



THE CENTER FOR  
PEOPLE AND FORESTS

# Community forestry adaptation roadmap to 2020 for Vietnam







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## Introduction

During the course of the twenty-first century, Asia and the Pacific's forest-dependent communities will bear the brunt of climate change impacts – specifically, the 2.2 billion people living in the region's rural areas, and the 450 million people in the Asia-Pacific region who rely on forest resources to some degree. Forestry and climate change policies, laws, projects, financing and capacity building efforts must address these people's interests through climate change adaptation.

Community forestry supports local level climate change adaptation by enhancing resilience in multiple ways: supporting livelihoods and income, increasing food security, leveraging social capital and knowledge, reducing disaster risks and regulating microclimates. However, adaptation planning has, by and large, not included community forestry as a viable climate change adaptation tool. To address this, RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests has developed a set of roadmaps to help guide the meaningful inclusion of community forestry in climate change adaptation planning through the year 2020.

To develop the roadmaps, RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests conducted a desk-based literature review on the link between community forestry and climate change adaptation in the region, and in the selected countries. Based on the review, a ten-question interview template was drafted to gather primary data from experts, defined as practitioners, policy-makers and researchers with experience in community forestry and/or adaptation in the included countries. The information provided by these interviews informed the analysis and recommendation of these reports.

## Key messages and recommendations

The Vietnamese government legally recognized community forestry in 2004 and has piloted community forestry in various parts of the country's upland areas. Greater attention is needed to link community forestry with climate adaptation in upland areas, where it has a vital role to play in enhancing the climate resilience of local communities. For coastal mangrove forests on the other hand, adaptation is increasingly being recognized as a key issue. However, there is a need to scale up mangrove adaptation projects incorporate community participation in resource management.

The most immediate and pressing actions needed to strengthen the role of community forestry in climate adaptation in Vietnam are the following:

- **Policies and planning** – Community forestry should be expanded in support of the 'action plan' within the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention and mainstreamed in provincial climate change action plans.
- **Legal reform** – Timber harvesting regulations should continue to be simplified and tested with local community members to refine and improve their clarity, as this forms an important source of livelihood diversification for climate adaptation. Increased investment is required for the legal education of both local government and local communities regarding community forestry and timber harvesting regulations. There is also a gap in the national legal framework for community forestry in mangrove forests. These forests are under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, though they cannot decide on, or approve community forestry management plans in mangrove forests, as community forestry falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. It is important that the two ministries coordinate together to address this challenge in expanding community forestry in mangrove ecosystems.
- **Project development** – Ensure that further community forestry mangrove based restoration projects are well integrated with other coastal development plans to boost complementarities and reduce risks of conflicting aims. Take lessons learned from mangrove restoration projects led by non-governmental organizations over the past decades and apply them to government led mangrove restoration projects, emphasizing the need to harness local ecological knowledge while taking care to maximize survival rates of mangrove seedlings. There is a need to address the imbalance between the number of community forestry adaptation projects in coastal and upland areas.
- **Public funding and private investment** – The Vietnam Administration of Forestry should consider a dedicated funding project to support community-forestry climate adaptation. Readdress the balance of funding for climate adaptation so that community forestry based adaptation in upland areas receive comparable support that currently provided in coastal areas.
- **Capacity development** – Scale-up efforts for basic awareness-raising on climate change adaptation across both national and local government and identify 'climate change champions' outside of agencies which typically deal with climate change issues. Harness Vietnam's high level of academic research capacity for climate change adaptation and community forestry and bring together these research communities to share knowledge and form recommendations for how to progress community forestry based climate adaptation in the country. The use of a trained "local resource person" in community forest groups (as used by the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal) would facilitate community forest vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning at the local level. A coordinated effort is also needed to ensure REDD+ trainings also disseminate information on adaptation.

## Acronyms

BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (Germany)
CFM	Community Forest Management
Ha	hectare
DRAGON	Delta Research and Global Observation Network
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NTP	National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change
REDD+	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation +
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries





## Overview and key statistics

Key statistics	
<b>Total population</b>	88,7745,500 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total land area (ha)</b>	31,007,0001
<b>Total forested area (ha)</b>	13,515,0002
<b>Forest under community management (ha)</b>	3,809,000 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Forest-dependent population</b>	25,000,000 <sup>3</sup>
<b>Rate of deforestation (ha/year)</b>	+144,000 <sup>4</sup> (2005 -2010 average); +270,000 (2000-2005 average); +236,000 (1990-2000 average) <sup>5</sup>
<b>Global Adaptation Institute (GAIN) Index<sup>6</sup></b>	<p>Overall Ranking: 109 (out of 176 countries)            Overall Score: 56.3 (100 is best)  <i>Better than expected given GDP/capita<sup>7</sup></i></p> <p>Vulnerability: 0.373 (0 is best)  <i>Less vulnerable than expected given GDP/capita</i></p> <p>Readiness: 0.499 (1 is best)  <i>Less ready than expected given GDP/capita</i></p>
<b>Climate Risk Index<sup>8</sup></b>	Vietnam is the 6th country in the world most impacted by extreme weather events between 1991 and 2010.
<b>Major expected climate change impacts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased occurrence of extreme rains, causing flash floods.</li> <li>• By 2050, more than 1 million people in the Mekong Delta will be at risk from coastal erosion and related land loss.</li> <li>• Vietnam will be one of top 12 countries most impacted by sea-level rise with a projected impact on up to 16 percent of its area, 35 percent of its people and 35 percent of its GDP, if sea level rises by five meters.</li> <li>• Rice production is predicted to decline dramatically by end of the century due to submergence of tens of thousands of hectares (ha) of cropland and saline intrusion.</li> <li>• Increased risk of prolonged droughts with more than 12 million people to be affected by increased water stress.</li> <li>• Increased health risks from heat waves, dengue fever and malaria.</li> </ul>
<b>Level of national adaptation planning and preparedness (H/M/L)</b>	High
<b>Reference to forestry in national adaptation planning (H/M/L)</b>	Medium
<b>Adaptation practices of relevance to community forestry</b>	Livelihood enhancement and diversification; mangrove restoration to mitigate erosion and coastal flooding; protection and development of forests to protect sea and river dykes; landslide and erosion prevention; provision of food and water during drought or crop failure.

1. The World Bank, (2012). *Indicators*. Available online: [data.worldbank.org/indicator](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator) (Last accessed July 16, 2013).

2. Forest Protection Department. *Vietnam Forest Data*. Available online: <http://www.kiendlam.org.vn/Desktop.aspx/List/So-lieu-dien-bien-rung-hang-nam/> (last accessed 22nd January 2013).

3. Chao, S. (2012). *Forest Peoples: Numbers across the world*. Forest Peoples Programme. Available online: [http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2012/05/forest-peoples-numbers-across-world-final\\_0.pdf](http://www.forestpeoples.org/sites/fpp/files/publication/2012/05/forest-peoples-numbers-across-world-final_0.pdf) (last accessed Oct 21, 2013).

4. FAO, (2010). *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2010*.

5. *ibid*

6. Global Adaptation Institute Index (GAIN), (2011). Viet Nam. Available Online: <http://index.gain.org/country/viet-nam> (last accessed February 28, 2013).

