There is a case; the regulations are not conformed strictly. (In Deo Thao, the regulations stipulated those who logged bamboos for sales have to pay 10% of bamboo sale revenue to forest protection funds, at the beginning exploiters paid 10% of their sales as the regulations stipulated, then they paid only 5%, and then their were nobody paid)

2.2 Recommendations

Based on analysis of the above-mentioned problems, the workshop participants proposed the following activities in the plan of strengthening Yen Bai project

- Instruct villages/hamlets to organize village meeting to discuss, reformulate plans, regulations of forest protections, facilitate farmers to participate in decision making process on strategies and modalities of forest protection and management.
- Those regulations that approved by the district people committee but are still not completed should be amended and then submit to the
district people committee for re-approval. It is necessary to get ideas of neighboring village/hamlet leaders on the regulations and discussed by commune people council members prior to submit for re-aproval.

- Establish village/hamlet afforestation funds. the budget law does not forbid the formation of such kind of fund, but establishment of this fund needs to be consented by majority of community members, accountancy of the fund must be transparent. For those village/hamlets who are allocated poorly forested areas, during the first years are requested the state budget to provide fund of amount of 50,000 VND/ha/year for first 5 years to establish protection forest fund and used for forest protection activities according to the expenditure norm stipulated by villages/hamlets.

- Make plan to disseminate village/hamlet forest protection regulations to farmers. In case, for those people who are illiterate, can not understand, speak King Language, it would be paid more attention on dissemination of the regulation in local languages in meeting with mass organizations or in village meeting.

3. Benefits received by community

3.1 Current situations

- Those households, communities who are allocated and contracted for watershed protection forest are supported at amount of 280,000 VND/ha/year. In some year, supported budget is limited, but forested areas is large, the level of support was 230,000 VND/ha/year (as in Ze Xu Phinh commune, in 2001)

- Those households, communities who are allocated or contracted for production forest are not given any kind of supports. There is minor benefit for mountainous villagers of using very small amount of money for support, while state budget spend billions VND yearly on forest protection, the government cannot maintain this situation for long time.

- The households, communities who are allocated watershed protection forests have no rights to exploit and use timber, even in production forests, which are natural forest (as in Giang Cai). The decisions on forest allocation of district people committee do no mention stipulations, which allow the community to exploit and use timber from the forest. This annuls force, and interests of villagers when they are allocated natural forest for protection.

3.2 Recommendations

Based on the analysis of the situation, the workshop participants proposed that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development should advise Yean Bai Provincial People Committee to promulgate guidelines for implementing Decision 08 of the Premier Minister and Decision 02 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on forest management, include the following contents.

- Allow the households, the communities who are allocated production forest generated from natural forests to exploit and use forest
products according to approved procedure and design when the forest are mature.

- Those households and communities who are allocated watershed protection forests (very important and important) are given budget similar to which provided to the government organizations. Apart from that, when the forest is biologically mature and the canopy covering rate is more than 0.6, the forest owners are allowed to log the poorly old trees, diseased trees or naturally fallen trees in the forest according to the quotas issued by the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and sub-Department of forest protection are responsible for monitoring and controlling exploitation process. If the tree density in the forest is too high, the owners are allowed to make a logging design up to 20% of total capacity.

For natural bamboo forest which is categorized watershed protection forest, when canopy covering rate reaches 80%, the owners are allowed to exploit 30% of total capacity annually.

- In case of state organizations when sign contracts with households and communities, the policy stipulated transforming from benefit repayment in cash into payment by sharing forest products when the forest are allowed to be exploited.

- Simplify complicated monitoring/controlling procedures, facilitate households to transport and sale their products to the places they wish.

Hanoi, May 24, 2001
Reporter
Vu Dinh Tuynh

**Report on situations of forest management, protection and development in Tan Nguyen Commune, Tan Binh district**

I. Social-economic situations of the commune:

- Tan nguyen is a mountainous commune, located in the North-West of Yen Binh district. It is 40 km far form district town. Committee of Mountains and ethnic minority categorize three villages of the commune as villages belong to zone 3 which are confirmed.

