

Country engagement strategy Viet Nam

RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests

2013-2018



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Bangkok, Thailand

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AAC	Annual Allowable Cuts
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASFCC	ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change Program
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CCM	Climate Change Mitigation
CF	Community Forestry
CFM	Community Forest Management
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoF	Department of Forests
ELM	Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
FSIV	Forest Science Institute of Viet Nam
FSSP	Forest Sector Support Program
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GiZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
GoV	Government of Viet Nam
GSO	General Statistics Office of Viet Nam
IDS	Institute of Development Studies
IFRI	International Forestry Resources and Institutions
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
JDR	Joint Donor Review
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoV	Means of Verification
NGO	Non-government Organization
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product

ODA	Overseas Development Aid
PES	Payments for Ecosystem Services
PFCC	People, Forests and Climate Change
RECOFTC	RECOFTC - The Center for People and Forests (Regional Community Forestry Training Center for Asia and the Pacific)
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
REDD+	REDD + conservation, sustainable forest management and enhancement of carbon stocks
RETE	Research, Education, Training and Extension
SCF	Securing Community Forestry
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SFE	State Forest Enterprises
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SIGE	Social Inclusion and Gender Equity
SNV	Organization for Netherlands Volunteers
SOE	State-owned Enterprise
TBI	To Be Identified
TFC	Transforming Forest Conflict
UN-REDD	United Nations Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCP	Viet Nam Country Program
VNFOREST	Viet Nam Administration of Forestry
WB	World Bank
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

Executive summary

Two-thirds of Viet Nam's land area of 33 million ha is hilly (midlands) or mountainous. Almost half of the land area is classified as forest, with one-quarter of Viet Nam's 90 million people living near or in forest lands. Many of them (13 million people) belong to 53 ethnic minority groups. There is a high correlation between the incidence of poverty and forests.

Since the economic reforms initiated in 1986, Viet Nam's economy has grown at an average rate of over 7 percent per year, with per capita income in 2010 being five times that of 1990.

Forest tenure reforms initiated in the 1990s have resulted in considerable diversification of tenure arrangements, with almost 30 percent of the forest land under management by local people, either by individual households or village communities. Most of the forests managed by local people are plantations of fast-growing species.

The Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy (2006-2020) puts much emphasis on community forestry (CF) development. CF management pilot projects have been initiated to develop more detailed procedures and guidelines for CF development.

The RECOFTC Viet Nam Country Program for 2013-2018 proposes to support CF development as part of the implementation of the Forestry Strategy, through support for learning and training, contributions to development of enabling policies and regulations, effective communication strategies and products and piloting and demonstrating good practices, in all four thematic RECOFTC programme areas: Securing Community Forestry; Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets; People, Forests and Climate Change; and Transforming Forest Conflicts. The programme's roadmap, shown below, is annually reviewed and adapted based on lessons from implementation.



The expected outcomes of the country programme for 2013-2018 with regards to each functional approach include:

- Participants in the capacity development programme can provide quality support to the communities in the CF network, set up as a platform to share CF experiences.
- The CF legal framework is revised/updated to enable secured CF and enhanced livelihoods and market access.
- Different communication tools are used to enhance people's awareness, knowledge and engagement.
- Effective CF practices – through integration of forest livelihoods and markets, Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) and Climate Change Mitigation (CCM), and transforming forest conflicts – are adopted and shared at demonstration sites.





1

RECOFTC's vision and mission

RECOFTC's vision is that 'empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes'. To achieve this, RECOFTC has missions to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improve governance and ensure fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and Pacific region.

RECOFTC's vision and mission in national CF development is based on its Strategic Plan for 2013-2018,¹ and its analysis of the status, prospects and priorities for national CF development in Viet Nam. In this section, a brief description of RECOFTC's past activities, the current status of RECOFTC's country programme and the strategic programme framework are presented.

1.1 RECOFTC's history of CF development support

Viet Nam is one of RECOFTC's founding members and has been actively involved in RECOFTC's regional CF development activities since its inception in 1987. RECOFTC's country office was formally established in 2010 and is currently staffed with a national programme coordinator, a training coordinator, a CF partnerships coordinator, administrative and accounting officer and communication assistant officer. Preceding the establishment of the country office, a range of research and training activities was implemented, supporting forestry tenure and governance reforms which included the introduction of a legal framework for CF in 2004, and the Community Forestry Management Pilot Project initiated in 2006.

RECOFTC-supported initiatives and projects since then have included:

- A forest governance learning group (2006-2013);
- A pilot evaluation of CF management (2009);
- A study of the REDD benefit distribution system (2009);
- Property reforms and forest rights in Viet Nam (2010-2011);
- Promotion of customary practices in protected areas (2010);
- Various activities with the UN-REDD Viet Nam Programme, including free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), evaluation and verification, assessment of the effectiveness of training and awareness-raising activities, pilot site-level planning (since 2010 to date);
- Capacity building in CF, forest governance, climate change and REDD+ⁱⁱ for Vietnamese civil society organizations (CSOs) and government organizations (under various initiatives since 2009);
- National Community Forestry Forum (2014); and
- Participatory governance assessment in Lam Dong (2013-2014).

¹ RECOFTC, 2013. People and forests for a greener future. Empowering local people to effectively engage in the sustainable management of forested landscapes. Strategic Plan 2013-2018. Bangkok: RECOFTC, November 2013. Available at: <<http://www.recoftc.org/site/resources/RECOFTC-Strategic-Plan-for-2013-2018.php>>.

Additional activities were implemented in Viet Nam by regional RECOFTC projects and programmes, including:

- Capacity building needs assessment (CBNA) for CF development in 2010;²
- The First People and Forests Forum in 2009;
- Participation in the Community Forestry Champions Network;
- The ASEAN Social Forestry Network;
- The conflict learning network;
- Grassroots capacity building for REDD+;
- ForInfo collaboration with SNV/GEF on certification of ecosystem service provision;
- The REDD learning network;
- REDD-Net Asia-Pacific; and
- Assessment of the capacity building needs of capacity service providers in REDD+ (2011-2012).

The main focus of the activities in Viet Nam has been on research, analysis and synthesis, training, networking and strategic communications (including the production of highly relevant research and frequently cited publications). In addition to strengthening these activities, the RECOFTC Country Programme intends to establish and develop pilot and demonstration sites to promote the adoption of more effective approaches and practices in CF development.

1.2 RECOFTC’s Strategic Plan 2013-2018

RECOFTC’s mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and Pacific region.

RECOFTC’s thematic areas and functional approaches are outcome-driven and focus on addressing key issues to achieve measurable progress towards positive changes in rights, governance and benefits (Table 1).