7. There is a strong correlation between a country's GDP per capita and its overall and readiness scores, and an inverse correlation with vulnerability. To account for this relationship, each of the overall, vulnerability and readiness scores have corresponding "GDP Adjusted" scores as well.

8. Germanwatch, (2012) *Global Climate Risk Index*.

## Community forestry in Vietnam

Vietnam has made great strides over the past decade in supporting community involvement in natural resource management; however, initiatives are still largely in the pilot stages.

The Government of Vietnam has supported Community Forestry Management under various donor and national programs over the past few decades, specifically on issues such as:

- i) The process of forest land allocation to households / household groups;
- ii) The decentralization of forest management; and
- iii) The development of pro-poor mechanisms targeting those groups who are involved in implementing innovative forest management solutions.

However, the 2004 Law on Forest Protection and Development was instrumental in cementing village-level management of forests into law.<sup>9</sup>

In 2006, the Vietnam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) established the Community Forestry Management Pilot Program. The aim was to develop an easy-to-follow procedure for implementing community forestry, with national guidelines on key elements such as integrated land-use planning, benefit sharing, as well as forest and financial management. By mid-2009, the government produced the *Handbook for Community Forest Management*. During the pilot period, the Government handed 17,000 ha of forest to communities and trained more than 150 forestry officials and 665 household leaders. By the end of the program, the 64 participating villages had approved management plans and received funding, half of which had actually begun implementing the sustainable timber harvesting plans.

While the preparation of regulatory and technical guidance is viewed more or less as a success, limitations have been identified including:

- Insufficient time to fully field-test the model;
- Overly complex and technical guidelines, procedures and regulations (the administrative procedures for harvesting, which have historically been applied to State Forest Enterprises, are too complex for the CFM context).<sup>10</sup>
- A focus on timber production within the Handbook for Community Forestry Management that neglects the important roles of non-timber forest products and forest ecosystem services;
- A lack of capacity in participatory methodology to support forest allocation, community forest assessment and planning.

The recently reorganized Vietnam Administration of Forestry (formerly the Department of Forestry) is currently implementing a second phase of national CFM piloting, which will end by December 2013.

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<sup>9</sup> RECOFTC (2011). *Community Forestry Management in Vietnam*. Available Online: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/Community-Forestry-in-Vietnam>

<sup>10</sup> Huy, B. (2007) *Community Forest Management (CFM) in Vietnam: Sustainable Forest Management and Benefit Sharing*.

## Expected climate change impacts in Vietnam

According to the Global Adaptation Institute Index as of 2013, Vietnam is the 77<sup>th</sup> most vulnerable country to the impacts of climate change and the 62<sup>nd</sup> country least ready country to adapt to them. Vietnam is highly vulnerable to climate change due to its relatively high rural population (72 percent) and the fact that 20 percent of its population lives within 10 meters of sea level. Meanwhile, the country's overall readiness remains low due to a low level of investment freedom,<sup>11</sup> voice and accountability and tertiary education.<sup>12</sup>

Vietnam's National Climate Change Strategy warns that average temperatures could increase by two to three degrees Celsius by the end of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This change elicits significant concerns for coastal and inland areas alike:

### Coastal areas

Due to polar ice cap melt and thermal expansion ocean levels are set to rise by between 0.75 centimeters to one meter. If these predictions are realized around 40 percent of the Mekong River Delta, 11 percent of the Red River Delta and three percent of other regions becoming submerged underwater. This includes two percent of Ho Chi Minh City underwater, Vietnam's commercial capital, home to over seven million underwater. Any slump in production in the huge Mekong Delta 'rice bowl' will have grave national and global food security implications, since Vietnam is the world's second-largest rice exporter.<sup>13</sup>

### Upland areas

While coastal climate adaptation may be the priority in Vietnam, there are still pressing climate adaptation needs in inland areas, particularly in the uplands. These areas, particularly the northern mountain region, suffer from the most severe impoverishment in the country and communities often have inadequate access to land, water and agricultural support services. This region is vulnerable to flash floods, which have increased in frequency and intensity in recent years. In general the region has been facing more severe and unpredictable extreme events, which also includes droughts and severely impacts agricultural production and associated livelihoods.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>. Constraints on the flow of investment capital, including rules for foreign and domestic investment; restrictions on payments, transfers, and capital transactions; labor regulations, corruption, red tape, weak infrastructure, and political and security conditions.

<sup>12</sup>. Global Adaptation Institute Index (GAIN), (2011). *Viet Nam*. Available Online: <http://index.gain.org/country/viet-nam> (last accessed Aug 26, 2013).

<sup>13</sup>. Walker-Leigh, V., (2012). *Vietnam's climate woes ignite national strategy*. May 10th 2012. Available online: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/NE10Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NE10Ae02.html) (last accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>14</sup>. FAO, (2012). *Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation in Vietnam*. Available online: <http://www.fao.org/climatechange/77134/en/> (Last accessed January 18, 2013)





## Community forestry and climate change adaptation

Community based mangrove management and community forestry offer vital opportunities for adaptation to climate change for both coastal and inland communities. Mangrove forests play a critical role for coastal communities and marine ecosystems alike, protecting coastlines from storm surges, flooding and erosion. They also serve communities as fish nurseries and a source of timber. However mangrove ecosystems themselves are vulnerable to climate change, including temperature and precipitation changes, sea level rise and coastal flooding. Peat swamp forests are another forest ecosystem sensitive to climate change. These forests are critical as they act as a 'sponge' that gradually releases water in times of drought, they are also important in sediment and nutrient retention and retain a large carbon pool.<sup>15</sup>

Community forestry approaches to mangrove ecosystem management have been shown to be one of the most effective methods to both restore mangrove ecosystems and maximize their contribution to support local livelihood resilience. For example, in the Da Loc commune in north-central Vietnam, communities have been responsible for maintaining mangroves for their protective function, with the leadership and guidance of CARE International. This Community Based Mangrove Reforestation project has not only succeeded in restoring and further expanding mangrove ecosystems for their protective function but has also increased local adaptive capacity through diversifying livelihood sources from valuable brackish aquatic species such as mollusks, oysters, hard and soft crabs, coy fish and fish.<sup>16</sup> (see Box 1 for more information).

In upland areas community forestry has a major role to play in strengthening the climate resilience of local communities. In these areas community forestry has an equal or even greater role in strengthening community climate resilience through diversifying and supporting livelihoods and income, increasing food security, leveraging social capital and knowledge, reducing disaster risks and regulating microclimates.

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<sup>15</sup> Moore, P et al ,(2002). *Communities in flames: proceedings of an international conference on community involvement in fire management*. FAO and Project FireFight South East Asia.

<sup>16</sup> Suzuki, R (ed.), (2012). *Linking Adaptation and Mitigation through Community Forestry: Case Studies from Asia*. RECOFTC. Available online: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/resources/Linking-Adaptation-and-Mitigation-through-Community-Forestry-Case-Studies-from-Asia.php> (last accessed Oct 15, 2013).



