

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



Report

Quality Assurance of Data Collection
Processes of the Participatory
Governance Assessment in Lam Dong,
Viet Nam in 2014

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1 Introduction

2014 is the third year of implementing the Participatory Governance Assessment for REDD+ (PGA) process in Vietnam. RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests has been contracted by FAO to assist the development of the governance indicators and corresponding data collection tools (field forms), to build up the capacity of the data collection teams and other country actors, and more importantly to take care of the quality assurance for the whole process. This report provides a documentation of how quality has been assured in the PGA process in 2014 and analyzes the external factors influencing the quality of the process. It also includes key reflection of the enumerators on the data collection process.

2 Overview of PGA process in Vietnam in 2014

2.1 Actors involved in PGA process in Vietnam in 2014

The PGA process in Vietnam experienced a structural change in 2014, with the establishment of the Expert Group (EG), which consists of governance experts with different backgrounds and working in different sectors. It is therefore important to start the overview of PGA process in 2014 with a brief description of the key actors involved and their respective roles in the process:

- The Provincial Core Group (PCG): at the core of the process is still the PCG, which consists of 15 members from Lam Dong's state functional organizations at provincial and district levels, from local authorities and university. The main role of the core group is to share background information on Lam Dong and to make data PGA collection instruments appropriate to the local conditions.
- The Expert Group (EG): This group includes 7 members from VNFOREST, International and Vietnamese NGOs, and academia. EG was set up to provide direction for PGA process in Vietnam, based on proper consultation with different stakeholders at national and provincial levels. It is also to provide technical support to the selection of indicators and tools and the report writing of the pilot PGA in Lam Dong province.
- The data collection group (DCG): with 18 members in total, coming from the Provincial Core Group (8) and 10 independent consultants from Lam Dong, Hanoi and Thua Thien Hue provinces. The main task of this group was to collect data and to provide feedbacks upon the data collection process and the survey tools.
- The coordination group (CG): including 3 members from FAO, UNDP and UN-REDD. The group's task was to coordinate activities of the process, to ensure communication among stakeholders and provide technical inputs throughout the process.

RECOFTC has been involved in the process in two roles: one as a member of the EG and the other as a consultant to take lead in developing the indicator framework, data collection instruments, training the enumerators and preparing the report.

2.2 Key steps in PGA Process in 2014

The followings are the key steps in the PGA process in Vietnam in 2014:

1. Identification of key governance issues for PGA: at the beginning of the process, after the EG and PCW have been set up, two key issues for PGA in Vietnam in 2014 were

identified by EG, based on the result of the Institution and Context Analysis (ICA) study conducted in 2013 and in consultation with and agreement from members of PCG. The key issues are:

- Issue A: Participation of local stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process with regard to forest contracting.
 - Issue B: Forest tenure rights (and benefit sharing)
2. Development of indicator framework: once the key governance issues for PGA have been agreed by all members of EG and PCG, RECOFTC took the lead in developing the indicator framework for assessing these two issues.
 3. Development of data collection instruments: after the indicator framework has been agreed. RECOFTC, in consultation with CG, EG and PCG then developed data collection instruments. A total of 17 survey forms were developed for collection of both secondary data (e.g. summary of legal framework, statistics) and primary data (from 12 different stakeholder groups).
 4. Training of enumerators: a 3-day training for 18 enumerators was conducted in mid-April to familiarize the data collection group members with the use of data collection instruments, to discuss plan to finalize the instruments and undertake data collection. As a result of the training, two stakeholders were dropped from the survey, namely the district People's Committees (DPC) and Private Forest Companies (PFC). The reason for dropping DPC was that DPCs were not directly involved in local forest governance and interviewing district technical units (e.g. forest protection unit) would be sufficient. PFCs were also dropped because they were believed not involved in forest contracting in the potential survey sites.
 5. Testing and revision of data collection instruments: after the training, the data collection instruments were revised and field-tested. Based on the results of the field test, the survey forms were further revised.
 6. Data collection: the PGA data collection took place in May-June 2014. Enumerators were divided into four teams, each team led by a senior researcher, to collect primary data in 4 districts in Lam Dong province. In total, the following stakeholders were surveyed:

