METHODOLOGY FOR
FOREST PROTECTION AND
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

TRAINER GUIDE

2ND Revised Version, January 2002 Son La
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BACKGROUND

Since 1990 the Government has undertaken a revision of the Law on forest protection regulations with the aim of making local organizations, households and individuals responsible for the protection and development of forest areas in the country.

This shift from state managed forest to participatory forest management can be seen in the new guidelines and decrees. Forestlands are allocated to organizations, households and individuals following a number of steps such as Land Survey, Land Use Planning, and the issue of Land Allocation Certificates.

Through this process the rights over the protection and management of forest areas have been transferred to local communities, and individuals. The result is that the number of the communities with Land Allocation Certificates has increased and is increasing every day.

It is recognized that the role of local communities is particular important to the management and protection of forest resources. This implies that the regulations on forest protection and development need to be developed and applied by the communities concerned.

Traditional village forest regulations are in general available and applied in each community. To respond to the new government policies on forests and to the increased responsibility of communities on protecting and managing their forest it has been proposed to assist communities in revising and updating such regulations by themselves to better respond to today government and forest users needs.

Extension has not been part of conventional forestry and foresters thus are not trained in its practice. Participatory extension methods are more likely not only to articulate farmers’ knowledge and concerns, but also to facilitate the process of action-reflection needed to identify and refine appropriate forest regulations, and also help people develop their own problem solving skills.

Strengthening peoples’ capacity in managing and protecting their forest according to regulations developed by themselves and approved by the relevant authorities is crucial in raising management efficiency and enabling a sustainable utilization of forest resources.

It is believed that if forest users’ capacity in managing their forest could be engaged and strengthened, giving shared importance to both timber and non timber forest products, increased benefits could be shared amongst users without depleting forest resources but on the contrary enhancing its productivity.
THE VILLAGE FOREST REGULATIONS METHODOLOGY

During the past four years the Son La Provincial authorities, with participation from the District, Commune, Village level representatives, and the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) have undertaken a revision of the existing guidelines for the preparation of Village Forest Protection and Development Regulations to better respond to government forestry policy changes from state managed to participatory forest management.

**Purpose**

The Village Forest Protection and Development Regulations methodology is being developed to respond to the government identified need and interest to build farmers’ capacity in designing their own forest regulations and therefore improving the management of forest resources.

The methodology aims to build each farmer’s capacity to analyze their forest resources and traditional regulations, eventually identifying and adopting the forest regulations that will best respond to farmers’ and government’s forest management needs. The purpose is also to assist the Forest Protection Officers to establish a rapport of trust, respect and exchange of information with local communities.

Consequently the methodology is not meant to instruct farmers on how the forest regulations should be prepared but through participatory training methods to provide them with tools and skills which will enable them to analyze their own forest resources, and to generate new ideas on forest regulations.

**Methodological approach used**

The Village Forest Protection and Development methodology uses “non-formal adult education” methods, based on experiential learning techniques, and participatory decision-making techniques. Farmers’ learning is directed by goals and needs looking for solutions to real life problems. Experiential learning advocates the establishment of optimal learning environments in which participants have a sense of belonging, security, and freedom to make choices. Necessary ingredients should extend to “voluntary attendance, informality of meetings, freedom of expression, and avoidance of pressure”. During the development of the methodology four major points were considered as follows:

1. **The existing forest laws**
   - The law on Forest Protection and Regulation;
   - Decision No. 45-1998/QD-TTG, December 21, 1998; on the execution of state management over forests and forestry lands;
   - Circular No. 56/1999/TT/BNN-KI, march 30th, 1999 providing a guideline on developing forest protection and development regulations in local communities;
   - The community forestry development strategy of the Social Forestry Development Project Song Da;
   - Village regulations should be designed in line with policy and advocacy of the Party and Government as well as the Law. At the same time village regulations should be in harmony with the fine traditions and customs of the village;
   - The village regulations should be examined by the Commune Peoples’ Committee and approved by the District People’s Committee.
2. To increase people's participation

Increased people's participation at village level in the decision-making process to identify and agree on suitable forest protection and development regulations will greatly assist communities in improving the management of their forest resources.

In addition to the contributions that will be provided by local leaders in designing the village regulations, attention has been paid to identify and to include elements that will promote a greater involvement of individual community members and in particular a greater involvement of women in the decision-making process.

In this respect the village regulations should be clear, specific, easy to understand, easy to implement, suit the village forest condition and village future plans in forest development, and should be adequately disseminated amongst members.

3. To strengthen communities capacity

To build communities capacity in resource management is seen as a pre-requisite for the successful design, self-enforcement of forest regulations, and a socially acceptable utilization of forest resources.

4. To provide a flexible approach

Communities vary from one to another in terms of physical, social and economic environments, leadership, cohesion amongst community members, and relation with local authorities. In some communities the forest regulations can be finalized in a short period of time, while in other more time will be needed to sort out conflicts of interest, and different opinions on specific issues.

It has been therefore proposed to devise a methodology that will allow each community to develop their own forest regulations within a flexible period of time and to consider the forest regulations related issues most relevant to them.

This is reflected in the planned number of the village meetings, which may vary from two to three days, the duration of each meeting which may vary from half-day to a full day, and the main issues to be discussed during the village meeting(s).
INTRODUCTION TO THE FIELD GUIDE

The purpose of this Field Guide

The overall objective of the Field Guide is to assist facilitators by providing the basic framework and materials for the implementation of the Village Forest Protection and Development Regulations methodology.

