PROPOSAL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
CONCEPT ON COMMUNITY FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

by

Paul van der Poel

Hanoi, June 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1  Introduction  2
2  Towards a Community Forestry Development Plan  4
3  The Actors: Who is Doing What?  7
4  Detailed Plan of Activities  8
   1) Selection of test villages.
   2) Community based analysis
   3) Definition of boundaries.
   4) Actual Land Use Appraisal
   5) Participatory Land Use Planning
   6) Land Allocation:
   7) Forest and Forest Land Agreements
   8) Definition of (Agro) Forestry Activities
   9) Formulation of Community Forestry Development Plans (CFDP)
We must walk slowly, because we are in a hurry

Objective: To describe in detail the SFDP Intervention Strategy and its implementation to be tested during the final phase of the Orientation Phase

When: August 1994 - March 1995

Where: Yen Chau District - Son La Province & Tua Chua District - Lai Chau Prov.

Who: SFDP, FIPI (Master B), District AF Department, FSIV

1. INTRODUCTION

During the first year of the SFDP Orientation Phase, the project has concentrated its efforts on obtaining a better understanding of the situation in the Song Da watershed with regard to the management of its natural resources. Based on this an intervention strategy has been developed which aims at sustainable natural resource management by local communities. This strategy consist of different steps in which different actors are involved and which leads to the development of community forestry development plans. In subsequent phases, this strategy (or parts of it) is to be implemented by local support services (like the extension service) but also increasingly by the local communities themselves.

The role of the project is to advise and assist local authorities and private sector in providing the necessary services to the population, to conduct applied research, defining and responding to training needs, to supervise and coordinate activities, and to facilitate communication between the actors concerned. Another role is to provide support to conceptual development and to provide inputs for the implementation of activities to be defined. The formulation and implementation of an intervention strategy is seen as a first but crucial step.

A community is understood as a relatively homogeneous group of people with its own social organization. In most cases the community will be the village or hamlet, but it might also be a group of people (also called interest group) within the village or it might be the commune as a whole, depending of its social organization. Whereas the village is usually considered as a basic, traditional unit, the commune is the lowest administrative unit which consist of several villages (often 5-15 villages per commune).

During the ZOPP workshop of June 1994, an agreement has been reached between project, central and provincial authorities to implement this strategy in a maximum of 2 communes (in Yen Chau and Tua Chua...
districts) in order to test its applicability, to improve it and to familiarize project and district staff with the different methods used. In February 1995, a joint evaluation of the first results will take place.

The intervention strategy is process-oriented and aims at assisting rural communities in the development of site-specific solutions for natural resources management problems at farm and community level. Process-oriented stands in contrast with an orientation towards fixed physical target, like in large-scale plantation projects. Site-specific means that solutions have to respond to specific ecological and social conditions. This also implies that the methods to be used as well as the people applying them have to be able to cope with different conditions; therefore the methods have to be flexible.

Local organisations and government institutions have to be able to apply the methods in a practical and cost efficient way. Instead of endlessly searching for an "ideal" approach on a specific site it is necessary to envision scaling-up the strategy on a regional scale within a given time limit. A balance has to be found between the government’s priorities and development objectives and the interests and priorities of the local population.

Key issue is that local communities are to participate in all major steps of the present strategy (from planning towards implementation and evaluation) to ensure that their knowledge and management capacities are incorporated and to enable farm households and local communities to manage their natural resources in a more sustainable way. Only in this manner, site-specific solutions can be developed in response to the population’s needs without continuous interference from official institutions. In the subsequent phase it has to be clearly defined what will be the task of the different actors involved, which activities are to be delegated to the communities and which ones to the local official support services and private sector.

In the following pages, the main steps are described which make up the proposed intervention strategy. This is followed by a more detailed description of the main activities in which contents and participants are identified. It concludes with a rough time schedule for the period August 1994- March 1995.