Survey groups	Number of survey samples	Gender balance in survey samples
1. People with forest contracts - Group discussion - Individual interviews	33 groups 132 persons	16 women groups 66 women
2. People without forest contracts - Group discussion - Individual interviews	29 groups 104 persons	15 women groups 58 women
3. People who received compensation due to forest land repossessed	2 households	N/A
4. People who have appealed or have been in forest (land) conflict	7 households	N/A
5. Commune People's Committee	8	N/A
6. District Office of Natural Resource and	4	N/A

Environment		
7. District Forest Protection Unit	4	N/A
8. State Forest Management Board	6	N/A
9. State Forest Company	1	N/A

In addition, 77 legal documents related to two selected governance issues were collected, along with various secondary data (reports, statistics).

7. Data entry: the data collected were entered into the computer by the data collection teams, using prepared entry forms. Key relevant points in legal documents were entered into MS Word documents and statistics and primary data were entered into MS Excel spreadsheet.
8. Data analysis and reporting: RECOFTC took the lead in analyzing the collected data collected and preparing the assessment report, with contribution from members of EG, PCG, CG and DCG.
9. Verification of findings: after the first draft report was ready, a meeting was organized in Lam Dong in mid June to verify the initial findings with members of EG, PCG, CG and DCG. Preceding this meeting, a smaller meeting between RECOFTC, PGA coordinator and leaders of four data collection teams was held to verify and initial findings in greater details.
10. Report finalization: after the verification workshop, RECOFTC continued to take the lead in finalizing the report, with contribution from members of EG, PCG and DCG. Even after the launch of report in Lam Dong in mid September, further revision of the report still took place to take into account emerging comments.

3 Quality assurance of data collection processes

This section discusses the quality assurance for PGA in Vietnam in 2014, focusing on the data collection processes.

First of all, in the identification of governance issues and development of indicator framework, a wide range of sources were used to make sure that the selected governance issues would capture an important part of the forest governance picture of Lam Dong and also were interesting and relevant for other parts of Vietnam. The sources included findings from ICA study conducted in Lam Dong in 2013 (through careful review of the report), experiences from EG members on forest governance issues in Vietnam (through group meetings), and experiences of PCG on forest governance in Lam Dong (also through the group meetings).

In the development of data collection instruments, the followings were undertaken to ensure the quality of the data would be collected:

- Development of data collection protocol to guide the process of data collection
- Development of guide for data collection to explain the rationale behind each question, what type of answers to be expected and how to collect the answers to each question.
- Consultation with members of EG and PCG through two meetings and various skype calls on the data collection instruments, guide and protocol

In the training of enumerators, there was no separate session for quality assurance. Yet, it was a focal point in all the sessions of the workshop, as followed:

Training sessions	Key quality assurance points emphasized
The PGA approach and its context in Vietnam	Through this session, members of the data collection teams were expected to understand the importance of their role in PGA process, and thus develop the sense of responsibility to undertake their tasks.
The methodological background of the PGA data collection tools	This session helped members of the data collection teams to understand the rationale of the questions asked in the field forms, thus enabling them to offer precise explanation of each question if it were not fully understood by the interviewees, and to check if the responses would meet the expectations.
Technical review of the data collection instruments (field forms)	This session made sure members of the data collection team understand the data needed for each form and the questions asked to different stakeholders, thus enabling them to offer precise explanation of each question if it was not fully understood by the interviewees, and to check if the responses would meet the expectations.
Data collection techniques	With this session, members of the data collection team would be able to understand the pros and cons of techniques to be used for each form and stakeholder, thus enabling them to make use of the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of these techniques.
Practical and ethical data collection/data entry/ analyzing/ reporting issues	In this session, members of the data collection teams had a chance to brainstorm the key issues that would affect the quality of the data collected and the successful completion of the data collection process and discussed strategies how to cope with these issues. This would help enumerators to avoid data collection problems in the field or at least minimize the impacts of them.
Core competencies for facilitating group discussions	The facilitation competencies discussed and practiced in this session would help members of the data collection teams conduct successful group discussions (by keeping appropriate attitudes and applying relevant skills in facilitating the discussion) during the data collection process
Review of the data collection timeline and plan	Members of the data collection teams to make sure all preparatory work, data collection activities and the daily team reflection properly planned, and the role of each team member discussed and clarified.

