Workshop Proceedings

EXPERIENCES AND POTENTIAL FOR COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM

HANOI, JUNE 1-2, 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>iii</td>
<td>Acronyms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>Glossary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>Welcoming Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reports

1  "Current trends of community forestry in Vietnam." Nguyen Hong Quan and To Dinh Mai
6  "The CFM strategy of the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP)." Nguyen Tuong Van and Ulrich Apel
10 "Linking Government & local forest management: A new approach to CFM being tested in Yen Bai." Edwin Shank
13 "Designing and implementing participatory forest protection & development regulations at the village level (Son La Province)." Nguyen Van Tuan

CFM Case Study Summaries

18  "Muong Lum Commune, Yen Chau District, Son La Province (Thai & Hmong minorities)". An Van Bay, Nguyen Hai Nam and Cao Lam Anh
22  "Dak Nue Commune, Lak District, Dak Lak (Mnong minority)." Bao Huy, Tran Huu Nghi, Nguyen Hai Nam

26  "Phuc Sen Commune, Quang Hoa District, Cao Bang Province (Nung An minority)." Nguyen Huy Dung, Nguyen Hai Nam and Pham Quoc Hung

30  "Doi and Ke Villages, Hien Luong Commune, Da Bac District, Hoa Binh Province (Muong minority)." Vu Long, Nguyen Duy Phu and Cao Lam Anh

33  "Giang Cai Village, Nam Lanh Commune, Van Chan District, Yen Bai Province (Dao minority)." Bui Dinh Toai, Nguyen Phuc Cuong, Vo Thanh Son, Edwin Shanks and Sheelagh O'Reilly

37  "Cu Jiang Commune, Ea Kar District, Dak Lak Province, (Ede minority)." Bao Huy and Tran Huu Nghi

40  "Dak Tover Commune, Chu Pah District, Gia Lai Province (Jarai minority)." Tran Van Con

43  Summary of the Case Study Synthesis Report

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### Presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>&quot;National Working Group on Community Forest Management in Vietnam&quot;</td>
<td>Nguyen Hai Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>&quot;WG on Forestland Allocation &amp; Forest Management in Dak Lak Province&quot;</td>
<td>Tran Ngoc Thanh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>&quot;Developing a strategy for HRD &amp; institutional strengthening for CFM in Vietnam&quot;</td>
<td>Peter Taylor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WS Working Group Discussion Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>The current state of CFM in Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Policy framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Legal framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>Strengthening WGs, their services and products through sector organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Human Resource Development &amp; Institutional Strengthening to support CFM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Annexes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>File</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Case Study Synthesis Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Working Group on Community Forest Management in Vietnam Membership List</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acronyms

CF  Community Forestry
CG  Core Group of the NWG-CFM
CFM  Community Forest Management
CPC  Commune People’s Committee
DARD  Department for Agriculture and Rural Development
DFD  Department for Forestry Development
DLPC  Dak Lak People’s Committee
FAO  United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
FLA/FMS  Forest land allocation/Forest management system
GTZ  German Agency for Technical Cooperation
IS  Institutional Strengthening
HRD  Human Resource Development
LTC  Land Tenure Certificates
MARD  Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MRC  Mekong River Commission
MRDP  Vietnam-Sweden Mountain Rural Development Programme
NGO  Non-governmental organization
NTFP  Non-timber forest products
PC  People’s Committee
PRA  Participatory Rural Appraisal
SFDP  Song Da Social Forestry Development
SFSP  Social Forestry Support Program
SMRP  Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project
NWG-CFM  National Working Group on Community Forest Management
**Glossary**

**Fixed Cultivation Program**: Also known as: "Program for settlement and fixed cultivation". The objective of this national program is to speed up the development of socio-economic situation of mountainous areas. The work on settlement and fixed cultivation has been oriented toward the development of the household economy, improvement of infrastructure at commune and village levels, step by step switching from subsistence small-scale economy to market economy and development of specialized production areas and processing industries in mountainous areas.

**Forest protection contracts**: Based on 327 program, government organizations such as: State Forest Enterprises, special forest management boards and forest protection departments, etc., sign contracts with local households, groups of households or village communities to protect the forest areas classified as protection or special use forests. Normally, farmers can receive protection fees of up to 50.000 VND/ha/year, but in reality mostly 20.000-40.000 VND/ha/year was paid depending on available forest protection budgets.

**Land Tenure Certificates (Redbook Certificate)**: Based on Land Law of Vietnamese Government in 1993, land is the property of the entire people, which is held under exclusive administration of the State. However, the State shall allot land to individual, household and other organizations to use on a sustainable and long-term basis. When land is allocated to users, they are provided a Land Tenure Certificate, also known as 'Redbook', that indicates the legal user rights of land allocated to them. The period of this certificate is 20 years for agriculture land, 50 years for forestland and unlimited for residential land. If allocated land is used corresponding to the right purpose the value of this certificate can be renewed for another cycle. Having LTC, land users have the "5 rights" to their land: transfer, exchange, lease, inherit and mortgage.

**Navigator tool**: Instrument for assessment of the level of community involvement in existing forest management systems. The "Navigator" was developed by NWG-CFM of Vietnam and covers five segments indicating elements in CFM as: 1) Land use rights, 2) Benefits from forest management, 3) State of natural resources , 4) Influence of government relevant to participatory forest management, and 5) Community organization for participatory forest management. The involvement of community in each element is assessed at three levels: Strong, medium and weak community orientation. For a more detailed description of this instrument contact: Dr. Nam, Secretary of NWG-CFM.

**Redbook Certificate** (see Land Tenure Certificates, above)

"327 Program": This program is based on Decision No 327-CT of Council of Ministers on September 15, 1992. The objectives of the program were: 1) Green-covering bare hills, protecting forests and environment, using potential of vacated lands in midland and mountainous areas, sand banks at sea-shore in an attempt to increase commercial products and industrial raw-material, 2) Achieve sedentarization and linking economy with society, and 3) Stabilize, improve and raise the material and spiritual conditions of life for people in virgin-land reclamation areas, minorities' areas in order to contribute accumulation for the State and strengthen national defense and safety. The program was discontinued early 1999.

"5 Million Hectare Program": This program is based on Resolution No 08/1997/QH10 of the 2nd Session of the 10th National Assembly, and Decision No 661/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on July 29, 1998. The Vietnamese Government launched the National Five Million Hectare Afforestation Program" (SMHP) with the goal to reforest and rehabilitate five million hectares of forest by the year 2010. It is a major effort of the Government towards sustainable forest management in Vietnam. It is generally perceived as the successor of the 327 program.
Opening Address

Nguyen Ngoc Binh, Director of Forestry Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, the Department for Forestry Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with the cooperation of the National Working Group on Community Forest Management (WG-CFM) and two GTZ-assisted projects, “Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin” (SMRP) and "Song Da Social Forestry Development" (SFDP), begin the National Workshop on Community Forest Management. It is my honor to open the workshop. On behalf of the Ministry, I highly appreciate the close cooperation and excellent preparation of the workshop by the organizing agencies, and warmly welcome participants from state agencies, international programs/projects, NGOs, MARD and local organizations to this workshop.

According to available statistics, there are about 19 million hectares of land classified as forestland in our country. The latest survey data show that there are currently nearly 11 million hectares of forest, representing an increase in forest cover from 28.2% in the early 1990s to about 33% at present. As we all know, the State pays great attention to the management and protection of existing forest area, since the lives of millions of people are closely linked to the forest. Hence, forests play a significant role not only in ecological environment protection, but in the economic development of the country.

In the interest of protecting and developing the forest stock of the country, the Government has lately issued several new policies in addition to carrying out such important national programs as the "327 Program for Re-greening of Bare Land", and, most recently, the "5 Million Hectare Afforestation Program". The policy on 'forest assignment/land allocation to households' has developed land potential and encouraged the active participation of farmers in the protection and development of the country's valuable forest stock. The new policies and state programs have contributed actively to hunger eradication/poverty alleviation as well as to the improvement of living conditions of people, especially ethnic people in mountainous areas. Such sustainable forestry development programs hence help bring stable incomes to households and communities, and by clearly linking their benefits with the forest, will reduce the need for State intervention (and hence expenditures) for forest protection.

Community forest management was conducted in the past by employing forest management systems traditionally used by the ethnic communities in the mountainous areas. This approach continues to be used in many locations today. The decisive factors for the success of such a management system includes: 1) a high degree of unanimity within the community with regard to the implementation of village regulations on forest protection, 2) close organization of the community, and 3) equality-based benefit sharing among community members. Forest management with the participation of communities living near the forest has proved to be socio-economically effective, ecologically sustainable, and consistent with the forest land allocation policy of our country at present.

However, to expand this form of forest management, there are still many difficulties, including: 1) an incomplete legal framework for community forest management, 2) Lack of appropriate policies to a) support land allocation/forest assignment to communities; b) provide benefits that encourage households, individuals, communities to actively participate in forest protection/development, and c) govern investment, technology, etc., and 3) Inadequate participation of communities in forest management.

In the forestry sector, a clear strategy for the development of community forest management is essential, especially given the diverse ecological, cultural and traditional aspects of the different ethnic communities in our country.

The National Working Group on Community Forest Management has recently been established and began implementing activities to support the development of community forest management in Vietnam. The Working Group involves members from different organizations working in forest protection/development. The initial outputs of the WG's activities are valuable and encouraging.

During this workshop, a number of case studies as well as other research will be presented, and their implications for community forestry discussed. I would like to charge you with recommending the "best practices" of models of community participation in forest management to the State so that they can be incorporated in the policy framework. I further invite you to take the opportunity afforded by this workshop to review the work of the National WG on Community Forest Management with an eye for possible areas for improving its effectiveness in fulfilling its mandate.

In conclusion, I wish all of you all a successful workshop.
Introduction

Workshop Organization Committee

Background

Forest management with participation of local communities living near the forest, has been applied in many places in Vietnam and bears the potential to introduce more socio-economically viable and ecologically sustainable forest management systems while reducing ineffective state expenditure. However, the decision-makers are still uncertain about the role of community participation in forest management and no specific policy or decision has been taken yet. The filling of this regulatory gap seems to be a crucial step, matching geophysical, economical and socio-traditional parameters in the country’s forestry development. Experiences and ‘best practices’ of community participation in forest management need to be identified, assessed, documented and discussed in order to learn and feed into the policy discussion process. This provision of information and experiences should ideally lead to a decision by the Government of Vietnam to support the testing and subsequent analysis of different socio-economically acceptable and sustainable forest management systems in Vietnam. Such a process would form the basis for the development of an appropriate policy framework for stronger complementary involvement of communities in the development of the forestry sector.

Workshop objectives

- Review, assess and share experiences in involving communities in forest management in Vietnam;
- Identify key elements to promote and support involvement of communities in forest management; and
- Define the future role of the national and local Working Group on Community Forest Management (CFM).

Workshop expected results

- The participants are aware of major CFM-related activities in Vietnam.
- Major policy-based potentials and constraints are identified.
- The structure and products of Working Groups are known and defined based on sector needs.

In order to support the above process, the Department for Forestry Development, the National Working Group on Community Forest Management, the German-assisted technical co-operation projects "Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin" and "Song Da Social Forestry Development", have jointly organized this National Workshop.

The Workshop program combines the presentations of experiences in development of CFM in Vietnam by different programs/projects with thematic group discussions to clarify issues related to these issues.

The two-day workshop (1-2 June 2000) in Hanoi was attended by participants working in Government of Vietnam offices, ministries and institutes at the Central Level as well as representatives of different provincial Agriculture and Rural Development Departments or Sub-Departments for Forestry Development of mountainous provinces. There are also participants from Program/Project and Non-government organisations who have considerable experiences in the development of CFM.
Executive Summary

The National Working Group on Community Forest Management (NWG-CFM) has been established and is operating under the supervision of the Department for Forestry Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) since December 1998. The objective of the NWG-CFM is to create a forum for discussions, studies and surveys on CFM and relevant state policies in order to design and propose strategic activities to support and strengthen the participatory role of local communities in forest resource management in Vietnam.

The NWG-CFM organized the National Workshop on "Experiences and Potentials toward Community Forest Management in Vietnam", which was held in Hanoi on June 1-2, 2000. This event provided a chance to gather experiences and otherwise progress in the field of CF in Vietnam. About 60 participants attended the workshop, including professionals from state agencies at central and provincial levels, research institutes and universities, international programs/projects, NGOs and experts of Vietnamese forestry sector.

The objectives of the workshop were:

- To review, assess and share the experiences in involving communities in forest management in Vietnam;
- To identify key elements to promote and support the participation of communities in forest management; and
- To discuss on the future roles of the national and local working groups on CFM.

The participants of the workshop were well prepared and their presentations and reports contributed tremendously to an effective event of information and knowledge exchange.

The workshop agenda, objectives and questions for discussion were elaborated with the help of the members of the NWG-CFM. Two Vietnamese-German technical assistance projects: "Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin" (SMRP) and "Song Da Social Forestry Development" (SFDP) supported the organization of the workshop.

The Workshop was structured as follows:

**Presentation of case studies and lessons learned**

A national report opened this part, presenting the current development trends of CFM in Vietnam. The report described the status of forest management in Vietnam, presented concepts of the terms 'community', 'community forest' and 'community-based forest management', to provide 'common vocabulary' during the Workshop, although the national discussion of these terms will certainly continue!

The report identified three forms of CFM currently common among ethnic groups in several areas in Vietnam: 1) village forest used traditionally; 2) natural forest protected by community through state protection contracts, and 3) plantation forests where community members make investments, manage and share the benefit of the forest. The report also presented the factors influencing the forms of CFM then analyzed the difficulties and obstacles in CFM development as well as the impacts of CFM on sustainable forest management, especially in remote areas largely populated ethnic minorities. Finally, the report made several recommendations to the Government of Vietnam on the development of community-based forest management in the areas of 1) policy changes, 2) priorities for CFM development, and 3) the need to conduct pilot models of forestland allocation to communities, toward the issuance of "Regulations on community forest management at village level".

**Reports**

The next set of reports presented the experience of three on-going projects with international support: Song Da Social Forestry Development Program (SFDP), Vietnam-Sweden Mountain Rural Development Program (MRDP), and Sub-Department of Forest Protection in Son La province. These reports addressed the following aspects:

- The **CFM strategy of Song Da**, SFDP focuses on providing an organizational framework and several technical solutions which farmers can use to carry out forest management, with support from local authorities and agencies. This strategy includes land use planning and forest land allocation, clarification of village boundaries, classification of forest types based on usage purposes (agricultural land, forestry land, protection forest land, production forest land, pasture, etc.) and issuance of land use certificates.
- The Vietnam-Sweden MRDP focuses on the development of linkages between the "formal" (state) forest management and the "informal" (local) forest management. An initial important step is to strengthen capacities of
local farmers in developing "Village forest development plans." These plans are designed to help clarify roles and responsibilities in forest management and protection (within the community and in cooperation with agencies at provincial level). The next is the district PC, which allocates forestland to communes and villages for long-term use. Where the commune level plays the monitoring and supervising role, the State provides funding for a limited period of time. In the long term, forest protection work should be linked with income/benefit sharing for households and communities, of which a part of income from the forest would be used for re-investing in forest management/protection.

- The experience of Son La Sub-Department of Forest Protection focuses on the process of assessing and analyzing the implementation of forest protection regulations at village level, elaborating guidelines for development and implementation of village regulations on forest protection and development with the participation of local farmers. The contents of the regulations include provisions on forest classification for usage and protection; exploitation of timber and supplemental forest products for the needs of farmers; forest clearance for upland cultivation; livestock grazing; forest fire prevention; hunting and exploitation of forest animals; provisions on rights, responsibilities of farmers in afforestation and forest protection, provisions on award, punishment and compensation for damages of forest resources.

**Case Studies**

Next, seven case studies on forest management by ethnic groups in northern mountainous areas and the Central Highlands (commissioned by the NWG-CFM) were presented. These case studies' presentations were all Power Point presentations (bilingual English and Vietnamese). These Proceedings include summaries of each of the seven structured case studies as well as a synthesis report. The case studies were designed to collect information on forest management systems with the participation of local communities as a means to contribute practical experience to the discussion and formulation of necessary policies on community forest management. The case studies focused on several major issues: 1) Existing forms of forest land use rights; 2) Forms of forest management at specific locations; 3) Income generation and benefit sharing from the forest; 4) Roles of community organizations in the management and protection of forest resources; 5) Impacts of external factors; and 6) Impacts of state policies on forestry development at locations.

Based on the review and analysis of the results of all case studies one important conclusion has been made: CFM, among other forest management systems, is a suitable option for sustainable forest management in Vietnam. The synthesis report of the case studies summarizes the following recommendations:

- Analyze and assess the status and impact of CFM and its potential for policy formulation;
- Provide the legal framework for village communities to participate in forest management;
- Study, influence and promulgate new or revised policies relevant for CFM;
- Design comprehensive programs on CFM integrated with government programs (e.g., 5 Million Hectare Afforestation Program);
- Promote CFM among and obtain resources through support from international organizations on all levels, national discussion and projects on community forest development.

**Presentations on roles and activities of WGs at national and provincial levels**

The second part of the workshop included presentations of the National Working Group on CFM, the Consultative Group on Forestland Allocation and Forest Management in Dak Lak Province, and the presentation of a proposal for human resource development and institutional strengthening (HRD&IS) to support CFM.

- In the presentation of the NWG on CFM, the objectives, main activities and outputs of the NWG in 1999 were introduced, including the development of an analytical framework, methodology and tools for the assessment of CFM. The detailed operational plan of the NWG in the coming period was presented.
- The presentation of the Consultative Group on FLA and Forest Management in Dak Lak described the objectives, organizational structure, activities, strengths and shortcomings of such an innovative inter-organizational forum. Its activities for forestland allocation and forest management, implementation of demonstration models and development of silvicultural solutions suitable with the local conditions were also presented.
- In the proposal on Human Resource Development & Institution Strengthening, the role and importance of HRD&IS for CFM development in Vietnam were elaborated. The main tasks are to identify needs upon which a set of guidelines for HRD&IS can be elaborated to enable key organizations in CFM development to implement HRD&IS strategies.

**Group discussions on CFM in Vietnam**

The third part of the Workshop consisted of Group Work on prepared topics. The participants discussed five main topics to systemize practical lessons learned, clarify and communicate present constraints and potentials for FCM.

**Topic 1: Status of CFM in Vietnam.**
The discussion resulted in an agreement on a working definition of CFM in the context of Vietnam. Although, at present, there are diversified forms of forest management with community participation in Vietnam, the majority can be grouped into two main forms: (1) Community manages and protects the forest that belongs to the village usage; and (2) Community participates in the management/protection of the State-owned forest through ‘forest protection contracts.’ The discussion also identified six main factors for the success of community participation in forest management.

**Topic 2: Impacts of State policies on CFM.**

The discussion identified four groups of state policies related to CFM: 1) Policies on land use rights/tenure, especially for forest land; 2) Policies related to forest protection and development; 3) Policies related to state investments and supports to CFM development; and 4) Policies related to forest harvesting and benefit sharing of forest products. Changes in state policies during the ‘renovation period’ created favorable conditions for the development of CFM. However, rights and responsibilities of communities in forest management need further clarification. Several recommendations on policy adjustments or supplement for the development of CFM were also put forward after the discussion.

**Topic 3: Legal Framework**

Creation of a legal framework for community and community forest to support a favorable environment for the development of CFM in Vietnam. Based on the criteria set by the current laws and regulations, communities are not recognized as a legal entity, which constitutes a major constraint for the development of CFM. The discussion proposed solutions for village community to be recognized as a legal entity.

**Topic 4: Strengthening the role of CF working groups at national and provincial levels.**

The discussion pointed out the need of strengthening the relationships and two-way information flow between the national working group and working groups at local level. The participants discussed future activities, expected results and partners of the NWG. The outputs of NWG should be made available to the State via the Policy Department and Department for Forestry Development of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

**Topic 5: Human Resource Development (HRD) and Institutional Strengthening (IS) Needs.**

The needs of HRD&IS for CFM development were discussed. Answers were found for the questions: Which institutions should be trained and strengthened? How is implementation? Who should be trained? Who can manage the said task? Who will benefit from these activities?

Finally, the workshop’s key recommendations for the Government were to: 1) increase funding for CFM survey and research work, and 2) create a legal framework and issue policies supportive of CFM (e.g., formally adopt CFM as a State management tools, establish guidelines for allocating forestland to communities, issue policies decentralizing and devolving certain decision making to local level). Recommendations to projects focused on support for networking, research and training.
Background

In the history of Vietnam’s development and defense, community and community relationships have been very important factors, contributing to the successful protection of national territory, national independence and natural resources. At present, Vietnam has fifty-four different ethnic communities, the Kinh being the largest ethnic group (more than 85%). Over 25 million people live in and near forest areas, their lives directly linked to that of the forest. Therefore, using community relationships in the sustainable management of forest resources is very important to promote local traditions as well as to adopt modern forest management techniques.

The term “community” can be most generally defined as, “all the people living in a society, with common characteristics, linked as a group.” Thus, similarity in one or more characteristics determines community relations in a society. There are different kinds of community: e.g., ethnic, commune (village), and religious. The relationships within any particular community are usually reflected in customs and written or non-written rules rather than in the organization form of a legal body. Therefore, a community cannot be addressed in the same way as an organization, be it political, civil or economic. Community is a social phenomenon, which should be taken into account in sustainable natural resource management.

Community forestry as defined above, has been existing for generations in Vietnam, and is reflected in the forest protection customs and management rules of many ethnic minorities and traditional villages. During the periods of land reforms, collectivization, organization of agricultural cooperatives, central planning, etc., many policies and mechanisms were developed that recognized two main forms of ownership: state ownership and collective ownership. Agricultural cooperatives were typically the organizations assigned responsibility for administration and management at the commune level in rural areas. During these periods, traditional types of community forestry were not promoted, and their contribution towards sustainable management of forest were therefore minimal, or nonexistent.