- There are 992 households in the commune consisting 4,765 inhabitants. There are 6 ethnic groups living in the commune, of which Nung and Dao ethnic minorities account for 70% of the total population in the commune. The knowledge level is low; the population distribution is not equal in the commune, the majority of the inhabitants living in villages/hamlets, which located far from national roads.
- The likelihood of the people relies mainly on irrigation rice cultivation, tea production, forest plantation and fruit trees. The areas are limited and scattered, intensification level is not high, so per capital food production is only 250 kg per year. Average income per capita per year is 1.3 million VND.

- Food shortage is still occurred during pre-harvesting period, especially for Dao ethnic minority. A survey on poverty in the commune conducted in 1996 found that the percentage of the poor households is high (384 households). Owning to proper implementation of policy of poverty reduction and hunger alleviation of the party and the state, households in the commune are supported by some programs such as credit for poor households, agriculture and forestry extension programs, and support in purchase of seedlings, animal breeds. The number of the poor households reduced year by year. In this year, the number of poor households is only 220 households (account for 9.7% of total households in the commune)

II. Situation of forests and forested lands

- **Total potential forestry areas of the commune:** 1,678.4 ha. of which:
  + Total areas covering forests is 1,232.6 ha
  + Total areas scattered by trees is 375 ha

- **Total natural forestland is** 812.7 ha, of which
  + Areas mixed by timber trees, bamboo: 500 ha
  + Bamboo forested areas: 312 ha
  The volume of woody plants is approximately 80 m3/ha, bamboo: 200 tons/ha)

- **Plantation forest:** 507 ha, of which
  + Areas of snowbell forests: 219 ha (including trees at 7 years of age: 50 ha; 3-5 years of age: 110 ha and 1-2 years of age: 59 ha)
  + Areas of acacia, eucalyptus forest: 98 ha (including trees at 6-7 years of age: 48 ha; 2-5 years of age: 50 ha)
  + Areas of *Maglietia* forest: 40 ha (including trees at 7-10 years of age: 94 ha; 3-6 years of age: 16 ha)
  + Areas of Cinnamon forests: 100 ha (trees at 5-10 years of age: 45 ha; 2-4 years of age: 55 ha)
  + Other indigenous trees: 50 ha (mainly 2-8 years of age)

- **Classification of forested areas by purposes**
  + Protection forest: 336.8 ha
  + The remaining is production forest:

III. Current situation of forest management

Owing to the financial assistance of Vietnam-Sweden Mountainous Rural Development Program, in 1997, Yen Bai Institute of agricultural planning and projections has carried out overall projection, focusing on land use projection for period from 1997 to 2000 and from 2000 to 2001. Through education and dissemination of information, villagers conceived the purposes, and significance of the long-term land use projection. The villagers are enthusiastic to participate and invest in production based on plan of land allocation.
- Up to now, there are 658 households in the commune have been allocated lands and forests and provided red books, with total areas of 1,232 ha, of which forest gardens is 951.8 ha.
- In 2000, under the instruction and guideline of Vietnam-Sweden Mountainous Rural Development project of Yen Binh District, the commune allocated 667 ha to two villages (Deo Thao and Dong Ke) for testing model of integrated protection groups. Although the district people committee have not made decision, after one year of implementing annual contract mechanism, the integrated protection group has gained initial results such as: prevention of clearing trees in production and protection forests, minimizing illegal exploitation and trading forest products, instructed villagers on how to prevent and treat forest fires, plant trees, look after forests and develop forestry effectively, and gained considerable confidence and support of the villagers.

**Shortcomings:**

- The implementation of the model is still not orderly routine; there is no regular evaluation to withdraw lessons. The forests in the other two villages in the commune have not been managed properly. Some breaks have been treated strictly by the government institutions.
- The commune forests are not managed effectively since in initial years of management practice.
- There is no agreement in forest management and protection between the commune and neighboring districts.