The detailed objectives of this Field Guide are:

1. To provide District Forest Protection Department officers with a step-by-step methodology to facilitate village members and forest owners in the design of their own Village Level Forest Protection and Development Regulations;

2. to provide methodological guidance to facilitate the village meetings;

3. to provide the base for preparing the final Forest Protection and Development Regulations document for approval;

4. to provide ideas on how approved regulations could be effectively made available and known to all village members;

5. to document and to make the methodology available to:
   - field based extension officers, farmers’ leaders and field-level development workers to facilitate the implementation of a Village Forest Regulation process
   - trainers or coordinators who will be training field-level facilitators using these guidelines

How to use the filed guide

This field guide contains a number of exercises on a selected range of forest regulation topics. Each exercise is described in detail so as to provide sufficient guidance to the facilitator. It includes a brief introduction, objectives, time and material needed, and steps to be followed. Each exercise ends with suggestions for leading questions to facilitate group discussions.

To implement an exercise it is often suggested to form small groups of 4 to 5 people or smaller. The group’s assignment includes idea-generation, brainstorming, information sharing, list making, and problem solving. One or two persons work as recorders, summarizing the groups’ output, and reporting to the larger group afterwards. The facilitator does not interfere, but monitors progress of the groups and offers procedural guidance and content suggestions.

Working in small groups is a very effective participatory training method increasing farmers’ participation and commitment. In small group people have less chance to hide or get lost. Participant speak more freely than in large groups where people feel little or no personal responsibility. Working in small groups offers the opportunity to:

- Stimulate individual inputs,
- break the ice,
- gather opinions and identify preconceived ideas,
- rank order items and create an agenda,
- collect questions and issues and promote feedback
During the exercises, you may also be asked to promote group discussion or assist groups in accomplish the task assigned. To be able to promote group decision-making process you need to use a variety of facilitation skills and methods you have learnt during the facilitators’ training. Some basic facilitation skills are summarized below.

**Listening.** Listening is the most fundamental skill for facilitation. Effective listening will allow you to single out problems if there is one, to understand the main point expressed by a farmer or a group, help speakers to develop competence and motivation to solve her or his problem,

**Observing.** This skill involves seeing without judging what happens. Within a group people interact in different ways, they interact not only through what is being said but also through how it is said; use of voice, facial expression, attitude, and gesture. Body language gives a clue to feeling and can convey strong messages.

**Questioning.** For a group to work together effectively, everyone ideas must be heard. Effective questioning is a necessary facilitation skill in the FPR to get everyone involved in learning. Questions are one of the most valuable tools for assessing understanding, making points, promote farmer-to-farmer exchange, using available knowledge in the group to answer a question.

**Summarizing.** Summarizing what a group of people have said, or summarizing decision taken by the group will help all the participants in the meeting to have a clear understanding of the main point discussed and agreed. It is also used when a participant makes very long, complicated or confusing statements, or when a participant has problems phrasing his/her own thoughts clearly.

**How the field guide is organized**

The field guide contains 4 chapters and Annexes. The chapters follow the methodology steps/cycle as shown on page 12. Each chapter deals with a main topic and it contains an introduction and a number of exercises related to the main topic.

**Chapter I** provides information on the activities suggested to be carried out before the beginning of the village meetings

**Chapter II** contains a series exercises to be conducted during the village meetings where decisions on forest regulations are taken

**Chapter III** includes the suggestions on procedures to finalize the document, its approval, and ideas to assist communities to effectively disseminate the regulations

**Chapter IV** deals with monitoring and follow-up activities to review village forest regulations

**Annex 1** contains the format of the document where the village agreed regulations are written down to be submitted to the commune and district authorities

**Annex 2** contains a list of rare and protected wildlife.
OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS TO DESIGN VILLAGE FOREST PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

In the following paragraphs you will find a summary of the steps that are suggested to be followed in assisting communities to design their own forest protection and development regulations.

**OVERVIEW OF VILLAGE FOREST PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS PROCESS**

1- Preparations

2- Village meetings

3- Writing forest regulations document

4- Approval of village forest regulations

5- Dissemination of forest regulations at village level

6- Monitoring an enforcement

7- Periodical review of the village forest regulations
1. Preparation

To make each village meeting successful, participatory and an useful learning experience for all farmers some preparations may be necessary and they may include:

- To gather the village (or commune) land use map, and other government regulation documents;
- to review existing data on forest resources, and village socio-economic data;
- to organize a meeting at commune level inviting all village heads to attend (if appropriate);
- to visit the village forest to have a better understanding of the present situation and general conditions and main farmers concerns in forest management;
- to inform the Village Management Board of:
  - the FPR process that will take place, its approach and the objectives;
  - what they can expect and what is expected from them;
  - who should attend the village meetings;
  - agree on the date of the first day meeting.

2. Village meetings

This is probably the most important step in the preparation of the village forest regulations. During a series of meetings the community members will first share their ideas and opinions on the purpose of the forest regulations and agree on what they would like to achieve with them.

Farmers will then classify their forestland and decide what regulations are appropriate and need to be applied for each forest product, for fire prevention, for the wildlife and the fines and compensations that will be applied to violators.

The main objective of the village meetings is the identification and finalization of the village forest regulations. During this step, together with the village head, you will facilitate the meeting, which includes the following main points:

- Introduction to the meeting
- Forest classification for management, utilization and identification of main problems related to protection and management
- Design regulations for harvesting of forest products
- Design regulations for uplands clearing and burning, and design the fire prevention plan
- Design regulations for cattle grazing
- Design regulations for hunting and harvesting of wildlife
- Identify benefits and duties of forest owners and protectors
- Identify procedure for fining, compensations, and awarding
- Decide on how regulations will be disseminated within the community
1. Finalize village forest regulations document for approval

Once the village forest regulations have been developed and agreed by all community members, such regulations need to be written down in a simple document that will then be submitted to the Commune and District for their approval.

During this step you will assist the village management board to finalize the document.

2. Approval of the village forest regulations

The document is submitted to the relevant authorities for approval. After the regulations are completed at village level the document is submitted by the village head to the commune and the commune leader submits the document to the district Forest Protection Unit. The district Forest Protection Unit together with the district Justice Unit then check and approve the regulations and the Forest Protection Unit feedback the results to the commune.