The testing of data collection instruments by itself was a means to assure the quality of the data would be collected due to the following reasons:

- it helped strengthen the validity of the data collection instruments, particularly the appropriateness of the interview questions, based on which the instruments could be revised
- it was also useful for the data collection protocol, logistic arrangements in the survey

The final revision of data collection instruments was done by the four leaders of the data collection teams. The reason was they were involved in the enumerator training and field testing and thus should have a clear idea of what should be changed in the data collection instruments, protocol and logistical arrangements. In addition, since they would be

responsible for data collection later so knowing how the instruments had been revised put them in a good position to use the instruments better in the field.

Great emphasis was placed on quality assurance during the data collection process in the field as it was the most essential stage in the whole process where wrong or unreliable data may be collected. In fact, all the quality assurance measures discussed above were meant to contribute to assure the data quality at this stage. Additionally, the following measures were emphasized during the data collection process:

- Each team had four members, including a senior researcher who was the team leader. Of the remaining members, one person is a freelancer and two from the PCG. Among the team members, one must be able to speak K'ho, which was the local language of the survey site. The team had at least one female member to facilitate the discussion with the women in the villages.
- Enumerator(s) to report to the team leader for immediate advice should there be any unexpected situation during their interviews.
- There should be daily team meeting at the end of each day to discuss what happened during the day and shared the experience how to handle unexpected situation by those who were involved. The team also would also discuss (other) possible ways of handling the similar situation in the future. The meeting was also meant to check the stage of data collection in the field (how much of what we wanted to know had already been covered) and discussed the plan for the next day and remaining part of the field work.
- Regular communication across the teams to share lessons learned and experiences

Also as part of the quality assurance for the data collection, a field note was prepared, based on the discussion in the enumerators training (see annex 1). The note covered key don'ts and dos for enumerators when doing interviews in the field. It also provided a list of 18 common problems faced in the field and suggested coping strategies. This note was distributed to all enumerators to help them in the field.

In the Data entry, standard entry forms were created in Excel spreadsheet for different field survey forms (for primary data). The forms were created in Excel spreadsheet because Excel allowed storage of large amount of data and its user-friendliness made it easy for using the these data. Another quality assurance point in data entry was that the leaders of the data collection teams were in charge of data entry, as they knew the best how to synchronize the unit/ data of the same field should there be variation across interview records.

In Data analysis and reporting, the following quality assurance measures were undertaken:

- Meeting with all the leaders of the data collection teams to discuss their impressions on the process in general and key findings for each indicator in the indicator framework. The meeting was also to discuss reflections from the team leaders on the process and on the data collection instruments
- Meeting with enumerators: the objective of this meeting was similar to the meeting with the team leader, but of lesser details as there were more people involved.
- (Selected) members of EG, PCG and DCG provided inputs to the report and RECOFTC took charge of the writing up
- Meetings with members (in addition to those who provided inputs to the report) of EG, DCG and PCG to discuss initial findings from the data analysis

The Verification workshop was meant to be a measure for quality assurance. To make sure that the best results were achieved, two separate meetings were organized:

- The first verification meeting was between RECOFTC representative and all the leaders of the data collection teams. As the four team leaders were in charge of the field work in the four survey sites, they were in the best position to verify the findings and to provide further inputs to finalize the report.
- The second verification meeting was held with members of EG, DCG and PCG where all participants had a chance to go through the draft report and verify the key discussion and findings

Finally, in finalizing the report various meetings (in persons and skype conference) were held for EG, DCG and PCG members to discuss comments from members and to provide inputs to the contents of the report.