**IV. Recommendations for policies, mechanism on forest management and protection**

In order to do good jobs in forest management, protection and development in years to come, Tan nguyen commune wants to propose the following solutions:

- Agree with the policy on allocation of forested land and forest located far from inhabitance areas to villages/hamlets to manage. Directly allocate forest and forested to adjacent village/hamlet leaders.
- Watershed protection forest and reforested lands should be allocated to village/hamlet leaders. Other categories of forested lands and forest should be assigned to individual household to manage, protect and develop. To minimize allocation of forests to state institutions since it is easily to create complications to villagers. The functions and tasks of the state forestry farms should focus on providing services like inputs, seeds, fund and technical advice to villagers.
- The government should have promulgated guidelines on establishment of forest protection and afforestation funds, ways of management and use of this fund.

*Presenter of the report*

Mr. Nong Cong Chinh,

*Chairman of Tan Nguyen People Committee*

Yen Binh district, Yen Bai Province
ZE XU PHINH Commune-in MU CANG CHAI District is a mountainous commune classified as the second level regions, which suffer from extreme difficulties. Its total natural area is 4,357 ha with a population of 235 households with 1,630 people, spreading in 5 mountainous villages of mostly H’Mong people, 98.7% of the total population, the rest of 1.3% comprises of other ethnic groups with poor cultural standards and bad inter-hamlets traffic system.

The life of people is still at low level with main income from farm work and single seasonal crops. Due to poor education background, there has not been any application of technology in agricultural production, thus productivity of crops and husbandry activities is very low. Moreover, goods production is still very underdeveloped and mostly self-supplying system is applied therefore life of people here is still suffering from a lot of difficulties.

During recent years, thanks to proper guidelines and policies of the Party and Government on “Development and Protection of Forest Resource”, the life of people here has gradually improved and rate of poverty has sharply reduced in comparison to the previous years.

I/ Current Situation of Forests and Land:

Forest area has been allocated under self-operating mechanism is 3,665.2 ha of which:

- Bounded forests: 2,394 ha, with timber resource of 17.6 ha = 458 m\(^3\) under mechanism of allocation upon self-managing to village communities.

- Plantation forests: 1,259.2 ha of which 745.5 ha under the management of state farm were allocated to households and the other of 513.7 ha is allocated to village communities.

- Potential land is 388.8 ha, plantation forests with resource available is 847.6 ha=67,255 m\(^3\) and plantation forests with resource unavailable is 411.6 ha.

- 100% of the current forest area of the commune is upstream protection forests and assigned forests under annual or short-term contracts.

II/ Current situation of Forest Management:

The work of programming the usage of the communal land is based on overall program on each type of land, the coordination of the communal people committee with teamworks, villages’ activities on forest protection and plantation, popularization of policies for forestry for people, propaganda activities of laws on forestry protection and development.
Borderline between forests and forestation land of villages and households is specified at site, divided up land plot, thus households assigned have responsibilities for forest protection and care.

As local people have more income from forestry activities thus forest development and protection is getting better. Coordination with local forestry management board and fire and fighting agency has been reinforced and reports to relevant authorities have been made.

The forests assigned to households are almost environment protection forests. Total area of land and forests that have been granted with red books is 325 ha and number of households that have been granted with red books is 65 (decision of the District's People Committee in 1993).

As a result, regenerating and planting forests assigned for households, which have committed with each other, forest management board and commune's committee.

**Responsibilities of assignors and assignees:**

- **For assignors:** Check and take over the forests, settle wages in schedule, outline plan and project for protecting forest, concentrate on mobilizing man power in time when fire incidents happen, identify and settle timely and firmly infringement of forestation law and regulation as households burn and destroy forests for illegal farming of wrong purpose.