3. Dissemination of government and village forest regulations

It has been often pointed out that farmers are not always well aware of the forest regulations. Considering that there are several forest regulations and they often change, it will be important for the community members to decide how regulations should be made known to everyone.

During this step you will assist the farmers to identify the best way to properly disseminate both, government and village regulations to all village members.

4. Monitoring and enforcing forest regulations

At village level the farmers themselves are the main responsible to ensure that regulations designed by them are followed. This is one of the main reasons why the new guidelines for forest regulation stress the importance of community members participation in the design process. Nevertheless during the village meetings it might be necessary for the community members to decide who will have the responsibility to ensure that regulations are followed by all and how this will be achieved.

5. Periodical review of the village forest regulations

- Mandatory revision of village forest protection and development regulations? This needs to be agreed by government
- Annual revision of quantities to be harvested by households.
- Which is the appropriate meeting? The annual village conference?
- Follow-up support to communities - coaching activities.
When and where to implement the process

There are several steps that need to be completed to successfully assist villagers to prepare and disseminate the village forest regulations. When planning the activity in your commune it will be useful to prepare a simple work plan so that your and farmers’ time is properly utilized.

It can also be useful to have a meeting at commune level with all village heads so that you have the opportunity to brief them on the overall process, purposes and procedure.

**Time of the year:** In scheduling the preparation of village forest regulations the facilitator should be aware of farmers’ availability and the importance of involving participants in setting the time and schedule of meetings. Women may not have the same availability as men. To guarantee that women can attend regularly suitable times need to be identified. Facilitators have an important role to play in this respect.

**Duration:** The overall process from the design to the dissemination of regulations may take about 2-3 months. The village meetings from two to four half-days.

**Length of each meeting:** There are no fixed rules on the duration of each meeting. This will depend on farmers’ and your availability. In general it is not possible for farmers to spend a full day away from their farm or other commitments very often. Therefore it is suggested the meetings take no more than half a day.

**Venue:** The farmers meet at a convenient village meeting place.
ROLE OF THE FOREST PROTECTION OFFICERS

The role of the Forest Protection officers is to assist the community members during the whole process to design the village forest regulations (from preparations to dissemination and monitoring), to facilitate the village meetings, and to provide adequate information of forest related issues when required.

The facilitators task is to be accepting, supportive, and most important to be able to establish a pattern of communication that creates a climate trust and safety, eventually increasing the flow of information and cooperation amongst group members.

The facilitator, a field officer or group leader is trained in adult education principles, facilitation skills, participatory training and group decision-making methods, and has implemented the methodology at least once as part of her or his training.

ROLE OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS

The village head and the Village Management Board are responsible for organizing and moderating the meeting.

The community members take part in the meeting and actively contributing in the decision-making process on village forest regulations. Since women are the major users of forest resources their presence and contributions during the whole meetings is a pre-requisite for the successful design and implementation of sound forest regulations. Their attendance and active participation has to be encouraged and supported.

This also implies that the time of the meeting should be chosen according to women availability to attend and to have a duration suitable with women daily tasks. This is also one of the reasons to conduct 2 or 3 meetings of half-day each, so that participants have also time to care for their own family and other commitment.

A secretary should be appointed to take minutes of the meeting and to help to compile the results of the discussions.
Chapter 1 - PREPARATION

In this chapter you will find hints and ideas on what to consider when preparing to implement the design of village forest regulations in your assigned commune(s).
1.1 PREPARATORY STEPS

To assist each village in designing their forest regulations, and making the village meeting successful, participatory and a useful learning experience for all farmers some preparations may be necessary, including:

1. To gather village and commune maps, if available, on existing forest, forestland and land use planning;

2. to take with you:
   - the Decree N0. 77 on administrative punishment in forestry issued by the Prime Minister;
   - the decision QD-UB/131/1998 issued by the Son La provincial People’s Committee temporarily providing guidance on harvesting, trading, transporting and processing of forest products;
   - the district winter-spring plan;
   - the Forest Protection and Development Law;
   - Existing regulations on the village and the commune;

1. if appropriate, you may ask the commune to organize a meeting inviting all village heads to attend, and to explain them about the process to design each village forest protection and development regulations (FPR);

2. to review existing data on forest resources, and village socio-economic data;

3. to visit the village forest to have a better understanding of the present situation and general conditions and main farmers concerns in forest management and protection;

4. to agree on the date of the first day of the village meeting, including who should attend. Participants of the village meeting should include the Village Management Board Members, representatives of mass organizations, one representative of each household. Since women are the main actors in harvesting forest products and upland clearing their participation need to be encourage and facilitated.

Prepare for the commune level meeting

To support the commune level meeting the following preparations should be taken into consideration:

1. A simple meeting agenda
2. Check list of what to say, and possible methods to be used,
3. Inform the Village Management Board about the FPR process that will take place in their village, its approach and the objectives, what they can expect and what is expected from them;
4. Material to be distributed as hand outs, and /or guideline to explain the process.
Chapter 2 - DESIGNING VILLAGE FOREST PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

This chapter contains exercises that will help you to introduce the village meeting, to assist farmers in assessing forest resources and to decide the most appropriate regulation.