Despite this long period of collectivization, central planning and management, traditional community forest management did survive. During the period of "Renovation," the State pursued a multi-component economy strategy involving participation of farmers in sustainable forest management and forestry development. Together with changes in social structure in Vietnamese rural areas, during the "Renovation Period," the sense of community was rehabilitated and promoted in different places. These transformations allowed for the reappearance of many community forestry models in rural mountainous areas. These community forest management models drew farmers toward sustainable forest management. Today they provide us with good examples of best practices using community involvement in sustainable forest management.

It is important to study these models to identify and assess development trends and propose solutions and policies to promote community managed forestry systems in Vietnam in the future. This is, in fact, the objective of the National Working Group on Community Forestry Management.

Current status of community forestry in Vietnam

Community types

Although there is a diversity of community organizational types in Vietnam, two predominate:
Ethnic community: there are 54 ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its specific social structures, production, complexion, language, customs, traditions and psychology.

Village communities: currently, there are about 50,000 villages which in turn belonging to around 9,000 communes (the lowest administrative level in VN). Each village community is traditionally considered a closed organization with very specific characteristics, for example, 1) village communities in lowland areas are a very old rural form of community based on wetland rice cultivation method, whereas 2) hamlets in mountainous areas are communities based on ethnic and clan relations as well as subsistence household economy where low-input systems and utilization of natural products (mainly from forests) predominate – with obvious impact on forest management (protection and development).

In addition to these major forms, there are also religious, clan, and gender communities. Several community forms have developed into other organization forms with clear objectives and operational rules.

In addition, there are mass organizations comprising members of common interest or social strata (Farmers’ Association, Youth Union, Women’s Union, etc.) that also can contribute to forest development in the local area.

What is community forest management?

The term "community forestry" (CF) was defined first by FAO as follows: "Community forestry encompasses all those activities that link people with forests, trees, forest products and in the sharing of benefits from these products." Vietnam offers two examples of CF that fit this definition.

In the first instance, the forest is held by the community, and members of a community jointly manage and develop forests

In the second instance, the forest is not held by the community, but the members of the community still jointly participate in its management. Hence, the communities remain closely linked to the forest as a source of employment, product harvesting, income generation and other benefits (water source protection, sacred and historical sites, etc.)

Factors affecting to the form of community forest management

Village communities need forest products and forest land

There are five basic needs that need to be met in the life of mountainous farmers: 1) food (especially during crops shortages), 2) fuel wood, 3) material for construction, 4) fodder for livestock, and 5) tradable goods providing cash income to buy essential consumption goods. In the past, when the population density was still low, and the local economy was nature-based and self-sufficient, community relations in mountainous villages were homogenous and relatively self-centered. At that time, all the community members had the right to satisfy their needs by using natural resources available on their territory, in accordance with the community customs and regulations. Therefore, less conflicts occurred between the communities and outsiders in terms of land use right of forest land.

During a period of "development" community relations in mountainous areas experienced many changes, particularly social and institutional:

State ruled that all forest and forestland is owned by the State. In the development of the forestry sector, the State assigned various organizations to manage forest areas (State forest enterprises, units of forest protection, special-use forest, political and legislative organizations, etc.)

The rights of and benefits for local communities from the forest had not been clarified in legal and management documents. Forest protection was designated the responsibility of the State.

Big demographic changes took place: the composition and structure of communities in mountainous areas changed. Many ethnic groups were gathered under a sedentarization policy. During this period, the number of local ethnic groups declined.

Due to the strict control of forest products by the government, local communities were no longer able to meet their own basic needs with forest products. As the communities’ benefits from the forest were reduced, they felt increasingly disposessed. Predictably, enlisting farmer participation in the protection of the forest became more difficult.

The varied types of community forestry

During the 'Renovation Period," the government accelerated the allocation of forestland to households, organizations or
individuals with the view to establish forest owners for all the forest area. By end of 1999, the Government had allocated 468,247 hectares of forest to different collective bodies (community) and 623,652 hectares of forest and forestland to 198,446 households. Although “village community” had not been recognized as a legal entity, a large amount of forest and forest land areas (about 400,000 hectares) were so allocated. It is, of course, better than the situation where forest is left unmanaged.

Further, there were many village communities of minority groups who were allowed to retain their traditional community forest management form in certain forest areas. These forests play an important role as water retention areas or as spiritual forests.

Community also plays an important role in joint forest management with government forestry organizations to manage “special-use forests” or “critical watershed forests” (through contracts for planting forest or protecting forest). Communities also managed particular forest areas allocated to households, forest farms or common grazing land, etc.

Given Vietnam’s current situation, two existing forms of forest management could be considered as community forestry management:

**Community forest:** (village forests, cooperatives’ plantation forests, natural forests formerly allocated to cooperatives). After changes took place in the organization of cooperatives, these forest types were allocated to villages for management. In fact, looking at land use rights, land use benefits, benefit sharing from the forest or forest management method, one can consider the forest as managed and used by the community and hence a form of community forest management.

**Natural forest managed by community under forest protection assignment:** This type of community forestry has the following characteristics:

- Natural forest
- Forest use rights belong to State organizations
- The State assigns village communities forest protection responsibilities for which they receive up to VND 50,000 per ha from the state budget
- Community members can benefit from several products from the forest, such as dried fuel wood, non-timber forest products, etc.
- Responsibility for forest protection is clearly stated in the assignment contract
- In many places, farmers have developed and carried out community-managed regulations on forest protection.

**Plantation forest,** jointly invested and managed with benefits shared by members of the community. The characteristics of this type are:

- Community invests in forest plantation in the form of labor
- Community members jointly manage and benefit from the forest in accordance with the regulations set up by the community, and share the products in accordance with the community agreement.

Different types of community-involvement in forestry can be found in different economic and ecological areas, especially in areas with an underdeveloped production and cash economy. The higher developed or better preserved the community organization of local ethnic people, the better the traditional community forest management. The experience of Hoa Binh, Son La and other northern mountainous provinces support this theory, as shown in the following case studies from Song Da SFDP, SMRP and the National Working Group.

**Assessment of community forestry impacts**

Community-based forestry management is one of several types of forest management, which could be applied for sustainable forest management. It is important to base management systems on the specific conditions of each location while applying and combining community-based forest management harmoniously with other sector stakeholders (state management, collective and individual management).

**Community forestry is one type of forest management which is suitable for areas with the following**
conditions:

- Remote areas, where subsistence economy is still dominant and the life of local farmers still depends strongly on the forest
- Mountainous areas with poor access and infrastructure. Flexible and decentralized management on forest land should be applied to suit the needs and specific conditions of the location
- Areas with high degree of community traditions and indigenous knowledge
- Areas where the development and maintenance of existing forest is of interest of the whole community and can be clearly delineated. In these areas, allocating forestland to individual households would reduce the monitoring and benefiting rights of community from forest resources.
- Watershed protection areas.

Community forestry is useful for the country as a whole, since

- It reduces state payments for land allocation, monitoring and control to individual persons and families.
- It makes better use of limited state resources (personnel, funds)
- It is consistent with policy objectives and strategy of the 5 Million Hectare Afforestation Program
- It helps rehabilitate degraded forest area through natural regeneration
- It contributes actively to hunger eradication and poverty alleviation
- It helps reduce expenses for forest protection by benefit sharing, thus involving communities in forest protection.

Shortcomings in the process of community forestry development

In the context of awareness and concepts:

Community forestry is still mixed with collective-style management forestry systems. This leads to the misconception, in some places, that there is no need to apply community forestry. It is still not clear if community forestry is a type of forest management, which should exist parallel with State, collective and individual forest management for sustainable forest management, e.g. Joint Forest Management

"Community" is still not recognized as a legal organization type. The administrative rules and regulations needed to accomplish this should not be as lengthy and complex as those applied for political or economic organizations.

In the context of forestry legality

Is it necessary to regulate community as a civil organization?

Not being a civil or economic organization, can community be allocated forest and forestland from the State for management?

Questions put forward during the practical development of community forestry:

Is it suitable to apply community forestry for newly formed village communities, which lack traditional decision making structures?

How effective is community forest management in areas with developed production economics?

In land use planning, is it necessary to leave some land area for community forest? If so, to what extent? Will that be in the public interest?

Conclusions
Some say that at present, it is impossible to put forward a sub-degree document on community forestry, as forestland allocation to communities is still not mentioned in the Law on Land and Law on Forest Protection and Development. Moreover, community is not yet a legal body, a civil organization. If so, do we need to wait until the laws are revised before institutionalizing community forest?

We consider that at present, the Government (and the Ministry) should have a sub-degree regulating forest management, e.g. production and protection through village communities. In this document, the forest type assigned to communities for management and benefiting should be clearly indicated. This is better than leaving community forest management to develop in its own way while there is no legal document to regulate this problem. If the communities have no legal security any sustainable forest management seems to be far away. The present trend underlines this lack of responsibility. It is necessary to identify prioritized areas for community forestry development in order to strengthen the organization of forest management at commune level, in accordance with Decree 245-CP.

In the areas prioritized for community forestry development, it is necessary to carry out stocked forest land allocation to communities, households and organizations for forest management.

It is necessary to concretize benefits from the forest to local farmers in accordance with the forest production and protection responsibility agreed with them. Farmers should participate in discussion and implementation of forest protection policies and strategies. Only then will they become protectors of our precious resources.

It is necessary to conduct pilot development of community forest management regulation at the village/community level, to facilitate the issuance of a regulation on "Village community-based forest management" and other forms of joint forest management.
Introduction

The Social Forestry Development Project is the first technical cooperation project in the Vietnamese forestry sector. The project is supported by GTZ and implemented by the Department for Forestry Development, MARD. The project focuses its activities in Son La and Lai Chau provinces. At the provincial level, the project is closely working with the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), Forestry Protection Department, Planning and Investment Department as well as the Cadastral Department.

Project purpose

The purpose of the SFDP project is that local communities in Son La and Lai Chau provinces manage their natural resources in an ecologically, economically and socially sustainable way.

The project is scheduled for 12 years and divided into 4 phases:

- **Phase 1** (1993-1994) Orientation phase: Baseline studies and Project concept
- **Phase 2** (1995-1998) Pilot Approach (Develop methodologies and technologies)
- **Phase 3** (1999-2001) Institutionalization and Capacity Building
- **Phase 4** (2002-2004) Hand-over and Large Scale Application

Main project activities are:

- Land Use Planning and Land Allocation: Secure Tenure and Conflict Resolution
- Increase Agriculture Production (by developing an extension service)
- Community Forest Management
- Decentralizing Planning Mechanisms (Village Development Plan)
- Capacity Building and Training

SFDP Strategy for Community Forestry Development

Over the past years, SFDP has developed a strategy for community forest management. Underlying is the recognition that community forestry is not only important as an option in forest management, but possesses potential for sustainable forest resource management in remote areas such as the Song Da watershed. Most communities in this region have lived in their local environment for several generations and are likely to maintain institutions and local knowledge, which can support community forest management.

Based on project experience in the Song Da watershed, community forest management should be seen as approach to reach mainly two objectives: 1) To protect existing forest resources to ensure watershed protection and to facilitate sustainable utilization of forest resource for subsistence needs; and 2) To enable natural regeneration on forestland without existing forest to increase the forest cover and to restore productivity of forestland.

The highest order goal of SFDP’s strategy is to provide an organizational and regulatory framework in which villages elaborate and implement community forest management plans with the support of local institutions. The community
forest management strategy of the SFDP is based on the results of land use planning and forestland allocation (see graph, below). In particular, it is a clear demarcation of village boundaries and different land use types (e.g., protection, production or grazing land) as well as land use right certificates (often referred to as “Redbook Certificates”), that give people the level of security they need to focus on forest management and protection options.

Before community forest management planning can take place, organizational interventions have to be made and technical options for improved forest management need to be in place.

Organizational and management interventions

These options are aimed at enhancing village and commune institutions so that they are capable of supporting local people to formulate and implement village forest protection regulations. Up to now, forest protection regulations have been introduced in 80 villages located in seven communes in Yen Chau and Tua Chua districts. Since 1998, these regulations have been substantially improved in Yen Chau as more management responsibility was handed over to local communities which were additional given certain utilization as well as marketing rights for forest products in state-owner protection forests.

The Village Management Boards have been set up during “village development planning,” a methodology designed to introduce a more participatory planning process to ensure that available funding from different sources are efficiently used and that villages develop their own problem solving skills. In the Village Management Board, at least one member in charge of forestry issues was selected. Presently, there are about 80 Village Management Boards in the project area.

In places where local management capacity is lower, e.g. in Tua Chua district, SFDP has set up two Commune Agroforestry Management Boards (in Muong Bang and Sinh Phinh communes) on an experimental basis. There are at least three members on each Board, one is the head, the second in charge of forestry issues and the third is responsible for agricultural activities. The task of these management boards is to raise forest protection awareness among local people and to upscale forest management and protection activities throughout the communes. The Commune Agroforestry Management Boards have monthly meetings with District extensionists, forestry officers and SFDP field staff for exchange information. This can be said to be “the most effective forest protection unit” at commune and village levels.

The Government has been instructed to set up a forestry extension network on the communal level for the successful implementation of the national five million ha reforestation program. But it remains a big task to get it to function, especially in a region like the Northwest, where three-quarters of the area is forestland with hardly any forestry extension staff. Therefore, what awaits SFDP in the coming period is how to define the duties and functions of forestry extension staff at district and commune levels.

**SFDP Strategy for community forestry development**
Technical interventions

Forest management technical interventions are carried out through the establishment of so-called experiment and demonstration plots, which are designed in close cooperation with the local people. These are trials in testing species, natural regeneration with intervention, enrichment planting, etc. They have been set up on forestland already allocated to local people and, of course, with their agreement. Local people have been participating in establishing, monitoring and protecting these plots and have received technical training from the project right in the field. The experiment and demonstration plots are testing not only the technical but also the social viability of community forest management options.

The selected forest management options are actively promoted in the planning process with farmers. These options are mainly based on natural regeneration, among them establishment of forest and restoration of degraded forest by means of natural regeneration, introduction of coppices systems with standards, regulated extraction of natural forest, and management of bamboo forests for income generation.

SFDP Methodologies to promote CFM

After these organizational and technical options have been identified, the third step is to develop and test a methodology for community forest management that can be applied on a wider scale. In 1999, it became very clear that this methodology had to be divided into two sub-methodologies: 1) Methodology for formulating forest protection regulations at village level, and 2) Methodology for community forest management planning at village level. The two methodologies are developed and tested in the pilot areas of SFDP, in Yen Chau and Tua Chua, and are being refined in view of expanding that which has just started.

Broader use of methodologies

Wider application is facilitated by providing training on the project's methodologies for several institutions concerned with community forestry in both provinces. Co-operation contracts between SFDP and forestry institutions on the provincial level ensure further spread of the project's methodologies. Recently, the Community Forestry Network Son La and Lai Chau has been established, consisting of fourteen government institutions and four projects working in this area. This
Network will further promote community forest management as an appropriate management option in forest management.

**Constraints to large scale implementation**

For the time being, several constrains exist for large scale implementation of the community forest management strategy. The major issue is security: i.e., local communities or groups of households are not provided with secure tenure or long-term rights over forestland. Local uncertainty about whether they will reap future benefits from existing forests constrains current investments of labor or other resources in community forestry activities.

Other issues include: 1) the lack of experience among extensionists on silvicultural management of natural forests, 2) the absence of service and shortages of forest products in combination with market problems (remoteness and state restrictions) does not encourage villagers to engage in forest activities, and 3) food security is still a major concern of the majority of the local people in the mountainous areas of Song Da watershed.

**Conclusion**

Community forest management is a relatively new approach in Vietnam. It has been introduced and promoted by several development projects working in Vietnam. Indeed, it is providing a cost-effective, socially acceptable and environmentally sound approach to forest management. Involvement of local communities in forest protection and management leads to a stabilization of degraded forest ecosystem and enables natural regeneration. Objectives of watershed protection and utilization of forest for local needs can be combined. A supportive policy environment on national and provincial level is an important element for large-scale application of CFM.

Experiences from the SFDP shows that further changes in policy could expand possibilities for community forest management in the following ways: 1) providing land use titles for forest land for communities (villagers or groups of households) would legally recognize community forestry as an management option in forestry; 2) giving people long-term rights over forest resources will improve their commitment to forestry activities and provide security that they can enjoy the long-term benefits; 3) permitting the utilization and sale of forest products will create sources of income which increase the short-term benefit of the forest for local people and replace forest protection fees paid by the Government; and 4) strengthening separate management support units in the local forest administration will facilitate a sound forest management by local communities.

Changing forestry policy in a way that fully supports community forestry requires a long–term commitment of the Government. The development of community forestry as an appropriate and successful management option is a long-term process. This process is likely to receive strong support of at least two groups: local governments and local communities, on the one hand, and foreign donors, on the other.
Background

Under Program 611, funds for contract payments for forest protection will be concentrated on critical protection/watershed areas. Yet there are also large areas of less critical protection forestland in the uplands. This leads us to ask the question: What approaches can be developed for management and protection of these areas that are not dependent on unsustainable levels of contract payments? The MRDP experience has shown that people are most interested in individual household land allocation of more valuable forest situated close to settlement areas. Yet in many upland communes there are large proportions of protection forestland (frequently over 70%) that exceed the capacity of individual household management. This leads us to our second key question, namely, What community based approaches can be developed for effective management and protection of the large areas of forest situated far from settlements or under less valuable regeneration forest cover?

The new approach being tested by MRDP in Yen Bai is based on a number of short and long term objectives and goals. In the short term, the MRDP plans: 1) to survey and prepare "Community Forest Management and Protection Plans", 2) to establish roles and responsibilities for forest management and protection (both within the community and links with district organizations), 3) long term allocation of forest areas to the commune and village by the district, 4) Sub/allocation of "forest management units" to groups of households, hamlets, villages as locally appropriate, 5) to delegate responsibility for regulation and monitoring to the commune level, and 6) to secure program/government funding support for a limited period of time.

In the longer term, the MRDP plans to work toward a concept of "Protection through Production", to introduce improved silvicultural techniques for forest protection and production, and to enhance income/benefit sharing arrangements between households and community whereby some of the revenue from the forest is put back into forest management and protection.

The first stage in the process of achieving these objectives and goals is to prepare "Community Forest Management and Protection Plans." To do so, the first step in the process is to hold commune and village meetings to introduce the concept of community forestry and to discuss the preparation process. The second step is to identify and survey "forest management units" with villagers. This information is then used to make a Village Forest map. The criteria used for identifying forest management units include: 1) Forest condition and capacity, 2) Existing management arrangements, 3) Main products, and 4) Proposed contract allocation arrangements

The third step is to formulate overall technical prescriptions and activities for each forest management unit category. Step 4 focuses on setting up Village meetings to discuss management proposals and community regulations for each category of forest management unit. Step 5 is to compile village/commune forest management and protection plan, Step 6 to call community meetings to approve the plan and, finally, Step 7, to submit the plan to the District People's Committee.

The forest management plan will contain: a) A map identifying the different forest management units, b) A list of the households that will be involved, c) Overall technical objectives for each management unit, d) Draft community regulations on management & protection, and e) Support requested for implementation of the plan.

Previous Land Use Planning in Nam Lanh Commune

In 1996, MRDP contracted the Agriculture and Forestry Planning Institute in Yen Bai to conduct land use planning. This
was to form the basis for land allocation and forest contracting.

Current and Projected Land Use in Giang Cai Village and Nam Lanh Commune as a whole:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Category</th>
<th>Giang Cai Village (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Land Area</td>
<td>1,895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture Land</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Land</td>
<td>600.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural forest</td>
<td>586.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest land for planting</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlement Land</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land for services</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land without plan</td>
<td>1,212.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including land with capacity for agroforestry</td>
<td>1,204.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Projected

However, this proposal for dividing up forestland was found to be not suitable.

There were two main reasons why villagers were not so keen on this approach. Firstly, it would be very difficult to effectively protect some of the more remote areas if divided in this way, and, secondly, the division of the forest area in this way cut across and did not take into account different types of forest management already in existence.

Types of Forest Managed within Giang Cai

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Managed by Villagers</th>
<th>Managed by Hh’s</th>
<th>Contract with Enterprise.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timber forest:</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Forest - Bamboo &amp; timber</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People often talk about "traditional community forest management". We have found this is not such a relevant concept in the northern uplands. It is more appropriate to talk about the linkages between "formal" (government) and "informal" (local) forest management systems.

The context of community forest management varies considerably in terms of institutions, quality and condition of forest, etc. There is a need to adapt overall policies and guidelines to fit specific local contexts.

The level of community cohesion has a very strong impact on the scope and potential for community forestry.

Time is needed for a community to work out all the details regarding management units, regulations, responsibilities etc.

There are strong linkages between food security and the capacity of a community to undertake community forest management and protection.

Coordination between different forest organizations (Forest Protection, Enterprises, Projects etc.) is also important for success of community forestry.

* Managed by Cooperative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old mixed forest Bamboo &amp; forest</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural regeneration of bamboo &amp; timber</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed forest cinnamon, timber &amp; bamboo</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat Bamboo Forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest Garden</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young natural regeneration area/bushes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swidden with grass cover</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Issues to be considered

People often talk about "traditional community forest management". We have found this is not such a relevant concept in the northern uplands. It is more appropriate to talk about the linkages between "formal" (government) and "informal" (local) forest management systems.

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* Managed by Cooperative
Designing and Implementing Participatory Forest Protection & Development Regulations at the Village Level (Son La Province)

Nguyen Van Thuan,
Forest Protection sub-Department/Son La

Background

In the past, regulations on socio-culture, security and forest protection did exist, but were not followed strictly. This was due in part to limitations in the process to integrate the traditional regulations and the fact that some of the regulations were made "top-down" without sufficient involvement of the villagers.

It is very clear that local people have a very important role in protecting and developing forest resources. That means forest protection and development regulations should be built up and applied with local participation. Building up the regulations through discussions among villagers will not only increase their will and sense of responsibility to protect forest, but will also strengthen their capacity in forest management and utilization.

In order to change this situation and develop democracy as well as link the regulations with local people's responsibilities, especially in forest protection and utilization, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued the Circular 56/1999/TT-BNN-KL dated 30 March, 1999 to guide the development of Participatory Village Forest Protection Regulations.