4 External factors influencing the quality of the process

This section discusses the key factors that influence the quality of the PGA processes in Lam Dong, which are not under the direct control of RECOFTC. Positive factors (i.e. those contributing to enhance the quality of the process) are discussed in Sub-section 4.1, and negative factors (those undermining the quality of the process) elaborated in Sub-section **Error! Reference source not found..**

4.1 Positive factors

First of all, it is important to acknowledge the contribution from the multidisciplinary teams to the quality assurance of the PGA 2014 process in Vietnam. As discussed in Section 2.1, the 2014 PGA process in Vietnam was undertaken by four groups of people coming from different organizations, with different backgrounds and disciplines, and playing different roles in the process. The presence of EG alongside with PCG allowed the process to stay focused on forestry context in Lam Dong (i.e. concentrating on two governance issues that were important for Lam Dong), yet maintaining the linkage with broader governance context in the whole of Vietnam (i.e. connecting the two selected issues with the country context). More importantly, the balance between field experts, academia, practitioners and policy makers and enforcers in the highly interactive teams minimize the risk of the process being biased toward individual view points.

Secondly, and also related to the first factor, is the high qualifications and pro-activeness of team members. The whole PGA process in 2014 has seen very pro-active contribution from the majority of the members of the all the four teams, particularly the PCG and EG. The inputs from the team members were received in almost every step of the process, as discussed in Sub-section 2.2, from the selection of key governance issues to development of the indicator framework and data collection instrument, through data analysis and reporting. The quality contribution from the team members was essential in the PGA process.

4.2 Negative factors

Although it took a few months from for the process to undertake, there was a pressure of time for actors involved. The key reason was the majority of members of the four groups, particularly those of EG and PCG, was full-time staff in their respective organizations. Some key members were even in very busy positions, such as Director of Forest Protection Department (FPD) under VNFOREST, or deputy director of Lam Dong DARD and deputy

director of Lam Dong Sub-FPD. Consequently, it was impossible for them to fully participate in the process.

Secondly, there was a trade-off between buy-in by local government and the level of width and depth the discussion in the PGA report could go. As PGA was meant to provide an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the local forest governance, the discussion on weaknesses was not easily taken by some of the local actors, particularly when the issues of concern were part of their responsibilities. For the report to be accepted and follow-up actions be taken into account, some discussions were completely dropped from the report and the level of depth in the others reduced.

Another factor was the unavailability of the enumerators. Although it was planned that each team had four members, of whom at least one female and one fluent in K'Ho language, it was not the case in all teams. As one person dropped after the enumerator training and it was not possible to find a replacement, one group had only three members. In addition, one team ended up doing the survey in a H'Mong commune, thus none of the team members were able to communicate in the local language. By contrast, in other three teams the communication with local people was much better as at least one of the members spoke the local language.

Last but not least, the review of related legal documents did not take place as planned. According to the original protocol, the policy review would be carried out by the leaders of the four data collection teams before the field test of data collection instruments. However, due to some reasons, it could not be done as planned. As a consequent, the survey content in the survey forms did not fully reflect issues drawn up from the policy review. In other words, the primary information collected from the field work could not explain all important issues in the related policy framework.

5 Enumerators feedback on the data collection process

This section discusses the reflections of the data enumerators on the pilot PGA data collection in Lam Dong province in 2014. The discussion covers two aspects: 1) the process and organization of the data collection, and 2) the data collection instruments. Other comments are presented in Box 1.

5.1 Process and organization

Preparation for field work: Preparation prior to field work was extremely useful. Although all teams spent one day to visit their respective survey site to discuss with local authority about the assessment and to select the interviewees. This visit was very helpful to make the actual data collection process went smoothly. The preparation should also made sure that official letter of introduction for the team to reach relevant stakeholders in the field as in two out of four district the enumerators still had problem meeting the communal authorities as they did not receive introduction letter.

Capacity building for enumerators: Members of the DCG expressed significant capacity building among themselves throughout the process. Members of each team were varied in field experience. Throughout the process, they were able help each other. For instance, inexperienced members at first were not comfortable interviewing local people but were able to handle the matter easily at the end of the process. Experienced members also felt that their capacity in designing and carrying out a survey enhanced.