During this step you will facilitate a number of exercises that will help the group to:

- agree on the purpose and objectives of the village forest regulations,
- identify and prioritized main problems in forest management,
- mapping their forest resources,
- design forest regulations for harvesting of forest products, clearing and burning for upland cultivation, preparing fire protection plan, cattle grazing, hunting and harvesting of wildlife.
Overview of the village meetings’ agenda

OVERVIEW OF THE VILLAGE MEETINGS’ AGENDA

9- Dissemination of the regulations within the community
8- Procedure for fining, compensations, and awarding
7- Benefits and duties of forest owners and protectors
6- Regulations for hunting and harvesting of wildlife
5- Regulations for cattle grazing
4- Regulations for uplands clearing and burning, and design the fire prevention plan
3- Regulations for harvesting of forest products
2- Forest classification for management, utilization and identification of main problems related to protection and management
1- Introduction to the meeting and setting village forest regulations objectives
### INDICATIVE VILLAGE MEETINGS AGENDA FORM

#### Day one

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Method</th>
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<td>Harvesting forest products</td>
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2.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE VILLAGE MEETING

The design of village forest regulations can only become a success with the farmers active participation. When a group of farmers first meets they are usually somewhat full of question. Who is there? What is going to happen? Where do I fit in? It is worth my trouble, and time?

For most of the farmers the approach is new and they are not used to the kind of participatory methods used. It is therefore very important that the farmers know what they can expect from the meetings and what is expected from them.

The main objective on this exercise is to help the group to get settled in, create a sense of welcome, and establish an atmosphere of co-operation, and sharing, increase their self-confidence, and increase exchange of information.

Objectives

- A sense of welcome and an atmosphere of co-operation will be created
- Farmers will be able to explain the steps that will be followed to prepare the village forest regulations
- Farmers will be able to explain the purpose of the meeting;

Time needed 20 minutes

Material Large pieces of paper with the methodology steps, tape, pins

Steps

1. Before you start the introduction, prepare a flip/wall chart clearly indicating the steps that will be followed during the meeting(s) (the 9 steps of the meeting)

2. Start your introduction by presenting:
   - the objectives of the meeting,
   - the steps that will be followed,
   - the time that may be required,
   - the role that the participants are expected to play.

   During this presentation show the meeting chart (previously prepared) and make use of it while giving farmers an overview, in a chronological order, of the meeting.

1. Then, if appropriate, briefly introduce the relevant government policies.

2. Ask participants if they have any questions for clarification, and answer to them.

Note: It will be useful to keep the meeting chart visible to all farmers during the whole meeting(s) period. This will help participants to remember the whole process, and the links amongst different topics discussed during this and following meetings.
2.2 SETTING FARMERS’ OBJECTIVES OF THE FOREST REGULATIONS

Before deciding on how forest resources can be utilized and the restrictions to be applied it is important for the community members to reach a common vision on what they want to achieve with the regulations. This will help the community to identify regulations that will better help them to achieve the objectives.

Objectives
- Farmers will have shared their perceptions on the purpose of the forest regulations
- Farmers will have agreed on what they want to achieve with the regulations

Time: 1 hour

Material: Small paper, flip chart, markers, and tape (or pins)

Steps:
1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Ask farmers to divide into three groups and to discuss:
   - what they think is the purpose of designing forest protection regulations
   - what they want to achieve with it.

Then ask the groups to finalize their findings, and write them on paper (Allow 20 minutes for discussion and writing)

1. Ask each group to select a representative that will present their result to all farmers

2. Ask each representative to present their conclusions.

3. Promote a short plenary discussion highlighting differences so that at the end an agreement is reached on the purpose and what the community wants to achieve.

4. Write the main conclusions on a large paper and fix it on the wall for all to see

Your notes:
2.3 MAPPING - FOREST CLASSIFICATION

The preparation of a simple forest map may help the group to visualize and/or identify the main features of their forest such as boundary, as well as different forest areas, their location and condition, present uses, bare lands, streams, roads etc. Thus the map provides a clear picture of the forest at a glance.

When used as a point of discussion this map gives participants a common orientation towards the resources within the forest area, which will assist them in the design of forest regulations according to each area.

This simple forest map could also be followed by a short walk through the forest to confirm representative forest features.

Objectives

- Farmers will be able to identify the position of their forest on the map;
- farmers will be able to distinguish different forest areas, their location and conditions;
- farmers will have classified their forestland according to forest function classification.

Time needed 1 to 1.5 hour

Materials Large piece of paper, marker, pencils or pens, tape.
Or the ground, coloured powder, chalk of different colours.

Steps

1. Explain the learning objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Ask farmers (in plenary or smaller sub-groups) to draw a sketch map of their forest and nearby features on a large piece of paper, or on the ground, indicating main forest boundaries, and reference points such as roads, rivers, springs, north/south, special places, and settlements (this will give them an initial orientation).

3. Ask the farmers:
   - to mark/draw the location of their forest on the map by different areas classified as “Production”, “Protection”, and “Special-use”, including local names given to each area;
   - to indicate/write/draw the main forest conditions.

1. While making the map promote group discussion on the characteristics of each identified forest area to share individual perceptions and to reach a consensus on each area. Involve at least 6 or 7 people in making the map, including women.

2. Then ask one person to present/explain the map to all. Add new descriptions or changes if farmers wish to.

3. If appropriate, after the completion of the map, you may suggest to the group to go for a short forest walk to visit the areas and confirm (or change) boundaries and descriptions.
7. Leave the map on the wall for all to see, and at completion of the meetings leave the map with the village for their future reference.

8. Often the map prepared includes many corrections. You may assign two or three persons to re-draw the map to make it more clear. The new map can be prepared in the evening (home work). Leave with them paper and colour pencil, markers.

9. Remember to make use of this map during the discussion on regulations.

10. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed during this exercise.

**Note:** Often farmers start to draw the commune area. Allow them to make this sketch map, but then ask them to make a more detail map focusing more on the forest and surrounding agricultural lands, where forest boundary, and area classification can be see clearly.

**Some suggestions to facilitate the group discussion**

- Where is your village?
- Where are the main roads, rivers, springs, and cemetery?
- Where is north and south?
- Which are the areas for plantation, holy, production, and protection?
- Can you indicate them on the map? (Their location and boundary)
- Can you identify different forest conditions?
- Are you using different forest areas for different purposes?
- In which area is harvesting not allowed (timber and/or firewood, bamboo, others)?
- Which forest areas are considered to be better or poorly managed?