2. TOWARDS A COMMUNITY FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In the SFDP problem analysis, the following issues were identified as key problems for the local population in the project region with regard to natural resource management:

- lack of land tenure security
- unclear situation with regard to forest land and forest use
- lack of knowledge about land use alternatives in response to diminishing and degrading natural resources
- lack of credits and incentives to implement alternative activities

In order to clarify the land tenure situation, the allocation of land and forests to individual households and organisations has become a priority for the Vietnamese government and, in mountainous areas, for the Ministry of Forestry. However, the low speed and the way in which this land allocation has taken place so far has caused concern among the central authorities. There is a growing recognition that land allocation has to take more account of the local situation in the mountainous areas, especially with regard to ethnic groups.

The Ministry of Forestry has tried out alternative ways of land allocation in Hoa Binh province, among Muong and H'Mong communities. Basic principles are that land allocation is done mainly by the communities themselves and that all land of a particular commune and village is allocated at the same time. The new approach appears to have some clear advantages over the present, piecemeal, land allocation which is mainly done by the local authorities themselves, for it excludes community participation and does not recognize the great potential of the management of forests and forest land by the local population themselves.
Project intervention:

- training
- applied research
- forestry extension service
- market/marketing system
- credit, incentives

The SFDP intervention strategy takes land allocation as an intermediate step towards the formulation of community forestry development plans. Prior to land allocation, diagnostic research with PRA methods on community level will be conducted in order to identify the main characteristics, problems and needs with relation to natural resources: the so-called key issues. Crucial is an assessment of the present importance and potential of forests and trees for the community and household. PRA or Participatory Rural Appraisal consists of a series of investigative methods, applied with and by the rural community, to assess a particular situation. There are many different methods and which method is to be applied depends on the objective of the appraisal and the local situation. The project aims at applying only a reduced set of PRA methods in a short period of time (aiming at a maximum of 2 days per community).

After the PRA, preparation for land allocation process will take place. Additional steps will be the definition of boundaries on commune and village level and a participatory land use planning. It has to be defined who is going to manage what type of land and forest and what are the conditions and benefits of this management. Whereas this issue is relatively easy with regard to individually owned agricultural land, with regard to
management of forest land (with or without forest) clear regulations have to be agreed upon. It also has to be
defined whether forest lands and forests are to be managed by the community or by individual owners.

The project is of the opinion that larger forest areas (especially so-called protection forests) and degraded
forests lands might be managed more efficiently by organized farmer groups or entire communities. Whether
these assumptions are valid in the project area will depend on the local situation and tradition, but also on the
flexibility of the Agroforestry departments since flexible land and forest use agreements are required to
experiment with different approaches.

At this stage the major problems and priorities with regard to natural resource management have been
identified, land use planning and land allocation have taken place and management issues with regard to land
and forest have agreed upon. This will be followed by a definition of the major technical interventions to be
addressed.

These might consist of the introduction or improvement of one or more of the following activities: agroforestry
(like homegardens, forest gardens, hedgerows, etc.), introduction of sloping agricultural land techniques
(SALT) to improve agricultural production and reduce erosion, improved management of natural forest
(including non-wood forest products), accelerate fallow development, establish forest and fruit tree
plantations, etc.

These activities are drawn up in a so-called community forestry development plan which identifies
responsibilities, inputs, timeframe. Naturally, the plans have to be ready and agreed upon on time (possibly at
the end of the year) to provide for budget allocation and preparation of field activities (like the production of
seedlings).

The formulation of community forestry development plans is a crucial step before any physical activities (like
establishment of nurseries, tree planting, etc.) will take place. At the same time they are agreements between
the community and the (local) government and serve as a planning tool for the Agroforestry department to
identify inputs and outputs. They also constitute the basis for monitoring and evaluation, both for the
community and the Agroforestry department.