Table 1. RECOFTC’s thematic areas

Thematic areas	Strategic outcomes
Securing community forestry	Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective.
Enhancing livelihoods and markets	Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices.
People, forests and climate change	Enabling environments for local people’s engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change impacts are strengthened.
Transforming forest conflicts	Institutions to transform conflict are in place and becoming more effective.

These results will derive from achieving intermediate outcomes that are the result of four functional approaches applied in each thematic area both regionally and in programme countries (Table 2).

² The latest CBNA for CF development in Viet Nam was conducted in 2010 by an independent national consultant. Nine categories of competency standards were used for the assessment: CF policy and planning; sustainable CF management; forest resources assessment; participatory action research; socio-economic and cultural assessment; sustainable development and conflict management; awareness, public relations and advocacy; Individual capacity development and training; programme development and project management. The key participants were the Department of Forest Protection, its subdepartment and Forest Protection Office in Phong Dien District of Huế; Department of Forest Development; Department of Forest Usage; Phong My Commune People’s Committee; local NGOs – Nature Care, Centre for Sustainable Development in Mountainous Areas; Huế University of Agriculture and Forestry; Management Board of Phong Dien Nature Reserve Area; May Day Company; Community of Pa Hy Ethnic Minority.

Table 2. RECOFTC's functional approaches

Functional approaches	Intermediate outcomes
Training and learning networks	Enhanced capacities are used by key stakeholders to provide quality support and professional advice to local communities.
Research, analysis and synthesis	Enabling policies and regulatory instruments are adopted to enhance the rights of local people, improve forest governance and ensure a fairer share of benefits.
Strategic communication	Communications strategies are used to enhance awareness, attitudes and behaviours among target audiences.
Piloting and demonstrating	Improved practices adopted in CF are effectively replicated.

During this strategic plan period, RECOFTC will enhance the value of its approach by fostering a learning culture and creating a learning environment within RECOFTC and with its partners, and placing increased emphasis on addressing the cross-cutting issues of:

- **Social inclusion and gender equity through a rights-based approach**
 Key components are laid out to ensure that a socially inclusive approach is mainstreamed across thematic areas and functional approaches with systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. These are an integration of social and gender equity perspectives in regional and country-specific programmes and projects; organizational capacity development with supportive functions, processes and policies; expansion of social inclusion and gender-focused work; and knowledge sharing for social- and gender-responsive policy and practice.
- **CF leadership development**
 This initiative consolidates RECOFTC's core business of strengthening and expanding CF in the region with a targeted approach to identifying and cultivating 'agents of change' within the field of CF. Building on RECOFTC's extensive CF networks and learning from cutting-edge leadership development approaches being pioneered elsewhere, RECOFTC will identify and cultivate long-term relationships with key individuals demonstrating the potential to bring about real and effective change in the field of CF.
- **Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)**
 Active engagement with key project stakeholders in assessing the progress of the programme or project and in particular the achievement of results is the focus of this cross-cutting effort. Through their active engagement, they are enabled to share control over the content, the process and the results of the M&E activities. Consequently, the assessments and learning from changes become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of the people directly affected, building ownership and empowering beneficiaries. Eventually, accountability and transparency, including timely corrective actions for improved performance and outcomes can be pursued.

Parallel with its regional work, RECOFTC will consolidate and expand its engagement with eight focal countries: Cambodia, P.R. China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Thailand and Viet Nam. RECOFTC will also continue to engage with other countries in the region and beyond, where it can add value and find opportunities for mutual learning.

The focus of the country programmes is on supporting development and building capacity for the implementation of national CF programmes, with the following elements:

- Development of individual and organizational capacities for CF development;
- CF development at the field level:
 - Identification of potential forest communities
 - Formalization of CF institutions and framework
 - Management planning of CF institutions for sustainable CF management
 - Ongoing management/implementation/institutional development
- CF networks and coordination (within and between stakeholder groups);
- CF research and information management (including M&E); and
- Policy, legislation and administrative development.

Table 3. Proposed framework for national CF programme components

1 Training	2 CF Development		3 Information Management and Communication	4 Networks and learning groups	5 Policy and regulatory framework development
	CF establishment and management	Additional sub-components			
Needs assessment	Identification - communities and forests	Institutional development	Research	CF membership networks	Review
Course and materials development	Formalization	Enterprise development	M&E	Multi- stakeholder networks and learning groups	Clarification
Training / coaching	Management planning	PES & climate change mitigation	Database and mapping	National CF working group	Revision
	Implementation	Climate change adaptation	Communication and outreach	Regional and global networking (e.g. ASEAN)	Budget allocation, sustainable financing and investment
		Alternative livelihoods			

RECOFTC will support the formation or strengthening of national multi-stakeholder CF working groups, and align its portfolio of in-country initiatives with national CF programmes.

2

National development context

2.1 Geography, population and economy

Viet Nam's total land area is 33 million ha; about two-thirds is considered hilly and mountainous and one-third lowland. Such topography and high population density contribute to some of the lowest land endowments per capita in the world – less than 0.5 ha/family on average (Wells-Dang, 2013). The main agricultural areas are in the northern Red River Delta area, the southern Mekong Delta and in the coastal areas. In the Central Highlands, north central coast and northeast, forest cover is over 40 percent and almost 20 percent in the southeast (FSIV, 2009).

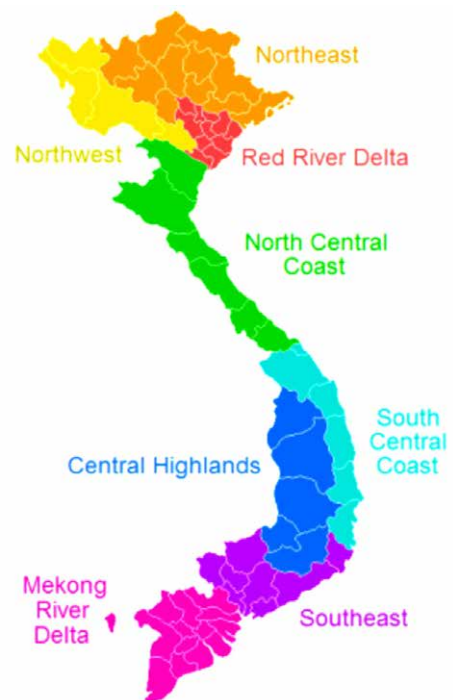
As of December 2013, the population of Viet Nam was 89.7 million.³ It is the third most populous country in Southeast Asia and the thirteenth globally (Nguyen and Le, 2010). The growth of the population from 2005 to 2011 was 1.1 percent per year, the lowest rate in 50 years (WB, 2013b).

Estimates of the rural population vary from 60 percent (WB, 2013b) to 70 percent (VNFOREST, 2013). It is estimated that a quarter of the population lives in or near forests and upland areas (FSIV, 2009).