**Your notes:**
### 2.4 IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO FOREST PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Within the community there might be issues, related to forest management and utilization, that are controversial and of more concern for all. At the beginning of the meeting it will be important for the village members to express these concerns for all to know and to make sure that during the discussion and the decisions that will follow, these points are taken into consideration.

This will strengthen peoples’ confidence and participation in the meeting.

**Objectives**

- Farmers will have exchanged the main problems they feel they have in forest management
- Farmers will have made a list of problems/issues they would like to discuss during the meeting

**Time needed** 45 minutes

**Material**  Hat or basket, small paper, pens, tape or pins

**Steps**

1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.
2. Distribute to each farmer a small piece of paper and ask them to write one main issue or problem they would like the meeting to consider, or to be taken into account. *(Allow 10 minute to write)*
3. Ask farmer to put their card into a hat (or small basket).
4. Collect the hat and read the cards for all to know.
5. Group the cards according to problems (topic) avoiding duplications.
6. Make a final list of the main problems the farmers would like to consider during the meeting.
7. You may also decide to change the order of the topics to be discussed later in the meeting, starting from the one farmers have indicated they are more concerned about.
8. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

**Note:** This exercise can also be done in group of 2 (instead of individually), especially in case some of the participants does not feel confident in writing.
2.5 DESIGNING REGULATIONS FOR HARVESTING OF FOREST PRODUCTS

During this step farmers will identify and agree on which regulations farmers think are most appropriate to regulate the harvest of each forest product by each of the previously identified forest areas.

The forest map previously prepared will help farmers to visualize each area.

Objectives
- Farmers will have identified the forest products they want to regulate;
- Farmers will have discussed and agreed on regulations to be applied to each product and each area;
- Farmers will have identified and agreed on the level of fine to be applied.

Time 1 ½ hours

Material Flipchart, markers, pins, the village forest map, list of main problems

Steps
1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.
2. Facilitate a quick brainstorming to identify which forest products farmers would like to include in the regulations. At the end write the final list of products on a flipchart and fix it on the wall for all to see.
3. Ask farmers to divide into three (3) or four (4) groups and ask each group to discuss and write on paper for each forest product:
   - What is allowed, location, when, quantities, by each forest area indicated on the map,
   - what is not allowed and where
   - compensations to be paid
   - the fine to be applied
4. Ask a representative of each group to present her/his group finding to all.
5. In plenary ask a board member to prepare a final table or text combining the relevant contributions of the groups, avoiding duplications. Promote and guide discussion if disagreements on regulations arises so that a consensus is reached.
6. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

Note: Often farmer concentrate only on the quantity of forest products. Depending on local situation there could be more important details that could be included in the regulations in particular the time and modality of the harvest.

After making the list of products to consider, to increase farmers’ participation especially women, it is suggested to divide the participants into smaller groups (3 or 4) and then combine their findings in plenary session. The composition of the groups is very important and can vary according to situations.
Some suggestions to facilitate group discussion

- Which are the important forest products you want to include in the regulations?
- Which are the farmers/groups entitled to harvest forest products?
- By product:
  - Where it can be harvested?
  - Where it cannot be harvested?
  - When is the appropriate time for harvesting?
  - What quantity is each household or community allowed to harvest?
  - How harvest should be done? (harvesting formalities)
  - What compensation should the transgressor asked to pay?
  - What fines should be applied to violators?

Example of table of regulations for harvesting forest products

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Area allowed</th>
<th>Area not allowed</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Modality of harvest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>When</td>
<td>Quantities</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuelwood</td>
<td>Area A and B (local names)</td>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>One load per household</td>
<td>Area C and D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo shoots</td>
<td>Area B (local name)</td>
<td>Once a year</td>
<td>20 shoots per household</td>
<td>Area C and D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variety (name)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(date)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.6 DESIGNING REGULATIONS FOR UPLAND CLEARING AND BURNING

The farmers will now decide which regulations are most appropriate to regulate the clearing and burning of upland fields for cultivation.

The forest map previously prepared will help farmers to visualize the surrounding agricultural field of each forest area.

Objectives

- Farmers will have discussed and agreed on clearing and burning regulations to be applied to each agricultural area surrounding their and others village forests;
- Farmers will have agreed on modalities/techniques for uplands burning;
- Farmers will have identified and agree on compensation and fine to be applied.

Time 45 minutes

Material Flipchart, markers, pins, the village forest map, list of main problems

Steps

Before you start this exercise it will be important to find out whether the land allocation has been carried out or not and if land has been physically demarcated.

1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Making use of the map ask farmers to indicate where clearing and burning should not be allowed. This is important when forest and agricultural areas have not been allocated/demarcated yet. An agreement/decision on boundaries should be reached.

3. Then guide the discussion by asking farmers to discuss on:
   - Where is burning allowed?
   - What should be the size of the fire prevention belt?
   - When is time for burning on agricultural fields?
   - How burning should be done (techniques/modalities)?
   - What compensation should be paid?
   - What fine should be paid?

4. Follow the discussion, ask questions to involve silent people, help the group to share ideas;

5. While the discussion in going on write the main decisions on the board (or chart) for them to see. **WRITE IN BIG LETTERS**

6. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed and agreed.
Some suggestions to facilitate group discussion

- Has land allocation been carried out?
- Has forestland been physically demarcated?
- Is there an area where land allocation has not been conducted?
- Which are the areas where burning and clearing is prohibited?
- Which are the areas where burning and clearing is allowed?
- What is the appropriate time for upland clearing and burning?
- What are the techniques that should be used by all for upland burning?