## CASE STUDY: Mangrove Restoration in Da Loc

Project Duration: 1989 - ongoing  
Project Managers: Various, including,  
Japanese Red Cross, Save The Children,  
CARE International, The Community Based  
Mangrove Management Board  
Partners: Government of Vietnam  
Location: Da Loc commune, Than Hoa province,  
north-central Vietnam

*(Photo Credit: Hou Kalyan, Phnom Balang Community Protected Area, Chykreang district, Kvav commune, Siem Reap province. [ 20 November 2012]*

### Project outcomes and lessons learned:

Da Loc commune is vulnerable to increasing extreme weather events. The damage caused by Typhoon Damrey in 2005 was a pivotal moment for the commune, leading to mangrove reforestation initiatives for disaster risk management. Involving local communities as direct partners led to this project's success compared to earlier less participatory initiatives. In the interim years required for the mangroves to reach maturity, unanticipated secondary benefits have resulted. In addition to the income benefits from enhanced aquaculture, mangroves also serve as powerful carbon sinks.

The success of mangrove restoration in Da Loc has benefited greatly from local knowledge, as exemplified from their barnacle removal practices. Based on local experience, community members new knew the stage when barnacles had the thinnest shells and planned the best times to remove them manually. In this way, community members were able to avoid use of expensive and harmful chemical pesticides, while also improving the survival rate of young trees.<sup>17</sup>

This project has shed light on a number of important issues:

- Official recognition of community management rights over the mangroves has been critical in ensuring the sustainability and commitment of local communities. However, these rights are short term (five years). The sustainable management of the mangroves is contingent on establishing longer-term community rights.
- Trade-offs have emerged that may threaten the project. The income potential of aquaculture practices that are destructive to the mangroves remains a strong temptation.
- Unless equitable benefit-sharing mechanisms are ensured and participatory decision making processes are incorporated for the well being of vulnerable community members, there is a risk that the success of the project will be compromised.
- Pre-existing, locally adapted knowledge can be highly beneficial to projects. Understanding and incorporation of local knowledge may lead to innovations that enhance effectiveness and improve uptake by local communities.

From the RECOFTC publication '*Community Forestry in Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation: Case Studies from Asia*', available to download: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/resources/Linking-Adaptation-and-Mitigation-through-Community-Forestry-Case-Studies-from-Asia.php>

<sup>17</sup>. Ibid

The following sections (policies and planning, legal reform, project development, public funding and private investment and capacity development) summarize existing approaches and provide recommendations on how community forestry and community based mangrove management can be used to advance climate change adaptation in Vietnam. A roadmap diagram at the end of this report visually displays recommended actions for relevant stakeholders to uptake through the year 2020.



# Policies and planning

## Key institutions

Vietnam's long history of adapting to natural disasters is reflected in the current institutional structure. The Government of Vietnam has allocated responsibility for climate change adaptation and forestry issues to six key government agencies:

- **The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MoNRE)** is assigned by the Prime Minister as the leading agency for climate change in Vietnam. This includes the Department of Hydro-Metrological and Climate Change, the management agency for climate change issues and the National Hydro-Meteorology Agency, which serves as the technical agency in charge of weather forecasts, sea level rise and hydrological information. This Ministry submitted the government's initial national communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 2003. This included preliminary assessments of the potential impacts of climate change on major economic activities, an overview of vulnerable sectors and some adaptation measures for water resources, agriculture, coastal zones, forestry and other sectors.<sup>18</sup>
- **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)** is the leading agency for dealing with climate change in the agriculture sector. This includes the Directorate of Forestry and Directorate of Water Resources, the latter being the technical agency and resident body for MARD's climate change program (food security, rural development and water resources management). The Central Committee for Flood and Storm Control, situated under MARD, and is responsible for the coordination, planning, monitoring and evaluation of flood protection and disaster mitigation actions.<sup>19</sup>
- **Ministry of Planning and Investment** is the lead agency for program planning and resource mobilization for climate change programs. This includes the Department of Science, Education and Natural Resources and Environment, which is in charge of policy formulation and fund management on climate change. Management of Official Development Assistance projects is assigned to the Department of Foreign Economic Relations.
- **Ministry of Finance** is the leading agency for finance management, budget allocation and risk financing (trust fund, risk insurance) for climate change. This includes the Department of Public Finance, assigned by the Ministry of Finance Minister to be in charge of policy formulation and management of fund and projects on climate change.
- **Ministry of Education and Training** is the leading agency for integration of climate change education in school.
- **Ministry of Information and Communications** is the agency in charge of public awareness-raising, communications and information dissemination.

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<sup>18</sup>. Oxfam, (2008). *Vietnam: Climate change, adaptation and poor people*.

<sup>19</sup>. Powell, N, Osbeck, M, Bach Tan S.B, and Toan, V.C. *World Resources Report Case Study. Mangrove Restoration and Rehabilitation for Climate Change Adaptation in Vietnam*. World Resources Report, Washington DC.



There is no Ministry of Forestry in Vietnam – the highest body is the Vietnam Administration of Forestry under MARD. MARD is responsible for agriculture and forests, though the land beneath forest cover is under management of MONRE. Therefore the ability to formulate and implement climate change action plans in the forestry sector is reportedly slower than in other sectors due to the need for two ministries to approve plans. However, a Joint Circular (#07/2011/TTLT-BNNPTNT-BTNMT) has been issued for the two ministries to work together more closely in dealing with communities. As a result, it has been easier for these two ministries to work together on climate change adaptation and forestry issues.<sup>20</sup>

To compliment the Ministerial work, national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Vietnam have formed the Climate Change Working Group with the goal of facilitating information sharing, capacity development and coordination among NGOs and the government in responding to climate change.<sup>21</sup> The Climate Change Working Group has a thematic group dedicated to adaptation, though forestry is mostly referenced with regard to Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation + (REDD+) and Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) (REDD+ falls under mitigation thematic group). Vietnamese NGOs have formed the Vietnamese NGOs & Climate Change Working Group, also with a subgroup on adaptation. A memorandum of understanding with the Government of Vietnam was signed, which gives the two networks a role in supporting the Government in implementation of the National Target Program (NTP).<sup>22</sup>

## Key policies

There are four key policies in Vietnam that relate to climate adaptation, including the following:

### The National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change (NTP)

Formally approved by the Prime Minister in 2008, the NTP assigns MONRE with the task to coordinate, development of an overall climate change strategy for Vietnam, including goals for adaptation and the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. The document lays out responsibilities for ministries and government agencies and asks all cities and provinces to devise their own climate change action plans by the end of 2013, to be implemented by 2015. The NTP also aims to assess climate change impacts and ensure the incorporation of assessments into development and investment plans.<sup>23</sup>

Forestry is identified as a sensitive sector in the NTP, which states the need for reforestation to protect upstream watersheds, mangrove restoration programs to protect sea dykes and increased communication with communities who depend on forests.<sup>24</sup> Specific activities mentioned in the NTP relating to adaptation for forests include the following:

- Develop and implement an action plan with specific goals, tasks, projects and program which need to be executed in the fields of agriculture, forestry and fisheries with an effort to adapt and mitigate climate change; led by MARD, coordination by MONRE, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and other related ministries, branches and regions.

<sup>20</sup>. Personal communications, Ngo Tri Dung (2012).