There are 54 different ethnic groups living in Viet Nam, with the Kinh majority predominating in the lowland agricultural areas; most of the other 53 ethnic groups (also known as ethnic minorities) live in the uplands. According to the 2009 Population Census, the population of the ethnic minority groups was estimated at 13 million people (14 percent of the total population). Over half of these ethnic groups live in the northern areas, 35 percent in the Central Highlands and less than 10 percent in the central coast areas (Baulch et al., 2008; Baulch et al., 2010). Ethnic groups are estimated to be 4.5 times more likely to be poorer than the Kinh and Hoa (people of Chinese ancestry), and also more likely to suffer from malnourishment, illiteracy and poor health. The minorities accounted for well over one-third of the poor in 2004 and were expected to increase further (IDS and CAF, 2008).

The national poverty head count in Viet Nam fell from 58 percent in 1993 to 19.5 percent in 2004 (IDS, 2008), and to 14 percent in 2011 (WB, 2013b). Yet in 2010, 66.3 percent of the minorities were found to be poor, compared to 12.9 percent of the Kinh population (WB, 2012).

Figure 1. Eco-regions of Viet Nam



³ Source: <<http://www.gso.gov.vn>>

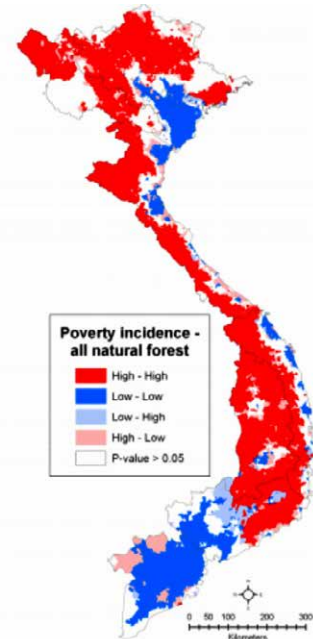
There is a high correlation between the incidence of poverty (i.e. the proportion of poor people in the population) and forests as illustrated in Figure 2 (Mueller et al., 2006).⁴

The World Bank summarizes the reasons for Viet Nam's remarkable success in poverty reduction in the following terms: "Market based reforms to promote high and sustained economic growth were critical to Vietnam's success, buttressed by egalitarian policies in the provision of basic services, access to land, and investments in infrastructure to ensure widespread opportunities for the poor" (WB, 2012).

Between 1990 and 2010, Viet Nam's economy grew at an annual average rate of 7.3 percent, with the 2010 per capita income being almost five times that of 1990 (WB, 2012). Real GDP grew by 5.25 percent in 2012, the lowest level since 1998.

The slow pace of implementing further institutional reforms contributes to this deceleration of growth in GDP. More than two years after the government set out to reform the state enterprise sector, progress has been limited. There are presently efforts to create a comprehensive legal framework – building on existing legislation – for the management of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). But it is also noted that successful restructuring of SOEs will be difficult to achieve without strong interagency coordination and improved transparency. Delays in implementation of structural reforms could undermine investors' confidence and worsen growth prospects further (WB, 2013).

Figure 2. Poverty and forests



Source: Mueller et al. (2006).

2.2 National social and economic development

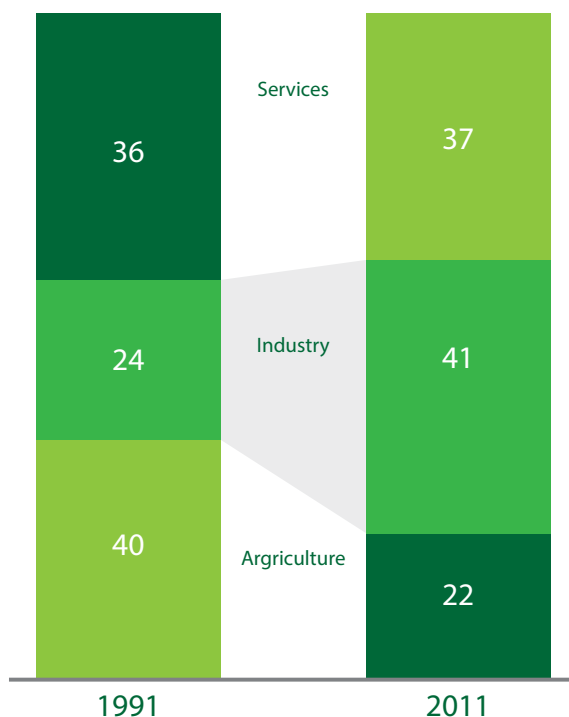
The industrialization and modernization that has taken place in Viet Nam since *Doi Moi*⁵ is reflected in the change of contributions from the different economic sectors to the GDP. In 1991, agriculture contributed 40 percent to the GDP, in 2011 the figure was 22 percent, whereas the contributions from industry and services had grown from 24 and 36 to 41 and 37 percent respectively, showing that the main source of growth in Viet Nam during that period had been industry (manufacturing), although agricultural production had also grown at 3 to 4 percent per year (WB, 2012b).

It is this shift from agriculture to manufacturing and services that has provided the main contribution to the growth of labour productivity, which is the key to sustained prosperity as it is linked to wages and the standard of living (Ketels et al., 2010). From 2000 to 2008, the shift between sectors contributed two-thirds, while sectoral productivity growth contributed only one-third to the growth in labour productivity. The agriculture and forestry sector registered a higher growth in labour productivity compared to manufacturing, whereas the focus of both the government and private investors was on the manufacturing sector with much lower rates of labour productivity growth, contributing to low and declining efficiency in investment (Ketels et al., 2010).

⁴ The absolute numbers of poor people are however higher in lowland, urban areas because of the much higher population densities there (Mueller et al., 2006).

⁵ *Doi Moi* or renovation refers to the economic reforms initiated in Viet Nam in 1986 to create a 'socialist-oriented market economy' <www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doi_Moi>

Figure 3. Change in sector contributions to GDP, 1991-2011



Source: WB, 2012b

The recorded contribution from the forestry sector to GDP was 1 percent in 2005. However, as this does not include unrecorded forest product consumption (such as non-timber forest products [NTFPs], with an estimated value of US\$1 billion), the provision of public goods (the value of ecosystem services is estimated to be several times higher than that of timber) and the processing of forest products are likely to be considerably underestimated. Adding the output from wood-based products increases the recorded contribution to GDP from the forestry sector to 5 percent. Forestry consumes 20-25 percent of public expenditure in agriculture and forestry, while contributing only 4 percent (based on values from unprocessed wood products) to the sector's total output (JDR, 2011).

The Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2011-2020 targets GDP growth of 6.5 to 7 percent per year, a reduction in the numbers of poor households by 2 percent per year (and 4 percent in areas with extreme poverty) and forest cover of 42-43 percent by 2015 (GoV, 2011a). The 2011-2020 Viet Nam Sustainable Development Strategy's objectives are

macroeconomic stability, including green growth and low carbon footprint; cultural and political stability; and mitigation of environmental impacts through wise use of natural resources, protection and development of forests, and conservation of biodiversity (GoV, 2012a). In the National Strategy on Environment Protection, the degradation of natural resources and biodiversity is addressed, as well as the need for capacity development to respond to climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Proposed courses of action include minimizing the conversion of forests for non-forest purposes, continuing afforestation and forest protection programmes, managing the lease of protection forests and preventing encroachment and deforestation, particularly of natural forests and of forest fires (GoV, 2012b). The Ministry of Resources and Environment is the main agency in charge of implementing the strategy, which includes the mobilization of communities to join in environmental protection (GoV, 2012b).

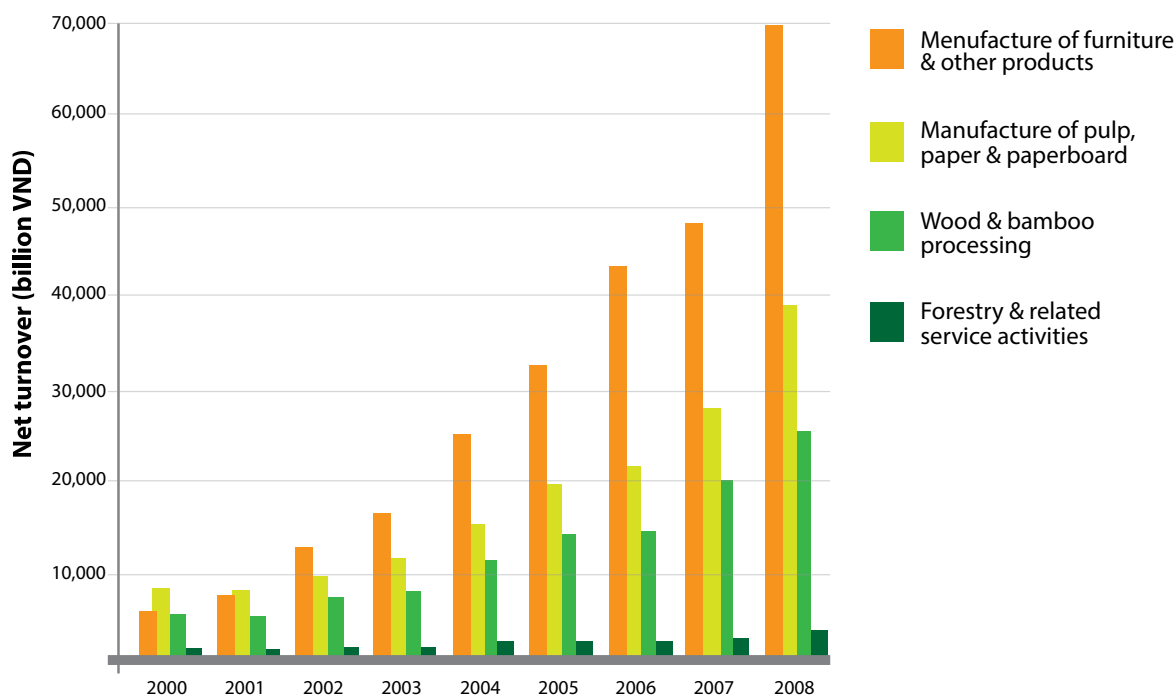
The Master Plan on Economic Restructuring addresses reviewing and evaluating forest planning; maintaining reasonable watershed area and special-use (conservation) forests; developing innovative mechanisms and organizations for forest management via the strengthening of household and entrepreneurial management autonomy; turning remaining forest area into zones for concentrated raw material supply; and developing and exploiting forests effectively and sustainably to improve the incomes and the lives of forestry workers (GoV, 2013).

The role of forestry in the National Strategy on Climate Change is defined as “to speed up the afforestation and reforestation projects, encourage enterprises to invest in planting economic forests. Up to 2020 it is necessary to establish, manage, protect develop and use 16.24 million ha of land planned for forestry activities in a sustainable way; raise the forest coverage to 45%; sustainably and effectively manage 8.132 million ha of production forests, 5.482 million ha of preventive (protection) forests, and 2.271 million ha of special use (conservation) forests.” The strategy also refers to building the capacity of local people to cope with climate change, but no mention is made of their role in forest governance and/or management (GoV, 2011c).

None of these national strategies provides much guidance related to the rights and responsibilities of local people in forest governance and management, although they all seem to agree on the importance of forests and the need for judicious use and sustainable management of forest resources.

The growing recognition of forests in providing ecosystem services is particularly noteworthy in Viet Nam; it is a challenge to combine these services with the need to produce more raw materials. There has been spectacular growth in the wood-processing industry, as illustrated in Figure 4. Estimates of wood-processing and trading enterprises in 2005 varied from 1 200 to 1,500 with an aggregate processing capacity of 2.2 to 2.5 million m3 per year, operating at 55-50 percent of capacity. It is estimated that 75 to 85 percent of the wood for wood-processing and timber industries comes from imported sources (Barney, 2005; Van der Poel, 2007; Joint Development Review, 2011). The share of illegally-sourced wood in Viet Nam’s imports was estimated at 17 percent in 2008, but it was declining at the time. The government has formed a working group on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) and signed a memorandum of understanding with the Government of Lao PDR in 2008 and with the European Union in 2009 to address the issue of import of illegal timber (Chatham House, 2010).

Figure 4. Growth in turnover of wood-processing enterprises, 2000-2008



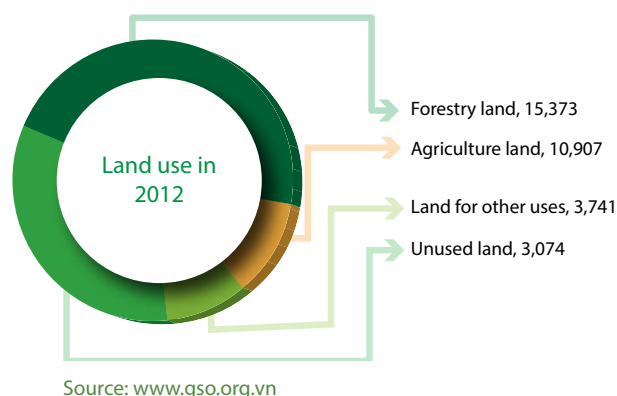
Source: Joint Development Review, 2011

In the implementation of the Strategy on Exports and Imports for 2011-2020, with Visions to 2030, promotion of production and economic restructuring in agricultural production are two of the proposed courses of action. This includes the development of 'material supplying centres' for the wood furniture industry, formalization of standards for agroforestry exports and creation of more collaborative arrangements or producer associations (GoV, 2011b).