Example of table to be used to summarize farmers decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Area allowed</th>
<th>Area not allowed</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Modality of burning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearing</td>
<td>agricultural lands (local names)</td>
<td>area C and D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burning</td>
<td>agricultural lands (local names)</td>
<td>time of the year</td>
<td>area C and D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Farmers decisions can also be summarized in text form instead of tables)

Your notes:
2.7 PREPARING THE FIRE PREVENTION PLAN

Objectives

- Farmers will have discussed and agreed on how forest fire should be prevented;
- Farmers will have agreed on individual responsibilities to prevent forest fires;
- Farmers will have agreed on the composition of the fire prevention group and its responsibilities;
- Farmers will have identified and agree on compensation and fine to be applied.

Time needed 45 minutes

Material Flipchart, markers, pins, the village forest map, list of main problems

Steps

1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Guide a plenary discussion by asking farmers to discuss, one at the time, the following:
   - How can a fire prevention plan be organized?
   - What should be immediately done in case of fire?
   - Who is the main responsible for mobilizing the whole village in case of fire?
   - Should a fire prevention group be appointed? (often forest protection groups have also responsibilities for fire prevention)
   - If yes, should the work of the group be paid?
   - Is there any funding for this? If not, how will they be paid? From where?
   - How should we deal with households who intentionally avoid participating in the fire prevention?
   - How should we deal with households where only elderly people live?
   - How should we deal with households where only mother and child are present at the time of fire?
   - What do we do when fire has been provoked by a nearby village member? Who has the authority to intervene?
   - What compensations should be paid by the violator?
   - What fine should be paid by the violator?

3. Follow the discussion, ask questions to involve silent people, control dominant people, help the group share ideas;

4. While the discussion is going on write the main decisions on the board (or chart) for them to see. WRITE IN BIG LETTERS

5. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed and agreed.

Note: To promote people’s participation (and individual contributions), this exercise is better done in smaller groups asking each group to discuss on the list of questions and to share results with all.
2.8 DESIGNING REGULATIONS FOR CATTLE GRAZING

This meeting participants will decide which regulations are most appropriate to regulate cattle grazing in the forest.

The forest map previously prepared will help farmers to visualize the different forest areas.

Objectives

- Farmers will have discussed and agreed on regulations to be applied to regulate grazing in each forest area;
- Farmers will have identified and agree on compensations and fine to be applied.

Time

45 minutes

Material

Flipchart, markers, pins, the village forest map, list of main problems

Steps

1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.
2. Explain that according to government regulations grazing is not allowed in the forest.
3. Guide a plenary discussion by asking farmers to discuss, one at the time, the following:
   - Which area is designated for grazing?
   - If there is no area designated, which land/areas could be used for grazing?
   - Modalities for grazing?
   - In the agricultural and forestland how to settle dispute between owner, protector and violator?
   - If they don’t come to an agreement who should be involved? Who has the authority to intervene?
4. What compensation should be paid for grazing in the forest areas?
5. What fines should be paid for grazing in the forest areas?
6. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

Some suggestions to facilitate group discussion

- In which forest area is cattle grazing prohibited?
- Which ones are designated areas for grazing?
- In case of damage how the cattle owner and the damaged owner should resolve?
- If they cannot resolve, who has the authority to intervene?
2.9 DESIGNING REGULATIONS FOR HUNTING & HARVESTING OF WILDLIFE

The farmers will now decide on the regulations that are most appropriate to regulate hunting and harvesting of wildlife in their forest.

The forest map previously prepared will help farmers to visualize the different forest areas.

Objectives

- Farmers will have discussed and agreed on regulations to be applied to wildlife hunting and harvesting in each forest area;
- Farmers will have learn more about rare and protected species in their province;
- Farmers will have identified and agree on compensations and fine to be applied.

Time needed 1 hour

Material Flipchart, markers, pins, the village forest map, list of main problems, and list of rare and protected species in the province.

Steps

1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Prepare a flip chart divided into four columns with the heading “Past”, “Present”, “Reasons for changes”, and “Proposed solutions”.

3. Through a plenary session ask farmers to list all the wildlife (animal, insects and plants) they remember to have seen in the past and in the recent years (present) in their forest. Write the local names on the chart under each headings for all to see.

4. Ask farmers to exchange their experience and views on the reasons why species have disappeared or appeared in their forest. The reasons for changes in wildlife.

5. Ask farmers what actions could help to increase and/or protect wildlife in their forest.

6. Ask farmers to indicate which species on their list are protected by government regulations. Circle or underline the protected species on the chart.

7. If the list of protected species cannot be completed by farmers complete the list for them and explain the reason why species are protected.

8. Based on the list of wildlife that has no hunting and harvesting restrictions ask farmers to indicate what regulations they would like to apply for hunting in their forest, where, when, and number of species and fine to be applied.

9. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.
Some suggestions to facilitate group discussion

- Which animal do you remember you have seen in the past (20-30 years ago)?
- Which animal did you see last and this year (present)?
- What do you think are the reasons for the change?
- Do you know which one are rare and protected species in the province?
- What should we do to improve the situation?
- Which animal can be hunted and in which area?
- Which plants can be harvested and where?
- Where animals and plants cannot be hunted and harvested?
- Where hunting and harvesting is prohibited?
- What fine should be applied?

Example of flipchart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present</th>
<th>Reason for changes</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specie</td>
<td>Specie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.10 IDENTIFYING BENEFITS AND DUTIES OF FOREST USERS AND AUTHORITY

This session can be carried out as:
- a plenary discussion in a village meeting or
- a small group (6 to 10 people) comprised of representatives of village’s main mass organizations. Assign them tasks to propose benefits and duties, reimbursements, punishments/fines to be presented in the following village meeting for comments and approvals.