<sup>21</sup>. VUFO-NGO Resource Centre, (2011). *Climate Change Working Group*. Available online: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/ccwg> (Last accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>22</sup>. Personal communications, Nguyen Thi Yen (2012).

<sup>23</sup>. IRIN humanitarian news and analysis (2010). *Vietnam: Government leads region in climate change challenge*.

<sup>24</sup>. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, (2008). *Draft National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change*.

- Conduct an impact assessment for protection forests and coastal forests with an effort to minimize natural calamity and climate change. This should include specific goals and tasks to be accompanied with the method of the implementation; led by MARD, coordination by Central Committee for Floods and Storm Control, Ministry of Planning and Investment, MONRE, other related ministry / branches, areas and regions.<sup>25</sup>

## Vietnam’s National Climate Change Strategy

Building on the NTP for Climate Change launched in 2008, the National Strategy covers both adaptation and mitigation, while setting guideposts for the short, medium and long term with three action phases running to the end of 2012, from 2013-2025 and 2016-2050. The latter phase is expected to counter the expected rapid increase in greenhouse gas emissions implied in Vietnam’s ambitious industrialization plans.

The Strategy also includes ‘Strategic Tasks’, which include developing wide-ranging actions on food and water security, sea level rise, increasing forest cover and renewable energy use, emission reductions, community capacity development for adaptation and scientific and technological development. Provinces and cities are tasked with developing their own plans, merged with national goals, involving the private sector and civil society.<sup>26</sup>

## The National Strategy for Disaster Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020

Vietnam’s National Strategy for Natural Disaster Risk Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020 makes multiple references to the use of forestry in adaptation (see Table 2).<sup>27</sup>

Table 1 - Regional Division of references to forestry made in Vietnam’s National Strategy for Natural Disaster Risk Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020

Region	Disaster prevention
The Red River Delta and the North Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reforest to protect upland watersheds</li> <li>• Plant mangrove and protection forests</li> </ul>
The Central Coast, the Eastern South and Islands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase forestation</li> </ul>
The Mekong River Delta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish planning of flood control, to be proactive in flood prevention, reasonably use land and forest resources and favorable natural conditions of the region</li> </ul>
Mountainous areas and Central Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Properly plant and exploit forests</li> </ul>

While the guidance given above is very general in nature, further detail is provided in the ‘action plan’ section of the strategy document which outlines the following targets for ‘Programs on forestation and protection of upstream forests’:

<sup>25</sup>. Ibid

<sup>26</sup>. Walker-Leigh, V, (2012). *Vietnam’s climate woes ignite national strategy*. Asia Times. Available online: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/NE10Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NE10Ae02.html) (last accessed January 10, 2013).

<sup>27</sup>. Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2007). *National Strategy for Natural Disaster, Prevention, Response and Mitigation to 2020*.



- Establish, manage, protect, develop and sustainably use 16.24 million ha of forestry land; increase the area of forest coverage to 42-43 percent by 2010 and to 47 percent by 2020;
- Pay attention to develop and explore non-wood forestry products in the areas of protection forests to make forest protection beneficial to local people;
- Plant trees to protect dyke systems.

The plan designates responsibility for these actions to 'MARD, locals,' but does not specify approaches for how they will work together. Nevertheless, there are positive linkages to community forestry in the plan, particularly recognizing the need to develop and explore non-wood forestry products to increase the benefits of forest protection for local people. By assigning responsibility for the action plan to 'locals,' there is opportunity for large-scale involvement from community members, with great potential to employ community forestry approaches.

### The Action Plan Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector, Period 2008-2020

The Action Plan Framework under MARD references a number of planned activities relating to forests and climate change adaptation, in the following sections:<sup>28</sup>

- **2.2.9** – A 2009-2015 study is proposed to forecast the impacts of climate change in biodiversity, forest ecosystems and wetlands and propose adaptation measures, chaired by Forestry Research Institutes. The funding sources are proposed to be MARD and external agencies.
- **3.8** – The development of policy and mechanisms for the management, protection, development and sustainable use of forest and forest land resources, chaired by the Department of Forestry and agencies under MARD. This includes policy and mechanisms developed for the management, protection, development and sustainable use of 16.24 million ha for planned forest development. This includes a rate of forestland area increase from 42-43 percent in 2010 and 47 percent in 2020, with the funding sources being MARD and external agencies.
- **5.4** – The development of a tree-planting program (2008-2020) for wave protection of sea dyke system, chaired by the Department of Forestry (now the Vietnam Administration of Forestry) Department of Dyke Management and Storm Control. The funding sources are proposed to be MARD and external agencies.
- **5.3.7** – The development of a research and planning program (2010-2020) for forest protection and development to protect sea dykes and coastal areas. This would be chaired by the Department of Forestry and collaborating agencies under MARD, with funding sources being the MARD and external agencies.

Each of these activities has strong potential to incorporate community forestry approaches and groups in their implementation, from community-based research to the 'sustainable use of forest and forest land resources'. However direct references to community forestry are currently lacking in these plans.

<sup>28</sup> Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (2008). *Action Plan Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Period 2008-2020*.

## Recommendations for policies and planning

- **Expand the role of community forestry in relevant adaptation plans**, including the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention 'Action Plan,' and Action Plan Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in the Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Period 2008-2020. Community forestry can contribute to the Plan's restoration and afforestation goals for the national forest estate from 42-43 percent in 2010 to 47 percent by 2020.
- **Leverage community forestry to develop non-wood forestry enterprises in protection forests**, as identified in the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention as a means to enhance adaptation benefits for local people in these areas.
- **Update the handbook for community forestry management** to include greater emphasis on supporting alternative livelihoods through Non-Timber Forest Products.
- **Mainstream community forestry into provincial climate change action plans** for forested provinces, as mandated by the National Climate Change Strategy.







## Legal reform

While there has been progress in the supporting legal framework for community forestry in Vietnam in recent years, there remain a number of key areas that require improvement. Reforms are necessary to secure rights and strengthen management practices for local people, thus maximizing the role community forestry can play for the national climate adaptation process.

## Reducing timber harvesting complexity and accelerating the land allocation process

One of the critiques of the first phase of the CFM pilot project under MARD was that harvesting guidelines were too complex and resource intensive for communities. For example, some projects found that the plan preparation and approval process is so costly and time-consuming that resulting income from actual harvesting is just enough to break even. As a result there have not been sufficient funds for routine forest protection tasks, which has reduced the overall viability of the projects.

Steps by MARD have recently been taken to issue new guidelines that allow local communities to prepare their own harvesting plan and require district authorities to approve the plan (or not) within 10 days, whereas previously this had taken two months. With these barriers removed, CFM has become more economically viable, at least in good quality forests.<sup>29</sup> There have also been other attempts to reduce complexity for local communities, such as the Handbook for Community Forest Management. However, this handbook has yet to be properly refined and tested and initial feedback suggests that it and the regulations it covers remain too complex and technical especially for the sub national level.<sup>30</sup>

According to villagers interviewed for a joint study between the International Union for Conservation of Nature and RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests, the transaction costs of participating in CFM exceeded the financial benefits. This will become a growing issue in Vietnam because most of the 2.7 million ha of forest lands under Commune People's Committee control that are scheduled to be allocated to communities by 2020 is of poor quality. If communities are given new, but temporary authority, they may be tempted to harvest as much as they can, as quickly they can ("cut and run"), before policy changes and they are shut out of the forest again (the same phenomena has been seen in China where household forest allocation was followed by surges of deforestation). Policy and tenure stability are therefore vital, as is a political culture that does not punish intelligent risk-taking by local government officials.<sup>31</sup> Nearly 20 percent of the forest estate (some 2.5 million ha) remains unallocated, though most of this is earmarked for communities. Its long-term distribution needs to be a higher priority.<sup>32</sup>

To enhance the pro-poor focus on community forestry management there are a number of other areas that require legal attention, such as developing an equitable distribution of forest resources among recipients and pro-poor mechanisms for benefit distribution.