From the start the project will introduce a participatory monitoring system to provide information during the life
of the project, so that adjustments and/or modifications can be made if necessary. Participatory monitoring is
defined as the systematic recording and periodic analysis of information that has been chosen and recorded
by insiders (community members) with the help of outsiders (project staff). Participatory Evaluation is an
opportunity for both outsiders and insiders to stop and reflect on the past in order to make decisions about the
future. Whereas monitoring is a continuous process, evaluation is done on particular moments during the
projects’ lifecycle (for example: every 6 months or year). The methods for PAME or Participatory Monitoring
and Evaluation are described in FAO’s Community Toolbox (Vietnamese translation available).

In the process, new technologies will be introduced which have to be adapted to the site-specific conditions.
This might range from the introduction of rattan species in secondary forest, commercial tree crops, new
agroforestry arrangements to experimentation with new fruit trees and improved fallow development. Also
existing local technologies will be considered for better understanding and improvement. Therefore, in a
number of communities an on-farm research programme will be formulated which is accompanied by
demonstration plots. The results of this research will be fed into the PAME system to determine their progress
and to select the most promising technologies.

3. THE ACTORS: WHO IS DOING WHAT?

The major implementing agent to implement the strategy at community level will be the Agroforestry
Department at district level (abbreviated as AFD), which has a number of forestry and agricultural technicians
as well as cadastral units necessary for land allocation. A number of these technicians will be grouped into an
extension unit on district level. They are the ones to work directly with the communes and villages and will
function as an interface between local authorities and the communities.

Concerning the technicians on district level it is necessary to establish their professional background, their
working conditions (including means of transportation and incentives) and their training needs. A core team
has to be formed and managed on district level with full-time commitments to the projects’ activities. Close
relations will be maintained with the provincial authorities and the projects’ central staff to create the
necessary backing and identify necessary inputs.

At community level, a representative has to be chosen to function as a so-called, extension volunteer” and who will receive the necessary training in technical and organizational aspects. Again, it has to be specified what his/her responsibilities and necessary incentives are to enable him/her to function effectively. Other possibilities might be the creation of so-called management groups on community level or interest groups, but this matter still needs a lot of consideration in order to avoid the creation of yet another structure which might be difficult to support in the future. As much as possible existing structures on community level should be encouraged and supported.

For the execution of the land allocation process, assistance is sought from the cadastral units on district level. In addition to this, the definition of boundaries and the present land use appraisal needs to be executed by the regional forestry inventory brigades with possible assistance and training from the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute (FIPI) to provide the necessary maps.

On-farm trials and demonstration plots might be installed and monitored by the Forest Science Institute (FSIV), for which an agreement has to be made with the regional branch of FSI located in Son La. The FSI might work on a contract basis for a number of years and yearly evaluation events will be held with the communities involved to assess the results in field.