2.3 Land and forest resources

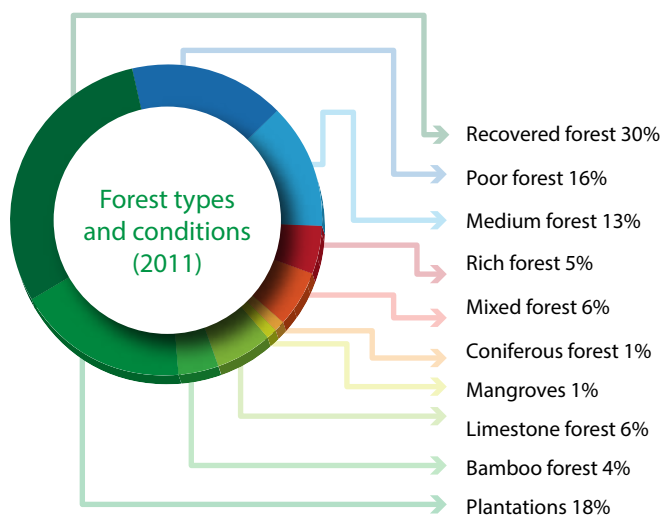
Almost half (15.4 million ha or 47 percent) of Viet Nam's total land area of 33 million ha, is classified as forest land. Agricultural land accounts for around 33 percent (10.9 million ha), other uses constitute 11 percent (including land for residence and industrial use and water bodies) and 9 percent is registered as unused areas (www.gso.org.vn). Despite the low land endowment per capita and because of the high fertility of agricultural land and abundant labour, Viet Nam is not only self-sufficient in food and but also among the top exporters of agricultural commodities such as rice, cashews, coffee, rubber and pepper.

Figure 5. Land use in 2012 (1,000 ha)



Equitable access to land and secured land tenure has been vital for Viet Nam's rapid economic growth. By the end of 2012, 76 percent of the total land area had been allocated to land users, including 79 percent of forest land (www.gso.org.vn). However, the issuance of formal land-user rights certificates (LURCs) has been slow: in 2009 these had been issued for about half of the total land area, with about one-third of the LURCs granted under the names of both spouses (Joint Development Review, 2011).

Figure 6. Forest types and conditions (2011)

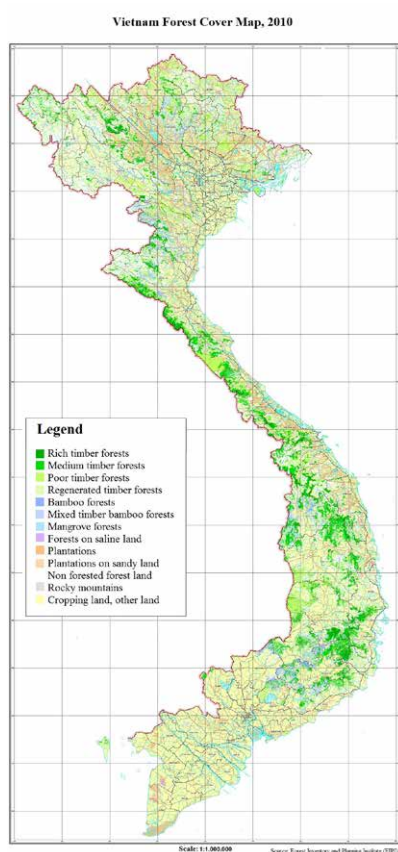


Source: Joint Development Review, 2011

Land policy has evolved considerably over the past two decades. The land laws of 1987 and 1993 were instrumental in land allocation and recognition of land-use rights. The Land Law of 2003 covers all legal, land-use planning, land finance and land administration systems. The legal basis for the Land Law is Article 17 of the 1992 Constitution (amended in 2001) with the provision that "Land belongs to the State – all under the ownership of the whole people" thereby abolishing any form of collective or private ownership of land (Nguyen, 2010). This may have contributed to the role of the state in receiving more attention than the role of other stakeholders in land management (Joint Development Review, 2011).

Issues concerning all categories of land are presently being debated in preparation of a new land law. In forest land the main issues are related to competing demands for (both forestry and agricultural) production by different stakeholders and conservation needs. Processes to resolve these conflicting demands

Figure 7. Forest status (1999)



Source: Mueller et al., 2006

are underdeveloped. There are also problems with the interfaces between formal and customary management, exacerbated by policy constraints on the recognition of communal land rights, leading to disputes between customary landowners and new claimants. Centralized approaches to land-use planning by different agencies also contribute to confusion (Joint Development Review, 2011).

Forest cover in 2012 was 13.2 million ha or 39.9 percent of the land area. Less than 1 percent of the forest cover was primary forest, 21 percent (2.8 million ha) was planted and 10.4 million ha comprised naturally regenerated ('natural forest'). Planted and natural forest area has increased since the late 1980s, through plantation and improved protection of forests, at over 2 percent per year from 1990 to 2005 and over 1 percent per year in 2005-2010 (FAO, 2010).