Objectives
- Farmers will have identified the benefits and duties of forest owners and forest protection/fire prevention group;
- Farmers will have identified who has the authority to fine violators;
- Farmers will have identified the amount and source of funding to pay for the work of the village protection group;

Time needed  1 hour

Material  Flipchart, markers, pins, list of main problems

Steps
1. Explain that in order to clarify rights and duties, it should distinguish types of ownerships and management responsibilities.
   a) Natural forest and planting forest managed by community
   b) Natural forest managed under protection contracts.
   c) Forestry land allocated to households with Red books.
   d) Forestry land where households or individuals invest to plant forest themselves.

2. Explain to villagers that as for b) and c) rights and duties are clearly stipulated in protection contracts and Red books. (Discuss on benefits and duties if necessary)
3. Explain that as for d), the investor have rights to gain benefits from forest in the time of harvesting. He must pay tax for Government. He is in charge of protecting and managing forest according to VFPRs.
4. Discuss with villagers on rights and duties of a):
   - Do we need a forest keeper ?
   - Do we need to establish a protection group ?
   - How much money do the protection group get from forest protection activities ?
   - Do we pay money to them or allow them to harvest a certain volume of forest products ?
   - What are the protection group’s tasks ? Is it necessary to carry out regular checks ?
   - How can we mobilize villagers to participate in forest protection activities ?
5. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

Note:
If protection contracts and funding are available, protection and management of contracted forest must be implemented following rights and duties stipulated in the contracts. It should discuss on what can be done if the funding source is not available so far.
2.11 IDENTIFYING PROCEDURE FOR FINING, COMPENSATIONS, AND AWARDING

Objectives
- Farmers will have identified the rights of village heads;
- Farmers will have identified punishments and fines;
- Farmers will have identified the amount of compensation and awards;

Time needed 1 hour

Steps
1. Explain villagers that they should identify awards, fines and punishment, and compensations.
2. Discuss on village head’s rights: village head has authority to make fines of 5,000 VND to 30,000 VND per case of violation if the value of violated forest products does not exceed 200,000 VND. If the value exceeds 200,000 VND, it must be transferred to higher authority for handling. Discuss the rights of village head in mobilizing villagers to take patrols, check and seize illegal forest products.
3. Repeat previously identified fines and punishments. Discuss carefully on these issues in order to make it socially acceptable. It should apply educational, persuasive and harmonious methods and light punishments.
   - Discuss with villagers on awards for people who identify violators and solve violation cases. It should identify clearly who are awarede (forest owners, people identifying violators and solving violation cases e.t.c) and how many percent of fines is used for awards, put into village’s or commune’s budgets. E.g: Total money of punishments and compensations can be devided as follows: Person detecting violations will receive from 20 to 30 %/case. Person arresting violators and solving violations will receive from 20 to 30 %/case. The remaining will be kept in village budgets/funds.
4. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

Hints for discussion:
- How can disputes be solved?
- Which level of fines should be reported to higher authorities?
- Is it necessary to make records? If yes, who do it?
- What about the first warning? The second warning?
- Is it necessary to file of all violations?

Your notes:
2.12 DECIDING ON HOW FOREST REGULATIONS WILL BE
DISSEMINATED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

It has been often pointed out that farmers are not always well aware of the forest
regulations. Considering that there are several forest regulations it will be important for
the community members to decide how regulations should be made known to everyone.

During this step you will assist the farmers to identify the best way village regulations
(and relevant government regulations) could be properly made available and known to
all.

Objectives
- Farmers will have shared ideas and decided on how forest regulation should be
  made easily known to all.
- Farmers will have agreed on who will be responsible to disseminate the approved
  regulations.

Time needed 1 hour

Material Paper for sub-groups, pens, flipchart, markers, pin and tape

Steps
1. Explain the objectives and the procedure of this exercise to the participants.

2. Ask farmers to divide into organization groups.

3. Ask each group to discuss on the following questions:
   • Which ones do you think are the best methods that can be used by the village
to disseminate both village and government forest regulations.
   • Which one are the village organizations and/or people that can best
accomplish this task.
   • What resources are needed for effective dissemination.

1. Ask each group representative to present their finding to all.

2. Through plenary discussion assist farmers in finalize the best methods for
dissemination and who will do it.

3. Wrap-up, summarising the main points discussed.

Note: this exercise can also be done by brainstorming (with flipchart)
2.13 REVIEW OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The time needed to prepare the village forest regulations will vary from one to three days (or half-days) according to local situation. It will therefore be necessary that each meeting starts with a summary of what has occurred during the previous meeting. This will help to bring attention back to the topics, and to refresh memories on what has been discussed, achieved, and agreed during the previous meeting.

Objectives

• Participants will refresh their memories of what has been discussed, achieved, and agreed during the previous meeting.

Time needed  15 minutes

Material  Notes from previous meeting, charts prepared by participants, the chart showing the overall meeting steps and topics

Steps

1. Ask a selected farmer to summarize what was achieved and discussed during the previous meeting.

2. Extend and explain the summary when needed.

3. Before the end of the day’s meeting identify the farmer who will summarize findings at the next meeting (if any) so that they can prepare notes.

Some suggestions to facilitate the review/summary

• Which were the main topics discussed?
• What were the participants’ main observations/comments?
• Which were the main group conclusions or agreement?

Your notes:
2.14 BRIEFING ON THE DAY’S ACTIVITIES / TODAY’S AGENDA

At the beginning of each meeting it is important for farmers to know what is today agenda and which activities have been planned. This helps the group to settle in and focus on the meeting.

Objectives

• Farmers will know the programme, activities for today’s meeting.
• Farmers will be reminded about the process to design forest regulations

Time needed 15 minutes

Material flipchart with the process

Steps

1. Present to the participants the activities that have been planned for today and adjust them if required.

2. Discuss briefly the objective of each activities and expected outputs.

3. If there is a visit to the forest, make participants know about it.

4. Review the steps of the methodology so as to make farmers clear about the process and at what step we are today.

Some suggestions for presenting today agenda

• What are the main objectives of today meeting.
• Which are the topics that will be discussed; in chronological order?
• How long the meeting will be?
• What are the participating farmers expected to contribute most?
• What will be their and others role?