- **For assignees:** Households define by themselves that forests are valuable natural resources need protecting and looking after. Forests assigned and received is households' forests so need protecting, looking after, and mending regularly, have absolutely not forests fired, prevent timely other people from destroying forests, take part in fire fighting forests, plant trees with high economic value to develop and enrich themselves thus forests is households' stable incomes, and implement regulations and policies on protecting forests.

Tan Dong, one commune of Area III located in Tran Yen Upper District, having common border with Van Yen District from the North and Yen Binh District from the East and Bao Dap Commune from the West. Its population is 3,250 residents divided including 675 households of 03 major ethnic groups: Kinh, Tay and Dao. Tan Dong is also divided in 08 wards of which there are 03 ward of Dao people including 1,250 people, equivalent to 38.4 % of total population in the whole commune. Road system in Tan Dong is in bad condition and is far away from the center of the district. The culture standard in Tan Dong is also very low. The income per capita of Tan Dong people is still very low, mainly from rice and manioc with monthly income per capita of 15,000 VND and high poverty rate, 150 kg/person/year. Although Tan Dong has received attention with projects funded by the Communist Party and the Government in various fields, it still has to suffer a lot more difficulties and disadvantages that the delta area.
II. Situation of Land and Forest:

The total volume of natural land in Tan Dong is 2,551 ha.

1. In which

- The area for forestation land is of 2,298.3 ha, including:
  - Natural forest and protection forest: 204 ha
  - Timber Forests: 168.5 ha
  - Plantation forest: 850.6 ha
  And the potential area for forest plantation is 1,076 ha

2. Agricultural land: 318.87 ha including 103 ha of for two rice crops annually.

3. Other land: 133.83 ha

A. Plantation forests including 03 major trees:

- Snowbell for materials of paper production: from 1 to 10 years = 450 ha
- Maglietia for materials of paper production: from 1 to 20 years = 150 ha
- Cinanimon tree: from 1 to 15 years

B. Land Allocation:

Thanks to the technical assistance of Vietnam Mountainous and Rural Development Program, funded by Sweden, Tan Dong measured and worked out the forestation land use map in taking in account of border between households, handed over the forestation land, worked out the red book for households in 1997 (there were 451 households having red book accounting for 1217 ha). After receiving handed-over land the peasants invested themselves in cinnamon tree forest plantation with the commune’s assistance in seeding, plant, forestland use and exploitation and settling border dispute.

III. Current Situation of Forest Management:

To become rich and prosperous Tan Dong people have no choice to grow and protect forest including forest fire fighting and prevention, reasonable forest exploitation because Tan Dong rural forest square represents 83.53% of total using land.

For example, 02 wards No. 7 and 8 has been conducting very well the forest protection and management from 02 pilot years with the technical and financial assistance of the Program with the following steps:

1. To acknowledge on the Land Law, Land Protection Law

2. To work out the map and set up the protection group
3. To work out Protection Regulations
4. To delaminate the forest land and use reasonably the fund
5. To seek for funding sources
6. Do not burn the forest land for rice cultivation
7. To punish someone who doesn’t conform with the Land Protection Regulations
8. Funding 1,000,000 VND for two wards according to budget plan for the year 2000
9. Raising the allowance for protection group
10. Assisting in cinemon tree seeding, setting the baby plant protection garden, preparation for the next crop

IV. Recommendations:

The Government should adopt the suitable policy as follows:

1. To hand over the remote areas for wards or communes with the average tax rate of 70,000 VND/ha/year and wards and communes will give the land for the peasants with the rate of 03 years once.
2. To continue handing over the attached neighbor land for peasants.
3. The Government should give the bonuses for the excellent group or peasant.

Reporter
Mr. Nguyen Van Thang, Chairman of Tan Dong Commune People Committee, Tran Yen District, Yen Bai Province
REPORT ON COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT
IN MO DE COMMUNE, MU CANG CHAI DISTRICT, YEN BAI PROVINCE

1. Population and Economic Situation in Mo De Commune

Mo De Commune is a mountainous commune (area III)
It adjoins Nam Xay Commune, Van Ban District in the North, with Mu Cang Chai Town in the South, with Che Cu Nha Commune in the East and with Khaoc Mang Commune in the West.

