



UN-REDD VIET NAM PROGRAMME

GETTING REDD+ READY



If you would like to engage with the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam,
please feel free to contact us at:

UN-REDD PROGRAMME VIET NAM

Suite 805, Artex Building, 172 Ngoc Khanh, Ha Noi, Viet Nam

Tel: (+84) 4 6 273 7912

Fax: (+84) 4 627 37914

Website: www.vietnam-redd.org



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INTRODUCTION

Over the last 18 months, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has tackled the complex task of implementing UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme. To prepare the country for the yet to be finalized Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) mechanism, the Ministry has been supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The four partners have prepared ambitious plans and achieved a suite of positive results. We have produced this booklet to inform you about the Programme by focussing on some key aspects of the six components of readiness.

All the partners would like sincerely thank the Government of Norway for its financial support.



SETTING THE SCENE

Mr. K'Sau has lived with his family in Lam Ha District of Lam Dong Province in Viet Nam's South all his life. Like his parents his livelihood is based mainly on agriculture, although the forest surrounding his village provides vital products and services to his and neighbouring communities too. Still somewhat unsure what exactly the UN-REDD Programme is all about, Mr. K'Sau welcomes its participatory approach. Early in 2010, he participated in the Participatory Carbon Monitoring (PCM) pilot training. He had the following to say: *"We hope that managing our own forests and providing basic forest information through participating in PCM will link to more income for us in the future."*

The enthusiasm of Mr. K'Sau and his fellow villagers is encouraging, as the district needs their support for its ongoing forest restoration activities, support that is desperately needed throughout the country. Much of Viet Nam's forest cover was removed between 1943 and 1990. Since the 1990s, the Government of Viet Nam has made considerable efforts to bring the forest back. From 9.2 million hectares in 1992, the forested area increased to 13.25 million hectares by 2009. Despite the many efforts, the quality of natural forests continues to decline, suffering from fragmentation and degradation. Over two-thirds of Viet Nam's natural forests are poor or regenerating, while rich and closed-canopy forests constitute only 4.6 percent of the total. Biodiverse rich lowland forests have been almost entirely lost. Given the state of the forests in Viet Nam a comprehensive multi-stakeholder approach in forest restoration, conservation and improved management are critical for REDD+ to succeed.



PHỤ ĐỒNG CHÂN - VÕ VĂN NGHỆ

FORESTRY IN VIET NAM



In Viet Nam, forest and forestry land are administered at the central level by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Allocation of land to households, including forestry land is the responsibility of the Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MONRE).

Prior to 1990, policies in support of forest protection were weak. Since 1992, the Government of Viet Nam launched a series of forest-related programs such as Program 327 "Re-greening the barren hills", the Five Million Hectares Reforestation Programme (5MHRP) or Programme 661, Program 147 "support for development of production forest plantations". The Forest Protection and Development Law has been passed by the National Assembly in 1993, and then revised and adopted in 2004.

To support forest management and protection, a series of further policies, decrees, and strategies have been drafted and programs initiated including the Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy 2006 – 2020, the Community Forestry Management (CFM) Pilot Program, Forest Land Reclassification Enforcement and Governance (FLEG), FLEG-T (Trade), the decree on Payment for Forest Environmental Services, the National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change.

Development Program 1: Sustainable forest management and development program

Objectives: To manage, develop and use forest sustainably and effectively to meet the basic demands for forest products for domestic consumption and export, to contribute to national economic growth, stabilization of society, particularly for mountainous ethnic minorities areas, while ensuring the protection functions, biodiversity conservation and providing environmental services contributing to sustainable national development.

(Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy 2006 – 2020)

Viet Nam is moving towards becoming ready to implement REDD+. The Government has initiated numerous measures to advance Viet Nam's REDD+ Readiness.

Various regulatory measures are under preparation and await official presentation to and endorsement by the Government. Within the various ministries having direct or indirect impact on the forests and the effectiveness of REDD+, several policies and targeted legislation are being prepared.