To implement the Circular in Son La province, the Son La People's Committee assigned Son La Forest Protection sub-Department in cooperation with Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) Song Da to build up a detailed guideline on facilitating participatory forest protection regulations at village level based on the methodology developed by SFDP Song Da. This guideline will be used by field forest protection officers to assist communities in developing Forest Protection Regulations.

Establishing a working group on Forest Protection Regulations

In October 1999, the Son La People's Committee established the Forest Protection Regulations Working Group with members from the Son La Forest Protection sub-Department and SFDP SongDa. The main purpose of the Working Group is to develop the guidelines that will help Forest Protection Officers to facilitate village forest protection regulations in a participatory way in order to increase usage of the methodology for developing forest protection and development regulations throughout the Son La province.

Firstly, the Working Group analyzed the situation in some villages that have independently established and applied forest protection and development regulations in Mai Son and Muong La districts. Then the Working Group evaluated the forest protection regulations that have been developed and applied in 29 villages in the Yen Chau District, Son La Province. These villages provide a good example of the capacity of local people and their villages to independently develop and implement forest protection regulations based on traditional practices but which conform to government guidelines. As a result of analysis and evaluation, the working group compiled draft guidelines on Participatory Forest Protection and Development Regulation at village level in order to gather comments from related institutions. Subsequently the guidelines will be submitted to Son La People's Committee. It is expected that the guidelines will be approved in June or July 2000.

The Working Group will make a detailed training plan for District Forest Protection Officers. This training should provide them with the facilitation skills for setting up the regulations and developing an implementation plan in ten districts of the province (six districts in the first phase and four districts in the second) in 2000.

Participatory Forest Protection and Development Regulations
Basic prerequisites

To ensure maximum local participation, the regulations must be: 1) based on discussions and opinions of local people, 2) consistent with Government regulations and policies, 3) clear, simple and easy to understand for local people, 4) carefully incorporated into existing regulations, 5) submitted to commune and district authorities (district level approval is required), and 6) after district approval, disseminated in a way that villagers know and understand what the rules are.

Content of the regulations

- Main issues to be covered by the regulations are as follows:
- Forest classification for management and utilization
- Harvesting timber, bamboo, bamboo shoots and fuel wood for daily use
- Clearing and burning for upland cultivation
- Cattle grazing
- Fire prevention
- Hunting wild life and harvesting non-timber forest products
- Duties and benefits of forest owners and forest protectors
- Fines, compensation and awarding

Forest classification for management and utilization

Forest classification aims at providing solutions on how to use, protect and manage forest suitably. From forest classification, villages can demarcate the border for each forest area such as areas that need to be protected strictly, areas where harvest of timber, bamboo, bamboo shoots and others permitted. Forest classification is not required to follow the Government's definition of three forest types but may be defined following village utilization purpose.

Regulation on harvesting timber, bamboo, bamboo shoots and fuel wood for daily use

There are several issues that need to be clarified with this regulation, including: Identification of target groups entitled to harvest forest products, areas where different forest products can be harvested, times for harvesting each product and harvesting modalities and procedures, and quantities of forest products that each household or community may harvest.

Regulation on clearing and burning for upland cultivation

Clearing and burning for upland cultivation always are crucial issues that need to be discussed among villagers because inappropriate upland clearing and burning may not only affect forestry land but also may cause forest fires. Thus there are some points should be made clear as follows:
- When is an appropriate time for upland burning?
- Where is burning for upland cultivation not allowed?
- What will villagers have to do in case of forest fire?
- Are there any rules for upland cultivation area where land allocation has not been carried out?
- What is the size for fire prevention belt?
- What are techniques/modalities for upland burning?

Regulation on cattle grazing

It is very necessary to have regulation on ruminant grazing in order to avoid damages by ruminants to forests and agricultural areas. Thus villagers should discuss: 1) Define areas where cattle grazing is not allowed (forest plantation, natural regeneration with enrichment planting)? 2) Which area is designated for cattle grazing? And 3) How do cattle owners and land users solve in case of damage by cattle?

Fire prevention plan

A fire prevention plan is an essential element of forest protection, especially in the dry season. Thus it should be clear about: 1) How to organize when fire occurs (by professional group or by all villagers)? 2) Who takes the main responsibility for mobilizing villagers to stop fire? 3) What to do in case of fire? 4) Are there any funds for fire prevention and where are potential sources? 5) How to share responsibility with households that do not take part in fire prevention?

Regulation on hunting and harvesting wildlife
Wildlife has been disappearing in the area. There should be action to stop this situation and villagers should determine an appropriate regulation on hunting and harvesting wildlife with some suggested questions as follows: 1) Which animals can be hunted and harvested? 2) Which animals may not be hunted and harvested? (The list of wildlife that need to be protected and the Decision 1523/QD-UB dated 26 September, 1997 by Son La People's Committee must be taken into account.) 3) Why have some wild animals that lived in the past disappeared? 4) What will villagers do to protect existing wildlife?

**Identifying benefits and duties of forest owners and forest protectors**

Regulations should be clear about benefits for which forest owners and forest protectors are eligible due to their activities to protect forest. They can be paid by Government budget, by program or project funds or by contributions from villagers. It is suggested to contract with forest owners and forest protectors.

Their duties should be clear. This involves defining the roles and responsibilities of all groups involved and providing detail such as who is to patrol, how violations will be dealt with, how to fine, how to handle cases of outside violators, etc.

**Fining, compensation and awarding**

**Fining.** At present, there is no mention of the village as a fining level in government legal documents. Thus it is necessary for villagers to discuss thoroughly to find proper fining and handling of fines. Education, dissemination and persuasion should be used to ensure proper awareness of fining rules. Fines should be light. In case of damage by cattle, both sides (cattle owner and land user suffering damage) must agree upon compensation. Re-offence will be fined. In case of starting forest fires or illegal clearing for farming, the village will make a report and send it to higher level to handle. In case violators refuse to pay fines, the head of village will make a report and send to higher level to handle.

**Compensation:** Besides confiscation of illegally harvested forest products, compensation can be considered according to value and characteristics of each type of forest product such as:

- Timber: according to diameter or height
- Bamboo: according to quantity of stems
- Non-timber products such as mushrooms: according to number of kilograms
- Newly planted trees: compensation is paid according to value and violators have to re-plant

**Awarding.** It should be clear who will be awarded (forest owner, detector or person handling the case) and with what percentage of fines and where the remaining money is kept (in the village fund or commune budget).

**Facilitating Forest Protection Regulations – the entire process**

The Working Group agreed on seven steps for the process of establishing Participatory Forest Protection Regulations at village level as follows:

**Step 1: Preparation**

There should be a meeting at commune level with village heads to inform them about the main content of the guidelines and how to make the regulations in their village. Officer should also clearly define the time to organize village meetings. Attendance of all households is obligatory.

Before attending the village meeting, the officer should prepare appropriate documents such as: map of village forest, land use planning map; some related law documents, district Spring-Winter plan; some existing regulations of the village and commune, etc.

**Step 2: Village meetings**

This may be the most important step in the process because the regulations will be made in this step. The head of village or one member from village management board will conduct the meetings. Participants are the village management board and one representative from each household. There should be a representation of old and young and mid-aged people, the participation of women is especially important because they are the ones who mainly harvest fuel wood, forest products and clear for upland cultivation.

If there is a large number of people in the meeting, it should be divided into small discussion groups in order to increase the effectiveness of discussions and to reduce “ice atmosphere”. Small groups also help to overcome the shyness of women and to avoid the situation where the village head voices one opinion and villagers are uncomfortable to disagree.
Officers play the role of facilitator to assist villagers in having good discussions and answering all questions relating to laws or regulations of the Government.

During meetings, villagers can decide on regulations appropriate to harvesting forest products, for fire prevention, for cattle grazing, regarding wildlife and also fining, compensation and awards.

**Step 3: Finalize village forest protection regulations for approval**

After discussions and having reached agreements among villagers, the regulations should be written down in a document and then submitted to commune and district authorities for approval. Officers should assist the village management board to finalize the document.

**Step 4: Approval of the regulations**

The document will be submitted to commune and district authorities and be approved by district authority.

**Step 5: Dissemination of the regulations**

It is very important to decide on how to disseminate the regulation after approval because villagers should not only discuss the regulations but they also have to understand them well if they are to follow them strictly. Oral dissemination and visualization tools such as using flipcharts should promote understanding, large posters printed with regulations and hung in public so that the regulations are well known by all of the villagers.

**Step 6: Monitoring and enforcing the regulations**

Villagers are the ones who designed the regulations so they should also follow them. But it is necessary to assign persons responsible for monitoring the implementation of the regulations and for their enforcement. These persons may be head of village or member of village management board.

**Step 7: Periodic review of regulations**

The regulations should be reviewed in order to design revisions that reflect changed situations in the village.

**Implementation**

The forest protection regulations have been tested in 29 villages in Yen Chau district and two villages in Thuan Chau district and we have received feedback and comments. A draft version of the Guidelines on Participatory Forest Protection Regulations at Village Level has been compiled and tested. Hopefully, the Working Group can complete the guidelines after organizing one workshop on Participatory Forest Protection Regulations at Village Level that is foreseen in June or July 2000. The Son La Provincial Authority plans to extend the methodology to the whole province during the year 2000. During the testing process, the following strengths and weaknesses were identified:

**Strengths:**

The methodology developed by SFDP Song Da benefited from intensive support by the Working Group to develop and test the guidelines on Participatory Forest Protections Regulation at village level.

Two years experience in Yen Chau District have been incorporated in the methodology. This experience can be considered a suitable basis to develop the guidelines.

Villages who applied the methodology have given positive feedback. They now have improved protecting their forests and have a good perception of protecting and developing their own forests.

**Weaknesses:**

At present, there is no law that governs fining authority on the village level. Therefore it is difficult to design a suitable fining modality for head of village or village management board.
Different ethnic groups and different languages may cause misunderstanding in the process of designing and disseminating the regulations and thus also may require efforts from forest protection officers in learning ethnic languages.

From testing in Yen Chau, it was seen that some heads of villages still did not strictly enforce fining with their relatives.

**Conclusions**

It is very clear that Participatory Forest Protections Regulation at the village level is a very necessary methodology to develop democracy from grass root level and mobilize communities to improve protection and development of forests.
CFM Case Study

MUONG LUM COMMUNE, YEN CHAU DISTRICT, SON LA PROVINCE (Thai & H’mong minorities)

An Van Bay, Nguyen Hai Nam and Cao Lam Anh

Background information

Muong Lum Commune belongs to Yen Chau District, Son La Province. The Commune is 30 kilometers from Yen Chau District town and is home to nine H’mong and Thai villages. The Commune is categorized as a remote commune of the province. There are 336 households with 2,006 people in the Commune; nearly 27% of which remain poor and hungry, according to official statistics.

The Commune covers an area of 5,052 hectares, 8% of which is agricultural land, 89% forestland, and 3% bare land. Forests here were heavily depleted between 1970-1995. H’mong villages do not have wet paddy area, but have better forest resources than Thai villages. Thai villages, which have wet paddy areas, are closer to roads but have depleted their forest resources due to higher timber utilization.

Recently, there have been government and international development projects like the Community Health, Education Development, Contractual Forest Protection, Fixed Cultivation and Settlement, Safe Water Supply, and Credit programs. However, these projects have not been participatory and there has been lack of coordination among them.

This study aims to investigate the forest management forms of the Thai and H’mong minorities in this area.

Study methods

- Collection and aggregation of data relating to forest management of local authorities and other entities,
- Identification of locally existing land and forest management forms with attention towards traditional forms,
- Analysis of internal and external factors affecting local forest management and development,
- Application of the community forest management analysis framework,
- Application of PRA tools.

Study results

Existing Thai and H’mong forest management forms in Muong Lum commune

Both communities of Black Thai and H’mong in Muong Lum Commune traditionally managed and protected forest which they considered to be their own. This area of forest normally surrounded the living areas or served as the watershed area for the main water sources of the villages. The H’mong villages’ traditional customs were superior because: 1) The boundary of forest areas which they considered as they own forest were clearly understood, 2) The village had very strong regulations on management, use of its products, clearing for shifting cultivation and protection of the forest (this is a customary law that all community members must follow) and, 3) Timber was exploited only for personal use, not for commercial purposes.

However, in recent years, due to the failure of traditional customary laws in the face of new (but ineffective) constitutional and forest protection laws, the forest resources at the commune was exploited in an uncontrolled way and the natural resources were heavily degraded.

Management and use rights over forestry and agriculture land are not yet legitimizied with "Redbook Certificates." The commune ensures that each household gets 600 m² of terraced fields and 3,500 m² of upland fields, but has never determined the exact area of each household holding. Land ownership in Muong Lum is therefore mainly based on traditional forms of ownership. Community members unquestionably recognize each other’s use rights over land and trees.

Contractual forest protection for natural forest and forestland are under a sub-forest protection unit of the district. Muong Lum’s communal People’s Committee signed a contract with the district forest protection unit for forest protection. Upon
acquisition of the contract, the commune decided on three types of contractual protection: 1) to groups of farmer households, 2) to households, and 3) to the whole village. Protection fees for critical areas (important structures, national and provincial road corridor) is VND25,000 per hectare per year and, for less critical areas, VND15,000 per hectare per year.

Whereas the commune assigns the forest protection and management, each village has a forest protection group. In the annual Commune People's Council meeting, there is a resolution on participation in forest protection and management by all the people. The commune forest protection and management board works according to monthly plans. The commune also has specific regulations to handle the local demand for timber for house building timber.

Two strong points in community forest management of Muong Lum commune could be noted: 1) The organizational structure for implementing contractual forest protection is functioning well, and 2) There are working regulations for the commune forestry staff and a fund for forest protection. Two weak points are: 1) Community forest management capacity at village and commune levels remains low, and 2) Participation in decision making for community forestry activities is inadequate. Key problem areas are: The forest has been over exploited, Local demand for forest products is very high, especially among Thai communities, There are disputes with neighboring communes, and Land allocation has not been conducted.

Forest generated benefits

- Water supply for paddy cultivation, household use and livestock raising,
- Cash income from timber and non-timber forest products,
- Food and foodstuffs,
- House building and furniture making materials,

There are seven groups of forest products that could be identified as bringing direct benefits for local people:

- Fuel wood trees: women are interested in 13 species of fast growing small and straight trees, which are easy to carry, and good for making fire.
- Trees for sawn timber: solid and valuable only distributed now in remote or high limestone outcrops far away from the villages.
- Trees for pillar making: straight and stable trunk, water and termite resistant,
- Bamboo: Most preferred are dang, luong, song mat,
- Starch trees: highly valued, especially at times of crop failure, including certain types of tubers,
- Trees for fruits and barks: often big timber trees or bushes: Cinnamomum, dai hai, Aloritis Cordata, wild longan, melia.
- Medicinal plants: Amomum Xanthioides, ha thu o, Polygonatum kingianum, Stephania rotunda, Nervilis sp.

Forest generated income only accounts for 5 to 15% of the total household income but is valuable for it helps in the most difficult times.

Problem areas that need to be addressed include, 1) over extraction of timber, 2) over extraction of fuelwood (even young valuable trees are harvested for fuel), 3) control over forest resources remains loose, especially over non-timber forest products, and 4) forest generated benefits are not evenly distributed in the community. Households with more labor capacity harvest more forest products and obtain more benefits.

Lessons learned from community forest management

Forest protection and management plans could only be when they reflect wishes of the community, hence requiring local participation in the planning process.

It is necessary to provide training in participatory approaches for forestry staff at different levels.

Men and women in ethnic groups often have indigenous knowledge about forest management, utilization and forest protection. The use of this indigenous knowledge could be very useful for community-based forestry activities.

There is diversity of stakeholders in contractual forest protection: CPC, cooperatives, military units, etc. Experiences from
Yen Chau should be shared with other regions to work out proposals for policy formulation.

An important lesson to be learned from local people is to proceed with forest protection activities in a steady manner without rushing. Local communities should always be encouraged to participate in community forestry development.

"Navigator tools" used to assess the level of community involvement in forest management at Muong Lum Commune clearly indicated that although the state of forest in the commune is relatively good, the level of community involvement in forest management is low. The most important step to promote community forest management at Muong Lum Commune and ensure forest resources development is to carry out participatory land use planning and forestland allocation to the community, groups of households or households. The forest should be contracted long term to the village community to protect and manage so that the development of forest can be sustainable. Government policies should encourage local people to become involved in the forest protection and development so that they can better profit from these activities.

**Recommendations**

- Raise awareness of local people about active forest management without subsidy
- Develop a high yielding and sustainable farming system to reduce pressures over the forests
- Control harvesting of forest products, including non-timber forest products in watersheds and forests in the commune
- Introduce substitute products to timber and fuelwood to reduce the need for forest exploitation
- Allocate agriculture land to households and groups of households with "Redbook Certificates"
- Prevent outsiders from clearing forest for farming by allocating of land
- Make land use plans with people's participation
- Transfer technologies on afforestation and natural regeneration to local people
- Improve the upland farming system
- Allocate forestland to households or groups of households for protection and management
- Provide training on organization and management skills for staff and local people

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CFM Case Study

DAK NUE COMMUNE, LAK DISTRICT,
DAK LAK PROVINCE (Mnong minority)
Dr. Bao Huy, Tran Huu Nghi, Dr. Nguyen Hai Nam

Background information

The study for this area covers forest management practices of the Mnong ethnic group, which live in Dak Nue Commune, Lak District, Dak Lak Province. The commune is home to 635 households with 3,288 residents, composed of Mnong (52%), Kinh (29%) and Ede (19%) ethnic groups. Since 1985, the local population has been fast growing due to an influx of migration. The total natural area of the commune is 12,500 hectares: roughly 7% agriculture, 40% forestry and 53% unused land. Vegetation is characterized by dense evergreen tropical forests, sparse dipterocarpus forests and bamboo forests. In recent years, the local people have started to shift to marketable crops. This commune is presented as an example of forestland protection responsibility shared by local people and a Forest Enterprise.

Study methods

This study is based on a review of documents/reports in the SMRP office in Dak Lak province, and discussions with different stakeholders in province and district levels (cadastoral office, forest protection units, Lak Forest Enterprise, district agriculture department and communal people committee). Specific steps included:

- Collection of data and information available in district and commune
- Semi-structured interviews
- Field observations
- Discussions with different target groups: local leaders, ethnic farmers, farming encroachers, women, village old men, related institutions.
- Application of several PRA tools: e.g., a transect depicting the farming system, a matrix to evaluate different forest products and benefits
- Group discussion, situational analysis and documentation
- Application of the National Working Group "Navigator Tool" to define the current status of community forest management

Study results

Forms of local community forest management

The Mnong community has very strong forest management traditions for their surrounding living area. Each village (Buon) has a certain area that includes both forestland and land for agriculture production (shifting cultivation). Shifting cultivation was strictly controlled by village elders who were considered as landowners for the entire village. At present, whole areas of forest and forestland are under state control through forest enterprises, management boards of special use forests and national parks. Since 1994, these institutions made been contracting with local households to provide protect services for 'protection' and 'special use' forests under the "327 Program. However, since the local people were simply 'hired' by the forest enterprises, their actual commitment to forest protection is mixed.

Although the area covered by 'protection contracts' is quite large (40 to 80% of the total forest area), only 14% of households hold such contracts. Contractual protection offers an advantage in terms of generating employment, increasing income for local people, bringing down the rate of deforestation and enhancing inputs in household garden development. The disadvantage is that farmers in several areas received "low" protection fees, and were not given any farming land. Furthermore, contractual allocation does not take place in every region, causing lack of equity. Contracted areas are often far from residential areas, making it difficult to protect; nor do women participate in discussions about forest protection. Typically, the responsibility and benefits of contracted people were not clarified, causing lack of real interest from farmers concerning forest development. Furthermore, the community practices and needs regarding natural resources have been overlooked.

A common land use system is composed of upland farming and wet paddy cultivation. In recent years, coffee has been being planted in upland areas. Permanent upland fields are close to residential quarters and have been allocated to individual households with land tenure certification ("Redbook Certificate"). Fallow upland fields, which are usually
scattered some distance away from residential areas, were managed either by households or communities, sometimes belonging to other villages or communes.

There have been several small disputes over inherited paddy areas, upland fields and industrial crop areas of migrated people. Land conflicts also occur over afforestation land of local institutions, and between different kinships and villages.

As for land use planning, villages have not had any comprehensive land use plan that includes forests and forestland. Some master plans are not very feasible. Land allocation to community/household is still in an experimental phase.

The leaders of forest enterprises or forest management boards said that the allocation process would be difficult to manage if land were allocated to communities. On the other hand, local people prefer a community approach since it is so difficult to assign forest to individual households when forests are different in quality and distance to residential areas. The local people also think that the protection fee could be used for common purposes to reduce their common contribution.

Benefits come from forest

One of the most important uses of the forest, one broadly recognized by all people, was the use of forestland for shifting cultivation. The cycle of rotation after one-year cultivation was 20-30 years so that the generation of forest is in very good condition.

Forest products that people usually extract from their forest are bamboo, bamboo shoots, rattan, leaves, tubers, grass, wild animals, fish, barks, honey, and resin. Bamboo and bamboo shoot are still abundant. Whereas some products could be regularly extracted (e.g., timber, fuelwood, leaves, grass and tubers), some others are becoming rare (e.g., wild animals, fish, bark, honey, and resin).

Forest products are used in many ways: For food or for sale (bamboo shoots, barks, bamboo, a few wild animals, fuel wood, pine resin); For house building (e.g., timber, bamboo, rattan, grass); For fuel or for making furniture.

Households earn income from farming and harvesting timber and non-timber forest products. Poorer households have to depend on forest products both for income and daily subsistence. Average and relatively wealthy households only use forest products for household consumption. Potential incomes from forests range between 60,000 and 130,000 VND/ha/year. Therefore, if forestland is allocated to households and communities, the government could save the money spent on protection fees and at the same time could have some revenues from benefit sharing with the households.