Coordination: although the coordination in the field was highly appreciated, enumerators also indicated points for improvement. First, it would be useful to consult local Forest

Management Board or Forest Company in the area in advance to select villages suitable for the assessment purpose as these organizations were the one in charge of managing local forests. Second, although it was not necessary to interview district people's Committees (as decided during the enumerator training), a courtesy visit to their office would be appropriate to show respect to the district authority and the survey team could take the chance to introduce purpose of the survey and request for support when required. Thirdly, when going to commune, it was useful to have a district officer travelling with the survey team to introduce purpose and content of the survey to the commune. If this is not possible, a letter or a phone call from the district authority to inform the commune of the team's visit would be helpful. Fourthly, to save time for introduction and to accelerate the process, the survey team could hold a meeting with all key stakeholders (government organizations) to introduce the survey purpose, contents and process in order to avoid any query later. Fifthly, at the village level, the survey team should work with not only village leader but also the traditional village head, heads of the forest protection groups, local priest, and especially the women leader.

Interviewing women group: it was often not common to discuss with women on forestry activities as such work was often carried out by men. During the data collection process, there was a case that women opposed to come to the meeting as they thought they had nothing to do with it. To get women involved in forestry discussion, it would be useful to explain carefully the purpose of the interview to a woman. In addition, it would be useful to invite both husbands and wives for a meeting and later hold a meeting with them separately.

Information sharing among team members and across the teams: Sharing information and experience among the team members on daily basis proved to be very useful because enumerators could learn from others' experiences and better prepare for the work on the next day. It also helped team members to adjust their shortcomings during the interviews (e.g. using of survey form 10). However, team meeting was not done regularly due to various reasons, affecting the chance to learn from each other's experiences.

Interview with a translator: the quality of a translated interview depended very much on the translator's understanding of the topic. Instead of asking question by question, it would be useful to conduct a conversation to make the interviewee feel at ease. The interviewer could fill in the form at the end of the interview and asked for missing information if needed.

5.2 The data collection instruments

Of the field forms used, Form 10 (assessment of individual's legal knowledge) appeared to be the most challenging for both interviewers and interviewees. First of all, finalization of this Form could only be done after the policy overview (or at least after completion of the review on legal rights over forest of different stakeholders – Form 4). As a result, this form could not be discussed in great details during the enumerator training. Secondly, as some people were not able to read, the interviewer had to read and explain content of the quoted document. This made the answer incompatible to that of other interviewees (who did not receive similar explanation). Moreover, Form 10 was applied to community members only so the interview results did not reflect a difference of viewpoints between the community members and other stakeholder groups. In the future, the form should be designed in a way that Part B (assessment of interviewee's understanding of rights to forest) would be asked before Part A (requesting interviewees to read an excerpt on legal rights to forest) to avoid that the answers were based on the reading in Part A.

Form 17 on village basic information also caused some problems during the survey. Some information seemed to overlap (e.g. area of coffee plantation and area of upland). Moreover, it was difficult to estimate the income from different sources. Yet, it was also understood this

could be a local issue because not in all locations that area of coffee plantation coincided with area of upland (i.e. people may plant various crops on an upland field, e.g. hilly rice, cassava, coffee or plant coffee on various types of land, e.g. home garden or upland field). The estimation of the proportion of income also depended on the way the question was asked. People may feel difficult to answer a direct question, e.g. “What is the percentage of income from coffee out of your total income?” But they could answer through a game, e.g. “If your total income is 10 groundnuts, how many groundnuts would be from coffee?”.

Forms 13 and 14 (group interviews of households with forest contract, households without forest contract, respectively) did not have questions on rights of management, exclusion and alienation. This was because in the final round of revision of the questionnaire these questions were mistakenly deleted.

Form 8 (Interview of Forest Management Board and State Forest Company) did not include information about training on facilitation skills and experience to design a process to facilitate participation.