4. DETAILED PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

During the first so-called test-run the whole methodology will be tried out in villages located Yen Chau and Tua Chua district during the period September 1994- January 1995. Based on table 1, the activities will be described in more detail to define What, Who, and How.
### TABLE 1: COMMUNITY BASED NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Selection of test commune and villages</td>
<td>SFDP + local authorities</td>
<td>Based on criteria like accessibility, land use, social organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Community Based Analysis (definition of key issues)</td>
<td>AF District + Community</td>
<td>PRA-Techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Definition of boundaries of commune and village</td>
<td>AFD + Forestry Inventory Brigade + village chief</td>
<td>Boundaries on topographic map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Land Use Appraisal (mapping of conflict areas)</td>
<td>AFD + Forestry Inventory Brigade</td>
<td>Land Use classification and Mapping with predefined criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Participatory Land Use Planning (maps)</td>
<td>AFD + Community</td>
<td>Participatory Land Use Planning (+ mapping)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Land Allocation (Land Use Certificates)</td>
<td>Community + GDLM (cadastral agent)</td>
<td>Land Allocation by community (see Tu Ne experiences)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Land &amp; Forest Management Agreements</td>
<td>AFD + Community</td>
<td>Especially related to communal management of forest and forest land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Prioritization of (agro) forestry activities &amp; applied research</td>
<td>Community (members) + AFD</td>
<td>E.g. Agroforestry (home- and forest garden, hedgerow, fallow development), Nat. Regen., Forest Management, Plantation, NWFP’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Formulation of Community Development Plans (+ formation of interest groups or management groups)</td>
<td>Community + AFD</td>
<td>Written agreements on activities, inputs, timeframe, duties and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Approval of Community Development Plans (responsibilities and inputs)</td>
<td>Local authorities (district and province); support by central level</td>
<td>Swift and transparent procedures with time limits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. On-farm trials (establishment)</td>
<td>Forest Science Institute</td>
<td>Out contracted to FSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Introduction of Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation system</td>
<td>AFD</td>
<td>Based on FAO’s PAME methodology (see The Community’s Toolbox)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Monitoring of Results</td>
<td>Community + AFD</td>
<td>id.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Evaluation events (+ feedback of results on &amp; FSI implementation &amp; Research)</td>
<td>Community (assisted by AFD)</td>
<td>id.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) **Selection of test villages.**

First of all the test villages and communes have to be selected. The communes to be selected might be the same as the communes for which plans have been made with regard to the 327 programme. This has to be done with the provincial authorities in August/September 1994. The villages to be selected depend on whether they are willing to participate, whether they are representative for the area with regard to land use and social organization and whether they are accessible.
2) Community based analysis

First of all, the purpose of the project has to be introduced to the village leaders and a suitable timeframe (2-3 days) will have to be agreed upon. On the agreed days a number of participatory activities will conducted which are guided by the project staff. Main activities consist of the following: a needs assessment, background history of community and resource use, describing management rules and regulations with regard to land and forest use and the use of fire, transect of land use systems, defining primary products (especially tree and forest related). This will be done via a series of group and individual discussions and mapping activities. During these activities visual tools will be used to keep track of their outcome.

During this process, the most suitable investigative tools will have to be defined for the different local conditions and ethnic groups. Staff will have to be trained in the use of these methods and, especially, in the analysis and reporting of the results. Initially a maximum number of 4 persons from the project will be responsible for one set of activities in a particular community, which might be reduced to 2 persons in the future. Training will take place in September 1994, prior to activities in the field. A maximum training period of one week is thought to be necessary, which should be followed immediately by field activities.

3) Definition of boundaries.

Boundaries have to be defined in two stages. First of all, the commune and village boundaries are defined. Secondly, boundaries of individually and community managed plots have to be established. In both cases they have to be put on a map whose scale varies between 1:10.000 and 1:50.000. A trial will be conducted with a GPS device (Global positioning System) to found out whether this activity can be done cheaper and more accurate than the present method by hand. Boundary conflicts will have to be settled with approval of the local authorities. See also activity 6 on land allocation.

4) Actual Land Use Appraisal

To prepare for the land use planning, the present land use will have to be assessed and the necessary data on size and quality defined. This might be done by forestry inventory brigades of the province or contracted out to the FIPI. Important is which land use classification is used to avoid confusion in the future. The Tu Ne/Tan Lac experience applied a very practical classification which was a mix of the classifications used by the Ministry of Forestry and the one applied by the Cadastral Department. Important was the involvement of the local people in defining the units. A similar classification might be applied as long as it fits the local situation.

5) Participatory Land Use Planning

This step aims at describing in broad terms the future use of land and forest. It aims at identifying which land units are in conflict between actual and potential land use. Furthermore it identifies which area and forests are important for watersupply of the irrigation systems, etc. This is an activity based on the present land use map which has to be conducted by the AFD and commune and village involved. It serves as a preparatory step for land allocation and definition of (agro) forestry activities. It should be avoided to use this step as a tool to prescribe future land use since this will not assure its adoption by local people but, instead, lead to further conflicts. This is especially important when discussing forests lands or protection and production forests.