Government support

Apart from protection fees, the "327 Program" made inputs in rural infrastructure, production development, and protection forest establishment, thus helping to increase forest cover in protection areas. Land allocation is being implemented on a trial basis. Support from the Fixed Cultivation Program has helped to reduce farming intensity in upland areas. The hunger and poverty alleviation program offers very short term credits of meager amounts, making farmers hesitant to apply for fear that they will be unable to repay in the event of crop failure. Extension has helped to change farming practices with reduced farming in upland areas, but still faces financial problems and difficulties in technology transfer. At present, very few Mnong households receive land for afforestation but work instead as hired labor for forest enterprises.

In a traditional community organization, the village leader is a respected community member, i.e. wise man, village member, mediator or magician. Kinship plays an important role in community life. In each village, land is inherited matrilineally. Some forest areas are regarded as sacred or spiritual forests that no one is allowed to violate.

Lessons learned from community forest management

A harmonized combination of traditional practices and government policies in land allocation could bring about good results and respond to aspirations of the community.

Instead of paying protection fees through institutions like forest enterprises or management boards, land use rights should be granted to local communities to save state money and improve forest management.

Forest related rural development programs could only be successful with active participation of local communities.

Combining government interests with local people's benefits is essential for the formulation of a forest management policy
that is responsive to people's wishes.

The formulation of a land use plan is an urgent and difficult task, especially in the Central Highlands. Therefore, active participation of local people and staff is decisive to achieve success in forest management.

**Recommendations**

It is necessary to discuss with local communities about forest management orientation

It should be left to households, kinships and communities to decide on forest development and extraction with technical support from related institutions. A reasonable benefit sharing mechanism should be discussed with stakeholders (households or communities with local authorities).

There should be support policies for communities in forest enrichment, especially for impoverished and newly generated forest.

Initiatives of local people in investment, management and extraction of less critical watershed forest and production forests should be encouraged. Traditional forms of community's organization and rules in community forest management should be restored and supported. The policy/legal framework should accommodate them.

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Background information

The study areas selected were Doi and Ke Villages in Hien Luong Commune, Da Bac District, Hoa Binh Province. Since nearly 90% of the population in both hamlets are Muong, this study presents forest management as practiced by Muong ethnic community in Hoa Binh province. Hien Luong is a mountainous commune in Hoa Binh province. The total natural area is 3,276 hectares of mostly steep, sloping land. Agriculture land accounts for 4% and forestland 82% (Forest cover is 54.6%). Land area per capita is two hectares, of which 0.08 hectares are agriculture land, and 1.1 hectares forestland. Food per capita is 175 kg per year. Average annual income stands at VND 1.2 million.

The commune is located in a "very critical" watershed area of the Da River Basin and the Hoa Binh hydropower dam. The entire forest area is designated as 'protection forest' and has been contracted for protection under 01/CP. There are 1,464 hectares of natural forest and 325 hectares of plantations. Plantations include Acacia mangium, eucalyptus and several kinds of bamboo. The natural forest is home to "Nua" bamboo (with low volume: 15,000 culms per hectare). Timber forest and brushland no longer contain valuable trees. Natural forests on limestone contain several timber species with low timber volume (40m³/ha).

Study methods

This study was carried out to collect information on traditional natural resource management practices of the Muong ethnic minority. Information on forest resource development and the community's forest management practices over time are also evaluated. Methods used during the study include:

- Collection of past documents related to the practices in resource management and utilization of the Muong ethnic community (commune leaders, hamlet leaders, old people, women, etc.)
- Interviews and discussions with different target groups to explore ways of managing the forest in the hamlet community (hamlet leaders, old people, women, etc.)
- Application of several PRA tools: a transect depicting the land use and management system, a matrix to identify products, benefits and income from the forests
- Application of "the navigator" to determine the current status of community forest management in the study area.
- Interviews with experts
- Discussion within the study team, analysis and documentation of the results.

Study results

Locally existing forms of forest management

There are three forms of forest management:

*State forest management*: The Song Da Watershed Management Board is the manager of the protection forest project.

*Household management*: Households practice plantation forest protection on forestland already allocated to them with land use right certificates

*Community forest management* (though protection contracts). The hamlets are allowed to manage a certain area of natural forest and are awarded protection contracts from the Song Da Watershed Management Board for this area. At present, community managed forest accounts for 49% of the total allocated land area. The village head receives the land on behalf of the community.

The rights of the hamlet over the community forest are: 1) Management rights (setting up internal regulations, organizing...
protection activities, handling violations), and 2) Utilization rights over timber and other products (extracting timber for house building by households in the hamlet). However, forest managed by community may not be transferred, inherited, or used as collateral or as a contribution to joint ventures.

Stakeholders in community forest management

The Hamlet leader. The Hamlet leader represents the hamlet in CFM affairs, is responsible for establishing a hamlet regulation on forest and land protection, gives permission for harvesting timber and bamboo for house building and household use, and mobilizes people to prevent and handle violations of the community forest.

The village cooperative. The head of the cooperative is authorized to sign contracts for afforestation and the protection of natural forests and plantations on behalf of the hamlet.

The Veteran's Association does not participate in forest patrolling, but watches out for violations.

Other organizations: Commune party council, village party cell and other mass organizations are all interested in leading people to protect and develop the community forest.

The household is the major beneficiary of the community forest. Each household is allowed to extract timber for house building from the community forest when needed.

Benefits from the community forest

- Timber for house building
- Animal fodder
- Vegetables
- Balanced water supply

The most prized benefits from common forest are: Timber and nua are most valued, Luong and bamboo shoots are becoming more important, and people highly appreciate the role of the forest in regulating the water supply. When compared with the total household income, forest generated benefits have always played an indispensable role in the life of local communities.

Lessons learned from community forest management

Institutions involved in land allocation need to consider the wishes of local people and their traditional practices and allocate a certain area of natural forest to communities for management.

The people and the leadership in the hamlet are capable of managing and protecting their common forest areas.

Forest managed by hamlet communities can satisfy some of the most urgent needs of local people, such as timber for house building, medicines, food, and fodder.

Although no "Redbook certificates" have been provided for common forest contracted to the hamlet, the local authorities have accepted and recognized community capacity in natural resource management in these forest areas.

The approach in community forest management could also be applied to other fields, e.g., construction of a water supply system or a cultural house for the community.

Recommendations

Hamlet or village community forest management is consistent with both ancient Muong tradition and current government policy. Therefore, the government should consider providing a legal base to maintain and develop this form of forest management.

The Government should extend the forest protection fee for the Song Da watershed area. It should be considered as an input of the Hoa Binh hydropower plant. Thus the power price should be calculated to include the cost of watershed protection for the Hoa Binh dam on a long-term basis rather than just for 5 years.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should review community forests in hamlet/village communities in ethnic areas to complement and complete the forestry land allocation and forestry development support policies. Above
all, the legal base for utilization rights over forestry land of village community should be considered.

A regulation on rights of households and communities to extract benefits from natural forests (including watersheds) and a policy for forest product utilization should be elaborated. Such a regulation would increase the local people’s self interest in protecting the forest and should include funds to cover forest protection and establishment expenses.

In the future, for Hien Luong and other communes in the Hoa Binh dam area, which belong to the "very difficult commune" category (Government Program 135), the forest protection fee should be maintained so that the local people continue to associate protecting existing natural forests with reaping benefits.

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CFM Case Study

GIANG CAI VILLAGE, NAM LANH COMMUNE, VAN CHAN DISTRICT, YEN BAI PROVINCE (Dao minority)
Bui Dinh Toai, Nguyen Phuc Cuong, Vo Thanh Son, Edwin Shanks and Sheelagh O'Reilly

Background information

Giang Cai Village belongs to Nam Lanh Commune, Van Chan District, Yen Bai Province. The village is five kilometers away from the commune center and 12 kilometers from the provincial road. This is a village with large areas of forest and forestland. Nam Lanh commune has seven villages, six of which are mainly Dao villages and one, H'mong (Ngon Lanh).

By 1996, Nam Lanh had 401 households with 2,497 residents, in which the Dao people accounted for 88%, H'mong 6%, Thai 2% and several households were Kinh, Tay, and Kho mu. In Giang Cai Village alone, there were 87 households in 1996 with 550 residents, 145 of which were of working age and all of whom are Dao.

Forestland in Nam Lanh Village lies mainly in less critical protection areas. Total natural area is 1,895 hectares, of which agriculture land accounts for 4%, forestry land 32% and unused land 64%. Giang Cai Village was selected as a study area because of its diversity in land and forest types, ranging from forest garden near residential areas, production forest far away from residential areas, and less critical forests to sacred forests. In addition, the village's cooperative is currently managing a Cinamomum garden for many households in the village. It also represents a forest management model of the Dao ethnic minority in the local area.

Study methods.

Data were collected from 3 following sources:

- PRA results, with tools like wealth ranking, village mapping, and household and land use change pattern analysis.
- Construction of village/commune forest management and protection plans
- Data from some available study conducted by the Mountainous Rural Development Program on land use planning, market analysis and development, land allocation process and forest management planning

Study results

Locally existing forms of forest management

Based on district master planning, most of forestland of Giang Cai Village belongs to protected and less critical watershed forest categories. Due to its complex topography, with elevations ranging from 400 to 1,400 meters, and the considerable distance from the village to higher elevation forest areas, the task to protect these areas is difficult. Villagers classify the forests of the area according to their own categories as different types of protected forests, forest under household management, forest under cooperative management (e.g., the Cinamomum garden) and forests contracted for protection by the Van Chan Forest Enterprise. Households only want to manage and protect forests near their living area and would like to leave most distant forests to the collective management of groups of households or the whole village.

The People’s Committee of Van Chan district has approved a management plan for the protection forest of Giang Cai Village, which covers 1,092 hectares. The village has decided to divide this area into five plots and to assign them to five hamlets for protection. All villagers must participate in protection; the Cinamomum garden remains under cooperative management.

This classification of forest by local people seems more practical than the official classification of "protection" or "production" forests, for it reflects the complexity of local forest types or forestland management systems in mountainous areas.

Table 1: Different types of forest management forms in Giang Cai village

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<th>CFM Case Study</th>
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<tr>
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<td>The People’s Committee of Van Chan district has approved a management plan for the protection forest of Giang Cai Village, which covers 1,092 hectares. The village has decided to divide this area into five plots and to assign them to five hamlets for protection. All villagers must participate in protection; the Cinamomum garden remains under cooperative management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This classification of forest by local people seems more practical than the official classification of &quot;protection&quot; or &quot;production&quot; forests, for it reflects the complexity of local forest types or forestland management systems in mountainous areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 1: Different types of forest management forms in Giang Cai village</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Community forest management

Should be based on agreements over forest plot boundaries with neighboring villages.

Dividing the forest of Giang Cai village into five plots for five hamlets to protect has been approved by the District People’s Committee. Any violator of forest management rules will be punished. The village can decide to use benefits gained from forest managed by the community for common use purposes. For example, the money from Cinamomum sales was used to build a bridge connecting the village to the commune.

The relation between food security, land use and forest protection should be considered. There is a need to build a strong basis for food security. Future shortage of land should be taken into account while allocating land to households. The market for agriculture product should be expanded to help ensure food security.

Forest generated benefits

- Present and future income generation
- The forest protects water supply and increases agricultural production
- The forest provides conditions to develop efficient community land management
- Generates cash income
- The forest’s stock of trees can be compared to "bank" for households that, with efficient management, will provide future resources
- Communities knowledgeable about their resources and capable of efficiently managing them are also united and well functioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forest types</th>
<th>Village managed</th>
<th>Household managed</th>
<th>Contractually protected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timber forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Old forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regenerated forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed timber and bamboo forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Old forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Regenerated forest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed forest of Cinamomum, timber and bamboo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo forest</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest garden</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young regenerated forest</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post cultivation land dominated by grass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lessons learned from community forest management

National policies should be flexible, not only those related to forest and forest use.

There should be locally specific solutions instead of general guidelines for all.

Local communities classify forestland in their own way, which proves to be more specific and efficient than national classifications.

Rapid forest regeneration and establishment could only be achieved with food security, which is best provided for through raising agriculture productivity.

The coordination among local forestry-related institutions with clear task and function definitions is very important.

There is a need for a locally specific land allocation policy for the mountainous area. Poor households in the mountains are not capable of developing and managing forest plots far from their villages. They can, however, cooperate within their community to do so, which benefits the community as a whole.

Recommendations

- Local communities propose the following issues be addressed to achieve improved forest management:
- Food security for the present and the future
- Population pressures
- Fixed settlement
- Market access
- Status of forest resources at the time of allocation
- Resources needed for forest reestablishment, regeneration, and protection
- Plans for forest rehabilitation should not be over ambitious, as they require resources like time, labor, capital, which are not always available in the village.
- The benefits of people participating in the protection of critical watersheds should be considered.
- A balance should be achieved between short term and long term objectives in forest and land management.
- The process of land use planning and management should be finalized
- There should be a legal corridor and policies for promoting community forest management, which looks encouraging, albeit in its early stages.

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CFM Case Study

CU JIANG COMMUNE, EA KAR DISTRICT, DAK LAK PROVINCE, (Ede minority)
Bao Huy and Tran Huu Nghi

Background information

The study area is Trung Village, Cu Jiang Commune, Ea Kar District, Dak Lak Province. The Commune is located in high, steep mountains. The Commune is composed of 23 villages with 2,045 households, 10,440 residents, and includes Ede, Hmong, Kinh and other minority groups. The Commune covers an area of 14,640 ha, of which 15.6% are agriculture land, 65% forestland and 15.4 % unused land. Out of the 9,535 ha of forestry land, 75 ha are plantations and the remaining 9,460 ha are land with natural forests. Vegetation cover includes: Dense evergreen forest, Dipterocapus forest and bamboo forest.

This study presents the current status of community forest management by the Ede ethnic group in Dak Lak province.

Study methods

- Document gathering
- Semi-structured interviews
- Field observations
- Group discussion
- Application of PRA tools, e.g. Transect depicting the farming system, matrix giving points forest products
- Situational analysis and documentation
- Application of the "navigator"

Study results

Land use rights

Traditionally, all types of land in the village had clear owners according to village regulations in the Ede community. The Ede minority inherited land matrilineally.

Allocation of agriculture land was carried out, but "Redbook Certificates" have not yet been provided. In 1986, each household was allocated 0.15 ha of garden and residential land. In 1989, each household was allocated 0.2 ha for wet paddy cultivation. The land areas of each household are only listed in books for tax calculation.

Forestland in the Commune is under the management of the Ea Kar Forest Enterprise. Several years before, the Forest Enterprise contracted Trung villagers to provide forest protection under the "327 Program". The village leader received the contract on behalf of the whole village. The contracted area was 1,756 hectares with 60 households involved in protection. The Forest Enterprise hired local people for reforestation, site clearance and forest tending. However, communities and households did not have much management responsibility. Consequently, the ‘protection fee’ was perceived as a wage paid by the Forest Enterprise for labor.

The current production system of Ede people in Trung villages includes cultivating wet paddy, planting coffee and harvesting forest products for subsistence.

Although there were no conflicts related to land use in the past, recent in-migration has resulted in several disputes. The Ede people feel that their village land is shrinking, with many old upland fields being encroached and intruded upon by other communities.

In the year 2000, the Eakrar Forest Enterprise plans to allocate 1,000 hectares of forest and forestland to Trung villagers for long term forestry purposes with "Redbook Certificates". Villagers have proposed that forest be allocated to the community under control of the village head and village elder.
Forest-generated benefits

Forest products classified according to their importance are: timber, bamboo, bamboo shoots, leaves, wild game, honey, fish, and resin. Products still extracted in abundance are bamboo, bamboo shoots and leaves as medicines and vegetables. While, forest enterprises extract timber in large amounts, local people only harvest timber for house building. Outsiders of the village also have right to harvest forest products in the area.

Local people harvest forest products mainly for domestic consumption (e.g., bamboo shoots, wild game, honey, fish, vegetables as food, and timber for house building and furniture making. Local observers find that forest products from the forest area of the village are becoming scarcer. Whereas forest products contribute about 5% to the income of wealthy households, they represent about 65% to poorer household income (roughly VND 2.9 million)

Support from government program

The "327 Program" contracted with households to provide forest protection and made inputs in rural infrastructure. However, due to lack of people's participation in several regions, the program was not highly efficient.

A land allocation program without people's participation can result in irrational resource use where lines between land ownership and utilization of households and communities and other economic sectors are confused.

The extension program has proven to be helpful to Ede people in raising their income while restricting upland farming, expanding wet paddy and industrial crop cultivation areas.

Communities, kinships, and groups of households are informally organized for forest management. Regulations exist, but enforcement remains weak.

Lessons learned from community forest management

Forest enterprises and forest protection units alone are not enough for efficient forest management. The active participation of local communities together with long-term land allocation to households and communities is essential.

Traditional laws and social organizational structures can form the basis for mobilizing local people forest and forest land management.

A policy and institutional set-up which is specifically suitable to each ethnic group and friendly towards the poor and the disadvantaged is essential in ensuring efficient community forest management.

Recommendations

The Ede people have been traditionally efficient in management and distribution of their resources. This capability within the community or kinship should be taken into consideration for long term forest protection goals.

Participatory land use planning should be conducted before land allocation.

After allocating land to communities/kinships/households, the government should provide technical assistance and market information so that local people can work out their production orientation.

The government should adopt policies targeted at enriching newly regenerated forests and supporting community forest management that is compatible with the Ede ethnic minority's traditional forest management system.

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**CFM Case Study**

**DAK TOVER COMMUNE, CHU PAH DISTRICT**
**GIA LAI PROVINCE (Jarai Minority)**
Tran Van Con

**Background information**

Dak Tover belongs to Chu Pah District, Gia Lai Province and is a newly founded commune (1996). The commune has total area of 3,700 ha. The population is 1,249 people, of which 1,126 are Jarai (90.1%) and 123 are Bana (9.9%).

The commune’s economy is mainly based on upland farming and forest products. Major crops are rice, maize, cassava, and mung bean. The Jarai people traditionally consider the forest as common property. Any one capable could cultivate as much land as they could, as long as they did not encroach on the land already cleared by others (including fallow land).

In social organization, Jarai people follow a matriarchal system. The basic social organizational unit is "Buon". Today, the villagers nominate the leader of the village, but the council of elders still plays an important role in affairs relating to customs and traditions. In the past, apart from the village owner and village elders, the military leaders, magicians and medicine practitioners were important persons in their community. They all play specific roles in the village's social life. As polytheists, the Jarai people make frequent offerings. The Jarai people are honest and show a highly developed sense of community in all family and social activities.

The Dak Tover Commune is 3,700 hectares, in which forestland covers 20.7%, agriculture land makes up 5.4%, and unused land represents 70.6%. Forests of the village are mainly post-cultivation regenerated forests. The forest area is not yet allocated, but is under state management (forest protection station). Household incomes are mainly generated from food crops (53%), sugar cane (27%) and forest products (20%).

**Study methods**

- Secondary document collection and analysis
- Guided interviews and discussion (see annex for questionnaires)
- Field observation
- Group discussion
- Transect drawing
- Matrix making for forest product

**Study results**

**Locally existing forms of forest management and land use rights**

Special-use forests are managed by the management board of the "Special Use Forest and Forest Protection" sub-Department.

Protection forests are alternatively managed by the management board of "Protection Forests, State forest and Agriculture Enterprises," other institutions (military, economic) as well as the local community.

Production forests are managed by State forest enterprises, the Forest Protection sub Department, as well as households and local community.

Agricultural land is managed by households, co-operatives and Offices/ organizations/ businesses.

Unused land is managed by the Forest Protection sub-Department and the Cadastral Office.

**Land use rights:**

*Forest land:* at the time of the study, land allocation was not yet implemented under Decrees 01 and 02/CP. Land did not belong to anyone in particular and was generally managed by the forest protection units.
Agriculture land and residential land were unquestionably recognized as being owned by farmer households (though still without “Redbook Certificates”).

Other land types are not allocated.

No land use conflicts were observed.

The current status of community forest management

Community organization: In the village, there are village leaders, the Farmer’s Association, Women Union, Veteran’s Association, Youth Union, mass and military groups. Which, together with the village leader, play decisive roles in all community activities. As for management of resources, in addition to traditional laws, the Commune People’s Committee is generally held to be legally responsible entity.

Traditional laws (village regulations): Within the boundary of the village, forest and other resources are under the collective ownership of the whole village. Everybody is entitled to select an area for farming, upon which others will not be allowed to encroach. Village outsiders must obtain permission from the village owner and the villagers in order to cultivate village land.

Benefits derived from the forest

- Products people can extract from the forest
- Materials for house and fence building and making tools,
- Food for difficult times, food stuffs like bamboo shoots, vegetable, meat, fish, etc.
- Medicinal materials,
- Marketable products,
- Balanced supply of water, attractive natural environment,
- Dwelling place for gods and spirits that are believed to protect local people.

Analysis of the role of community forestry

Land use rights and impacts on household economy

There is no basis for land allocation in the absence of a land use map,

Poor farmers do not want to get "Redbook Certificates" if they have to pay a fee,

Local people need a land area large enough to cultivate using traditional practices

Restricting upland farming without considering current land distribution patterns could increase imbalances among different forms of land management,

The Kinh people’s land purchases are resulting in locals going further into the forest to look for new farming land or to seeking work from the new landowners.

Shifting cultivation and upland farming: Clearing land for upland farming should not be banned altogether, but needs to be reasonably planned and the traditional farming system improved. This should be a solution for community forest management and development.

Impacts on community structure and its role in forest management: Traditional laws of the community are losing force, although that process could be easily reversed. Although clearing for upland farming has become illegal, the practice continues, leading to deterioration of the forest. Other social pressures on the forest are also on the rise. Approaches to addressing these problems need to be changed; most importantly, they must involve greater participation of local communities.

Lessons learned from community forest management

To enhance the role of local communities, there is a need for changes in land use planning with a combination of community benefits with forest development,

Forestry studies must not be detached from other sectors relating to overall socioeconomic development of the
mountainous areas. The improvement of social and economic lives of communities residing within the forest or in proximity of the forest should be a priority.

To involve local communities in forest management and protection, there must be synchronized solutions. The policy and institutional set-up must be friendly toward the poor and the disadvantaged.