About the target groups, the survey focused on district and lower levels. It should include provincial technical department in the survey to have a wide view of points. For instance, at the provincial level there is the Forestry Sub-department to advice DARD on forestry policy but at district level there is no Forestry Section. As a result, absence of an interview of the provincial Forestry Sub-department led to a gap in understanding on policy development and implementation from the provincial to the local level.

During the enumerator training, it was agreed to drop the District People’s Committee from the interview list. Yet, this resulted in missing of information related to policy implementation at the district level. As stakeholders at the district level covered in the survey were law executive agencies, it would be necessary to interview district People’s Committee on policy implementation at the district level.

Box 1: Reflection from data collection teams on strong and weak points of the process

Strong points

- The questionnaires were well-prepared
- Favorable conditions were created by local authority
- Most of the team/participants were forestry officer and very active
- Local people were friendly and supportive
- The scoping visit to the site before the survey was useful
- Financial arrangement was clear and transparent
- Good interview skills and techniques acquired
- Reliable data were collected as cross checking was made
- Preparation in terms of planning was good
- Tasks were clearly assigned for group members
- Good relationships among groups members helped arrange time and resources for field work
- The training was good and should be shared via communication channels

Weak points

- Logistic arrangement (including accommodation, grouping) could be better
- Information provided in the toolkit was not good enough
- Limited knowledge of local people, especially H’Mong women (the translation might not be

correct)

- Data entry forms have not been finalized
- Linkage among survey groups were not clear
- It would be good to have one group member who speaks the ethnic language.
- Hints should be given for difficult questions
- The training duration was short; not enough time for practicing interviewing
- Difficulties were found as the enumerators did not well practice the tools.
- Form 8 was too long but lacked in-depth questions
- Form 10 was not suitable for people with limited knowledge (people with illiteracy and people not knowing their rights and benefit)
- Form 14 contained some unnecessary information and should be shortened
- Form 13 and Form 14 were not suitable at some points
- Form 17 consisted of such information that villagers could not provide; the form should be given to villages and communes in advance
- The questionnaire was too long, which made the interviewees bored
- Survey time should not fall at noon (11 a.m.) or 5-6 p.m. as women could not concentrate
- Local people did not care about the Government laws, so some information was hard to collect
- Do not assign task to someone that he/she is incapable of finishing
- The session/part on participatory mapping was not necessary
- It was important to work with the head of the village first to avoid too many people coming to the interview

6 Summary and lessons learned

This report discussed the quality assurance in the PGA process in Vietnam in 2014, including an analysis of the external influencing factors and key reflection of the enumerators. The discussion indicated that all steps of the PGA process was designed and undertaken with the aim to achieve highest possible quality. Different measures were undertaken in each step toward this objective. Yet, there were also factors influencing the overall quality of the process, which went beyond the control of RECOFTC. To a certain extent, the quality of the PGA report was undermined by a combination of various factors.

As the lessons learned from the process, the followings are to take into account:

- Existence of both EG and PCG (with clearly defined roles of each group/ member): the existence of EG alongside with PCG was a plus point for the PGA process in Vietnam, as it helped enhance the quality of the final report and achieve the capacity building objectives of PGA process. For the future, an EG should be maintained to lead the PGA at national level while PCG be established to lead the process in each participating province. The role of each group and that of each member should be clearly defined.
- Stick with the original plan but allow flexibility: the whole PGA process is often designed in a way that internal consistency can be maintained. This necessarily requires careful adherence with the plan to avoid losing track. Yet, unexpected things may happen as the process uncoils, which influence the original plan. Flexibility will therefore be needed in such case to address new situations.

- Although 2014 is the third year of PGA process in Vietnam, it is still a new and learning process for all involved. It necessarily involves time and efforts for all. Most importantly, it may involve trade-off between quality and participation, follow-up actions, and capacity building for all.
- As it is a learning process, documentation of lessons learned from each step will be very important for actors involved to learn from mistakes and enhance the quality of the process as it goes.