6) Land Allocation:

In this activity land is allocated to farm households, groups of households or to the whole community depending on its applicability and wishes of the people involved. Land use certificates are legally binding contracts signed by two parties: Chairman of the districts PC and the person(s) accepting the land in which rights and duties are clearly defined. The main steps are summed up in table 2.

The preconditions for land allocation (Article 19 of the Land Law) are:

- There has to be a general land use plan
- Organisations, households and individuals have to present a request to village and commune authority

It has to be clearly defined who is in charge of carrying out and monitoring land allocation in the field. In Tu Ne/Tan Lac this has been the Forest Protection Unit. Whether this is also the case in the project region is not yet known. Concerning land users such as cooperatives and state enterprises (who possess LUC (!!)), signed
by Chairman of the District PC): they are allocating forest on a contract basis (i.e. sharing of the value of the trees when harvested) to their employees and to farmers in surrounding areas. The legal situation of these contracts is not covered by the Land Law. Whether this will be a problem in the project region is not yet clear since there are no or few state enterprises.

It will be necessary to request authority to change the existing regulations concerning land allocation. Like in Tu Ne/Tan Lac, the Provincial People’s Committee will have to do so. This mainly concerns the following principles:

- All land in entire commune is to be allocated at the same time (individual/communal)
- Land allocation is carried out by villagers themselves
- LUC for forest land are less binding with regard to land use (agroforestry activities)

### TABLE 2: LAND ALLOCATION STEPS: (to be adapted to local circumstances)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Definition of commune and village boundaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Definition of present land use map and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Village meetings on information and application forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Applications compared with commune cadastral register and existing LUC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Location and area of plots used by households are defined on a map 1:10.000 (or smaller?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Remaining common land defined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Data verified in field (allocated, requested and common land), in presence of commune’s PC and cadastral agent. Maps scale?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Plan made for the distribution of the remaining common agricultural and forest land (in an equitable and democratic way)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Draft cadastral map of the village was prepared and presented and discussed in village meeting, in presence of commune’s PC and cadastral agent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Applications are revised in light of the discussion and negotiation in the village meeting. Concerned households are to make revised applications for land allocation. All households demarcate their borders with neighboring households with poles. Demarcation of the remaining land is done by the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>An official cadastre of the commune is prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Registry of the allocated plots to each household is prepared and presented to district and province authorities for approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Provincial PC gives approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Chairman of District PC signs a decision to allocate land in accordance with steps above and issues corresponding LUC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7) Forest and Forest Land Agreements

A major activity which is attached to the land allocation is to define who is going to manage what type of land
or forest. It has to be specified what the management units are: individual, interest group, community. But also the obligations and the benefits are to be agreed upon in a negotiation between community members and the AFD. A variety of possible arrangements are theoretically possible but which is most suitable will depend on the local physical and social situation, wishes and desires. Most possibly different arrangements will have to be tested and carefully monitored before an "ideal" situation has been reached. The outcome of the negotiations will very much depend on an estimation of who benefits from what and on a certain degree of mutual trust.

8) Definition of (Agro) Forestry Activities

For different land use problems, different (agro) forestry activities have to be defined in a discussion between the community, individual households and AFD.

Which activities are most desirable depends on the wishes of the population and the technical feasibility of the proposals. Most probably fruit trees will be an important activity and different spatial arrangements can be thought of in terms of location and species composition. Other important activities might be erosion control through a combination of trees, grasses and physical works and agricultural crops. The introduction of Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT) might be an important activity. Improved productivity of forests and fallow land through the introduction of valuable timber trees, rattan species, etc. or legumes might be another activity. Forest management and improved natural regeneration have to addressed. Small scale plantations could be an alternative.