<sup>29</sup> IUCN, (2011). *Future of Community Forest Management in Vietnam: Workshop Summary*. Available online: [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_recoftc\\_cfm\\_meeting\\_june\\_2011\\_summary\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_recoftc_cfm_meeting_june_2011_summary_final_en.pdf) (Last accessed January 14, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> RECOFTC, (2011). *Challenges for Vietnam. Issues ahead for expanding Community Forestry in the country*. Available online: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/Challenges-for-Vietnam> (Last accessed January 14, 2013).

<sup>31</sup> IUCN, (2011). *Future of Community Forest Management in Vietnam: Workshop Summary*. Available online: [http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn\\_recoftc\\_cfm\\_meeting\\_june\\_2011\\_summary\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/iucn_recoftc_cfm_meeting_june_2011_summary_final_en.pdf) (Last accessed January 14, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> RECOFTC, (2011). *Challenges for Vietnam. Issues ahead for expanding Community Forestry in the country*. Available online: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/Challenges-for-Vietnam> (Last accessed January 14, 2013).

## Awareness raising for local communities on community forestry

In general, local people in Vietnam lack capacity to understand the complex community forestry guidelines. There is a need for awareness raising to increase local understanding and participation in the community forestry framework. This is a long-term process, which would likely start with the identification and prioritization of major problems as defined by local people, followed by the interpretation of laws that relate to these problems into the dissemination of revised, easy-to-understand guidelines. Various forms of communication (e.g., radio, posters, pictures, leaflets and trainings) could then build awareness and understanding among all villagers.<sup>33</sup>

## Applying community forestry legal framework in mangrove areas

There is currently a gap in the legal framework for community forestry in mangrove forests due to conflicting government structures and procedures. Mangrove ecosystems fall under the jurisdiction of MONRE, however MONRE cannot decide or approve formal CFM plans, as this is the responsibility of MARD. There are some pilot cases, such as the Da Loc project (see Box 1) that have facilitated a Community Based Mangrove Reforestation approach, though this has required dedicated time and resources to navigate the legal framework. If community forestry is to be scaled up in mangrove ecosystems, greater coordination is needed between MONRE and MARD to address this issue.

### Recommendations for legal reform

- **Simplify timber-harvesting regulations** and test them with local community members to refine and improve their clarity. Sustainable harvest and sale of timber can be a key alternative source of income, increasing climate resilience for local people.
- **Increase investment for training and education regarding timber harvesting** regulations and community forestry for both local government agencies and local communities alike.
- **Establish a cross-ministerial mangroves working group or committee** between MONRE and MARD to coordinate the support the approval of community forestry in mangrove forests.
- **Mainstream pro-poor benefit sharing mechanisms** within community forestry guidelines, drawing on lessons learned from both domestic and international experience.
- **Increase government financial support for afforestation** of forests allocated to communities with low timber reserves, particularly during the early phases of allocation when there is little income to reinvest from community forests.
- **Utilize REDD+ funding resources to drive forward the legal recognition of community forestry** and to support communities in signing legal agreements to manage forestland.
- **Amend the 2003 Land Law** make sure people are managing forests and have the right to repossess and negotiate with concessions.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid



## Project development

The majority of forest-based adaptation projects undertaken in Vietnam are mangrove restoration and rehabilitation projects (especially to protect sea and river dykes) with only a small number of community forestry-based climate adaptation projects underway in upland areas.

Vietnam's experience suggests that adaptation approaches with a single objective, such as protecting coastal infrastructure from sea level rise, can lead to conflicts of interest that hinder implementation, especially when local communities are not involved. Parts of the coastal zone cannot be effectively managed in isolation and there is a strong need for integrated approaches with participation of all affected stakeholders, applying both engineering and ecosystem approaches, such as the restoration of mangrove forest.<sup>34</sup>

The principle functions promoted through mangrove restoration and rehabilitation differ regionally. In north and central Vietnam, mangrove restoration and rehabilitation has been promoted for Disaster Risk Reduction and thus its protective function is prioritized. This is reflected in northern Vietnam's most significant mangrove restoration program, led by the International Red Cross. Projects have been run in eight provinces with 18,000 ha of mangroves planted along a 100-kilometer stretch of sea dykes. However, the Red Cross program support ended in 2006, and projects have faced sustainability challenges, partly borne out a lack of continued economic incentives for communities to continue mangrove restoration.

In southern Vietnam, some attempts have been made to promote and design mangrove restoration and rehabilitation with a greater focus on poverty alleviation and livelihood diversification. In the Coastal Wetlands Protection and Development Project, Mekong Delta (1997 to 2007), forest land leases were issued to nearly 8,000 households and involved capacity development and training, construction of schools and health clinics, roads and electricity.<sup>35</sup>

While there is no legislation in place that promotes mangrove restoration as a dedicated climate change adaptation measure, there are numerous mangrove projects initiated by NGOs and supported by international development organizations and donors. MARD also coordinates a number of smaller projects linking climate change adaptation with mangroves.<sup>36</sup> There are various international organizations involved in climate change adaptation work in Vietnam including: World Bank, Asian Development Bank, KfW, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Flora and Fauna International (FFI), Birdlife International, Conservation International, CARE, Oxfam, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Australian Government Overseas Aid Program (AusAid), BMZ (Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany), German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation, SNV Netherlands Development Organization and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

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<sup>34</sup> Schmitt, K (2012). *GIZ Climate Change Adaptation in the Lower Mekong Delta*. Presentation at the 'Basin-wide Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability Assessment for the Wetlands of the Lower Mekong Basin for Adaptation Planning: Final Regional Workshop: Phnom Penh, 2-3 February 2012.

<sup>35</sup> Powell, N, Osbeck, M, Bach Tan S.B, and Toan, V.C. *World Resources Report Case Study. mangrove Restoration and Rehabilitation for Climate Change Adaptation in Vietnam*. World Resources Report, Washington DC.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

Table 2 below lists examples of community forest-based adaptation projects being undertaken in Vietnam.