Annex 1: Key don'ts and dos in the field

Before conducting a survey:

Please make sure the followings are handled well:

- Questionnaires/forms (contents and number of copies)
- Survey plan
- Overview document
- Interview schedule
- Stationeries
- Vehicle
- Task assignment for group members including who would be facilitating each meeting? And what he will do?
- Plan for emergency (sickness, vehicle, etc.)
- Development of facilitation plan for each difficult situation. This aims to collect the best information to reflect raised questions/indicators.

During the field survey

- Try to stick with the plan. Flexibility can be made if unplanned cases happen.
- When interviewing
 - Start with building trust (by asking about family, children, etc.) if necessary
 - Clearly state the objectives of the interview
 - Focus on the interview subject but be flexible when respondents talk about something not relevant
 - Interview in a way that construct a 'story telling'
 - Develop the story along time
 - Facilitators should be neutral, respectful, understanding, inclusive, and sympathetic
 - Apply facilitation skills such as listening, observing, questioning, probing, and explaining – see below
 - Avoid using unsuitable words. For example, do use “people” instead of “minority group”
 - Re-explain a question if respondents do not understand it (ask another person to translate the question into local language if respondents do not understand). Do not suggest answer
 - Use a similar story (when the interview is coming to the end) to share with respondents if suitable
 - Thank respondents at completion of the interview.

At completion of interviews and by end of each day

- Get lesson learnt from the interviews and issues faced
- Re-check the quality of gained information
- Compare the gained information with indicators and the questionnaire to check whether all required information has been filled
- Head of the group shares the results with other teams

General comments:

- Do care about people's life and living standard
- Be sympathetic with respondents
- Respect unconditionally to colleagues and respondents (however different their point of view, opinions, attitudes, gender, or class are, you must respect their dignity and abilities)
- Believe in your co-workers
- Accept that each person has his own value, behavior, and views
- Treat the way you want others to treat you
- Be patient and listen
- Be friendly
- Listen to others' speaking; try to do the followings:
 - Show care
 - Do patience
 - Understand
 - Be neutral
 - Find out the meaning of the issue
 - Help respondents form thoughts, opinions, and ideas
 - Practice silent skill when silence is required
- Question well
 - Good preparation
 - Group work
 - Good observation
 - Good listening
 - Specific questions
 - Open questions with 6 supporting ones
 - Careful probing questioning
 - Avoid leading questions
 - Simple language
 - Be aware of sensitive matters
 - Do not rush to conclusion
- Probe well:
 - Be active in listening
 - Make the next questions based on the previous ones
 - Clarify the information
 - Point out key issues
 - Do not judge when listening
 - Do not change topics
 - Do not anticipate things
 - Do not go too much in detail of an unimportant matter
- Do not think that you know better than others
- Do not give advices if others do not ask
- Do not judge or criticize others
- Do not impose your opinions on others
- Do not suppose that others need your help
- When others are speaking, do not:
 - Rush them
 - Argue
 - Interrupt
 - Give early judges

- Advice when not being asked
- Rush to conclusion
- Let respondents' psychology and emotion overwhelming your mind

Research ethics:

- Do not reveal either information or identity of respondents
- Do not promise
- Do not suggest answers
- Explain that respondents have the right to refuse answering such questions that they find private or sensitive

Some possible issues and suggested coping strategies

Issue 1: Local people do not feel comfortable joining the interview

Reason: They see the enumerators taking notes of what they say or use questionnaires

Suggested coping strategy: before getting started, enumerators should introduce and explain clearly that taking notes does not affect the interview. In addition, it is useful to have two enumerators conducting an interview, one person leads the interview and the other takes note. The latter can add questions or clarify the information if needed.

Reason: Words or questions used by the interviewers are not appropriate (to people's level of understanding)

Suggested coping strategy: Before going to the field, it is necessary to review the questionnaire to agree on the language used. All concepts must be clearly understood prior to the interviews so that the enumerators can explain the questions in the simplest way when interviewees do not understand. Also, if this happens during the interview, one can ask someone in the village (present at the meeting) with better knowledge to explain to others in local language. However, please note that the translation could be biased by the opinion of the translator.