There should be strategies combining macro level objectives with the micro level benefits to local people and communities.

Clearing for upland farming should not be banned, but measures must be taken to improve the local traditional farming system to ensure sound community forest management and protection.

**Recommendations**

To build an effective community forest management model, there should be measures and policies to eradicate the current obstacles in land classification, land use planning and land allocation to farmer households and communities.

To further improve the mechanisms used to assess the sustainability of natural ecosystems, with particular focus on agroforestry development (e.g., boosting industrial crop production, developing processing industries).

Further studies should be carried out to better understand other forms of traditional forest management and traditional tenure systems to assist in the formulation of appropriate policies. Potential or current relations between traditional management systems and other official systems should be identified.

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Background information

Phuc Sen is located in Quang Hoa District, Cao Bang Province. About 77% of the commune area is forestland, 20% agriculture land and 3% residential land. Phuc Sen is a mountainous commune with a population of 2,027 people. Nearly 99% of population belong to the Nung An ethnic group. Population density is 169 people/km². The production system includes agriculture, forestry and handicraft activities. Statistical data show that 70% of the households in the commune are involved in handicrafts (making tools like hoes, knives, axes), and 96% of the households are involved in weaving baskets of different types.

In the Nung community, the village is the smallest unit. The life and production practices of the Nung people are strongly influenced by kinship. Many traditional values, costumes and food are still much in evidence. Nung people live in stilt houses made from valuable timber with traditional tiled roofs.

This study was conducted in Tinh Dong and Lung Vai villages of Phuc Sen Commune where the limestone mountain forest management practices are considered typical for the Nung An ethnic group. The total natural area of both villages is 310 hectares; of which 90% is forestland, 7% agriculture and 3% other land types. Fifty percent of the forest area is under household management and 50% under village management.

Local forests are mainly regenerated ones without old forests. Popular species are "Nghien", "Trai", "Long mang", and "Sen". Recently, a species namely as "Dau choong" has been widely planted. Besides woody species, several kinds of bamboo are also grown.

Historically, the Nung An people have been living in Phuc Sen Commune for 12 generations, or about 200 years. Prior to 1930, the Commune was covered with dense forests, which were common property of the Commune and villages. In the period from 1930 to 1959, the forest was heavily depleted as a result of unclear forest ownership, lack of forest protection regulation and frequent and commonplace upland burning for farming. Since 1960, the cooperative and local authorities began dividing forests by villages and households for management. Since 1981, forest managed by household and village has proven to be more and more efficient.

Study methods

- gathering available data, field observation
- discussing with related institutions and individuals
- employing PRA tools
- conducting discussions in study team, situation analysis and documentation
- analyzing and assessing the impacts of forest management and protection according to five areas of elements set by the Working Group’s Navigator

Study results

Land use and existing forms of forest management

There are three forms of forest and forestland management. The first form is forest under management of the village community. Village communities have their own regulations concerning forest protection, utilization and the punishment of violations. Tinh Dong village has 20 hectares and Lung Vai 120 hectares managed by the village community. In general, common forest areas often lie far away from the residential area and on high mountains. Timber and other products from village forests were used for common purposes such as helping households in the village affected by natural disasters, building schools and clinics, providing timber for funerals or weddings in the village, and setting aside land reserves for allocation to other households, if necessary.

There are several problems in forest management by village community. First, the common forest area is sometimes encroached upon for household plantation. Roughly 10% of the area has been used by households for planting trees,
mainly near low residential areas. Second, there are difficulties mobilizing people to plant more timber species. Thirdly, there are some disputes between villages over border areas.

The second form of forest and forestland management is forests managed by groups of households. Some forest areas in the Commune have been given to groups of households for management during the period from 1960 to 1980 instead of keeping under all village management. Household Group Management proves to be more efficient than village management for the following reasons: 1) the forest area is close to the living area of each group of households and can be managed and protected more easily, 2) since there are not many households in one group (10-12), it is easier to agree on management as well as benefit sharing mechanisms.

Finally, the third form of management is forest areas managed by households. In the beginning, cooperatives planted these areas and then allocated them to individual households for upland farming. These areas are often situated lower than the village forest, may lie between the village and its forest or may even lie in the area of other villages. At present, villagers respect these private areas.

Agriculture land allocation to households was done in 1960 and in 1980 and now all agriculture land has been given "Redbook Certificates". Although Phuc Sen started allocating forest and forestland to villages and households very early (even before the Government had a policy for land allocation) they had no "Certificates". Some villages are now hesitant to reclassify the forests and seek "Redbook Certificates" for the following reasons:

- Farmers are afraid of changes in the land area they are using,
- Farmers fear that the government may withdraw their plantation areas,
- Reallocation might affect the community forest where common activities are held, e.g. sacred forest, where cropping festivals take place.
- No serious land use conflicts were observed in the Commune. All Commune members think that the present management situation is good and could be sustained in the long run.

Community forest management

The village head is the highest decision-maker of the village. Each village is home to 1-3 kinships and the head of the biggest kinship is often the village head. Village heads often serve two-year terms and are nominated by villagers. This person is responsible for making plans in community forest management and having them implemented by the villagers. Several mass organizations (e.g., Youth Union, Women's Union, and mass and military groups) are also participating in community forest management. They participate voluntarily in implementing village regulations. Households contribute one to two days of labor per year to forest tending. All are responsible for forest protection and implementation of the village's forest management and protection plans.

Shared benefits from village forest

- Timber for building houses and construction of common infrastructures.
- Fuelwood for funerals, 300 kg/funeral.
- Fuelwood for daily use, a big demand of local people (on average each household consumes 40 kg / day),
- Fodder for cattle,
- Income generation from fuelwood sale and provision of medicinal plants and materials for producing incense sticks, paper and woven wares,
- Regulation of the water source for production and daily use by local people,
- Vegetables

People also claim other benefits when forest in their village is well protected:

- Landscape benefits and climate harmonization,
- Habitat for birds and animals,
- Better village organizational structure and improved social relations in the community
- Strengthened cultural traditions (maintained through common production and utilization activities in the community forest),
- Positive impact on local forest rehabilitation,
- Improved local awareness of silvicultural processes,
- Contribution to the alleviation of local shifting cultivation and regreening of denuded hills.

The role of community forestry

More employment is generated for locals, especially in the off season, and sufficient fuelwood is available for household consumption.
Effectively applied traditional laws help to manage resources efficiently and generate benefits to farmers. Common forest management activities tend to unify community members and instill them with a greater sense of responsibility. Hence, community forestry can help maintain and develop cultural traditions.

Forest has been rehabilitated through allocation to villages and households: 97% of forestland has been covered with forest trees, the remaining 3% with bushes (1a, 1b). With their indigenous knowledge, local people have identified a suitable local species (e.g., “Dau Choong”) which is well suited to mountain limestone. Local forests are now home to many valuable species (Nghien, Trai, Tau, etc.).

The community has basically been equipped with knowledge about forest plantation, tending and protection,

Slash and burn practices have been reduced with the allocation of forests. The bare land has been covered with forest trees.

**Lessons learned from community forest management**

The village community plays an important role in the rehabilitation and protection of forest that has been destroyed due to bad management. Village forest management organizations have been functioning well, really bringing about benefits for villagers through efficient implementation of the village's forest protection regulations.

Forest regeneration on limestone is known to be a slow and difficult process. Nonetheless, considerable progress has been made because the Phuc Sen people knew through experience that "Dau choong" was a suitable species, which can be regenerated either by seeds or coppices and have widely planted this species.

In the future, emphasis should be given to improving cooperation with other communes regarding forest protection and conflict resolution on forest borderlines to ensure efficient forest management. In addition, additional local timber species should be planted when vegetation cover has been well established (Nghien, red Muong, etc.) which can supply good timber for construction or selling in the market. Finally, the promotion of several medicinal plants should be investigated as a means to generate additional income for farmers.

**Recommendations**

The government should encourage extending this successful model of community forest management to be developed in other mountainous limestone areas.

It should be kept in mind, however, that detailed discussions with local people are essential to identifying appropriate forestland allocation solutions. Swapping and deliberating among households should be considered so that a household has a single area to manage, making it convenient for their production.

Further studies should be conducted to detail community institutions, "Redbook Certified" forest allocation and local expectations concerning community forest management.

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CFM Practices of Ethnic Groups in the Northern Mountainous Provinces & Central Highlands

Summary of the Case Study Synthesis Report

Introduction and Overview of the Report

Under the directive of the National Working Group on CFM (NWG), seven case studies on "Community Forest Management" were conducted in the northern mountainous areas and Central Highlands in the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000. The objective of this undertaking was to document and evaluate actual CFM practices at several locations by different ethnic groups. By comparing these case studies, the NWG sought to advance the domestic dialogue about CFMs strengths, and weaknesses, and seek to define CFM niche alongside other government programs to protect forest and forestland. In doing so, this analysis both identified challenges, opportunities and potentials for CFM, and led to an outline of broad policy changes necessary to ensure that CFM fulfills its promise of improved forest management at lower cost with more stable communities.

The Case Studies

The objective of all seven case studies was to gain better knowledge on the status of forest management, especially traditional CFM of ethnic minorities as well as their potentials for sustainable forest management. The studies are also aimed at providing necessary information on the opportunities and challenges for CFM, in order to make recommendations to the State for improving the legal framework and policies related to the development of community-based forest management in a sustainable way.

The main criteria for the selection of the study sites were:

First, the selected sites represent different geographical types in mountainous and upland areas;

Second, they must represent ethnic minorities of the country.

The study sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Major ethnic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Muong Lum commune, Yen Chau district, Son La province</td>
<td>Thai, Mong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nam Lanh commune, Van Chan district, Yen Bai province</td>
<td>Dao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hien Luong commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province</td>
<td>Muong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phuc Sen commune, Quang Hoa district, Cao Bang province</td>
<td>Nung An</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dak Nue commune, Lak district, Dak Lak province</td>
<td>MNong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cu Jiang commune, Eakar district, Dak Lak province</td>
<td>Ede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dak Tover commune, Chu Pah district, Gia Lai province</td>
<td>Jarai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The methods used in the studies include:
For information collection, PRA tools were used, such as semi-structured interviews, group discussions, transects, seasonal calendar, matrix ranking, field observation, review of local land use history with the participation of local farmers.

Using the analytical framework and navigator tool in assessing the status of CFM and the role of participating communities.

All seven case studies successfully described several specific characters of local forest management, especially community-based forest management. Nonetheless, the objectives of the research were not always consistently reported upon. Perscribed methodologies, on the other hand, were well applied in all the case studies. “The Navigator tool” was used in analyzing the state of CFM, but in several reports (for example, Son La case study report), concrete results of CFM analysis were not reflected by using Navigator tool.

Existing forms of land use rights

According to the findings of the case studies, there are currently 5 main forms of land use rights as follow:

**Forestland allocated to individuals households (red books issued)**

Doi village, Hien Luong commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province serves as the sample for this form. On average, each household (Muong ethnic) receive land use right on 1.75 ha including natural forest and land planned for afforestation. Forestland here is planned as protection forest in Da river basin, but still households received red books. In Nam Lanh commune, Van Chan district, Yen Bai province (Dao ethnic), households received forestland use certificates, including land use rights on natural forest and plantation forest near the houses.

**Forestland traditionally used by local community or households (red books not yet issued)**

The sample for this form is the case in Phuc Sen commune, Quang Hoa district, Cao Bang province, where forestland is used by community for hundreds of years. Households use the forest area near their village. Further located forest is managed by village community. In Nam Lanh commune, Van Chan district, Yen Bai province, Giang Cai village community received 1,092 ha of protection forestland for management, allocated by the district People's Committee. The village communities proposed to divide this area into 5 plots for 5 villages management. Land managed by village communities includes old forest, young forest, mixed forest of timber trees and bamboo trees, young bush forest and regenerated forest. In Dak Tover commune of Gia Lai province, forest and forestland is used by village communities in accordance with their traditional customs.

**Forestland used by government organizations**

These organizations mainly include state forest enterprises and management units of protection forest. Among 7 case studies, except for Phuc Sen commune (Cao Bang province) where forestland is managed by village communities and households, in the rest 6 case studies forest is allocated to SFEs or protection forest management units.
Protection contract for protection forest, e.g. Hoa Binh

Production management contracts, e.g. Dak Lak and Gia Lai

Forestland of which forest owner is not yet clarified

At three case study sites: Muong Lum commune (Yen Chau, Son La), Phuc Sen commune (Cao Bang), and Dak Tover commune (Gia Lai), a part of forestland is not yet belong to the usage of any household or state agency. As the local administrative body, People's Committee at commune level temporarily monitors the collection of forest products and solves the conflicts on forestland that occur on its administrative territory.

Grazing land

At all the study sites, some area that planned as forestland, but in fact it is used as grazing land for decades. There is no forest cover on that land, there is only grass, and so the land is suitable for grazing, and people don't use that for any other purpose. A special character is that both local communities and outsiders can use that land for grazing.

Summary of existing forms of forestland use at the study sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study sites</th>
<th>Forestland allocated, land use certificates issued</th>
<th>Forestland managed by villages or households informally</th>
<th>Forestland managed by commune PC</th>
<th>SFEs, management units of protection forest</th>
<th>Grazing land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muong Lum, Son La</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dak Nue, Dak Lak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hien Luong, Hoa Binh</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phuc Sen, Cao Bang</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The case studies revealed the following main advantages of community forest management:

- Forest is protected by communities while the State does not pay money for protection
- Community has access to forest products common purpose, own consumption, therefore securing their livelihood;
- Equality in benefit sharing from the forest
- Contribution to the implementation of state forestry development programs

The constraints and challenges for CF experienced in the case studies are:

- Lack of legal basis for forest land allocation to communities;
- Community forest management does not receive much attention and support of managers and policy-makers;
- Lack of national programs supporting the development of CFM;
- Organizational and managerial capacities of upland communities are limited.

Favorable conditions for the development of CFM are:

- Remote areas, where farmers' source of livelihoods and production systems traditionally depend strongly on the forests;
- Existing common forest management tradition of community;
- Defined boundaries of forest among villages in line with local customs;
- Community is well and effectively organized.
- Community is aware of environmental services, water, and microclimate of the forest.
- Existing state of forest constitutes a valuable resource, i.e. is not too degraded.
- Communities do not depend solely on forest resources.

In summary, the findings from the seven case studies show that CFM based on traditional structures offers a solution to contribute towards sustainable forest management. CFM is in line with national level objectives to manage national forest resources and services. Combined with national forest policies and the national program of 5 million ha afforestation, it has a very high potential to contribute to hunger eradication and poverty alleviation, to reduce the state expenses in forest protection and strengthening community development and participation in civil society.

To support and develop CFM, several recommendations can be extracted:

- Analyze and assess the status and impact of CFM and its potential for policy formulation;
- Provide the legal framework for village communities to participate in forest management, including:
  - Allocation of forest land to communities for management and usage, issue land use certificates to communities
  - Clarification of rights and responsibilities of local communities on forest products.
- Integration of internal regulations of communities on forest protection into management structures.
- Study, influence and promulgate new or revised policies relevant for CFM. Assess and indicate the cross/sectoral character and influence of CFM on relevant and supportive national policies, e.g. forest land allocation to communities, "benefit sharing" policy for forest products between the state and community, food security for mountainous farmers, human resource development for forest stakeholders, appropriate tax and re-investment policy for forest development.
- Design comprehensive programs on CFM integrated with state programs such as: 5 million ha afforestation program, program for fixed cultivation and sedentarization, program for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation.
- Promote CFM amongst and obtain resources through support from international organizations on all levels, national discussion and projects on community forest development.
It was proposed that in the future the National Working Group on CFM should provide technical assistance and support the relevant agencies at central and local levels as well as local communities in the following activities:

- Improve awareness for CFM through mass media, experience exchange workshops, training courses;
- Conduct in-depth surveys on the status of CFM in several locations;
- Study on the impacts of state policies on forest development in general and CFM in particular;
- Study the on-going practices and develop options for forest land allocation to communities;
- Develop regionally-influenced models of CFM and arrange for exchange of experience among stakeholders;
- Influence CFM-relevant decision-making and policy development on national and provincial levels.
- Promote integration of CFM into state programs and international projects.
National Working Group on CFM
in Vietnam

Dr. Nguyen Hai Nam,
Secretary of NWG on CFM

Introduction

On November 11, 1998 the first meeting of the National Working Group (NWG) on Community Forest management (CFM) was held in Hanoi. Among those present was Dr. Mark Poffenberger from Asian Forestry Network who was a great supporter of this initiative. There was a consensus among those present that a specialized forum for CFM in Vietnam is needed. The group members identified a number of policy issues, management trends, and strategies for the NWG-CFM to pursue. These included the following:

- During the Vietnamese Government’s process of changing from ‘state forestry’ to ‘people forestry’, several questions needed to be answered: For example, what tenure and management units are appropriate for other land use situations? Where would CFM be appropriate? How should CFM strategies be adapted for varying social and environmental contexts?
- Forest management activities are being influenced by a number of policy instruments that can broadly be categorized as 1) Basic laws, 2) Legal documents, and 3) Development programs. However, it is important to determine what blend of laws, regulations, and programs provides the most appropriate policy mechanism to enable communities to play a greater role in forest management.
- Field research indicates that CFM systems are operating in different parts of Vietnam, especially in some upland ethnic minority areas. Many communities/villages retain spiritual forests, forest gardens, and traditionally protected watersheds. However, there are no policies or programs designed especially to recognize the legal rights and responsibilities of communal groups as public forestland managers. How could an official government ‘Community Forestry (CF) Strategy’ be developed to meet this need? How could it build on existing systems of community forest conservation and sustainable utilization?
- International Development Programs/Projects and Government organizations are interested in working on forestry related issues in Vietnam. At the present time, out of 136 government branches, 32 deal with forestry in some manner. By 1998, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry had 29 separate forestry projects funded by bilateral or multilateral agencies. In addition, there were 33 NGO projects focusing on CFM. A broad-based Technical Working Group was formed by MARD to discuss social forestry, land allocation, and planning issues, but no special group on CFM has been operating in Vietnam.

In this situation, this NWG decided to meet regularly and to begin developing an agenda and a program of activities. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Decision No: 5355 QD/BNN/TCCB on 22 December 1999 recognized the establishment of the WG.

National Working Group

Objective of the Working Group:

The objective of the WG is to explore policy and operational strategies to facilitate and strengthen the role of community involvement in managing forest resources in Vietnam by providing a forum for examining, monitoring, and accelerating the progress in this area.

Tasks and responsibilities:

- Initiate discussion on CFM issues among institutions and partners;
- Identify experiences, projects, and areas where relevant knowledge related to CFM exists in Vietnam;
- Develop appropriate definitions and strategies for CFM in Vietnam;
- Organize meetings, diagnostic surveys, cross-visits and other activities that bring attention to share experience, knowledge and learning;
- Conduct case studies to assess the state of CFM, both in traditional systems and current situation and identify potential for CF;
- Analyze constraints and opportunities affecting CFM efforts;
• Elaborate and propose recommendations related to policies and programs to government institutions.

Memberships

Members of the WG -CFM in Vietnam have been selected from government and non-government organizations (NGO), donor agencies, academic institutions and individual professionals directly engaged with CFM related programs.

Core Group of National Working Group on CFM

Objective of the Core Group: The Core Group’s objective is to assure the smooth functioning of the WG in meting its objectives and planned tasks and activities. The CG will be responsible for the administrative and financial operation of the WG

Core Group functions and tasks:

Meetings
- Attend WG meetings; Prepare and document WG meetings through the Secretary of CG (agenda, minutes, presentations).

Activities
- Develop a plan of activities (products, related budget, etc.). Monitor the implementation of activities and budget utilization; Assist and support the activities of WG members or consultants; Promote efficiency to ensure that WG products meet specifications and are of high quality; Document achievements and results.

Financial
- Present an annual budget request to the SMRP for financial support; Submit quarterly accounting report to the SMRP according to established budget lines; responsible for final financial decision-making for all NWG-CFM activities;

Communications
- Maintain a simple information system among WG members and partners (communication with members between meetings, preparation of meetings, facilitation of WG meetings, and following-up on recommendations for action).

Members

Based on selection by all members during WG meeting on 10-9-1999, CG has been established including 5 members and 2 supporters.

Working Group Activities and Main Products

Review Documents, Forums, Meetings (Group and Sub-group meetings), Create Methodology and Instruments, Establish an Analytical framework, Create a "Navigator Tool", Support Tropical Ecological Support Program Research (TOEB) in Vietnam, Carry out case studies, Organize field visits for exchange of experiences, Produce information, a forestry profile and a glossary.

Key issues of Analytical Framework

Four key issues comprise the Analytical Framework:
Using these questions, the next step was to analyze how the answers might differ when applied in communities with a strong sense of involvement in community forest management, as opposed to communities with a relatively weak commitment.

### Elements Key to Determine Viability of CFM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators of Strong Viability</th>
<th>Indicators of Weak Viability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element 1: Appropriate level of government influence?</strong></td>
<td>Government provides technical + financial support to communities, which engage in forest management, by means of contractual arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words: Policies, administration, services, interaction</td>
<td>Government provides technical + financial services to rural areas, people make use according to their own resources, practices, no formal arrangement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element 2: Where do the benefits of forest management go?</strong></td>
<td>NTFP goes 100% to communities; timber used by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key words: Distribution, arrangements for distribution</td>
<td>NTFP + fuel wood + non-commercial timber be</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
communities according to cutting regime approved by government; communities pay royalty to government for sale of timber | used by communities; cutting regime and sale of commercial timber organized and done by government

**Element 3: Natural Resource. What forest do we have?**  
Key words: Physical resource, quality, types

| degraded and dense forests, including critical protection forest, is given to communities for joint management by the government | only degraded forests and scattered forest allocated to communities

**Element 4: What land use rights do exist?**  
Key words: Legal, history, tenure

| Decree 01: natural forest allocated to households (Redbook); 50 years’ user right; ownership with government. | Decree 02: forests are given to households under contracts
| Decree under formulation: natural forest allocated to communities; user rights for 50 years; ownership with government.