Table 2: Existing community-forestry based adaptation projects in Vietnam

Project and partner(s) (if any)	Geographic scope	Description
Mangrove Community Forestry in Da Loc Commune and NgaThuy (CARE) <sup>37</sup>	Sub-National	Da Loc is a coastal commune located in ThanhHoa Province, north-central Vietnam and covers an area of 11,116 square kilometers. Da Loc and surrounding areas experience an average of five to six typhoons annually, in addition to continuous sea encroachment and flooding. Starting in 1989 the Japanese Red Cross, Save the Children and the Government of Vietnam collaborated in planting approximately 350 ha of mangrove seedlings in offshore areas bordering Da Loc. After Typhoon Damrey in 2005 Care International facilitated a Community Based Mangrove Reforestation approach, which empowered local communities as stewards and beneficiaries of the mangroves. <sup>38</sup> (See Box 1 for more information)
Management of Natural Resources in the Coastal Zone of SocTrang Province (GIZ-BMZ)	Sub-National	This Vietnamese-German technical cooperation project, "Management of Natural Resources in the Coastal Zone of SocTrang Province", which started in March 2007, aims at providing pilot solutions to solve the conflict between economic development and sustainable management of natural resources. This includes climate change adaptation activities focusing on livelihood diversification and mangrove management. <sup>39</sup>
ICMP/CCCEP Integrated Coastal and Mangrove Forest Protection in Mekong Provinces for Adaptation to Climate Change/Climate Change and Coastal Ecosystems Program (BMZ, AusAID)	Sub-National	This 37 million Euro CCCEP project is based on a concrete example of delegated cooperation where, in 2008, AusAID commissioned GIZ with the implementation of a biodiversity conservation project in KienGiang Province in the Mekong Delta to adapt to and mitigate effects of climate change. <sup>40</sup>
Adaptation to climate change through the promotion of biodiversity in Bac Lieu Province (GIZ)	Sub-National	This \$5 million project is funded by German Ministry of Environment and is being implemented by GIZ from 2010 to 2014. It aims to assist government agencies in developing protective mechanisms for the coastal zone and rehabilitating mangrove forests through capacity development activities for local authorities, the development of school curricula and awareness-raising campaign for environmental education and through assisting farmers to raise local incomes through the introduction of salt-tolerant rice species. <sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Suzuki, R (ed.), (2012). *Linking Adaptation and Mitigation through Community Forestry: Case Studies from Asia*. RECOFTC. Available online: <http://www.recoftc.org/site/resources/Linking-Adaptation-and-Mitigation-through-Community-Forestry-Case-Studies-from-Asia.php> (last accessed Oct 15, 2013); Elan, (2011). *Community-based mangrove reforestation and management in Da Loc, Vietnam; Mekong River Commission (2011).The First Meeting of Climate Change Adaptation Demonstration Projects in the Lower Mekong Basin: sharing lessons and experiences*

<sup>38</sup> Hoa, S,L,T (2012). *Adapting to Natural Disasters and Contributing to Climate Change Mitigation: mangrove Community Forestry in Vietnam*. RECOFTC and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam.

<sup>39</sup> GIZ, (2011). *Management of Natural Resources in the Coastal Zone of SocTrang Province*. Available online: <http://czm-soctrang.org.vn/en/Home.aspx>. (Last accessed January 14, 2013).

<sup>40</sup> Schmitt, K (2012). *GIZ Climate Change Adaptation in the Lower Mekong Delta*. Presentation at the "Basin-wide Climate Change Impact and Vulnerability Assessment for the Wetlands of the Lower Mekong Basin for Adaptation Planning: Final Regional Workshop: Phnom Penh, 2-3 February 2012.

<sup>41</sup> Asia Pacific Adaptation Network (2011). *Adaptation to Climate Change through the Promotion of Biodiversity in Bac Lieu Province*. Available online: <http://www.apan-gan.net/adaptation-database/adaptation-to-climate-change-through-promotion-of-biodiversity-bac-lieu-province> (Last accessed January 14,2013).

Project and partner(s) (if any)	Geographic scope	Description
Adapting to climate change through conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in ThuaThien Hue province (United Nations Development Programme)	Sub-National	This UNDP Community-Based Adaptation project builds climate-adapted community models by conserving, exploiting and sustainably exploiting natural resources in Huong Phong commune. The project has been developed by the Consultative and Research Center on Natural Resource Management through a participatory process in which the community and local people took part in decision-making process. The project also seeks to raise awareness and improve the capacity of local people to adapt to climate change impacts. <sup>42</sup>
Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program (USAID)	National	This 5 year USAID funded \$26.5 million project, implemented by SNV, Winrock International, the American Red Cross and the Centre for Sustainable Rural Development aims to accelerate Vietnam's transition to climate resilient, low emissions development through investments in reducing net emissions from forests and enhancing resiliency of people, places and livelihoods in the delta regions to short and long term climate impacts. The program will primarily invest in provincial and district level demonstration and capacity development and share lessons learned to inform national policies and implementation. <sup>43</sup>
Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change (Mekong ARCC) (USAID)	Regional	This regional USAID project (2011-2016) will work in Vietnam, as well as the other three lower Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Thailand), to 1) research and identify key climate change impacts for the region's most vulnerable populations and 2) assist communities in highly ecologically sensitive areas to adapt. As of July 2013, the project received proposals to fund "Ecosystem and Community-based Climate Adaptation and Resilience Building Initiatives" for Kien Giang, Vietnam. <sup>44</sup>
CARE Vietnam upland community forestry adaptation projects	Sub-National	CARE Vietnam's work in mountainous areas involves adopting sloping agriculture land techniques and applying agro forestry and watershed management to help farmers protect soil fertility. Native species are being planted in production and protection forest areas. CARE promotes mixed species planting, with fast-growing acacia and also high value, long term indigenous tree species to have wood timber in future. The planting occurs in an area managed by commune but allocated to the community, with a community forestry management board established. A participatory visioning approach is used to involve all stakeholders in developing master plan for five and 10 years, including a climate risk analysis. <sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> UNDP Adaptation Learning Mechanism, (2012). CBA Viet Nam: *Adaptation through Conservation and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Thua Thien Hue Province*. Available online: <http://www.undp-alm.org/projects/spa-cba-viet-nam-adaptation-through-conservation-and-sustainable-use-natural-resources-thua> (Last accessed 14th January, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> SNV, (2012). SNV wins new project: *Vietnam Forests and Deltas Programme*. Available online: <http://www.snvworld.org/en/countries/vietnam/news/snv-wins-new-project-vietnam-forests-and-deltas-programme> (Last accessed 14th January, 2013).

<sup>44</sup> Mekong Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change. *Our Work*. USAID. Available online: <http://mekongarcc.net/ourwork/our-work> (last accessed Oct 21, 2013)

<sup>45</sup> Personal Communications, Nguyen Thi Yen (2012).

## Recommendations for project development

- **Integrate community forestry mangrove based restoration projects into broader coastal development plans** to boost complementarities and reduce risks of conflicting aims.
- **Synthesize lessons learned from NGO-led mangrove restoration projects** over the past decades and apply them to government led mangrove restoration projects, with an emphasis on the need to harness local ecological knowledge and techniques for ensuring mangrove seedling survival.
- **Focus upcoming adaptation project proposals on vulnerable upland and mountainous regions** for the piloting of community forestry based adaptation projects, as these initiatives tend to focus on mangrove areas only.





## Public funding and private investment

Vietnam is currently experiencing high rates of economic growth, yet questions remain how the transitioning national economic profile will impact funding for climate change adaptation. As an emerging middle-income country, Vietnam is receiving less international funding assistance, and there is a growing expectation that climate change adaptation actions should be funded via domestic sources. On the other hand government budget planning, particularly at a provincial level, does not yet adequately account for the full costs of climate change adaptation activities.