Partnerships and inter-agency collaboration:

The UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme closely collaborates with a number of organizations and projects including the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), The Center for People and Forest (RECOFTC), the Development of Management Information System for Forestry Sector (FORMIS) projects, the Finnish embassy and its supported project.

Contacts have been established with NGOs (e.g. International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Fauna and Flora International (FFI), Mangroves for the Future (MFF), and Winrock International) and CSOs (e.g. Sustainable Rural Development, The Centre of Research and Development in Upland Areas). During 2011, joint implementation of activities is expected to strengthen.

GIZ has indicated its willingness to contribute to the National REDD+ Strategy development. GIZ celebrated its collaboration with Viet Nam in a forestry congress, early September; UN-REDD actively contributed to this congress. GIZ has invited UN-REDD to elaborate the REDD+ Programme and potential for integrating elements of REDD+ in current GIZ-sponsored projects as well as for integrating REDD+ into the new GIZ-Viet Nam strategy which will form the basis of the new GIZ forestry programme, as of 2011.

UN-REDD VIET NAM PROGRAMME

The UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme started in August 2009. It aims to contribute to the outcomes and outputs formulated under the One UN Plan, in particular to Outcome 3: *Economic growth takes into account environmental protection and rational use of natural resources for poverty reduction.*

The long-term objective of the Programme is to assist the Government in developing an effective REDD+ regime.

The specific objective of the Programme is to strengthen institutional and technical capacity of relevant MARD organizations at central, provincial and local levels to ensure that by the end of 2012 Viet Nam is REDD-ready and able to contribute to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

The Programme's interventions comprise three components:



COMPONENT 1

Improve technical and institutional capacity for national coordination to manage REDD activities in Viet Nam.

COMPONENT 2

Improve capacity to manage REDD and provide other Payment for Ecological Services at district-level through sustainable development planning and implementation.

COMPONENT 3

Establish cooperation on information and experiences sharing on REDD implementation in the Lower Mekong Basin, especially among the four countries selected under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam).



National Implementing Partner:

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is the National Implementing Partner of this Programme, following the Prime Minister's approval of the Programme Document in 20th July 2009.

Di Linh and Lam Ha districts, Lam Dong Province have been selected as pilot sites of the National Program.

Lam Dong Province in the Central Highlands is endowed with 618,000 hectares of diverse forests, covering 63 percent of the total area.



Forests cover about 161,000 hectares in Di Linh District has of natural area. The forests in the district have been allocated to six forest owners (three forestry companies and three forest management units). The district has contracted out 37,675 hectares of its forest area to more than 1,000 households of mostly local ethnic minorities. For their protection efforts households receive annually 100,000 Viet Nam dong (or about US\$5) per hectare in compensation.



Lam Ha is a so-called new economic development district. Forests cover about 27,000 hectares. Forest cover is still expanding. Since 1991, the district has restored 400 hectares of forests per year on bare hills and allocated 19,068 hectares (or 25 percent of total forests) to local ethnic minority groups for their management and protection.

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At the proposal of the Director of Forestry (MARD) upon official letter no. 637/LN-TTr-QLR Decision N2614/QĐ-BNN- LN, dated 16/09/2009, the Viet Nam REDD Network and Technical Working Group for REDD were established to share information. The Network is an open-ended and broad-based stakeholder forum chaired by Government, and co-chaired by the donors' representative.

International development partners are also encouraged to participate, including JICA, GIZ, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Norwegian Embassy, Finnish Embassy, SNV and CARE international. In addition, research institutions (e.g. ICRAF, RCREE), universities, the private sector and national and international NGOs are encouraged to join.

The REDD Technical Working Group are then diversified into different Thematic Sub-Technical Working Groups, these consist of:

- (i) Sub-working Group on REDD Governance, which cover issues on REDD governance; government structures and capacity building; forest policies, rules and regulations; external linkages with other government agencies;
- (ii) Sub-working Group on MRV which cover issues on forest data, forest inventory, data management and MRV;
- (iii) Sub-working Group on REDD financing and benefit distribution; and
- (iv) Sub-working Group on Local Implementation of REDD which cover issues of REDD implementation at districts and communities, capacity building, interventions, alternative rural livelihoods, ethnic communities.