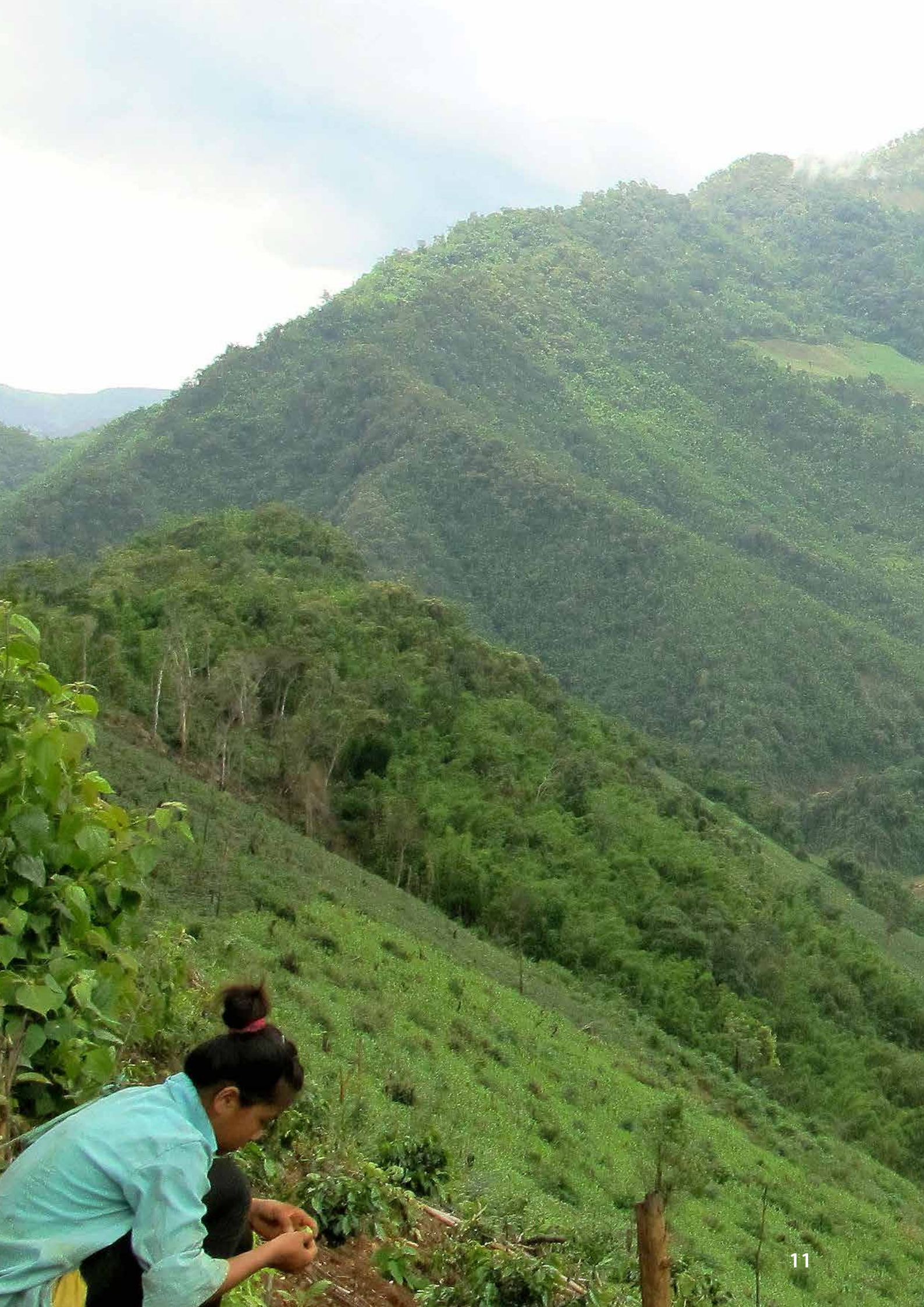
Most of the forest is in various stages of degradation or recovery, with only 5 percent of rich forest and 29 percent of poor and medium forest (JDR, 2011). FAO's Forest Resources Assessment for Viet Nam indicates that its rate of primary forest loss is among the highest. The growing importance of plantations, at 19 percent of the forest area in 2005, and 25.5 percent in 2010 (according to FAO, 2010) has been noted.

Forested areas predominate in the northeast, north central, central highlands, south central and northwest regions (Table 3). The remaining three regions (southeast, southwest and Red River deltas) make up only 6 percent of the national forest area. The five forest-rich regions in Viet Nam are the focal areas of CF implementation (Bjorn and Bao, 2009).

Table 4. Main forested areas in Viet Nam (2013)

Eco-region	Forest area (million ha)	% of national forest area
Northeast	3.64	26
North central	2.90	21
Central highlands	2.85	20
South central	2.03	15
Northwest	1.69	12
Southeast, southwest and Red River deltas	0.84	6

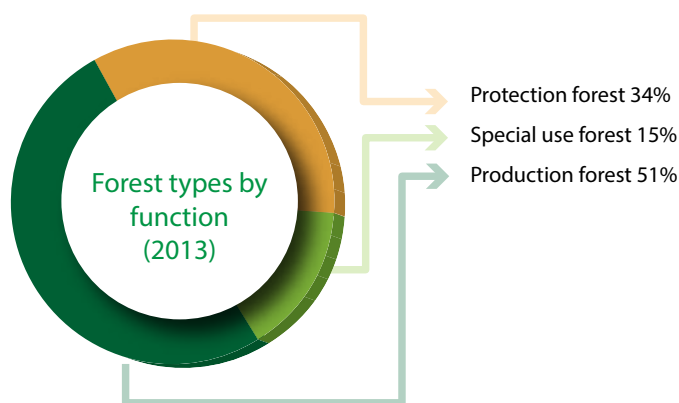
Source: www.kiemplam.org.vn



2.4 Forest administration and policy

Half of Viet Nam's forest cover is designated as production forest, covering an area of 6.7 million ha; protection forest and special-use (conservation) forest constitute 4.6 million and 2 million ha respectively (RECOFTC, 2014; VNFOREST, 2013).

Figure 8. Forest types by function (2013)



Source: www.kiemplam.org.vn

These areas are administered by the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) and its line agencies at provincial and lower levels. There are different departments responsible for forest development, forest protection and forest conservation (GoV, 2008).

The functional classification according to forest management objective (production, protection, conservation) also forms the basis for the organization of VNFOREST, with different departments responsible for the different forest management types. The Department of Forest Protection has officers stationed at the commune level (Pham, 2010), whereas for production forests and

conservation forests officers are stationed at the relevant forest management unit (state forest enterprise and protected area, respectively). The problems inherent to this type of 'large-scale' forest classification are reflected in the reclassification of forests and more particularly in the proposal to address protection issues in production forests and vice versa (Joint Development Review, 2011).

Types of forest harvesting under VNFOREST administration

1. Small-scale illegal logging, involving local people (and officials and traders)
2. Small-scale legal logging (as in community forestry)
3. Commercial legal logging (by SFEs according to AACs)
4. Commercial illegal logging (outside legal prescriptions)
5. Upland forest clearing for cash cropping (for cash crops in the Central Highlands)

Source: Barney, 2005.

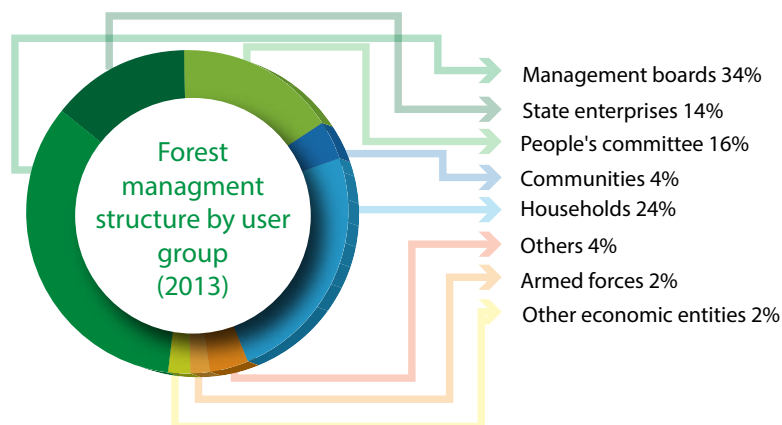
To control deforestation (of natural forests) a partial logging ban was introduced in 1997 that halted logging by state forest enterprises (SFEs); this was followed by introduction of annual allowable cuts (AACs) in some areas, particularly in the Central Highlands. This exacerbated the precarious financial situation of these enterprises, and only addressed one of the five types of forest harvesting under VNFOREST administration identified by Barney (2005).