**Element 5: What arrangements do communities have to manage resources?**  
Key words: Scale, No. of HH organized, organizational structure, regulations, history

| forest user groups have their own clear regulations for making use of forest and products. | regulations are available, but no clear implementation arrangements
| there are at least 15 household member of communities

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**Geographical Area Typologies in Vietnam and Its Characters**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Elements</th>
<th>Northern Area</th>
<th>Midlands</th>
<th>Central Highland</th>
<th>Mangroves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a Natural Resource/ Forest Land | • Watershed forest  
  • Conservation Forest  
  • Forest Garden (natural or plantation) | • Forest Garden | • Natural Forest  
  • Conservation Forest  
  • Plantation  
  • Mixed | • Mangrove Forest  
  • Aquaculture |
| b Stakeholders/Community | • Household-based or group of households (HH) | • Household-based or group of Household | • Traditional Ethnic Minority  
  • State Forest Enterprises (SFE) | • Household-based |
| c Influence from Government | • Protected Area under Government Control | • Allocated to HH with Land Tenure | • Protected Area/ Conservation  
  • SFE Control | • Contract by SFEs  
  • Lands allocated |
Advantages of the Working group

- WG activities are in line with Vietnam Government’s process of change
- Strong support from MARD
- Effective participation from most key agencies
- Competent and experienced members
- Close network collaboration among Mekong countries
- Continuing support from International organizations

Constraints to Working Group activity

- CFM is a relatively new approach in Vietnam (VN)
- WG members are still working on clarifying CFM strategy and development
- Lack of experience
- Members’ other professional obligations can conflict with participation in WG activities
- Limited resources
- Insufficient information flow

Future activity of the Working Group

- Improve participation of WG members
- Create policy dialogue with policy makers and concerned parties
- Guidelines to develop CF management strategy
- Support to Policy Department for in-depth studies on policy changes related to CF
- Support to TOEB research program (monitoring and evaluation tasks)
- Develop proposal of CFM human resources development and institutional strengthening
WG on Forestland Allocation and Forest Management in Dak Lak Province

Tran Ngoc Thanh, SMRP

History of establishment

Established by Decision 272/QD, dated 18th March 1999 by DARD, in response to demand of DARD on Forestland Allocation/Forest Management Systems (FLA/FMS), to test programs in which stocked forestlands will be allocated to: 1) Households, 2) User groups and 3) Communities and various sylvicultural techniques tested.

Objectives

- To study, advise and assist DARD, DLPC and other decision-makers in the fields of Forestland Allocation/Forest Management Systems
- To advise, assist DARD and its line agencies in the selection and design of forest management systems

Institutional Landscape of Working Groups

Recently tested models
**Working Group Services**

- Support and strengthen the coordination of and cooperation among line organizations relevant to FLA;
- Conduct process monitoring and evaluation events
- Assist in producing and distributing documentation
- Assist building demonstration models
- Conduct case studies
- Advise provincial and national decision-makers on policies, strategies to improve land use planning, forestland allocation and benefit sharing

**Lessons learned**

- Effective advice to DFD, DARD promoting FLA/FM with better results (faster, cheaper, more participation)
- Recruitment of many resource persons interested in FLA/FM to invest their efforts into the process
- Need for diversified support, SMRP, DARD, PC, etc.
- Creating space for scientific exchange through workshops, seminars
- Creating opportunities for dialogue with decision-makers
Comparative advantages of Working Group

- Ability to deal with complex issues of the process due to working as an integrated group
- Obtain true and meaningful participation of intended beneficiaries
- Eases discussions with decision-makers as well as local people
- Faster learning through the application of experiences from different perspectives
- Multi-institutional learning process and shorter communication lines
- Clear mandate given by the Peoples’ Committee
- The "total of pooled experiences is larger than the sum of each"

Disadvantages

- Lack of experience among members in working in such an organization since it is an innovative institutional approach in the Vietnamese context
- Danger to be overloaded with tasks by local decision makers
- Difficult to maintain a balance between the interests and pressure of work
- Lack of resources for work
Developing a Strategy for HRD & Institutional Strengthening for CFM in Vietnam

Peter Taylor, Education Technical Adviser, Helvetas, Social Forestry Support Programme

Introduction

One of the aims of this National Workshop is to identify key elements to promote and support involvement of communities in forest management. There is no doubt that most stakeholders agree that this is a desirable outcome. But who will undertake to promote this approach, and who will provide this support? Many organizations and institutions are willing to do this, but they often lack resources, not only in terms of finances and infrastructure, but also human resources. Even when human resources are available, they may lack the capacity to implement and deliver what has been laid down in policy, or the institution in which they are located may not be strong enough to use them effectively and efficiently. This paper examines how a strategy could be developed which will promote the development of human resources, both from an individual and an institutional perspective. It also presents a suggested rough plan of action for Human Resource Development and Institutional Strengthening for Community Forest Management in Vietnam.

Human resource development and institutional strengthening

Before looking at the specific context of community forest management, it seems important to clarify the key terms of human resource development (HRD) and institutional strengthening (IS). HRD is a term which is often used rather loosely, and rather than attempt to define it, I would say that it involves a number of key elements. Firstly, it should be underpinned by a systematic approach to learning (more will be said about this shortly). Secondly, HRD should lead to a building of individual competence in a range of different areas, whilst at the same time increasing individual motivation and commitment to the learning process. This should result in improved individual effectiveness, which in turn should contribute to an increase in organizational effectiveness.

As this last point suggests, HRD is an integral part of organizational development. Institutions are often the driving force for development in any context, since they can form a powerful force for change under the right conditions. But to do this, an institution, which can be characterized by a set of rules, norms, systems and behaviors which are recognized and passed on from one generation to the next, needs to be strong. Current theory and experience is showing that in order for an institution to become strong, it should improve the way in which it learns, and also in the way it performs in several key areas:

Future: an institution should be able to look into the future and make predictions related to possible, alternative scenarios. This is a very important part of the decision-making process, and reflects the capacity of an institution to deal with problems and take appropriate action.

Context: if an institution does not understand and relate closely to its context (or environment) it will become out of touch and unable to be responsive or proactive as opportunities and challenges arise.

Participation: for many institutions, participation is a core value, and a means to an end. In some institutions it may even become a desirable end in itself. Stakeholder participation contributes to and validates the development process of which an institution becomes a part.

Strategy: In order to be responsive to possible future demands and the reality of the context, and also to ensure that the development process is participative, an institution should be able to build a range of appropriate strategies which allow operations to be planned effectively.

Management: just as institutions depend on their human resources, they also require a high standard of management. The need for high quality management practices grows as more attention is paid to future, context, participation and strategy building.

I would argue that learning must be the basis for both human resource development and institutional strengthening. Bawden (2000) has proposed that learning should be viewed holistically, and this is completely consistent with the five key
factors mentioned above. A holistic view of learning is presented in figure 1.

**Figure 1: A holistic view of learning (Bawden, 2000)**

From this viewpoint, it can be seen that for learning to take place, individuals and institutions should understand and relate all learning to the context (the environment), build knowledge on sound theory (such as organizational learning and development theory), recognize and pay attention to core values and beliefs (such as participation), and take action which is informed by all of these factors. Learning can then become a dynamic process. Every time an action is taken, more is learned about the context, and the context will itself be changed by the action. The action then makes it possible to reflect on theory and values, and to adapt these if necessary. The way is then opened for new action, which allows for further development.

**HRD and IS for Community Forest Management**

Community forestry activities in Vietnam are very diverse, depending on the natural environment, policy development and implementation at national and provincial level, and on social and economic factors from local level upwards. All of these factors and elements have been highlighted in activities of the Vietnam National Working Group on Community Forest Management. Much experience and learning is taking place in CFM in Vietnam, but what is the vision for this learning at individual and institutional level? What strategies are in place, or could be developed to facilitate more effective learning? What methods and processes should be institutionalized to facilitate the learning process? So, in order to address these questions, what should be done and by whom?

What should be done and by whom?

There are several activities that need to be carried out: 1) Investigate the current situation regarding HRD and IS for CFM in Vietnam, 2) Based on these findings, develop a set of guidelines for HRD and IS which will enable key target organizations and institutions to plan and implement HRD and IS within the CFM arena in Vietnam, and 3) Provide support for institutions as they develop and implement these strategies.

The Vietnam National Working Group on Community Forest Management is well placed to take on the task of developing such a proposal, for several reasons, as follows:

- It can draw on a wide range of expertise and experience through its members and its links with key individuals and organizations involved in CFM
- It can engage with potential stakeholders, users and donors
- It can access and disseminate relevant and useful information
- Its members will benefit directly.

The overall concept discussed above is illustrated in figure 2.

**Figure 2: Human Resource Development & Institutional Strengthening**
Developing this activity

It will be necessary for the WG to consider, and possibly undertake, a number of steps: 1) agree on whether this action is necessary, 2) make a proposal for action, 3) support the development of a survey, and 4) provide further support and guidance as required.

This process will be iterative, since it will not be possible to reach agreement on each new step without completing the previous steps. The WG will need to think very carefully about what they are able to undertake themselves (through their own membership) and also in what areas they will need additional external support. To stimulate the discussion I have suggested a rough plan of action for the WG, regarding Human Resource Development and Institutional Strengthening for Community Forest Management in Vietnam. This is shown below in boxes 1, 2 and 3, and figure 3.
BOX 1: SUGGESTED GOAL, OBJECTIVES & TASKS
FOR NWG ACTION ON HRD/IS

Goal
To support the development of a strategy for HRD and IS for CFM in Vietnam that will in turn benefit farmers and rural community members with a responsibility and role in management of forest land.

Objectives of the Activity
There are three objectives with different time frames for this activity:

Immediate objective: To develop a proposal which provides the basis for the mid-term objective (see (b)).

Mid-term objective: To develop a set of guidelines on HRD and Institutional Strengthening for community forestry management.

Long-term objective: To guide and support key target organizations and institutions as they plan and implement HRD and IS within the community forestry arena in Vietnam.

Main Tasks
The following four tasks will be necessary:

A. develop a proposal for the following points:
   1. examine the extent to which HRD strategies have been developed to enable people working within the area of community forestry to serve their organizations well, to carry out their jobs effectively, and to have an opportunity for professional development which satisfies their personal needs.
   2. analyze the capacity of different organizations (current and future) to develop human resources in order to operate effectively within the Vietnamese context, and organizational needs for improvement.
   3. develop a set of guidelines for HRD and IS which will address the needs identified.

Conclusion

In order to address the important issues of HRD and IS for community forest management in Vietnam, it is vital to maintain the focus on learning, both at individual and at institutional level. HRD and IS cannot be achieved overnight; they are long-term strategies, and require a range of different inputs and activities. Also it is not possible to predict the outcomes, since the process will be dynamic and, hopefully, lead not only to change but also to development (for development can be described as change in a certain direction; it is never neutral). The process and outcomes will require systematic monitoring and evaluation, which as in all aspects of this process should involve key stakeholders. The form of action suggested in this paper is one approach to addressing these issues (a more detailed version is available to the National Working Group), but hopefully the approach will be developed and adapted further through dialogue and as the process unfolds.

Finally, it is often easy to forget when developing new strategies, that we should always consider the ultimate beneficiaries in any context. In the case of community forest management, it is essential to remember that our overall goal is to enable community members to manage forestland more effectively, and that the support we provide to individuals and institutions serves to help achieve this goal.

Reference

CFM Definitions

Vietnam's community-based forest management concept can be defined as the participation of households or groups of households in managing forest areas bounded by one village/hamlet.

Current community forest management forms:

The two main forms of community forest management are: 1) Communities have the right (traditional and/or institutionalized) to manage and utilize forest and forestland; and 2) Communities are contracted to manage and protect forest and forestland owned by a government organization and have limited/restricted access to forest products.

Main factors determining the success of CFM in Vietnam

- Clear and outspoken demand from community members to operate on a common basis;
- Community is decision-maker: Community has the right to make decisions concerning the protection, development and management of their forests.
- Local people benefit from forest products (e.g., for self-consumption or for sale to supplement incomes) and do not fear encroachment from outsiders.
- Inter-village regulations are defined and enforced.
- Community actively participates.
- Benefits are distributed equitably within the community
Policy Framework

Discussion Topic No. 2

- List and rank different related policies that affect the CFM development (e.g., land allocation, finance, benefits)?
- What adjustments/changes are most needed to develop CFM?
- What are the best ways to approach and influence policy makers?

During this session, workshop participants 1) listed and ranked different related policies that affect the development of CFM (e.g., land allocation, finance support, extension, credit, products, harvest, sharing benefit, market), 2) identified the adjustments and changes most needed to develop CFM, and, 3) discussed the best ways to approach and influence policy makers.

Government policies: how they apply to communities & households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Four main groups of government policies</th>
<th>How they apply to Communities</th>
<th>How they apply to Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land use policies (in particular forestland)</td>
<td>Land can not legally be allocated to communities</td>
<td>Eligible for land tenure certificates (six associated rights)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest protection and development policies</td>
<td>No allocation, only contracts for protection</td>
<td>Forest land can be allocated Eligible for contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government investment/ support policies</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>May be eligible for investment/support through different government programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvest and distribution of benefits from forest products policies</td>
<td>Contract payments and very limited benefits, e.g. NTFPs</td>
<td>Eligible for government payment. Eligible to harvest/ receive forest products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From 1993, when the land law of Vietnam and degree 02 where issued, up to now four major forestry policy changes took place during the Forest Development Renovation Process

Shift from State Forestry to People Forestry (i.e., from fully controlled by the Government to community management)

Decrees 02 and 163 put in place a process of issuing Land Tenure Certificates (LTC) with which forestland could be allocated to organizations, households and individuals for long-term use, and Decree 01, which provided for Government contracting with communities and/or households to plant or protect forest and forestland.

Shift from forest product exploitation to rehabilitation, conservation and forest development. Indicators of this policy shift include, for example, targets in the annual government plan to reduce the timber harvest level from 1.5-3.0 million m³ down to 0.3 million m³ with close control in the government plan. In addition, the Government initiated the 'Five Million Hectares Reforestation' National Program, and decentralized forest management (Decision 245, for example, transferred forest management responsibility from government institutions to People's Committees at various levels). Decision 187 addressed the issue of innovation of organization and management structure of the State's forest enterprises. And, finally, the Government is currently preparing to issue a policy to guide individual-household benefit sharing for forest management.

Implementation of the "National Program on 5 Million Hectare Reforestation" has further led to the issuance of a number of new policies. These include the "Policy on Forestland" which addresses classification of forest, land use planning, and land allocation (the limit for the amount of forestland that can be allocated to a household in different areas was established at 10-30 hectares). The "Credit for Investment through Contracts" policy establishes: 1) compensation levels for various forest protection contracts, 2) a grant program (VND 2 million on average to organizations/households who plant precious timber species with a harvest cycle of more than 30 years); and 3) a preferential credit fund, based on Vietnam’s “In-country Investment Incentive Law,” for organizations/households planting forest (ODA fund, National investment fund).

Other policies address rights to benefit from or sell forest products (all NTFPs, products from agroforestry cultivation can be freely harvested by households who protect the forest), the free transportation of timber and NTFPs from plantation and natural regeneration forests (except timber grade 1 and 2), and Tax exemption (No ‘Natural Resource Tax’ for products from natural regeneration forest and no ‘Trade Tax’ for products from plantation forests). The central government does not have clear policies concerning the harvesting of main forest products in the natural forest. Based on different situations, the local authority issues policies suitable to the conditions of their province.

Assessment of the effect of government policies on CFM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups of</th>
<th>Impact on communities/user groups</th>
<th>Policies needing to be</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Page 1 of 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>policies</th>
<th>... in the government laws</th>
<th>... in reality</th>
<th>changed or modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land use rights</td>
<td>Forestland cannot be allocated to communities.</td>
<td>Forestland is used by communities under traditional claim without land tenure certificate (LTC)</td>
<td>Forestland used by community needs to be allocated with LTC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forestland may be contracted to communities for protection by government organizations</td>
<td>Communities can sign contract to use forestland (not popular)</td>
<td>If the land cannot be allocated to a community, it is necessary to give long-term use contract to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest protection and development</td>
<td>No legal allocation of trees</td>
<td>There are forest areas claimed by the community (Spiritual forest, sacred forest, etc.)</td>
<td>Recognize forest area owned by community and extend forest allocation to community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Existing community forest area recognized (decree 17), but no legal allocation</td>
<td>Forest protection contracts are popularly implemented by community</td>
<td>Continuation of awarding protection contract for protected forest and special use forest areas to community (Based on benefit sharing policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forest can be contracted to community for protection (decree 01 &amp; program 327)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and investment to forest by Government</td>
<td>Funds from the government can be invested in contracted area</td>
<td>Community can receive government funds applied to contracted area for Forest planting</td>
<td>Government needs to invest in a fund for planting forest in barren land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No credit policy</td>
<td>No credit support to community</td>
<td>Having suitable credit policy for forestry development of community (Long-term and low interest rate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support through extension system</td>
<td>Community can receive extension support from government</td>
<td>Strengthen extension system in upland area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No tax to community (bare land, young forest, generated forest and plantation)</td>
<td>No tax payment</td>
<td>Issue tax policy related to sharing benefit mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forest harvesting and sharing benefit</td>
<td>Community can receive payment for protection contract</td>
<td>Community getting payment for protection contract</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development needs to quickly submit to the Government the benefit sharing policy related to forest management by households or community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People are not allowed to harvest timber in forests</td>
<td>Harvesting main products for common use purpose</td>
<td>Testing implementation of new policy on benefit sharing of forest products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People are allowed to harvest non-timber products in managed forest of community</td>
<td>NTFP are popularly harvested by people of the community</td>
<td>Extending market for selling forest products</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Proposed Flowchart for Disseminating Workshop Results

1. Proceedings from National Workshop
2. Research Group
3. Report on proposed Policy Changes
4. Circulating Report to relevant Organizations
5. Testing at different Locations
6. Monitoring, Analysis and Adjustments according to findings
7. Report to MARB, Policy Department
8. Contribute to Policy Dialogue
### Legal framework

**Discussion Topic No. 3**

- Can a community/user group be considered and legally accepted as a legal entity?
- What criteria are important?
- What would the legal status be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirements for recognition as a legal entity</th>
<th>Why &quot;Village community&quot; does not now meet these requirements</th>
<th>Elements favoring legal recognition</th>
<th>Policy changes to facilitate legal recognition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Official registration and recognition by a 'government approved' organization (e.g., People’s Committee)</strong></td>
<td>Currently, no precedent for establishing or registering a community as a legal entity. “Community” is commonly understood as a naturally occurring social relationship, rather than a closely knit organizational unit</td>
<td>Many villages, hamlets or household groups already consider their community an organization. Community retains a very important role in tradition and socioeconomic life of community members</td>
<td>District People’s Committees have the power to register and recognize a community, if they feel the community has met the criteria of a legal entity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A legal entity must demonstrate a strong organizational structure.</strong></td>
<td>Communities often lack demonstrable organizational structure. The government does not have guidelines describing key criteria communities must meet to qualify as being appropriately or sufficiently “organized”.</td>
<td>Strong traditional communities do exist, especially in minority villages in upland areas. Existing internal regulations/rules are effective. Heads of villages are elected and receive government allowance.</td>
<td>The government needs set organizational standards qualifying communities to receive allocations of forest to protect and manage. Improve legal status of internal regulation of community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Experience managing private properties

- Communities do not now legally hold private property.
- Communities’ capital resources are, at best, inadequate.
- The perceived role of community is social in nature and does not play.

- Communities have the right to own land (via government forest allocation) & establish own capital funds with income from, e.g.,
- Community member contributions, Income through the sale of community resources, Credit

- Issue forestland allocation policies that recognize community as legal entity.
- Issue policy to guide community in establishing & managing community funds.
| **Formalized relationships, roles and responsibilities** | Villages do not have formal procedures for defining relationships with other entities. Heads of villages are not held legally responsible for community activities. Community is considered by people “Everybody matters means nobody matters” | Social ties among community members are very close Effective structures to mediate/solve internal conflicts Systems, mechanisms and regulations of rewards and sanctions for members are highly effective | Promulgation of a “community organization law” (perhaps based on the new cooperative law) Determine lawful obligations of the Head of Village |
Strengthening WGs, Their Services and Products Through Sector Organizations

Discussion Topic No. 4

- What products and services are useful to the sector (policy discussion, action research, information products, exchange of experiences, visits, etc.)?

- How to link national/provincial WG with field activities and experiences?

- What services does the Government expect from WGs?

**Expected service from National WG**

**National WG**

- Assist and support establishment of WG at provincial level

- Extend activity to lower levels
- Exchange information and documents
- Research and study
- Workshop and meeting

- Documentation

- Field visit to models

- Guideline

**Provincial WG**
Ways to bring WG products to authorities and policy makers

Expected activities and products to NWG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities?</th>
<th>Products?</th>
<th>Partner organization?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Information document | • Community forestry newsletters  
• Video film of models in community-based forest management | • Forestry Journal  
• Television station |
| Training             | • Training course for provincial staff                                    | • WG members  
• Consultants       |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training material</td>
<td>• Projects at different locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy dialogue</td>
<td>• Presentation of new policies and directly exchange ideas with authorities and policy makers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other related state organizations (Land Administration, Financial...)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study tour and field visit</td>
<td>• Exchange experiences and lesson learnt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WG members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other organizations in forestry sector</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of models of community forest management</td>
<td>• Model at different areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• At different ecological zones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Different ethnic minorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific study</td>
<td>• Research of impacts from government’s forestry policies changes to community forest management development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Policy Department, MARD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Human Resource Development & Institutional Strengthening to support CFM

Discussion Topic No. 5

- What kind of HRD support is needed for the implementation of CFM in Vietnam?
- How and where should HRD activities focus in the development of CFM?
- Where can we find capacities for HRD?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Institutional Strengthening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Awareness of forest protection</td>
<td>Community organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Management skill</td>
<td>Forest protection group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Village planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How?</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Institutional Strengthening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disseminate policy to people</td>
<td>Effectively internal regulation implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forest protection education in school</td>
<td>Establish of forest development funds in community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Training materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Guideline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Models</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To Whom?</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Institutional Strengthening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>District staff</td>
<td>Village staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Commune and village staff</td>
<td>Mass organization in the village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who can do it?</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Institutional Strengthening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forestry College (Social Forestry Center)</td>
<td>District authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provincial extension center</td>
<td>District extension station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ToT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who benefits?</th>
<th>Human Resource Development</th>
<th>Institutional Strengthening</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community members</td>
<td>Community and village staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

Taking into account the report, presentations, case studies and results of the workshop workgroups, consensus was reached in a number of areas. These include:

**Terminology:**

*Community*, as referred to in "community forest management" in this workshop, is limited with to a combination of all the members individuals living in a village, who are closely linked in through production, livelihood and socio-cultural life.