A shift towards greater domestic funding for climate change adaptation is expected, however, extensive support from international donors is still seen as critical to the success of the National Strategy for Adapting to Climate Change.<sup>46</sup> Most local authority budgets for adapting to climate change remain deeply inadequate. The district of Hai Lang in Quang Tri for example, which is an area very vulnerable to flooding, has a total budget of just 500 million dong a year (USD \$35,000) for disaster risk management. Meanwhile, according to officials at MARD, the total national budget required for proper disaster management and dyke building for the period 2010-2020 is 1,200 billion dong (USD \$750 million), even before climate change plans are included.<sup>47</sup>

The experience of Vietnam shows that effective adaptation planning in high-risk environments requires investments greater than the financing capacities of most governments acting alone.<sup>48</sup> If funding for core adaptation activities such as disaster management and dyke building is in short supply, it may be more difficult to find resources to support less immediate and longer-term actions such as the development of community forestry for climate change adaptation.

This problem may be exacerbated further by overly optimistic assessments of the potential for private sector capital to plug the funding gap in climate adaptation. Within the NTP the government is aiming for foreign and private sector capital to comprise 60% of the funds needed for the activities outlined; however, experts believe it will be difficult to attract private sector funding for adaptation measures.<sup>49</sup> This is likely to be particularly difficult for community forestry, where private investment to date in Vietnam has not been forthcoming.<sup>50</sup>

An important consideration for funding community forestry-based adaptation measures is the potential expansion of REDD+ funding. Vietnam is among the countries where the UN-REDD Programme has made greatest progress, entering into Phase Two in 2013. The Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria of the Programme reference climate adaptation, with Criterion 14 stating the need to 'Ensure consistency with and contribution to national climate policy objectives, including those of mitigation and adaptation strategies and international commitments on climate.' (p.6)<sup>51</sup>, If this criterion is applied during Phase Two of the program then this may provide additional support for community forestry based climate adaptation. Other project-based REDD+ activities in Vietnam may also help to support community forestry based climate adaptation in the country.

<sup>46</sup> Walker-Leigh, V, (2012). *Vietnam's climate woes ignite national strategy*. Asia Times. Available online: [http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/NE10Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/NE10Ae02.html) (last accessed 10th January 2013).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid

<sup>48</sup> UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/8, p. 175; Oxfam, (2008). *Viet Nam: Climate Change, Adaptation and Poor People*.

<sup>49</sup> IRIN, (2010). *Vietnam: Government leads region in climate change challenge*. Available online: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report/88362/VIETNAM-Government-leads-region-in-climate-change-challenge> (Last accessed 15th January 2013).

<sup>50</sup> GTA Consulting Group and GIZ (2009). *Vietnam: Study on State of the Art of Community Forestry in Vietnam*.

<sup>51</sup> UN-REDD Programme, (2012). *UN-REDD Programme Social and Environmental Principles and Criteria*. UN-REDD Programme Eighth Policy Board Meeting 25-26 March 2012, Asuncion, Paraguay.



## Recommendations for public funding and private investment:

- **Increase provincial budgets for climate adaptation activities** and review budget plans for climate adaptation. Identify areas where funding for community forestry presents a cost-effective option for boosting climate resilience in the province (e.g. where community-based mangrove restoration can complement and enhance effectiveness of 'hard' adaptation measures such as sea dykes).
- **The Vietnam Administration of Forestry should consider a dedicated funding project to support community forestry-based adaptation.**
- **Streamline community forestry into REDD+ readiness** so that multi-lateral and bi-lateral funding for REDD+ readiness supports the advancement of community forestry in the country and provides support for forest based climate adaptation activities.
- **Readdress the balance of funding for climate adaptation** so that Community Forestry based adaptation in upland areas receive comparable support that currently provided in coastal areas.







## Capacity development

Developing a basic awareness of the principles of climate adaptation within the government will be the foundation for community forestry based adaptation to progress in Vietnam. This sentiment is captured in the 'Specific Objectives' of the NTP is to 'enhance organizational structure, institutional capacity and the development and implementation of policies on climate change' (p.23). This includes a target by 2015 for 'Research on nature, trend and scenarios of climate change impacts on sectors/regions and responding measures are updated and effectively implemented, thus contribute to strengthening capacity to respond to climate change.'<sup>52</sup>

With the implementation of the NTP, awareness-raising activities have been undertaken with most ministries. Within some ministries such as MARD awareness-raising has been relatively effective, with a dedicated office on climate change being established and action on disaster management and forestry being undertaken. However there is still a long way to go with a general lack of awareness and capacity regarding climate change adaptation in the Ministry.<sup>53</sup> Outside of MARD further resistance has been experienced in this process with climate change mainstreaming not yet gaining full support.

Low awareness and understanding of climate change adaptation is even more pronounced at a provincial level, according to a UN discussion paper on Vietnam and climate change released in December 2009.<sup>54</sup> According to the paper 'Provinces and lower-level authorities must rapidly develop their action plans to respond to climate change too, which will also require large-scale awareness raising and capacity-development efforts.'<sup>55</sup>

Encouragingly, Vietnam has a relatively high level of domestic academic research capacity in both climate change adaptation and community forestry. At southern Vietnam's Can Tho University the Delta Research and Global Observation Network (DRAGON) institute has recently been established, and is developing a scientific framework for comparing, integrating and ultimately predicting the effects of management practices on large ecosystems. DRAGON also engages in international research and is bringing together scientists and managers to model the management of large river deltas across the world.<sup>56</sup>

In regards to community forestry, Vietnam has a relatively high number of academic institutions researching the topic including Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, the Forestry Faculty of Ho Chi Minh City University, Vietnam Forestry University, the Forestry Faculty of Thu Duc University of Agriculture and Forestry, the Natural Resource Management Faculty of Tay Nguyen University and the South East Asian Institute for Water Resources and Environment.

There is a need to supplement research capacity with increased 'on the ground' capacity development for implementing community forestry adaptation projects. Currently most projects are led by bilateral technical agencies or international NGOs, although it is common for national and local NGOs to be junior partners in these projects. This presents an opportunity to build the capacity of these domestic organizations to progress to leading project implementation, which will be vital if community forestry-based adaptation approaches are to reach scale. There are also encouraging initiatives underway to build the capacity of national NGOs in climate change more broadly, for example through the "Capacity Building Project on Climate Change for Civil Society Organizations" organized by the Climate Change Working Group.<sup>57</sup> These broader climate change capacity development projects present an opportunity to provide more in-depth capacity development to national and local NGOs on specific issues like community forestry.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, (2008). *Draft National Target Program to Respond to Climate Change*.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Viet Nam (2009). *Viet Nam and Climate Change: A discussion paper on policies for sustainable human development*.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> IRIN humanitarian news and analysis (2010). *Vietnam: Government leads region in climate change challenge*.