There is much concern in Viet Nam about small-scale illegal logging, leading to calls for more effective law enforcement. Recent research demonstrates, however, that “domestic illegal logging will only be curtailed if Vietnamese policies promote forest governance that accommodates small-scale forest use and management, and allows local communities to benefit from the forest. Effective strategies to curb illegal logging will require the allocation of clear and secure tenure rights to local people in order to improve their ability to benefit from local forests” (Forest Trends, 2013).

The 2004 Law on Forest Protection and Development provides the legal basis for CF. In the law definitions of forest are presented including, the definitions of the three major classes of forests, based on their management objectives. The rights of the state are defined in terms of “the state uniformly manages and disposes of natural forests and forests developed with the state’s capital.” Forest owners are those who have been assigned forest by the state or lease forest from the state, and include the following categories: special-use forest management boards, economic organizations, households and individuals, the armed forces, research and education organizations, and foreign investors (GoV, 2004).

The other important policy statement guiding forest administration is the Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy (2006-2020) (GoV, 2007). In the three development programmes of the strategy (sustainable forest management and development; forest protection, conservation and ecosystem services; and forest products processing and trade) CF expansion and development are proposed as a major strategy to achieve programme objectives. This emphasis on CF is also reflected in the two support programmes: (1) research, education, training and forestry extension (RETE) and (2) renovating forestry sector institutions, policy, planning and monitoring (GoV, 2007). The implementation of the forest land allocation programme initiated in the 1990s, and of the law and strategy, is reflected in the diversification of forest land tenure under the management of different groups as indicated in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Forest management structure by user group (2013)



Source: www.kiemlam.org.vn

Tenure diversification is thought to have contributed to forest transition (from deforestation to expansion of forest cover) since the early 1990s. It must be noted, however, that much of the success of the forest land allocation programme has been confined to the allocation of degraded forest lands in the midlands for the establishment of plantations managed by individual farm households. The accessibility to a ready market for plantation wood has also contributed considerably to the success of these transitions (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011).

In the uplands, forest land allocation to individual households has been much less successful. The situation is more complex than in the midlands. Forests are valued for multiple products and services (not just wood), there is a diversity of existing management systems, and particularly for ethnic minorities, their customary forest land governance and management regimes are not well recognized or appreciated (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011; Dam, 2012). Commune capacity for arranging land allocation is usually less developed than in the midlands (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011). There is also a need to provide a legal basis for the recognition of customary lands in the uplands (Luong and Genotiva, 2013).

The contribution from the forestry sector to poverty alleviation is unclear. It has generally been a top-down process, with inefficient or inequitable distribution of degraded forest land. Local institutions through which people can voice concerns and share information are lacking and understanding of policies and laws is often deficient (JDR, 2011).



3

Context for community forestry development

3.1 Development trends and strategies

A major challenge for the direction of future economic, political and administrative reforms in Viet Nam is the deceleration of economic growth apparent in the recent past (WB, 2013a). According to one observer (Truong, 2013), Viet Nam is facing a crossroads “after a period of steady growth, in a desperate effort to save its economy from going virtually bankrupt as a result of ideological ambiguity, corruption, poor governance, and the absence of stakeholders’ participation in the process of the sustainable development of the country.” Although the World Bank phrases its assessment in milder terms, and pays tribute to the remarkable success of the *Doi Moi* reforms, it agrees with the need to implement planned structural reforms, particularly of the state-owned sector, improve the effectiveness of public investment and enhance transparency and improve market information (JDR, 2012).

Another factor that may influence the future development of CF is the future role of forests in the poverty alleviation strategy. Rural poverty represents about 90 percent of total poverty in Viet Nam (WB, 2012). Ethnic minorities make up 14 percent of the population and nearly half of the remaining poor. Minorities are concentrated in the forested upland regions. Although their need for good agricultural land is mentioned in many recommendations from poverty researchers (e.g. WB, 2012), forest land allocation and/or CF is seldom included in the policy recommendations from poverty research (see Baulch et al., 2010, for an exception).

An economic concern with potential implications for CF is the need for raw material for the furniture industry. Much of this material is presently imported, and the wood grown in plantations is of limited use for this purpose. With the recovery of the natural forest the potential for meeting the needs of the furniture industry should be explored in CF development.

Increasing policy emphasis on the role of ecosystem services (PES, REDD+) represents both opportunities and challenges for CF development that are well understood in Viet Nam (e.g. Sikor and Nguyen, 2011, Chapter 5). After the successful piloting of payments for forest ecosystem services (PFES) between 2006 and 2010, Viet Nam started scaling up its PFES policy nationwide in 2011. Now, PFES revenue has become an important investment in the forestry sector (accounting for 22.3 percent of sectoral investment), supporting protection of 2.8-3.37 million ha of forests per year (accounting for 20-24 percent of the total existing forest area of the country). Yet the slow process of the forest land allocation programme has made it difficult for PFES revenue to reach target communities (Office of the Government 2014).

Besides, there are many ongoing initiatives which provide platforms to promote gender equality in forestry policy, such as the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020; National Action Program on Gender Equality 2011-2015; Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2020 and National Strategy to Respond to Climate Change (Pham, 2013).

3.2 CF policies and resources

The Land Law of 2003 and the new Land Law of 2013 provided the legal basis for land allocation to village collectives, and the 2004 Forest Protection and Development Law endorsed CF tenure and defined the conditions under which villages could receive forest land collectively (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011). The Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy (2006-2020) puts much emphasis on CF development in the governance and management of production, protection and conservation forests and in the two development support programmes (RETE and forest institution reform) (GoV, 2007).

Piloting and developing community forestry management (CFM) is the fifth priority (out of 21) in the strategy. It indicates that natural production forests, plantation forests and small, fragmented protection forests can be allocated to villages. The target is to have 4 million ha managed by communities by 2020. A first-phase pilot project was implemented from 2006 to 2009, followed by a second phase from May 2012 to December 2013, implemented in 59 communities (in 35 communes) in nine provinces. Expected outputs include the finalization and institutionalization of CFM technical guidelines, a MARD decision on CFM implementation and suggestions for a CFM Decree. These documents were expected to form the administrative basis for nationwide implementation of CF. It is uncertain whether the results from the short second-phase pilot will achieve this objective. It is likely that review of the results will demonstrate the need for additional testing and development of the CFM guidelines.