There are 403 households with total population of 2,863, 100% of whom are ethnic H’mong people.

In general, education background of the people is relatively low.

Total natural area is 6,912 ha

Of which:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Ha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area for agriculture:</td>
<td>369.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area for rice cultivating:</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area for rice farming in mountainous region:</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area for corn farming:</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the population lives on agricultural activities. However, since 1991, thanks to attention and investment on forest planting and protection of the Government, people here have been earning benefit from forestry activities.

Meanwhile, living standard remains low, average income per capita is about 250 kg of rice a year.

Poverty generally comes from shortage of cultivating land, labor forces, lack of working knowledge and opium addition. Therefore, number of poor household is 221, with total population of 1293, account for 54.8% of total population in the commune.

Under the circumstance, the commune leaders have worked out on plans and line of action aiming at hunger eradication and poverty elimination, funded by such programs as 135, 166, Vietnam-Sweden Mountain Rural Development program.

These plans concentrate on road building, transportation developing, and canalization to irrigate the areas and increase the number of harvest season from 1 to 2 a year. The commune leaders also want to expand rice-growing area and popularize new science and technology to people, proliferate new varieties of plants and animals, improve cultural standard of people in the commune, especially of children. Forestation and forest protecting, properly implementing 661 program is among objectives of these plans. In addition, it is necessary to effectively manage and protect the forest to bring short term as well as long-term benefits to the people.

2. Situation of forest and forestry land
The total area of forestry land in the commune is 2817ha, of which 517 ha is planted forest, 2300 ha is forest with protecting boundaries and 583 ha is bare hills. 367 ha of existing planted forest were cultivated in 1991, where trees are less than 10 years old. Trees in the commune mainly are xa méc, vêl, and local tree.

Categorization of forest based on main uses

- Environment protection forests: 2817 ha
- Conservation forests: 0 ha
- Production forests: 0 ha

3. **Forest Management**

Master planning on land using of the commune is as follows:

Owing to attention from the leaders of the Province and District, a delegation from Designing and Planning Institute of Yen Bai province came to the commune in 1997 and furnished a detailed design of the province. Accordingly, there are convenient routes, irrigating canals in the commune. Moreover, the most important achievements are providing people with new and efficient way of working, building real school in some villages. In details:

- Boundaries of forests and forestry land in villages and the commune were made clear.
- 3,143 ha of forests and forestry land was allocated directly 386 household

Land and forests to be granted with Red Books:

- 396 households were granted with red books.
- All forests and forestry land area allocated upon decisions of the People’s Committee of the Province and the District was certified with red books.

Results from the process of allocating, replanting, cultivating forest and establishing boundaries around forests in order to protect

- Forest area assigned to protect: 1,167 ha
- Forest with boundaries for replanting forest: 1,500 ha
- Plantation forests: 517 ha

The square assigned, mechanism of assignment is stable and lasting, responsibilities and rights of assignors and assignee namely: Contractors design technology, supply seeds, young plants and capital. Contractees implement the works according to the contracts; receive payments if they finish the contracts. Hamlets and villages have not established funds for regenerating forests.

4. **Recommendations for policies for forest protection and management**
- Agree on guidelines and policies of assignment forestlands in key residential areas of communities to hamlets and villages that have representative rights of the communities.
- In our opinion the forests with protecting boundaries and regenerating nearby residential areas should be assigned to households. The other forests should be assigned to communities. The old forests with reserve should be assigned to state owned organizations forestation yards, forest management boards.
- The state needs policies and solutions such as annual supports for people's income, capital, technology for regenerating trees with high economic value. Thank to that people will have high sense of responsibility to protect forests.

On behalf of the Project Management Board of Bo De Commune

Director

Sung Vang Chinh