# Program 327 Review for the Vietnam Rural Development Strategy

**DRAFT REPORT**  
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for The WORLD BANK

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The World Bank is carrying out a study to assist the Government of Vietnam in formulating a new Rural Development Strategy. Key objectives of that strategy will be to improve natural resources management and increase productive opportunities for rural labor. Since 1992, Government has financed the "Greening the Barren Hills" Program (327) in support of these objectives.

This report describes, analyses and evaluates Program 327 and assesses its performance in achieving its goals in a sustainable manner. The report outlines the Public Investment Program with respect to Program 327 activities to the year 2010. The report recommends specific actions that the World Bank and other international donors could undertake to assist the Government to make the Program more effective.

Section 2 describes the Program. The Program was developed in response to Government concern over continuing declines in the area of natural forest; the failure of past plantation programs; stalled development in many rural and mountainous areas; and increasing costs and decreasing supply options for imported wood. It has had a range of objectives since its inception in 1992, but has mostly focussed on reforesting 'bare' and 'unproductive' land and protecting existing natural forests. The Program has evolved complex and bureaucratic institutional and financial arrangements. It has lacked research and extension support although external donors have funded activities under the Program.

Section 3 analyses and evaluates the Program. Official data is presented that indicates the Program has been largely successful in achieving its targets. In practice, it is acknowledged that the Program has been ineffective. Since its inception, the area of natural forest has continued to decline. Forest plantation programs have mostly failed although in some cases have enabled increased planting of industrial crops such as rubber, tea and coffee. Institutional, technical, economic and social issues are described that have impacted on the Program's effectiveness. These include:

- a top down, bureaucratic approach;
• lack of ability to challenge constantly changing project objectives;

• stalled land allocation processes that do not involve local people;

• reduced funding options for SFEs;

• harvesting and transport restrictions;

• local business practices;

• poor technical training, species/site matching, nursery practices and poor silviculture and follow-up maintenance;

• insufficient and untimely funding;

• pest, disease, fire, grazing and typhoon damage;

• a lack of detailed market studies;

• imposing the project on resource poor households in a way that ignores the need for an overall integrated development approach; and

• scarce land resources.

Experiences outside the Program are described. The long-term outlook for established plantations is considered to be poor.

Section 4 describes the Government's new 5 million hectare Program. Effective from July 1st 1998, the new program aims to reforest 5 million hectares and 'actively protect' existing forests so that by 2010, the total forest area will reach 14.3 million hectares, equivalent to Vietnam's forest area in 1943.

MARD is the main agency responsible with WI to develop detailed implementation plans for this ambitious program. Plans are not yet finalised, but the total forecast investment to the year 2010 will be approximately US$2.5 billion. Of this, US$1 billion is forecast to come from the State budget and US$1.4 billion from loans or donor support.

Program objectives are to speed up reforestation activities and improve forest protection; establish raw materials for forest processing industries; and to provide employment and income generation opportunities for rural households.

Although projects have not yet been formulated under the new Program, there appears to be little difference between the new Program and Program 327. Program 327 will essentially be subsumed into the new Program. The Program has a 'more of the same' feeling although it is more oriented toward production and revenue generation than 327. It remains exposed to many of the institutional, technical, social and economic issues described above. Some have been acknowledged and changed. For example:

• households will keep all revenue generated from plantation or protection activities;

• restrictions on harvesting and transport are reduced; and

• products may be tax exempt depending on MPI approval.

The plan still sees households as a key production unit, but expects increased involvement from State enterprises, domestic holding companies, collectives, social holdings, private businesses and foreign Joint Ventures. The plan emphasises stimulating and protecting natural regeneration as an important reforestation technique as well as funding new plantings.

Program implementation remains heavily top down. Project approval, financing and monitoring processes are unchanged. Program funds will continue therefore to act as a lifeline for failing SFEs. There is little recognition that households must be involved in the decision-making process. The plan ignores the social reality of rural
poor households and the network of informal use rights that have plagued land allocation processes. The plan recognises the technical shortcomings of Program 327 but fails to offer tangible solutions.