Critical in the definition of possible activities is to distinguish between already proven ones and potential ones for which trials will have to be carried. It is very important to assess the potential of indigenous (agro)forestry techniques and species before introducing new ones. These can be used as starting points for further technology development. Others factors which influence these decisions are the market situation, transportation opportunities, food security situation. New production systems have to be technically sound and sustainable, economically profitable and socially acceptable.

9) Formulation of Community Forestry Development Plans (CFDP)

After definition of the key issues, the land use planning, the land allocation, the management issues and the (agro)forestry activities, an agreement has to be drawn up between the community and the AFD. This agreement is called the Community Forestry Development Plan (CFDP) and describes the activities to be carried out by individual households, interest groups, communities for a period of one or more years. It clearly identifies the participants, timeframe, inputs and output expected and defines the necessary support from outside in terms of technical assistance (training, extension) and physical inputs (seedlings, incentives, credits, etc.). It also identifies who is representing the community or interest groups to the AFD, what his/her responsibilities are and what incentives he/she will receive and from whom.

The CFDP is the first output of the intervention strategy and the basis for planning for the AFD in the next year in terms of extension and budget. They could form the basis for programmed like 327 or investment programmes funded by outsiders. It is very important to have an agreement with the responsible authorities on the requirements for investment with regard to the formulation of these plans to ensure that the agreed activities are actually carried out. Furthermore, these CFDP are the basis for the monitoring and evaluation system as discussed in activities 12-14.

10) Approval of Community Plans

After the plans have been drawn up, a pause of 1 month is introduced to allow the community and the authorities to approve the plans.

11) Definition of on-farm research

Together with the AFD, community and FSIV, a research programme will be formulated to answer questions and problems for which no ready made solutions have been found yet. Furthermore this might involve the establishment of demonstration plots on new techniques (for example agroforestry, SALT, etc.). Ways should be found to ensure that local knowledge is included in the design of the research to be able to improve and compare different techniques. In regular evaluation events, the results have to be discussed to assess the opinion of the people involved or to introduce improvements.

12) - 14) Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PAME)
A monitoring and evaluation system will be introduced to the AFD and the communities involved according to FAO's Community Forestry Field Manual No.2 ("The Community’s Toolbox"). It is necessary to define with AFD and communities which information will be collected, by which methods and who is responsible for processing the results. A database will be established and managed by the project to record systematically the flow of information.

5. TIME SCHEDULE

The following is a rough time schedule for implementing the strategy during the last 9 months of the SFDP Orientation Phase: July 1994- March 1995.

**July 1994**
- Selection of VN experts on central level
- Assess counterpart personnel at district level
- Contract FIPI for data collection, boundary assessment, mapping & training
- Prepare for training of counterpart personnel

**August 1994**
- First selection of 2 communes in 2 districts
- Detailed workplan of FIPI - Start of field activities
- Detailed training programme for PRA-methodology
- Contract projects’ core team
- Contract consultant for training needs assessment
- Initiate contacts with FSIV about contract for on-farm research

**Sept. 1994**
- Finalize English training course
- Contract participants from provinces
- Start training of project personnel in project approach & PRA
- Make working agreements on district level
- Conduct problem analysis and project introduction at district level
- Visit first commune(s) and start selection of villages
- Finalize community based project database

**Oct. 1994**
- Finalize FIPI field activities
- Start PRA on community level + discuss first results
- Prepare and execute land allocation (boundaries, land use & land allocation)

**Nov. 1994**
- Make land and forest management agreements
- Get approval of local and central authorities
- Identify possible (agro) techniques
- Select community representative

**Dec 1994**
- Formulate Community Forestry Development plans (CFDP)
- Discuss results of CFDP and plan for implementation in 1995
Conduct training needs assessment

**Jan. 1995**  Draw up training programme

**Feb. 1995**  Start training

**March 1995**  Prepare to operationalize Revised Intervention Strategy  Prepare for field activities

ETCETERA - Comments please