*Community forest management implies 2 contents* has three components:

- The community has the right to use forest and forest land. For the purposes of this workshop, whether this right is traditional or formalized, even if it is not yet formally allocated by authorized state agency, or may be formally allocated (land use right certificate is issued) is of secondary importance.
- The community actively participates in forest and forest land management on in its area.
- Community forest management is understood as all the households or groups of households have the right to participate and make decisions in forest protection, forest tendering and benefit sharing on the village forest in the village area.

The two forms of forest management current practiced in Vietnam are:

- Community *directly manages* forest and forest land that is available for common use of the village (e.g., sacred forest, forest handled over allocated to the village by forest enterprises/cooperatives, local watershed forest, grazing land for livestock, and bare land planned for afforestation or natural regeneration).

- Community *participates in management* of the forest, which under usage of owned or controlled by other organizations: (e.g., protection of 'Special-use' forest through assignment contracts with state organizations, protection of 'Production' forest of forest enterprises through assignment contracts, and management and protection of forest and forest land which has been allocated to other households or organizations).

**Present status of community forest management in our country Vietnam**

Community forest management (CFM) in Vietnam, which is being applied in several locations, originated from the traditional customs and objective requirements of mountainous ethnic people, and is suitable compatible with their production system and socio-cultural knowledge.

So far, there are thousands of village communities are already directly managing and using a considerable forest area in mountainous areas (data on communities and forest area should be verified through surveys). Management of this forest area by communities have had positive impacts on forest management in general, and helps to meet partly local people’s the needs on for forest products of local people.

Communities actively participate in forest management/protection through national programs (former "327 Program" and current "5 Million ha Hectare Afforestation Program") by signing protection contracts with state agencies.
Advantages of community forest management

- Communities manage and protect forests more effectively and whereas the state doesn't have to invest much money in forest protection and less State budgetary investment for forest protection required.

- Forests managed by communities provide timber for public infrastructure needs (e.g., schools, clinics) in addition to other forest products which serve supplement people's livelihoods.

- Under CFM, benefits are typically shared more equally than under other existing systems.

- CFM supports social structures through spreading decision-making, rights and responsibilities.

- CFM has the potential to support the objectives and implementation of related government programs (e.g., "5 Million Hectare Afforestation").

Therefore, during the workshop there were many participants suggestions suggested to expand and develop CFM. However, Nonetheless, the expansion of forest area managed directly by communities should have to be applied for in suitable locations providing optimal parameters for success (large forest areas, remote areas, suitable consistent with traditional customs, traditional with management level capacities of communities, etc...)

Major obstacles of to CFM development

- Lack of legal recognition of communities to use forest and forest land (community is not yet a legal entity, and therefore can not receive allocated forest land).

- The concept of CFM is not yet well understood among managers, policy-makers, technical staff and farmers.

- National programs do not now provide for the support and development of CFM.

- Insufficient decision-making responsibility and understanding of government policies at the local level.

Favorable conditions for the development expansion of CFM

- CFM works well in remote areas, where farmers' livelihoods and production depend strongly on the forest due to self-sufficient nature of the local economy. It is difficult for the State to directly management to cover these areas.

- CFM can be developed in communities with traditions in forest management and high awareness of community participation;

- It is important that the area managed by villages have clear, traditional boundaries;

- Forest and forest products should be directly related to the life of community members;

- Community should have functioning organizational structure, internal regulations and the head of community should be a respected person recognized by community members.
Recommendations

In the course of this workshop, participants discussed the strengths, and weaknesses of CFM and sought to define CFM’s niche alongside other government programs to protect forest and forestland. In doing so, this analysis led to an outline of broad policy changes for the Government of Vietnam and project necessary to ensure that CFM fulfills its promise of improved forest management at lower cost with more stable communities, as well as a next round of activities.

Recommendations to the State Government of Vietnam

Create legal framework and issue new policies:

- Consider CFM as a management form in parallel or complementary with state management and private management.

- Issue legal documents (under-law documents) decrees on forest land forestland allocation to communities (form of allocation and land use rights should be adjusted to be appropriate).

- Issue policies, which allow for decentralization and devolution, i.e. local appropriate decision making, on:
  - Development orientation
  - Organization forms and operational regulations
  - Rights and responsibilities of community as a whole and its members
  - Benefit sharing between communities, members and state

- A state program is needed to conduct surveys, researches on CFM in order to solve the said problems. Funding is needed to support the survey and research work necessary for the State to develop the above CFM policies.

Recommendations to projects

- Participate in, support and strengthen the activities of national and local working groups on CFM to coordinate relevant organizations.

- Support and participate in researches for policy making and models development

- Organize awareness for CF and training for officers

Suggestions for future activities

- Improve the awareness on about CFM’s role among leaders, policy makers and people in general population

- Conduct surveys on CFM status (number of communities that are managing forests, area of community forests, contents and methods of CFM, benefits from the forest, etc...)

- Study the impacts of state policies on forest development in general and community forestry development in particular. Propose changes in policies related to the development of community forestry and community forest management

- Assist the state to monitor and study the impacts of forest land forestland allocation to households and communities

- Discuss the present forestry policies related to the forest development and development of communities in mountainous areas.
• Develop models of participatory forest management forms

• Organize study tours to models for experience exchange amongst CF actors

• Maintain and expand the activities of national working group on CFM the National Working Group on CFM, link the WG activities with national programs on forestry development
Introduction

Under the directive of the National Working Group on CFM (NWG), seven case studies on "Community Forest Management" were conducted in the northern mountainous areas and Central Highlands in the end of 1999 and beginning of 2000. The objective of this undertaking was to document and evaluate actual CFM practices at several locations by different ethnic groups. By comparing these case studies, the NWG sought to advance the domestic dialogue about CFM's strengths, and weaknesses, and seek to define CFM niche alongside other government programs to manage forest and forestland. The findings from the seven case studies show that CFM based on traditional structures can contribute to sustainable forest management. CFM is also consistent with national level objectives to manage national forest resources and services. Combined with national forest policies and the national program of "5 million Hectare Afforestation," it has high potential to contribute to hunger eradication and poverty alleviation, to reduce Government subsidies for forest protection, and to strengthen community development and civil society.

The Case Studies

The objective of all seven case studies was to gain better knowledge on the status of forest management, especially traditional CFM of ethnic minorities as well as their potentials for sustainable forest management. The studies are also aimed at providing necessary information on the opportunities and challenges for CFM, in order to make recommendations to the State for improving the legal framework and policies related to the development of community-based forest management in a sustainable way.

The main criteria for the selection of the study sites were:

First, the selected sites represent different geographical types in mountainous and upland areas;

Second, they must represent ethnic minorities of the country.

The study sites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Major ethnic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Muong Lum commune, Yen Chau district, Son La province</td>
<td>Thai, Mong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nam Lanh commune, Van Chan district, Yen Bai province</td>
<td>Dao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hien Luong commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province</td>
<td>Muong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phuc Sen commune, Quang Hoa district, Cao Bang province</td>
<td>Nung An</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dak Nue commune, Lak district, Dak Lak province</td>
<td>Mmong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cu Jiang commune, Ea Kar district, Dak Lak province</td>
<td>Ede</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dak Tover commune, Chu Pah district, Gia Lai province</td>
<td>Jarai</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The methods used in the studies include:

- For information collection, PRA tools were used, such as semi-structured interviews, group discussions, transects, seasonal calendar, matrix ranking, field observation, review of local land use history with the participation of local farmers.

- Using the analytical framework and navigator tool in assessing the status of CFM and the role of participating communities.

All seven case studies successfully described several specific characters of local forest management, especially community-based forest management. Nonetheless, the objectives of the research were not always consistently reported upon. Prescribed methodologies, on the other hand, were generally well applied in all the case studies, although even in this instance, there was not complete consistency.

**Research Findings**

Community-based forest management (commune, village, household) include many diversified and complex aspects. In the study cases, we focused on the most pressing issues: land use right, forms of forest management, sharing of benefits from the forest, community organization, changes in production systems and external influences to CFM at the study sites.

**Forestland use rights**

The common character of the 7 case studies is that land use rights are very diversified and are of much interest to local communities, as they consider it as one of the key factors for sustainable forest management and community livelihood improvement.

**Existing forms of land use rights**

According to the findings of the case studies, there are currently 5 main forms of land use rights as follows:

![Forestland allocated with Red Book certificate in Hoa Binh and Yen Bai](image)

**Forestland allocated to individuals households (red books issued)**

Doi village, Hien Luong commune, Da Bac district, Hoa Binh province serves as the sample for this form. On average, each household (Muong ethnic) receives land use rights for 1.75 ha including natural forest and land planned for afforestation. Forestland here is planned as protection forest in Da river basin, but still households received “redbooks.” In Nam Lanh commune, Van Chan district, Yen Bai province (Dao ethnic), households received forestland use certificates, including land use rights on natural forest and plantation forest near the houses.

**Forestland traditionally used by local community or households ("redbooks" not yet issued)**

The sample for this form is the case in Phuc Sen Commune, Quang Hoa District, Cao Bang Province, where forestland has been used by the community for hundreds of years. Households use the forest area near their village. More distant forest is managed by village community. In Nam Lanh Commune, Van Chan District, Yen Bai province, the Giang Cai village community received 1,092 hectares of protection forestland to manage, allocated by the District People's Committee. The village communities proposed to divide this area into five plots for five villages to manage. Land managed by village communities include old forest, young forest, mixed forest of timber trees and bamboo trees, young bush forest and regenerated forest. In Dak Tover Commune of Gia Lai Province, forest and forestland is used by village communities in accordance with their traditional customs.
These organizations mainly include state forest enterprises and management units of protection forest. In six case studies, forest is allocated to SFEs or protection forest management units (in Phuc Sen commune, Cao Bang province, forestland is managed by village communities and households).

- Protection contract for protection forest, e.g. Hoa Binh

- Production management contracts, e.g. Dak Lak and Gia Lai

Forestland of which forest owner is not yet clarified

At three case study sites: Muong Lum Commune (Yen Chau, Son La), Phuc Sen Commune (Cao Bang), and Dak Tover Commune (Gia Lai), the use of a part of forestland has not yet been assigned to any household or state agency. The local administrative body, People's Committee at commune level, temporarily monitors the collection of forest products and solves the conflicts on forestland that occur on its administrative territory.

Grazing land

At all the study sites, are areas planned as forestland which have in fact been used as grazing land for decades. There is no forest cover on that land, only grass, and so the land is suitable for grazing, and people don't use that for any other purpose. A special character is that both local communities and outsiders can use that land for grazing.

**Summary of existing forms of forestland use at the study sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study sites</th>
<th>Forestland allocated, land</th>
<th>Forestland managed by SFEs, management units of</th>
<th>Forestland managed by villages or</th>
<th>Grazing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Main constraints related to implementing forestland use rights of local people

In seven case studies, there are different constraints related to the implementation of forestland use rights, but in general, there is no sustainability of forestland use rights. The main constraints are described below:

- Forestland has not been formally allocated to households, “redbooks” have not been issued. In five of the seven case study sites, households have not received “redbooks.” Only in Hien Luong (Hoa Binh), households received forestland officially in 1994. In Nam Lanh (Yen Bai), district PC issued a decision in 1992 to allocate 1,092 ha of forestland to Giang Cai village for long-term usage. In other locations (Son La, Cao Bang, Gia Lai, Dak Lak), households don’t want to facilitate forest development on the land they are using, as they’re afraid that later, during forestland allocation, that area would change. Therefore, red book issuance on forestland is an urgent thing to do.

- Forestland allocated to SFEs can exceed their capacities to manage it, while at the same time the local farmers suffer from insufficient access to forestland (Gia Lai, Dak Lak)

- The Law on Land (1993) did not foresee the allocation of land to communities.

  In Cao Bang and Dak Lak, although half of forestland is being used by communities, local farmers are worried about changes to the dimensions and access to community forest after land allocation. Will they be able to keep sacred forest or forest for festival organization?

- Several cases of land encroachment happened in all the seven case study sites. Since forest blocks are not yet marked on the map, and “redbooks” are not issued, several farmers attempt to defacto enlarge the forestland area that they are using through encroachment.

- Gender inequality is common. Although the law is gender neutral, in practice, women are not allocated forest or forestland. Redbooks carry the husband’s name only (Hoa Binh). This means the wife has no claim on these resources in case of divorce, inheritance or as collateral.

Forest management forms

At all seven study sites, there are abundant and complicated forms of forest management. There is a lack of clarity in scopes, functions and contents of forest management by state agencies, authorities and communities. At all seven sites, there was general agreement that traditional CFM as practiced prior to the 1960s was successful. However, subsequent political changes provoked important changes in traditional forest management. To clarify those changes, we compared traditional community-based forest management with current forest management forms.

Traditional community-based forest management

In all the study sites, ethnic minority communities were found to be well organized traditionally. Village, or hamlet, is the highest independent social unit. Traditional village headmen play a decisive role in all community activities. All the community members strictly follow the local regulations. Many traditional customs continue to be practiced.
Main characters of traditional customs/regulations related to forest management

- Clear boundaries of each village, each forest plot
- All the village members have the right to select one or several forest plots for cultivation and development of forest gardens
- Upland fields and gardens can be inherited by next generation
- The power of traditional customs is reflected on 2 aspects: social and spiritual. On social aspect, it is community public opinions and relations, including negative and positive opinions, isolation or exclusion. On spiritual aspect, it is believed that if you follow the traditional regulations, you will be protected and supported by the spirits with health, good weather conditions... otherwise the spirits would give you sickness, diseases, calamities...

Main reasons traditional forest management practices become ineffective

The main reasons of the decline in traditional forest management practice effectiveness include:

- **Forest became State property** in accordance with the Law on Forest Protection and Development 1991. Forestland belongs to "all people" and hence under state management in accordance with the Law on Land 1993 and Decree 02/CP 1994 on forestland allocation.
- **Organizational changes in the administrative management system.** At the local level, Chairman of Commune PC is responsible to the Chairman of District PC for forest protection/management; forestland use in the whole commune, including: management of forest area, boundaries, management of contracts for protection, forest nourishment, regeneration and afforestation in the commune. The chairman of the Commune PC is also responsible for instructing villages to develop and implement regulations on management, protection, development and usage of forest on the commune territory in accordance with current legal regulations (Article 6, Decision 245/1998.QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on responsibilities of State management at all levels on forest and forestland).
- **Changes in community structure and organization.** At study sites in Gia Lai, Dak Lak, where 100% of population was previously indigenous, there have been many immigrants. In the past, the traditional village headman was the head of the community in all affairs. At present, he only takes care of community activities and festivals; the management of all other issues belongs to local authorities and line agencies. Mass organizations such as Women's Union, Youth Union, Farmers' Association, Veterans' Association play an active role in forest management and protection.
- **Changes in production patterns.** At all the study sites, there are many basic changes in the agro-forestry production of local communities. Households which are relatively self-sufficient in food production, are now also developing cash crops with higher inputs and more market transactions. In the past, the livelihood of households depended mainly on the forest; at present, incomes from the forest account for just 2-10% (Cao Bang, Son La, Hoa Binh, Gia Lai). Nevertheless, non-timber forest products are still of high importance to the group of hungry and poor households, as NTFPs help them to survive in food-shortage periods (Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Son La, Cao Bang).
- **Per-capita area of cultivation land is declining due to rapid population growth.** Once consequence is that the length of fallow period has declined from 20 to 30 years in the past to 3-5 years. In addition, there are several incidents of farmers (especially outsiders) who go deep into the forest to log trees for upland cultivation of paddy and coffee (Gia Lai, Dak Lak).
- **Changes in community awareness.** In the past, the community was the recognized "forest owner." All the local farmers were involved with forest protection and management. Now, as recipients of "protection contracts" from state enterprises for money but without a role in decision-making, these farmers see themselves as simply wage laborers. Consequently, they are less interested or conscientious about forest protection (Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Son La). Only in Cao Bang is forest still managed by community as before. There farmers, who consider themselves the real forest owners, take full responsibility for forest protection.

Current forest management forms

Due to diversified forms of land use rights, there are diversified forms of forest management. The following five major forms of forest management can be mentioned:

**Forest managed by individual households**
There are two cases: households received or didn't receive land use certificates (redbooks). In Hien Luong commune (Hoa Binh), households have received land use certificates. Although official land use certificates have not been issued to households in Nam Lanh commune (Yen Bai), the People's Committee of Van Chan district has decided to allocate more than 1,000 hectares to households for long-term management. In Phuc Sen commune (Cao Bang), households manage the forest according to their tradition for generations; even though they haven't received land use certificates, forest gardens of each household are recognized by local communities and authorities.

Community forest management at village level

This is the case of Cao Bang, Yen Bai and Gia Lai. In Tinh Dong and Lung Vai villages of Phuc Sen commune (Cao Bang), 60% of forestland (160 ha) is managed by community. In Giang Cai village of Nam Lanh commune (Yen Bai), village community manages 1,092 ha of forestland in accordance with the decision of district PC since 1999. In Dak Tover village (Gia Lai), village community manages 766 ha of forest. There are two forms of management on this forest area. First, forest plots that are located near the residential areas are managed by village community under execution of village headman. Second, for forest plots that are far from residential areas, community assigns to groups of households for management: one group is responsible for management of the forest plot that is near its residential area (Cao Bang, Yen Bai). Groups help each other in management and protection of community forest. Village headman acts as coordinator. Commune PC manages the forest area that is under conflict between 2 neighboring villages (Cao Bang).

Forest contracted to communities by state agencies for protection and management

In fact, this forest area belongs to the management of state agencies (SFEs, management units of protection forest...), but these agencies sign contracts for communities (commune or village) to protect the forest (Son La, Hoa Binh, Dak Lak). The forms of management are different: in Muong Lum commune (Son La), commune PC manages the forest protection contracts signed with district forest protection station, then assigns to households in the commune for contract implementation. In Hien Luong commune (Hoa Binh), commune PC signs contracts with the management units of protection forest, then assigns to village headmen, and that assigns to Veterans' Association at village level for implementation of forest protection and patrols. In Dak Nue commune (Dak Lak), Lak forest enterprise allocates directly 1,490 ha of forest to 67 local households through protection contracts. Nam Ca protection forest management unit allocates directly 700 ha of forestland to 23 households for protection.

Forest managed by state agencies

This is the forestland that the State allocates to SFEs, management units of protection or special-use forests for management (Dak Lak, Hoa Binh, Son La, Gia Lai, Yen Bai). On the funds allocated by the State, these agencies signs contracts with local households or families of SFEs staff. The general situation is that state agencies don't have enough resource to manage the allocated forest areas themselves. For example, SFEs focus on forest product exploitation more than on forest nourishment and enrichment. Therefore, they play an intermediary role to receive state budgets input in forest protection/management, then sign contracts with local households or their staff families for protection.

The results of this form of forest management are:

- Forest is getting more exhausted
- Much forestland is not used and properly managed
- People participate in forest protection as labor hirers for money only (Son La, Dak Lak, Gia Lai).

Forest that does not have official owner and is managed by commune authorities within the administrative boundaries

For a variety of reason there are several locations where forest still doesn't have an "official" owner. In such cases, forest is managed by the Commune PC within the commune administrative boundaries in accordance with the state legal regulations. There are two cases:

- First, if the land is covered by regenerated forest, Commune PC is responsible for management and forest rehabilitation (Son La, Dak Lak, Cao Bang, Gia Lai).
- Second, if the land does not have forest cover, only grass and bushes, that land is classified as grazing land. Grazing land is managed by Commune PC or allocated to village headmen for management at village level. Grazing land is used by village community and also neighboring villages for livestock grazing in extensive cultivation method. At all the 7 case study sites, not a single input is made on this type of land to improve the usage effectiveness and sustainability. Commune PC receives payment for forest protection from the state agencies, then signs contracts with households or villages to carry out forest protection/management activities. This is the case of...
Dak Tover commune (Gia Lai) and Muong Lum (Son La).

Sharing benefits from the forest

The 7 case studies show that benefits from the forest are of interest to everybody in the local communities, especially official classified ‘hungry and poor households’. It is also of interest to outsiders and the State.

Local communities

At the study sites, there are a lot of benefits that link local communities with the forest. On the forest where land use certificates are issued to households, households have the full right to harvest forest products. On community forest, local farmers can get the following benefits:

- Products for living needs of local farmers: fuel wood, timber for house construction, foods, medicines, fodder for livestock, materials for home use items
- Cash income from selling non-timber forest products or from contracting for forest protection
- Land for cultivation of food crops, plantation of fruit trees, industrial crops.
- Water source for livelihood and irrigation
- Forest makes the climate equable, reduces calamities, refreshes environment
- Farmers contribute to community development through forest protection activities
- Benefits from community forest are used for the following priorities:
  - Public welfare constructions: schools, medical stations, kindergartens, roads and bridges, public houses... (Cao Bang, Yen Bai)
  - Assistance to difficult households within the community (Cao Bang)
  - For common forest managed by village community and forest that has no clear owner, managed by commune PC, the principles of benefit sharing from the forest are:
    - Equity within the community
    - Benefiting right is linked closely with the responsibility for forest protection, enrichment
    - Local community can exploit timber for house construction when it is needed on condition that it is agreed by villagers and local authorities
    - Local community can intercrop agricultural crops or firewood species on the forestland that is being managed by the location

These principles are reflected in all the 7 case studies.

Outsiders

Benefits from the forest for outsiders are indirect and long-term (water sources, climate harmonization, calamities reduction, environment soundness, etc.)