Measures to improve the new Program's effectiveness are discussed. There is a growing body of relevant project level experiences that could, but so far have failed, to inform the wider policy context. There are opportunities for the World Bank and other international donors to strengthen these experiences. Specifically, it is recommended that the Bank:

1. Adopt the role of facilitator to develop a process that brings together the extensive and growing coalition of past and present project level experiences and interests. It is only through such a process that excellent and highly relevant project experiences will inform wider policy and rural development frameworks.

2. Promote a detailed Province by Province external review of Program 327 that would focus on the Program's positive aspects and would draw out experiences relevant to the Bank sponsored facilitation role.

3. Fund development of technical centres of excellence in each of Vietnam's nine ecological regions that could:
   - act as high quality, best practice nurseries with the capacity to produce at least 1 million seedlings per season. Production would focus initially on those species/provenance matches known to flourish in that eco-region;
   - undertake research across the Provinces in its zone to build on existing knowledge and experience to expand species/site matching options, including a focus on indigenous and exotic, high value production species;
   - investigate and develop natural regeneration methods;
   - investigate silvicultural and follow-up maintenance requirements;
   - investigate pest, disease and appropriate fire management procedures;
   - include training and extension facilities and be a focal point for activities;
   - involve households in program design and implementation; and
   - develop model, pilot plantations that demonstrate successful techniques.

4. Ensure through its facilitation role that the technical solutions developed by the centres of excellence are married to the social, institutional and economic solutions developed by other initiatives.

1 INTRODUCTION

The World Bank is carrying out a study to assist the Government of Vietnam in formulating a new Rural Development Strategy. Key objectives of that strategy will be to improve natural resources management and increase productive opportunities for rural labor. Since 1992, Government has financed the “Greening the Barren Hills” Program (327) in support of these objectives.

The World Bank has requested that FORTECH undertake a review of Program 327. Terms of Reference for the study are at Annex 1. The review will describe, analyses and evaluate the Program and assess its performance in achieving its goals in a sustainable manner. It will report Government plans with respect to this Program over the next five years. Based on these findings, the study will make recommendations on how to improve the Program's performance and effectiveness and suggest where the World Bank and other international donors could best assist.

FORTECH's Scott Poynton undertook a field visit to Vietnam from April 12 to 29, 1998 to collect information for the study. This report is the Draft Final Report and is formulated in response to the study ToR.
2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROGRAM CONTEXT

Forests as the Basis for Development

In 1943 there were an estimated 14 million hectares of forest in Vietnam. In 1975, a national-wide survey estimated that this had reduced to 11 million hectares. In 1997, this was further reduced to 9.3 million hectares. This reduction has seen a concomitant increase in the area of 'bare' or unproductive land. The continuing forest cover decline is cause for Government concern.

The Government believes that unproductive land threatens national development priorities. It sees the country's forests as underpinning ecologically sustainable economic, cultural and social development, particularly in rural and mountainous areas where some 80% of the population live. It places critical importance on Vietnam being self-sufficient in food production. Negative impacts, such as erosion, from past deforestation have damaged downstream agricultural areas. The Government is therefore concerned that bare, eroding hills are re-covered with vegetation. It is similarly concerned about sustaining rural livelihoods so at the same time wants forest sector development that will support productive opportunities for rural labor. It has thus promoted forest restoration and reforestation as a national priority, conducting various planting programs since 1956 (Lung, 1994).

Natural forests as a declining source of timber

Since 1986, Vietnam has experienced increased economic development. Until 1993, most of the timber to support this development came from the country's natural or plantation forests. Paper is the only wood product where imports have traditionally comprised a high percentage of total consumption (Phuc, 1994).

Whilst demand for timber has increased, the supply from Vietnam's natural forests has declined. The decline has not been planned as such, but has been a consequence of over-exploitation of the high quality and accessible natural forest areas.

Out of concern to protect what was left - Vietnam's forests are internationally important for their rich biodiversity and have great social and cultural significance for the Vietnamese people - the Prime Minister issued a decree in early 1997 to ban all natural forest logging. The PM instructed the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to prepare a plan to ‘close’ all natural forests. The plan subsequently only reduced the annual harvested volume, rather than ceasing it altogether. The plan recognised that Vietnam could not fund the timber imports that would be required to replace wood from its forests; and that stopping natural forest logging would lead to large-scale job losses in the forest and wood processing sectors, particularly in rural areas.