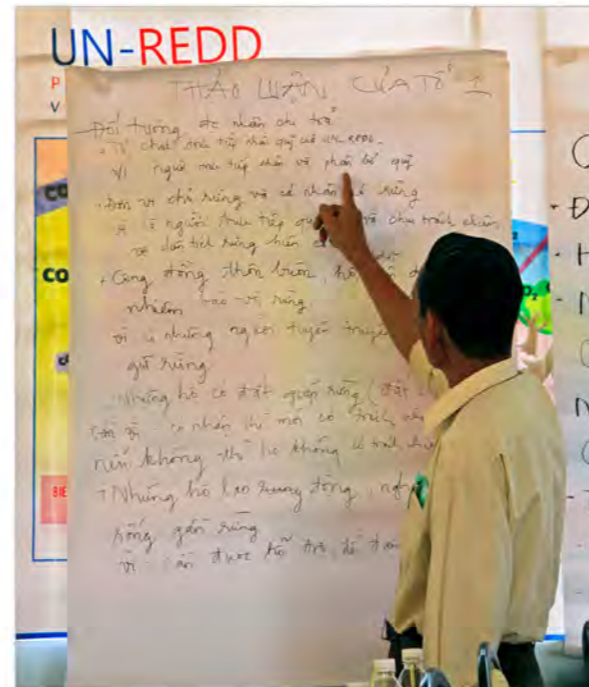


Viet Nam is well-placed to develop a REDD-compliant Benefit Distribution System (BDS) due to many years of experience with similar systems such as the 5-Million Hectare Reforestation Programme and the payments for forest environmental services (PFES) pilot projects. The focus on BDS also capitalizes on Viet Nam's functioning administration, social stability and relatively high degree of tenure security. These are assets that Viet Nam can use to gain a competitive edge in a future international REDD+ regime.

To assist the Government to design a BDS, a team of national and international specialists analyzed several issues and potential options. Fieldwork, literature review, and stakeholder consultations were carried out from September to November 2009. The study identified constraints that need to be addressed in order to create a REDD-compliant BDS, and ways to address them, and generated a number of key policy recommendations. During 2010, additional studies and analyses were undertaken to clarify some additional policy issues, and broad stakeholder consultations on the emerging recommendations are currently underway.

A total of 17 policy decisions, dealing with subjects such as REDD+ Fund design and governance, institutional responsibilities, local payment structuring, anti-corruption measures, and gender, are currently proposed. Following broad consultation, the resulting decisions will be piloted during Phase 2 of the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam, and lessons generated through piloting incorporated into the final REDD+ compliant BDS.

An important feature of the overall benefit distribution system is that the form and structure of local payments should be determined locally, reflecting the diversity of local cultural and social structures throughout the country. The devolution of such decision making will be subject to various measures to eliminate corrupt practices such as elite capture and embezzlement.





FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT



Participation and inclusion are among the human rights principles that guide the United Nations' work at all levels. They include full and effective participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, economic, social, cultural and political development.

As the first UN-REDD Country Pilot Programme, the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme piloted the FPIC (Free, Prior and Informed Consent) process in the two pilot districts.

The eight-step process was implemented over five months in early 2010. Step 5, the village FPIC meetings, were divided into three phases. In the first phase, a total of twenty villages were covered, in the second phase a further thirty-one villages were visited, and in the third phase an additional twenty-five villages. The purpose of breaking the village meetings into three phases was to allow lessons from earlier phases to be incorporated into revised procedures for later phases. The last step comprised an independent evaluation and verification.

FREE, PRIOR, AND INFORMED CONSENT




4
Contact village heads and villagers for preparing FPIC meeting.




2 & 3
Recruitment, training, practicing and experience learning to be ready for the village meetings.



1
Communal and/or district level workshops to raise awareness. Interlocutors distribute leaflets, put posters and interact with villagers.




0 Preparatory step:
- Gather legal rationales for village level FPIC activities.
- Prepare communication materials
- Consult with relevant authorities at provincial/district levels about FPIC implementation.