At the study sites in Central Highlands (Dak Lak, Gia Lai), outsiders are allowed to come to the forest managed by local communities or commune PC for collection of non-timber forest products. On the other hand, there are many immigrants from various areas to Dak Lak and Gia Lai, who log forest trees, clear forest for cultivation of agricultural crops. The dramatic decrease of forest due to the expansion of areas for plantation crops, e.g. coffee is symptomatic for the Central Highlands. This causes conflicts on benefits among local communities and has negative impacts on forest resources.
The State

The findings from the 7 case studies show that the State has made high inputs to forest development programs. Farmers receive money for forest protection paid by the State (Hoa Binh, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Son La). However, there is no clear policy on forest benefit sharing for the State. State income from the forest is too little compared with its inputs in forest protection and development. This causes difficulties for the State to make further input into the forest.

Difficulties in sharing the benefits from the forest

- Forest is degraded. In all the study sites, there is almost no primary forest. The forest is secondary forest, regenerated after upland fields, with low stock of forest products.

- Forest products bring little income to households (in all 7 case study sites)

- Forest products are overexploited, they are getting scarce day by day (Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak)

- Lack of local markets (in all 7 study sites)

- Farmers don't have chance to participate in the management of funds for forest protection. Only state agencies have the right to manage the state budget provided for forest protection activities.

Capacities of community in forest management

The capacities of community in forest management are reflected in many aspects: community spirit, community assistance, internal conflicts resolution, participation of farmers in management, and implementation of local regulations on forest protection and management.

At all the seven case study sites, ethnic minorities displayed strong community sense. Although they have to face many difficulties in daily life, they always support one another. In Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Son La, Yen Bai or Gia Lai, Dak Lak, whenever a conflict happens on forestland, they always try to find the best solution to solve and avoid future conflicts. Benefits from the forest are prioritized for community public purpose (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai). At the study sites in Son La and Dak Lak, farmers expect forestland to be allocated to the community for management. In Cao Bang, commune authorities and communities expect the State to recognize their forestland use rights as it is.

In Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Gia Lai and Dak Lak, communities have developed and carried out village regulations with concrete terms on usage, protection and management of forestland.

Through community-based forest management activities (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai), the managerial capacities of village communities have been improved. At these study sites, communities had an initiative to divide the forestland managed by villages into many plots and allocate them to groups of households for convenient protection and management. Mass organizations actively participate in forest protection. That is the case of the Veterans’ Association of Hien Luong commune (Hoa Binh).

Thus, local communities at the study sites have proved that they are capable of effective forest management. However, there are still several constraints:

- Officials at village and commune levels are not yet familiar with new method of organization and management, in which they cooperate with different organizations and line agencies (Cao Bang, Son La, Yen Bai, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

- There are few successful models of community-based forest management

- The state management in forestry sector has been mainly top-down management, farmers did not have much chance to contribute their opinions. This limited the local communities to participate in forest and forestland management. (Son La, Hoa Binh, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

Changes in production systems

The findings of the 7 case studies show that there are many basic changes in the production systems of ethnic minorities in mountainous areas, in terms of cultivation patterns and food security methods. These changes have impacts on many aspects of sustainable forest usage and management. In Gia Lai and Dak Lak, due to the lack of cultivation land, several households went deep in the forest to log trees for paddy fields. Changes in cultivation patterns at the study sites are described in the table below.
With socio-economic changes after renovation (1987) up to now, and under the pressure of population growth, there are big changes in methods to ensure food security at the study sites.

First of all, food security has always been the first priority in the community. Food security has not improved in several mountainous areas has not improved substantially since 1954. There are cases of serious food shortages (Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Yen Bai). In the past, foods came mainly from the forest, upland fields. At present, foods come mainly from wetland rice fields, upland fields, livestock and gardens (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Gia Lai). However, for the group of hungry and poor households, forest is still an important source of foods, especially in periods between crops (after Lunar Tet and in August, September) (Cao Bang, Son La, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Gia Lai, Dak Lak). To ensure food security, households depend not only on labor and local materials before. Nowadays, they need many inputs from outside (seeds, fertilizers, pesticide) which are beyond the means of hungry and poor households (Yen Bai, Cao Bang, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

**Influence from outside**

There are many external factors that influence CFM, most notably government policies, regulations, strategies at the provincial level, state and private enterprises, mass organizations, domestic and international markets, local and neighboring communities.

The findings of the seven case studies show that outside influences are abundant, complex and constantly changing. For a systematic analysis, each factor will be described separately below:

**Impacts of state policies and regulations**
All the case study reports comment that up until now, that there is no legal framework to involve village communities in forest management. Three legal areas are of particular concern:

- First, the "Law on Land 1993" states that "Land belongs to the ownership of the whole people under the united management of the State. The State allocates land to economic organizations, units of people army, state agencies, social and political organizations (commonly called as organizations), households and individuals for long-term sustainable usage". There is no provision for forest allocation to communities, yes even limited access for households compared to allocations to "organizations.

- Second, the rights and responsibilities of communities vis-a-vis the forest (benefits from and protection of) have not yet been legally clarified.

- Third, traditional community regulations for forest protection have not been legally supported by local authorities at different levels.

As for the state policies related to forest management and development, the case study reports show that up to now, there is no policy framework for the following issues:

- Allocation of forest and forestland to community
- Benefit sharing at an appropriate rate between community and government.
- Government investment and support to sustainable forest management
- Food security for households in mountainous and upland areas by supporting agricultural and forestry production.
- Human resource development and strengthening of community organization.
- Tax and re-investment for forest development.

**Policies and strategies at provincial level**

Based on decentralization of state management at present, the provincial authorities can have specific policies and guidelines that suit local conditions and effectively serve development tasks of local area. The findings of the seven case studies show that strategies at the provincial level are in line with the Government strategies. Sustainable forest management and priorities in development strategies at provincial level are fully consistent with the Government concepts and strategies.

**Relevant state agencies**

The relevant state agencies include State Forest Enterprises (SFEs), management units of protection forest, and forest protection units.

**State Forest Enterprises** manage forest exploitation in accordance with plans, and manage the forest stock in a designated area (Gia Lai, Dak Lak). In point of fact, SFEs usually focus on exploitation rather than protection. SFEs face many difficulties in forest stock management which leads to exhaustion after exploitation. The allocated forest area is too large for the SFEs limited human and other resources; therefore the effectiveness of forest management is very low. The State provides SFEs with funds for forest protection and management, and SFEs use the funds provided to contract households of SFEs staff and/or local authorities for forest protection. Local authorities in their turn allocate protection of forests to communities. Such contracting does not promote the participatory role of communities.

**Management units of protection forests** manage the "very critical protection forests" (Hoa Binh, Son La) or nature reservations (Dak Lak). These units receive State funds and sign contracts with local communities for forest protection (Hoa Binh, Son La, Dak Lak). Their operations are based on State funding and do not encourage farmers' participation in forest protection and planning work. Similar to the case of SFEs, households are engaged for forest protection from management units of protection forests as contract labor. (Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

**Forest Protection stations** are responsible for forest resources in the district area. Forest protection staff is responsible for cooperation with local communities and authorities in preventing destruction in the forests. Due to the size of the area and the lack of human resources, forest protection staff is unable to fulfill their mandate. One of the consequences is that although they do try to deal with big violations, small conflicts and land encroachments are left to the local authorities and communities to resolve (Son La, Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).
Mass organizations

At several study sites (Hoa Binh, Son La, Cao Bang), the role of mass organizations was considered an interested party. Mass organizations networks extend from village through commune, district, provincial all the way up to national levels. The functions and mandates of mass organizations may be different, but they are all expected to cooperate with local authorities in the implementation of State strategies and government socio-economic programs. Since 1997, mass organizations became involved with forest protection/management activities. In Hoa Binh, for example, management units and commune authorities enlisted the assistance of the Veterans' Association at the village level in forest protection. In Son La, forest management teams at the village level have been established to join forest protection staff in forest patrols. This has been conducted for only the last 2-3 years. It is not clear whether these activities will continue once the State completes the ongoing program of investment for forest protection. The most active participation is seen in Cao Bang, where the village common forest is managed by the community. Organizations of women, youth, and farmers here play an active role in supporting CFM at the village level (principally in forest protection and enrichment). They also take part in developing and implementing village regulations on forest protection. It is natural for them to actively protect and manage the forest, which they consider the common forest of the community.

Domestic and international markets

Since 1987, the impact of domestic and international markets influences are increasingly felt. Getting non-timber forest products to market is difficult (e.g., poor transportation options, bad roads), and the yields of NTFPs are low. People are reacting strongly to prices. In Yen Bai, for example, a fall in the price of cinnamon resulted in a fall in cinnamon production, and people's interest in tending or expanding the cinnamon forests declined (both community cinnamon forests and household cinnamon forests). On the other hand, the price for other NTFPs such as orchids and arrowroot rose; this led to the exploitation of this resource to near exhaustion. Finally, timber species such as pomu, lim, and nghien, are a valuable, albeit illegal forest product. In the absence of adequate surveillance, however, these unsustainable practices and outright violations are difficult to control (Gia Lai, Dak Lak, Son La).

International markets for several agricultural products, such as coffee, also have big impacts on forest management. High international coffee prices (1996 – 1998) led to intensive logging in remote areas of Central Highlands in order to expand the coffee cultivation area (Dak Lak, Gia Lai). High demand for wildlife on the regional market pushed many people to go hunting for wildlife in local forest areas (Cao Bang, Son La).

Local communities

All the local communities have their traditions in sustainable forest management. In Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Hoa Binh, and Gia Lai, communities continue to manage the common forest of the village, or forestland has been allocated to households. Consequently, they take initiative in forest protection, tendering and development. In Yen Bai, communities established a village fund for forest protection. In Cao Bang, mass organizations and households take the initiative of periodically tendering community forest and developing village regulations on forest protection.

However, local communities at all the study sites are facing a lot of difficulties due to hunger (before the harvesting period) and poverty. This limits their capacities in forest management and development. For example, community forest in Cao Bang has been just tendered by local communities for the last few years, no activity in afforestation. Due to the lack in cultivation land, several farmers log forest trees illegally and open land for upland fields (Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

Neighboring communities

In Cao Bang, Gia Lai, and Dak Lak, during the last few years, there were some minor forestland conflicts between local communities with neighboring villages, but were amicably resolved. In the last five to seven years, thousands of people have immigrated to the Central Highlands. They clear forest for upland fields of paddy and coffee (Gia Lai, Dak Lak), a situation local communities and forest protection units are unable to manage. Several poor households of local farmers sold their cultivation land to newcomers for coffee growing, and they themselves become hired labor.

Analysis of the impacts of community-based forest management

At all seven study sites, there is a forest area managed by a community. In Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Gia Lai, it is the common community forest which is traditionally managed. In Hoa Binh, Son La, Dak Lak, it is the forest which communities receive from state agencies under forest protection contracts. These forests are still rather poor, the yield of forest products is low, but their role is growing more and more important to local communities. CFM has impacts not only on household economy through access to natural resources, but also on natural resource development and community capacity strengthening.

Impacts on household economy
CFM partly satisfies the needs of local households. At all the study sites, local communities are traditionally closely linked with the forest. Firewood, timber and bamboo for house construction, fruits and vegetables, medical grass, livestock fodder are needs satisfied at least in part by the community forest. CFM also contributes to increasing household incomes through selling non-timber forest products and from payments for forest protection under the contracts signed with state agencies.

Non-timber forest products contribute 5-10% to the cash income of households in Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak. Payment for forest protection is VND 25,000-50,000 per household per year, varying in locations (Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak). In Hoa Binh, payment for forest protection, after deduction of management fees and contribution to village funds, is divided to households at VND 10,000/ha/year. This income is very important to households, as they have very few other sources of cash. Especially for hungry and poor households, cash income from CFM helps them survive in periods of food shortage.

**Impacts on the equity of use rights and access to natural resources**

At all the study sites, every villager is assured equal access to and use of natural resources in the community managed forest (water, NTFPs and timber for house construction), on condition that they follow the customs and regulations of the community. Every member of community has the right to go to community forest to collect timber, bamboo for house construction when they are in need (after securing approval from the community and Commune PC or forest protection units) regardless of whether they are a member of an agricultural cooperative or not (Hien Luong commune, Hoa Binh province). NTFPs are collected by community members in accordance with the general regulations of the village (Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Hoa Binh, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak). Forest products are prioritized by the community for public welfare constructions (schools, medical points, kindergartens, roads, bridges, etc.).

**Impacts on natural resources**

Natural resources at the study sites appeared to be better protected and developed when forest is allocated to local communities for management. At the study sites, community forests are regularly protected, periodically tendered with the participation of local people so that:

- The forest is not over-exploited or used as agriculture land for shifting cultivation (Cao Bang, Son La, Yen Bai, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).
- Forest cover is increased, especially in watershed forest areas surrounding Hoa Binh reservoir
- Forest is better rehabilitated, even on sloping land or rocky mountains (Cao Bang).
- Different kinds of products become abundant and diversified (Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Hoa Binh, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).
- Even forests in remote areas or forests on sloping land are tendered and better protected. Households cannot manage the remote forest plots (Yen Bai, Cao Bang, Son La).
- Water is supplied evenly from the forest to irrigate rice field became surplus, which could improve the rice productivity.
- The ecological environment became better. Wildlife was restored and more and more precious timber species were regenerated in the forest.
- Natural disasters (droughts or flash floods) became rarer.
- On the other hand, local people's awareness of the necessity to protect and develop forest has been improved. Mass organizations actively participate in forest management (Cao Bang). People are watchful over forestland encroachment or forest harming actions (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

Several neighboring communities came to visit community forest in Phuc Sen commune, Cao Bang and share experiences. However, there is still a small part in the community who does not care for protection of forest resources. They still log timber illegally and collect NTFPs to the exhaustion, still clear forest for upland fields beyond the control of forest protection forces and communities.

**Impacts on community development**

Setting up community forest actively contributes to strengthening community activities at all aspects:
People pay more attention to common benefits of their village. They protect forest to have sufficient timber and other forest products for house construction, enough water for livelihood and irrigation... (at all the study sites)

Individual actions affecting community forest are controlled by villagers themselves (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).

Organization of CFM helps improve the relationship among households in the community (at all the study sites).

Communities have many ideas for the general benefits of the villages. For example, village funds for forest protection have been established in Yen Bai; In Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, communities had an idea to divide the forest into small plots and allocate them to groups of households for convenient protection; In Cao Bang, indigenous knowledge has been promoted, several indigenous species that are suitable with limestone conditions have been planted on increasing area.

Village leaders are getting familiar with the participatory approach (Yen Bai, Hoa Binh, Son La). They learnt to listen to local farmers and encourage their ideas and suggestions.

National benefits

CFM brings benefits to the country such as:

- It contributes to hunger reduction and poverty alleviation (at all 7 study sites)
- It contributes to the rehabilitation of exhausted forests (Cao Bang, Hoa Binh, Yen Bai, Son La, Gia Lai, Dak Lak).
- It is in line with the "5 million Hectare Afforestation Program" (at all 7 study sites).
- It reduces the state expenses for forest protection (Cao Bang, Yen Bai, Gia Lai).

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the case studies, several conclusions on CFM could be made as follows:

First, land use rights on forestland as regulated by the State have not met the expectations of ethnic communities in mountainous areas. So far, very few households have received land use certificates. Forestland is effectively used by village communities, but this form of forest management has not been recognized legally. The scale of CFM is still very small. On the contrary, there is large area of forest, having its owners – especially forestland allocated by the state to SFEs – but not being used effectively with the purpose of forest development.

Besides, the forms of forest and forestland management are very diversified and complicated at the study sites. The scopes, functions and contents of forest management have not been clarified among state agencies, authorities and local communities. The traditional form of community-based forest management is losing its effectiveness. Meanwhile, the existing forms of forest management are not linked with the expectations and needs of local communities; there is a lack of people's participation in planning and monitoring of forest management activities.

Sharing the benefits from the forest is of great interest, not only to local communities, especially poorest households, but also to outsiders and the State.

Although benefits from the forest still account for a small proportion in household economy, only 5-20% of household income, but CFM proves to be an important source of support to the poorest group of households at the study sites, helping them survive in the most difficult periods, i.e. pre-harvest, when they have no other source for their daily needs except the forest.

CFM also brings the equality among local farmers in accessing, using and developing forest resources. It also brings significant benefits on the national scale.

At all the study sites, CFM is impacted by various external factors. The most important factors include state policies, regulations at central and local levels, relevant state agencies (SFEs, management units of protection and special-use forests, forest protection units...), domestic and international markets as well as communities, including local and neighboring communities.

In the state legal documents and policies, it is not yet mentioned to identifying a legal basis for community forest. Several
forestry policies are not suitable to the specific conditions at the study sites. A mechanism of information feed-back from local level has not been established. Concerned state agencies have not paid enough attention to the participatory role of local communities.

**Main constraints in the development of community forest management**

First, **lack of a legal basis for CFM**. In Decree 02/CP, it was not mentioned a village community as a target of forestland allocation.

Second, **contents of CFM have not been understood thoroughly among policy-makers at all levels**

- Several relevant officers still confuse CFM with forest management of collective economic organizations. They therefore consider it unnecessary to apply CFM, or, if CFM is to be applied it required the existence of supporting institutions like economic organizations. It is not yet recognized that CFM should co-exist with state, collective and individual forest management. Community is not yet recognized as an “organization,” since it is so fundamentally different from other accepted economic organizations. Nor is it necessary to set up full administrative procedures on establishment or disbandment as for other economic and political organizations.

- During the implementation of forestland allocation, in many locations, it is assumed that land can be properly protected only when it is allocated to households, as individuals would act better as the forest owners than communities.

Third, **lack of national programs to support the development of CFM**. The on-going state program on Five Millions Ha Program Reforestation has been focused mainly on state and private forestry sectors but does not have a component to support CFM development.

Fourth, **good experiences in CFM** have not been shared, enough attention has not been paid to improving community development capacities of local farmers and officers.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are necessary to overcome disadvantages in CFM development:

**First, to conduct surveys to review and analyze the results and impacts of CFM**, to establish CFM models in different areas on nation-wide scale.

**Second, to define a legal framework** for village communities to participate in forest management. The legal framework should cover the following major issues:

- **Forestland use rights**: Allocate forestland to communities for usage and management, issue land use certificates to communities; or sign long-term contracts with clear provisions on rights and responsibilities of communities (following the model of People’s Committee of Van Chan district, Yen Bai province, who signed contracts to allocate forestland to village community in Giang Cai village, Nam Lanh commune for long-term usage and management).

- **Responsibilities and benefits from the forest**: Clarify the responsibilities of local communities and their benefits from the forest. Set up a framework of benefit sharing between local communities and the State, ensuring the sustainable development of the forest and the harmonization between communities’ benefiting rights and common benefits of the state.

- **Improve the legality of community internal regulations** on management, usage and protection of local forest; ensure support to local authorities during implementation of such regulations.

**Third, to promulgate new or revised policies** concerning community forest management

- **Policy on forestland allocation to community**: The State needs a policy to allocate community forestland to the communities managing the forest where no other "owner" exists.

- **Policy on sharing benefits from the forest**: It is needed to have clear regulations on an appropriate ratio of benefit sharing between local communities and state agencies; regulations on devolution in decision-making process with participation of local farmers are essential.
• **Policy on government support to the development of CFM**: This policy should cover a large scope, including investment priorities, investment scale and subjects, and also credits to communities for forest development.

• **Policy on food security for local communities**: food security would be reached through developing agro-forestry activities, or agricultural and forestry extension works.

• **Policy on human resource development and organizational strengthening for CFM**: Attention should be paid to developing skills of communities in forest management, and strengthening capacity of local organizations to participate in forest management.

• **Policy on tax and reinvestment for forest development**: An appropriate tax policy should be developed to suit the current conditions of forest development, in order to create an income source for the state and therefore a funding source for reinvestment to forest development.

The general requirements of the state policies related to CFM:

• Policies should be flexible to suit the traditions, customs and socio-economic conditions of different ethnic minorities in mountainous areas

• Local communities should be encouraged to participate in the management, protection and usage of forest and forestland

• Legal documents should be written in a simple and concise language that is easy for local people in mountainous areas to understand.

**Fourth, to develop comprehensive CFM programs**, integrating CFM issues into current forest development programs, such as the "5 million Hectare Afforestation Program" (Decision 661/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister in 1998) is of utmost importance; Program on resettlement and fixed cultivation (Instruction 525/TTg of the Prime Minister in 1993); Program for hunger eradication and poverty alleviation (Decision 135/TTg of the Prime Minister in 1998).

**Fifth, to strengthen supports from international organizations**, including bilateral, multilateral and international NGOs. The supports from these organizations are conducted through programs/projects for community forestry development, in both research and implementation activities.

**Follow-up activities**

In the next stage, the National Working Group on CFM should provide technical assistance to help the relevant government agencies, local authorities and communities to conduct the following activities:

• To improve farmers' awareness on the role, importance and necessity of CFM through mass media, workshops, conferences, training courses and experience exchange on CFM.

• To conduct surveys of larger scale on the status of CFM, with the participation of relevant agencies working in policy-making, ethnology, sociology, gender issues, environment protection, investment issues...

• To study the impacts of government policies on forest development:

• System of degree and sub-degrees documents related to the management and development of forestry sector after renovation (1987 - 2000)

• Status of their implementation in locations

• Major impacts on forest development in general and on community forest in particular.

• To study the possibilities of forestland allocation to communities:

• Areas of priority

• Necessary state guiding documents

• Forms of CFM. Analyze strong and weak points and work out solutions for improvement
• Supports from other programs, such as program for resettlement and fixed cultivation, program of 5 million ha afforestation... for CFM.

• To develop models of participatory forest management and gain experience from these models, including:
  • Model of community forest managed directly by village level
  • Model of forest contracted to farmers for protection
  • Model of regeneration-oriented forest with participation of communities
  • Model of newly planted forest, managed by communities
  • Model of critical protection forest and special-use forest, managed by communities

• To create a mechanism for close collaboration among state programs/projects and international organizations working on the development of CFM in Vietnam.
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