In 1998, the annual harvested volume was therefore reduced to 350,000 m\(^3\)/year. Subsequent years will see this reduce further to 300,000 in\(^3\). Previously, the annual harvest was greater than 1 million m\(^3\)/year.

Increasing dependence on imports

As the volume of wood supplied from Vietnam's natural forests has reduced, it has sourced an increasing volume from its neighbors' forests. Since 1993 in particular, large log volumes have flowed from Cambodia and to a lesser extent Laos. Recently, increased volumes are being imported from Myanmar\(^1\).

Vietnam must, however, compete with Thailand for this wood. It is a finite resource and Thai companies have already secured a significant proportion of the available volume. Regionally, Indonesia and Malaysia are the largest timber exporters. Timber from these countries is priced on an internationally competitive basis however and timber imported into Vietnam from these sources is expensive compared to local sources or those from Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar. The Government in Vietnam is aware, therefore, that unless it can bolster supplies from within the country, it has only a limited time before timber import bills impact on balance of trade figures.

Unsuccessful past Plantation Programs
Despite plantation programs dating from 1956, Vietnam does not have a long history of quality plantation management. In the period to 1975, Lung (1994) reports that some 219,290 hectares were established. Understandably, during these war years, the program suffered from lack of funds and is acknowledged as being less successful than hoped in terms of producing quality plantations.

In the period from 1975 to 1986, plantation programs continued but again suffered from a lack of funds and technical inputs. Lung (1994) reports that whilst gross figures suggest that 563,120 hectares were established, survival and subsequent growth rates were poor.

The period between 1986 and 1992 witnessed an increased focus on plantation establishment, often supported by international donors. Although large areas were reportedly planted, funds remained inadequate and techniques poor as in previous programs. Whilst the program had increased success compared with previous initiatives, by the early 1990s, the country remained little advanced in its efforts to replace natural forest timber with plantation sources.

Program 327 In the face of continuing declines in the area of natural forest; the failure of plantation programs; stalled development in many rural and mountainous areas; and increasing costs and decreasing supply options for imported wood, central Government policy-makers have attached greater urgency over the past decade on reforestation initiatives. The forestry sector has a long-term strategy to manage 19 million hectares of forested land (Lung, 1994) to support Vietnam's rural and industrial development objectives. Continuing declines in the national forest resource's capacity to meet Government development objectives, despite efforts to reverse the trend, have therefore caused alarm.

In this context, the Government developed Program 327 in 1992. It was developed as a decision by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (the Prime Minister), indicating the great importance attached to its objectives.

### 2.2 PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES

#### 2.2.1 Objectives

Decision No. 327/CT, dated 15th September 1992, was formulated with the following objectives:

- re-greening the major part of the degraded hills;
- protection of forests and the environment;
- utilisation of bare land in hilly areas, of coastal alluvial flats, and water bodies for production of goods and supply of industrial raw materials;
- fulfilling the program for fixed cultivation and sedentarisation;
- combining economic and social activities;
- stabilising and gradually improving the material as well as spiritual life of people in new economic zones and of people belonging to ethnic minorities, and
- creating incomes to the State and consolidating the national security.

As Provinces and central Government gained experience with implementation of Decision 327 (Program 327), the Prime Minister made annual adjustments to the content, targets and objectives of the Program.

In 1993, the program was launched with a focus on forestry, agriculture, fisheries, settled cultivation and inhabitation and new economic zones. In 1994, the PM adjusted the scale and objectives of the Program, stressing an increased focus on forest protection as well as rehabilitation of bare land mainly in mountainous areas. Plans for aquaculture and coastal &exploitation' projects were excluded (MPI, 1996).

In 1995, the PM instructed that rehabilitation of bare land would become the primary task under the Program.
Program 327 would thus concentrate on two main components:

- protecting existing forest from shifting cultivation; and
- rehabilitating bare land and hills in mountainous, midland and plain areas although the focus would be in the mountainous and midland areas (MPI, 1996).

In 1996, the Prime Minister's Decision No. 556/Ttg was adopted to ‘adjust and supplement Program 327’. The Program was to be known as ‘National Program to Create and Protect Watershed Protection and Special-use Forest’. The new Program focussed on re-greening bare hill’s -by the specific planting of ‘Watershed protection and special-use forests’. it also focussed activities on protecting existing watershed and special-use forest, including crucial coastal forests. Plantations for the purpose of production and scattered trees were excluded from the Program as were fixed cultivation and sedentarisation projects.