Issue 2: The interview is interrupted as the enumerator is asking and taking note at the same time:

Suggested coping strategy: It is better to have at least two people conducting the interviews with one asking the questions and the other taking notes. The one who takes notes can add questions or clarify the information if needed.

Issue 3: There is a lack of collaboration among group members or with locality and other agencies.

Suggested coping strategy: It is the responsibility of groups and enumerators. The group heads and members need to work together and with outsiders to fulfill the job. It is suggested that groups contact the coordination group (Lam Dong Forestry Officers and UNDP/FAO) to ask for help if needed.

Issue 4: Enumerators use the wrong questionnaire or put answers to the wrong questions

Suggested coping strategy: It is clearly stated in the survey schedule that which questionnaire is used for which group of people, so enumerators need to check the forms before use. They can also use different colored files for each form to avoid confusion. After each interview, the enumerators should review the information they gather to ensure all information is accurately recorded in the corresponding questions. The groups may use a new form to record information if needed.

Issue 5: There is a lack of cooperation from local agencies

Suggested coping strategy: contact forestry officer at the province to ask for help if needed.

Issue 6: The geography and travel distance is inconvenient

Suggested coping strategy: The groups may stay overnight at villages/communes if needed. Flexibility is encouraged.

Issue 7: Making an interview like a 'chat' is good but needed information may not be collected

Suggested coping strategy: the enumerators ought to remember the questionnaire and apply facilitation skills to seek for information while chatting with interviewees.

Issue 8: Secondary data may be conflicting

Suggested coping strategy: If two or more sources of information conflict, the enumerators should rely on the most official sources. Other sources of information should be stated (it is noted that information variation should be explained in the report).

Issue 9: When interviewing individuals, the answers of one person may be biased to what s/he hears from the previous interviewee(s).

Suggested coping strategy: Flexibility is required. The enumerators can arrange different interview locations or ask people to stay out of the interview room.

Issue 10: (due to differences in the capacity of explaining ideas or for some other reasons) some people may dominate others in the groups.

Suggested coping strategy: Facilitation skills should be used (ask directly for comments from quiet people) to control the process. If a enumerator observes that someone showing disagreement with the speaker, the enumerator can meet that one in person to ask for more information.

Issue 11: The interviewees provide falsified answers

Suggested coping strategy: This is our most concern. Apart from incorporating triangulation in the process of designing the survey instruments, it is request that the enumerator groups introduce fully the contents and objectives of the survey to build

trust right from the beginning. If there is any information found incorrect, it must be checked immediately in the next interview in the same village.

Issue 12: The interview becomes boring

Suggested coping strategy: Jokes or funny stories can be used then coming back later to the interview. Respondents may be asked to have some candies or drinks.

Issue 13: There are too few people for a focus group discussion

Suggested coping strategy: the discussion should start because normally people will come later. Please also ask the head of village to invite more people to come. If too few people come, it is better to see if the meeting time is suitable.

Issue 14: The enumerators are late

Suggested coping strategy: The enumerators must be on time. They can stay overnight at villages or communes to save traveling time. Besides, back up plans for emergencies should be in place (car broken-up).

Issue 15: The interviewees are not representative

Suggested coping strategy: During the scoping visit, it is important to arrange time and people that are needed for the interview. In reality, if the people coming to the meeting are not the expected one, the interview will still be conducted but more focus more on representative participants.

Issue 16: Time for the meeting is not suitable

Suggested coping strategy: During the scoping visit, it is necessary to ask local people/respondents about the best time for interviews and try to stick with their recommendation.

Issue 17: Notes taken are insufficient (or wrong information is noted)

Suggested coping strategy: If possible, two people should be in charge of taking notes in the interview. After each interview, the survey team should review the gathered information to ensure that all information is accurately recorded in the corresponding questions. The groups may use a new form to record information if needed.

Issue 18: The group members lack knowledge about forestry

Suggested coping strategy: It is not important that an enumerator has to know about forestry. Each person has his/her own qualification or strengths, and he/she can support for others.