5
Interlocutors explains the significance of CC, REDD & expected UN-REDD activities; reply local people's queries & help their own discussions.



6
Through polling & voting by ballot



7
Document relevant information on consent.



8
Independent verification and evaluation, dissemination of experience and lessons learnt.



Experience and lessons learned for application of FPIC for REDD+:

- Education and awareness raising at all levels are essential, and are more difficult than might be assumed.
- A detailed analysis of the social, ethnological and linguistic status of the target area and spatial distribution of forests, ethnic minority groups and forest-dependent communities is necessary in planning an efficient and effective FPIC exercise. For large-scale FPIC, good linkages to authorities holding such information are important.
- The FPIC process needs to be institutionalized, and should logically be mainstreamed into socio-economic development and land-use planning processes.
- The variation in the capacities and experience of FPIC facilitators meant that training needs to be closely tailored to the needs of individuals.
- The local FPIC events need to be multi-phased with an introductory session, followed by an opportunity for the community to reflect, followed by another consultation to allow for any new questions or concerns to be addressed. Only then can effective and reliable decision making be expected.

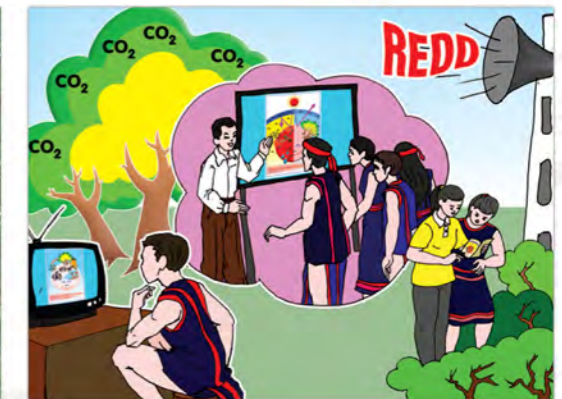
PARTICIPATORY CARBON MONITORING



Participatory Carbon Monitoring (PCM) is being developed and tested as a crucial approach for accounting carbon in REDD+ forests. Though still in the early stages of conceptual and methodological development, PCM is being designed as an integral part of the larger MRV (Measurement, Reporting and Verification) framework. PCM enhances awareness raising of forest managers and users, has the potential to generate data for reporting on the national GHG inventory together with the National Forest Inventory, and can also provide a basis for calculation of payments – if so decided.

A PCM manual has been developed. It has been field-tested in two sites with participants from the Protection Forest Management Board (PFMB), the Forest Protection Department (FPD), sub-FPD, and households of PFMBs.

The testing included indoor training on the purpose and methods of carbon measurement for the five carbon pools (and for measurement of carbon in herbs, shrubs and grass). It was followed by a field surveying practicum where participants practiced using different tools for measurement and monitoring activities. Participants learned to use tools and techniques such as GPS and clinometers, laying out sample plots, identifying tree species and measuring tree diameters. It was observed that the level of comprehension of participants (particularly those from ethnic minority groups) were higher than expected, which bodes well for the future. The next step will be to roll out PCM throughout the districts, with a session for training-of-trainers.



A LOOK TO THE FUTURE



Currently, a Phase II (2011-2014) of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme is being planned. This second phase will introduce REDD+ in the 40-forested provinces of Viet Nam and it will support full-scale implementation of REDD+ in six provinces. In the latter, the Programme will work with local participants for REDD-compliant forest management. It will also start to make payments to participants on the basis of their involvement and actual net reductions in emissions.

In January 2011, the Government established the inter-ministerial Viet Nam REDD+ Steering Committee and the Viet Nam REDD+ Office. It is expected that later in 2011 the National REDD+ Program will be officially launched. The UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme actively supports the Government in the development of the National REDD+ Program and will strengthen institutional capacity to manage and operate its functions. The second phase of the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme will also be closely linked to the Viet Nam REDD+ Steering Committee and the Viet Nam REDD+ Office in order to effectively operate the National REDD+ Program in the near future.