2.2.2 Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements to appraise and approve projects under Program 327 have evolved since its inception. Prime Ministerial Decrees and Circulars usually lack details, but nominate a number of Ministries to be responsible for determining how to implement a program. When Program 327 was first promulgated, a Central Directing Committee was established comprising 10 members from the Ministries of Forestry; Agriculture (MARD only came into being in 1995); Planning and Investment (MPI); Finance; and Labor, Disabled Soldiers and Social Affairs. It was headed by a Special Envoy of the Government and included a Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee. Each had defined responsibilities under the Program. After a number of adjustments the Central Directing Committee now comprises MARD, MPI, and the Ministry of Finance. Provincial Directing Committees have been established and mirror the Central Directing Committee structure.

Project approval has evolved into a complex process that commences at the District level and progresses through a bureaucratic ladder to the central level. Despite changes in emphasis since its inception, Program 327 funding has always been channeled through State farms and forest enterprises, including those of the Army. Where such institutions did not exist, for example in remote or bare areas, Provincial authorities created new entities based on communes or villages. Within these broad units, implementation has been at the individual household level. Projects under the Program therefore commonly included land allocation as the first step. Having allocated land, funds were to be made available to the households to bring bare land into production or to protect allocated land that already had forest cover.

The approval process commences with Provincial and District authorities working with State enterprise or commune managers to develop projects based on their interpretation of Program 327 objectives at that time (following the latest Decree or Circular). Forestry, agriculture and labor departments in a Province may work together to develop projects but have historically developed projects separately.

All projects developed by the respective authorities are submitted to the Province People's Committees (PPCs). PPCs are directly responsible to the Government for Program 327 and must co-ordinate Program 327 activities with other Government programs. PPCs prioritise projects according to their interpretation of Program 327 objectives and taking account of ongoing activities that are part of other programs. Projects approved by the PPC are then sent to the central Government.

At central Government level, the Central Directing Committee assesses project technical and financial viability. MARD appraises the technical and to a lesser degree financial viability of a project whilst the WI and the Ministry of Finance examine the financial viability. Based on the availability of State funds, a final project list is approved. Priority is given to those projects that have the greatest potential to provide a rapid return on investment and that are most closely aligned with Program objectives of the day.

2.2.3 Financial Arrangements

Cost & Benefit Sharing

Financial arrangements under Program 327 vary between projects. Essentially, projects operate under the principle that approximately 60% of the funds for projects can be used for:

- infrastructure development;
• scientific and technical facilities,
• public welfare activities;
• re-forestation of protection forest land and special-use forest land;
• national seed stands; and
• support during the first six months to people who move to a new area for the purpose of reclaiming land.

These funds are paid directly to the projects as grants and are administered by the project managers. Apart from the last item, individual households do not receive these funds, unless they are employed as labor on construction work. The remaining 40% of funds are made available as interest-free loans to individual households. The loans are to fund production activities on newly allocated land in accordance with project objectives. They are to be re-paid once project activities begin to yield resources. Repayment is scheduled in accordance with the production cycle of the plants or animals involved.

Once production commences, projects usually involve some form of benefit sharing with households. For example, if the project involves reforesting bare land, households are eligible to receive a percentage (usually 50%) of the revenue when the final tree crop is harvested. The remaining amount is paid to the Government. If a project involves protecting existing forest, households receive some proportion (usually around 25%) of the revenue generated when individual trees are harvested from the forest they protect.

**Cash Flows to Projects**

Once a project is approved, the project is eligible to receive funds from the State Treasury. Funds are transferred from the Treasury to the State Bank at Provincial level. Funds are only then released to project managers after they have proven, usually through a protracted and tortuous bureaucratic process, that project activities have been completed to a previously agreed standard. For example, in the case of plantation establishment, there are area as well as survival milestones. Trees must have been established over 'x' previously agreed hectares and there must be at least 85% seedling survival over the whole area. When project managers finally receive funds, they are then obliged to pass them to households.