Your notes:
Chapter 3 - WRITING REGULATIONS’ DOCUMENT, ITS
APPROVAL AND DISSEMINATION OF
REGULATIONS

Finalizing VFPRs:

Enclosed in Annex 1 the format of VFPRs to be submitted for approval. This document attached with village meeting’s minutes is submitted to commune and then forwarded to district authorities for approval.

People responsible for aggregating and submitting for approval are: the village head and the Village Management Board. The village meeting’s minutes need to be signed by all representative households.

The role of the facilitator is to support the village head, secretary and members of the Village Management Board to finalize the document.

Approving VFPRs:

The approving authorities are the commune people’s council and the commune people’s committee. The District PC will refer to comments and opinions of the forest protection station, the district Justice office will be responsible for approval.

The role of facilitator is a focal point to connect competent authority agencies in order to have the document approved in suitable time (including modifications, if necessary).

Disseminating VFPRs:

After regulations are approved a meeting is organized by the forest protection staff, the cadastral unit of commune and commune agroforestry extension staff, to inform villagers of the approval including modifications made by the commune/district. This is the starting point of the enforcement of the regulations.

During this meeting the village head identifies clearly:
- responsibilities of each villager.
- A seasonal monitoring and evaluation plan.
- How to disseminate VFPRs made in previous meetings.

The role of forest protection officer is to participate and to support further village meetings.

In addition, forest protection officer also support the community to disseminate VFPRs effectively based on ideas of women and men in the village meetings.

The format of the regulations should pay attention to illiterate people or those who can not read computer character’s fonts. Special attention should also be paid on how to identify the best way to disseminate information to women.
Chapter 4 - MONITORING AND PERIODICAL REVIEW OF FOREST REGULATIONS

This chapter refers to responsibilities of different authority levels in implementing and monitoring VFPRs as well as evaluating them regularly.

Implementing and monitoring VFPRs:

District level:

The district Agricultural and Development section co-ordinate to guide the commune and village levels in enforcing the regulations. The district forest protection station is the core assisting body to the district people’s committee in monitoring the enforcement of the regulations and at the same time disseminating the printed fire prevention plan issued by the forest protection sector.

Commune level:

Commune Forest Protection and - Cadastral officers take responsibilities to provide feedback of the approved VFPRs to the commune. The Commune needs to file all copies of VFPRs. They organize a village meeting to inform villagers of the regulations they have themselves made and about adjustment by the district and the commune in the approving process.

The commune assigns a person to check and monitor the collection of fines at the village level and handle commune level violations.

The commune should receive a copy of all village regulations.

Village level:

The Village Management Board assign one of its members to be responsible for enforcing, monitoring and evaluation the regulation. It is also responsible to disseminate the regulations to all households of the village.

In the meeting held for starting the enforcement on the regulation, the village head makes clear each villager’s responsibility, make the seasonal forest checking plan and set up the fire prevention and forest protection groups.

It is advisable to make a commitment paper bearing the villagers signatures signifying their agreement with the regulation.

The regulations should be written on Ao paper or on a sign board with large letters and posted where many people regularly meet or pass as reminder.

In the annual village conference it is necessary to review and evaluate the enforcement of the regulations.
In an annual meeting, the following issues should be discussed:

- What are villagers’ perception of VFPRs?
- how useful are the regulation for the community?
- encountered problems and proposed solutions, and ideas?
- If regulation need to be adjusted
- How many violation cases have been settled?
- How much money left of fines have not treated/shared?
- How much money have been collected and used for what?

Forest protection officers should participate in these village meetings and support villagers to handle constraints and difficulties encountered.

Regular evaluation of VFPRs:

VFPRs need to be reviewed and adjusted every 3 or 5 year or in case some policy changes requires VFPR to be adjusted earlier.

After 3 or 5 year implementation, the village may gain experience in forest protection and VFPR’s application. Therefore, villagers should review their VFPRs and decide how to readjust them to the new situation.

The Village Management Board and the Forest Protection Officers organize a village meeting to determine whether it is necessary to adjust the VFPRs.

In the same procedure as during the establishment of the VFPRs, a village meeting will be held to discuss and if necessary adjust, rewrite and submit the new VFPRs for approval.

The role of the forest protection officer is to support this process, facilitate VMB to finalize the document, follow the approval procedures as well as disseminate the new VFPRs.
LIST OF ANNEXES
ANNEX 1  Format of the regulations document to be submitted for approval
(this format can be used to make photocopy from this guide and distribute to farmers)

REGULATION ON FOREST PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>To be allowed</th>
<th>Not to be allowed</th>
<th>Compensations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 – Timber exploitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(With a letter of approval)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>- Bamboo</td>
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<td>- Bamboo shoots</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Other NTFPs</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 - Burning forest for upland cultivation</td>
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<td>3 - Animal grazing</td>
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<td>4 - Wildlife animal hunting</td>
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<td>5 - Forest fire prevention</td>
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<td>6 - Benefits</td>
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<td>7 – Duties</td>
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<td>8 - Responsibilities</td>
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<td>- Village head</td>
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<td>- Fines for the first time of violation: from 5,000 VND to 30,000 VND per case</td>
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<td>- Making reports/minutes to higher authorities when over responsibilities</td>
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Son La, dated

Village head  Commune People Committee  District People Committee
Annex 2  
List of rare and protected wildlife
Extracted from Decision No: 1523/QD-UB on 26th September, 1997 issued by Son La PC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Wide animals of Group 1</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Wide animals of Group 2</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Rhino</td>
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<td>Elephant</td>
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<td>Tiger</td>
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<td>Leopard</td>
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<td>Wolf</td>
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<td>Cobra</td>
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