<sup>56</sup> USGS, (2011). *Overview of DRAGON*. Available online: <http://deltas.usgs.gov/default.aspx?info=overview> (last accessed January, 28, 2013)

<sup>57</sup> VUFO-NGO Resource Centre Vietnam (2011). *Capacity Building Project on Climate Change for Civil Society Organizations*. Available online: <http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/content/capacity-building-project-climate-change-civil-society-organizations> (Last accessed January 16, 2013).

## Recommendations for capacity development

- **Scale-up efforts for basic awareness-raising** on climate change adaptation across both national and local government and identify 'climate change champions' outside of agencies which typically deal with climate change issues.
- **Bring together research communities** to share knowledge and form recommendations for how to progress community forestry climate adaptation in the country, Vietnam already has a high level of research capacity for climate change adaptation and community forestry that should be harnessed appropriately for project implementation.
- **Engage communities in participatory action research (PAR)** to identify adaptation solutions and improve buy-in for these approaches. Incorporating local knowledge into the research process is critical to successful community forestry- based adaptation at the local level.
- **Step up public awareness campaigns and capacity development** among key stakeholders and key leaders at district, commune and village level. Future activities could replicate the model of regional workshops organized by MARD on enhancing local awareness and getting practical input into local development plans in the provinces of Nam Dinh, Ha Tinh and Ben Tre in May 2008.<sup>58</sup>
- **Leverage REDD+ trainings** for the dissemination of information on community-based adaptation.
- **Establish a network of trained "local resource persons" in community forest groups** (as used by the Federation of Community Forestry Users Nepal) to facilitate community forest vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning at the local level.
- **Transfer project leadership to domestic organizations.** International NGOs and technical agencies should make a targeted effort to build capacity of local and national organizations to ensure ultimate sustainability of climate change adaptation projects.

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<sup>58</sup> Oxfam, (2008). *Viet Nam: Climate Change, Adaptation and Poor People*.







## Vietnam's community forest and adaptation roadmap- 2020

This roadmap provides time-bound recommendations for policies and planning, legal frameworks, project development, financing and capacity development in the immediate present, 2015 and 2020 for Vietnam.

Vietnam	Immediately	2015	2020
<b>Policies and planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand the role of community forestry in the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention 'Action Plan'</li> <li>Update the Handbook for Community Forest Management to include greater emphasis on Non-Timber Forest Products</li> <li>Leverage community forestry to develop non-wood forestry enterprises in protection forests, as identified in the National Strategy for Disaster Prevention as a means to enhance adaptation benefits for local people in these areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2015 community forestry is mainstreamed in the climate change action plans for all forested provinces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2020 community forestry has been fully utilized to help meet the target for increasing forest coverage to 47%</li> <li>By 2020, the research and planning programme (2010-2020) for forest protection and development to protect sea dykes and coastal areas has been completed with the full integration of community based mangrove management</li> </ul>
<b>Legal reform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritize the allocation of the remaining 20% of the forest estate (some 2.5 million ha), particularly forestland earmarked for communities</li> <li>Establish a cross-ministerial mangroves working group or committee between MONRE and MARD to coordinate the support and approval of community forestry in mangrove forests</li> <li>Mainstream pro-poor benefit sharing mechanisms and put a greater emphasis on the equitable distribution of forest resources within the existing CFM framework and guidelines</li> <li>Simplify timber harvesting regulations and test them with local community members to refine and improve their clarity.</li> <li>Increase investment for training and education regarding timber harvesting regulations and community forestry for both local government agencies and local communities alike</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2015, Government financial support is mandated to support the afforestation of forests allocated to communities with low timber reserves</li> <li>By 2015 timber harvesting regulations have been adequately simplified and refined for widespread use by communities</li> <li>By 2015, REDD+ funding resources are being used to drive forward the legal recognition of community forestry</li> <li>By 2015 the 2003 Land Law is amended to make sure that communities have the right to repossess and negotiate with concessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By 2020, the remaining 20% of the forest estate has been allocated, with an appropriate percentage of this land being allocated for community management</li> <li>By 2020 community forestry in mangrove forests is widespread across the country due to MONRE/MARD coordination.</li> </ul>



Vietnam	Immediately	2015	2020
<b>Project development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Synthesize lessons learned from NGO-led mangrove restoration projects</b> over the past decades and apply them to government led mangrove restoration projects, with an emphasis on the need to harness local ecological knowledge and techniques for ensuring mangrove seedling survival.</li> <li>• Integrate community Forestry mangrove based restoration projects into broader coastal development plans to boost complementarities and reduce risks of conflicting aims.</li> <li>• Mainstream climate change climate adaptation vulnerability assessment within the management planning process for Community Forestry projects across the country</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2015 the imbalance between the number of community forestry adaptation projects in coastal and upland areas is rectified, with a greater use of community agroforestry for climate adaptation in upland areas</li> <li>• By 2015 REDD+ projects and programs mainstream climate adaptation objectives within their design and implementation</li> <li>• By 2015 a strong learning and coordination network between community-forestry adaptation projects is established.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2020, climate adaptation vulnerability assessment and planning is mainstreamed across all community forestry projects in Vietnam</li> <li>• By 2020 a well-balanced portfolio of inland and coastal community forestry adaptation projects are in place across the country.</li> </ul>
<b>Public funding and private investment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify areas where funding for Community Forestry presents a cost-effective option for boosting climate resilience in the province (e.g. where community-based mangrove restoration can complement and enhance effectiveness of 'hard' adaptation measures such as sea dykes)</li> <li>• Readdress the balance of funding so that Community Forestry based adaptation in upland areas receive comparable support that currently provided in coastal areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2015 a dedicated funding project to support community forestry-based climate adaptation is established between the Vietnam Administration of Forestry and the Trust Fund for Forests</li> <li>• By 2015 both multi-lateral and bi-lateral funding for REDD+ readiness supports the advancement of community forestry in the country and provides support for forest based climate adaptation activities</li> <li>• By 2015, micro-credit, loans and insurance schemes are implemented to help community forestry groups strengthen climate adaptation measures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By 2020 the results of the funding project for community forestry-based climate adaptation are assessed and lessons from the project used to scale up support for community forestry-based adaptation activities across the provinces</li> </ul>

Vietnam	Immediately	2015	2020
<b>Capacity development</b>	<p>Scale-up efforts for basic awareness-raising on climate change adaptation across both national and local government and identify 'climate change champions' outside of agencies which typically deal with climate change issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incorporate local knowledge into the research process to increase the effectiveness of community forestry adaptation and engage communities in participatory action research (PAR) to identify solutions and improve buy-in for these approaches</li> <li>● Step up public awareness campaigns and capacity development amongst key stakeholders and key leaders at district, commune and village level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By 2015, national and provincial REDD+ trainings also disseminate information on climate change adaptation and link it to REDD+ and Community Forestry</li> <li>● By 2015 trained "local resource persons" in community forest groups are facilitating community forest vulnerability assessments and adaptation planning at the local level</li> <li>● By 2015 international NGOs and technical agencies have made a targeted effort to assign leadership roles to local and national organizations in climate change adaptation projects, with a view to transferring project leadership to a greater number of domestic organizations to 2020</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● By 2020, there are fully trained local adaptation planning resource persons accessible for every community forestry group in Vietnam</li> <li>● By 2020 more than half of all community forestry adaptation projects are led by national or local NGOs</li> </ul>