### 2.2.4 Choice Criteria for Sites and Communities

All Provinces have some 'unproductive' land. This is usually forest land that has been harvested to the point where all merchantable timber has been removed. Timber harvesting provides access in the form of rudimentary road networks to these otherwise remote areas. The pressure for land in most Provinces is high and having gained access, rural people move into the previously forested areas. They clear the remaining forest through burning and attempt some form of agricultural production. The land is generally unable to support more than 2-3 crop years however, and becomes degraded. Provincial Government's have used Program 327 to bring this land back into production. By making conditions favourable for rural communities to move into these areas and live there (rather than using them only for agricultural production whilst living elsewhere), Province and central Governments hope that the process of degradation can be reversed. They use funds available through Program 327 to develop rural infrastructure and to provide loans to households to get them started.

As such, sites for Program 327 funding have tended to choose themselves. Provinces prioritise certain areas as being more important than others, but essentially, all bare and 'unproductive' land is a target for a Program 327 project. At central Government level, Ministries have had to prioritise scarce Program 327 project funding to those projects perceived as having the greatest national benefit (i.e. that most closely correspond to the current objectives). Therefore, most Program 327 project funding has been dispersed in hilly or mountainous regions where erosion from degrading bare land impacts on downstream agricultural production.

In addition to 'unproductive' land, many Provinces, particularly in the central Highlands, contain remnant forests important for watershed protection and biodiversity conservation. In the latter years of Program 327, these sites have become priorities for funding.

With respect to priority communities, Program 327 funding does not have strict criteria. The Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas was represented on the Central Directing Committee for a period. This was particularly relevant when the Program was focussed on controlling shifting cultivation. In 1996,
when the Program moved away from this focus, the Committee was excluded. Ethnic minority groups are commonly represented in 327 projects however, by virtue of the focus on mountainous areas, Kinh people moving into these areas are also represented. Essentially, a project area is defined and the people that receive funding are those living in adjacent communities and claim use rights over the land.

2.2.5 Costs, Price and Income Expectations

Each project contains a unique set of costs, price and therefore income projections. All are singularly optimistic and rarely allow for contingencies beyond the project's control that could impact negatively on project viability. Projects usually have high and often unrealistic projections. These usually revolve around very high growth rate forecasts for trees and other crops or units of production. There is seldom any recognition that these growth rates are unrealistic. Otherwise poor households are forecast to become very rich.

Financial viability and rapid return on investment are critical elements of the project appraisal and approval process. Projects have to demonstrate excellent returns on investment. To strengthen their financial viability, in addition to optimistic price and income forecasts, planners therefore submit low cost structures for all project activities.

2.2.6 Research and Extension Support

The Program has never been backed up by strong research and extension support. National forest science and agricultural institutions, and to a lesser degree Universities, undertake most research in Vietnam. These bodies have historically suffered from poor funding and at times a lack of focus. It is only recently that these institutions have begun to develop active and effective extension programs to disburse research findings. Otherwise excellent research and highly trained researchers therefore have been unable to scale-up results from small trials to pilot to full-scale implementation levels.

At the same time, field practitioners often do not understand the relevance of research. Projects have historically been formulated in isolation from the latest research findings. Most Provinces do have agricultural and to a lesser extent forestry extension services. These, however, are usually under-staffed and under-funded, reducing their effectiveness.

2.3 EXTERNAL DONOR SUPPORT

There is a long history of external donor support to the forestry sector in Vietnam. This commenced in the early 1970s with Swedish funding to the Bai Bang Paper Mill. Since then, numerous donor projects have assisted research, land allocation, plantation establishment and community development activities.

Donor supported programs continue to play a major role in rural development, 327 'type' activities. In 1998, it is anticipated that 38,600 hectares of production plantations will be established through WFP, SIDA, KfW, ADB, World Bank, EC and bilaterally supported projects. Most current donor supported projects focus on developing participatory land allocation processes followed by tree planting activities.

Despite this long history of donor support, there are few plantations in the field - either Government or donor supported - that have survived to full rotation age. The area of unproductive land is increasing and the area of natural forest is decreasing.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

There is very little direct analysis of Program 327 contained in the literature. The Ministry of Planning and Investment has produced a paper that reviews the Program's achievements (MPI, 1996). It walks a fine line between reporting an impressive list of apparent achievements and being a critical appraisal of Program implementation. It provides a useful analysis from the Vietnamese Government perspective.

Most of the literature on land allocation, reforestation, and community development is in the form of donor funded project reports. Donor projects commonly have overlapping objectives to Program 327, but their
reports are usually project specific. They provide an interesting snapshot of on-ground rural development issues at specific locations across the country. Unfortunately, the documents tend to be scattered through various offices across a number of Ministries. They often report excellent and highly relevant project related experiences but have so far been ineffective in informing a wider understanding of rural development issues.

The FAO Regional Project 'Strengthening Re-Afforestation Programmes in Asia' (STRAP) held three national workshops from December 1994 through to June 1996. The workshops sought to draw out Vietnamese forest managers' experiences of past reforestation initiatives. Reports in the Proceedings (FAO, 1994, 1996a, 1996b) highlight positive and negative aspects of past plantation and forest protection programs and suggest ways to remove constraints to more activity in the sector. Papers in the proceedings tend to focus on fast-growing plantation species, but until recently, these have been the almost exclusive focus of most reforestation initiatives. There is very little experience with effective natural regeneration programs and almost nothing worthwhile is reported in the available literature.

3. PROGRAM ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

3.1 ACHIEVEMENTS

3.1.1 Official Data

As part of its planning process, MARD has developed a data set that describes Program 327 planned versus annual achievements. Table 1 summarises the data for the period from 1993 to 1997. Note that figures in Table I differ from those reported by the MPI (MPI, 1996).

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<th>Item</th>
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<td>Forest Protection</td>
<td>'000 ha</td>
<td>5477.6</td>
<td>6791.7</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Regeneration</td>
<td>'000 ha</td>
<td>758.5</td>
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ANNEX 1: Terms of Reference

The following T.O.R were developed by Mr William Cuddihy in collaboration with FORTECH's Scott Poynton. They were faxed to FORTECH's London office on March 25th, 1998. It was subsequently decided that Poynton would undertake a field visit as he was going to be in Vietnam during April on another assignment. Therefore, the reporting date was extended to coincide with the end of the additional work.

Terms of Reference

The World Bank is carrying out a study to assist the Government of Vietnam in formulating a new Rural Development Strategy. Key objectives of that strategy will be to improve natural resources management and increase productive opportunities for rural labor. For some years, Government has financed the "Greening the Barren Hills" Program (327) in support of these same objectives. The program reforested large areas with fast-growing tree species and established plantings of rubber and other tree crops. Yet the overall success has been mixed.

Your assignment will be to describe, analyse and evaluate that program and assess its performance in achieving these goals in a sustainable manner. Based on your findings, you will make recommendation on how to improve the Program's performance and where the World Bank could best assist.
Your report should be concise, analytical, and specific in diagnosis and recommendation and should cover, inter alia, the following:

1. **Summary of Conclusions and recommendations**

2. **Description of the Program**
   - location and areas planted by years;
   - species planted;
   - institutional arrangements used, provincial/national/local;
   - choice criteria for sites and communities;
   - costs per year and per ha., price and income expectations;
   - financial arrangements, cost-sharing, grants, credit;
   - research and extension support;
   - any external donor support; and
   - short literature review/summary.

3. **Program Analysis and Evaluation**
   - actual plantings versus targets – were the targets sensible?;
   - growth rates – divergence of actual versus expected an why;
   - quality of maintenance;
   - suitability of arrangements made, clarity of responsibilities;
   - long term outlook of already established plantings, rubber, timber species;
   - marketing experience – if any (e.g. have any fast growing sp. Been cut and delivered for pulpwood?);
   - relevant experiences outside the program (e.g. bilateral supported pulpwood projects); and
   - other issues – technical, financial and institutional.

4. **Program Options**
   - What is in the Public Investment Program for the next 5 years with respect to this Program?
   - Does the Government propose changes to the way the Program is implemented, financed etc.?
   - What do you propose should be changed to improve effectiveness?
   - Is there more than one way to overcome difficulties that might be suitable for different areas/ethnic groups etc.,
   - What in your view is the best way the international donors could assist, for example, you might want to recommend a pilot to develop appropriate technology before supporting a large project/program.

You will prepare a paper of 10-20 pages plus annexes, where appropriate, to be ready by mid-April, 1998.
Based on your recent work in Vietnam and familiarity with the program, it is understood that you will be able to carry out this work without need for further field work.

¹ Note that data on the volume of imports from Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar is not readily available. For the most part, there is only tacit acknowledgment at Government level that this activity is occurring.