In addition to the legal and administrative framework for CF development, there is documented expertise and knowledge about forest administration that can be found in universities and research institutes; with former CF project personnel operating as consultants, these resources can be readily mobilized for expansion of CF and development of CF extension. Good examples of such documentation include a comprehensive and detailed study of the state of the art in CF development in Viet Nam (Wode and Bao, 2009) as well as an overview of issues in CF by Sikor and Nguyen (2011).

3.3 Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders in CF development are the 25 million villagers living in the uplands and midlands whose sources of livelihood include forests. These include villagers who have already received use and/or management rights for plantation development, and use and protection of natural forests. Their stake in future CF development is in the strengthening and expansion of forest management and use rights, and the development of forestry extension services, i.e. information and advisory services related to forest management and silviculture, and forest product processing and marketing. The other key category of stakeholders is the upland ethnic minorities who live on or use forest resources. For these stakeholders the particular issue is the recognition of their customary rights, through some form of 'ancestral domain' arrangement.

Among the villagers, women play key roles in tending natural forests and plantations. Total female labour involved in afforestation accounted for 57.09 and 76 percent in these nurseries, while male labour account for 42.91 and 24 percent (MARD, 2006). Both men and women select relevant species and techniques to develop new plantations; they conduct enrichment planting, prepare sites, plant trees and carry out pruning and thinning. Women are more involved than men in natural resource utilization with 70 percent of ethnic minority women participating in harvesting of NTFPs for their daily use as well as for markets.

As a result of decentralization, people's committees at commune, district and provincial levels are other important stakeholders, in many cases requiring technical assistance in forest land allocation; this is indicated by the 16 percent

of the forest land that is still under the control of commune people's committees who have a role in forest land allocation. Similarly, the forest enterprises (for production forest) and forest management boards (for protection and conservation forest) play an important role, as do the local branches of VNFOREST.

Other stakeholders include the various research and development organizations in the forestry system (such as the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute and the Vietnamese Academy of Forestry Science) as well as at least six universities with solid experience in CF development. They often perform the role played by NGOs (or CSOs as they are called in Viet Nam) in other countries. A more prominent role for such CSOs in CF development is advocated by some authors (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011).

Donors in the forestry sector, presently coordinate their efforts with Vietnamese forestry organizations in the Forest Sector Support Program (FSSP). As the future of the FSSP is uncertain, other arrangements for coordination amongst stakeholders need to be considered. Reactivation of the dormant National Community Forestry Working Group has been recommended for this purpose (Pham, 2010).

3.4 Country CF development priorities

A major source for identifying priorities in CF development is the Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy, 2006-2020 (GoV, 2007). The strategy notes that the implementation of forestry 'socialization' has been inadequate and that the allocation of forest lands had not been carried out as envisaged, contributing to lower participation of the non-state sector in forestry than was anticipated.⁶ It has been noted that the role of local communities is not well recognized by many actors so the state remains predominant in CF initiatives. This indicates a need for well-documented pilots in CF demonstrating the potential of communities to govern and manage forest resources in a sustainable and equitable manner. The predominance of state rules is also reflected in the resolution of forestry conflicts; this points to the need to develop alternative arrangements for conflict resolution in which communities can play a more meaningful role (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011).

The need for strengthening CF approaches also arises from the planned expansion of CF: three-quarters of the production forest, 15 percent of the conservation (special-use) forest and 30 percent of the protection forest are to be managed mainly by private enterprises, communities, cooperatives, households, and individuals. In view of the perceived success of household-managed plantations, there is significant recognition of the role of private forestry. This reinforces the earlier-stated need for demonstrating the potential of community-based forest governance and management, particularly of natural forest (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011; Wode and Bao, 2009).

In addition to the three development programmes (on sustainable forest management, forest protection and conservation and forest product processing and marketing), the two support programmes on RETE and forest institution reform provide additional information on CF development priorities (GoV, 2007).

The forestry extension sub-programme emphasizes the need to develop capacity for the provision of relevant information and advisory services for farmers and communities that are managing natural forests and plantations (MARD, 2005). Other sources also point at the need to strengthen the management rights and capacities of farmers and communities (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011) and the need to develop extension capacity in the forestry sector (Pham, 2010).

⁶ Note that this assessment refers to the situation in 2006 when the forestry development strategy was written.

Another set of priorities can be distilled from the results of research and pilot activities related to the customary rights and practices of ethnic minorities in the uplands and the need for an ‘ancestral domain’ type of approach to address their needs (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011; Luong and Genotiva, 2013; Baulch et al., 2010; Dam, 2012).

There is much interest in government promotion of PES and REDD+. In both initiatives, the clarification of arrangements for tenure and equitable sharing of benefits is recognized as important; therefore there is an obvious, albeit insufficiently recognized, need for collaboration with CF initiatives (Sikor and Nguyen, 2011).

The conclusions and recommendations from a review of CF development in Viet Nam provide a detailed and comprehensive overview of the country priorities for CF development (Table 4) (Wode and Bao, 2009).

Table 5. National community forestry development priorities

Scope	Issues	Recommended priority actions
Institutional responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of approval and reporting procedures into lower-level legal mandates Channel for lesson learning/feedback to central levels CF policy development stalled (2009) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear job descriptions of DoF (VNFOREST) personnel with tasks and outputs Government commitment and action in decentralization at district and commune levels Strategic action plan for CF-related administrative reform
Policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many guidelines and reports from pilots, but no technical and strategic national synthesis Centralized policies and complex and conflicting regulations hamper field-level implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear commitment from MARD leadership to drive towards national CF policy reform Comprehensive policy reform at the national level and technical guidelines at the provincial level in line with national decentralization efforts Re-activation of regional CF working groups Coordination of ODA support
Technical issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and proven, simplified silvicultural and planning procedures not accepted Legal and administrative procedures for large-scale enterprises not adapted to CF needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis and consolidation of technical field experiences Harmonization of technical details based on good proven practices Development of technical guidelines for CF

Scope	Issues	Recommended priority actions
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commune and village levels capable of decentralized forest management • Capacities for technical and administrative support and law enforcement need to be strengthened 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity development for local authorities (based on adjusted job descriptions) to provide administrative and technical support to CF • Improved communication and interaction between local protection force and communities supported by provincial Forest Protection Departments
Costs and finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of CF development comparable to costs of existing forestry programmes • Urgency of bringing good natural forest under CF in view of their ongoing degradation • Where degraded forests are handed over, need for initial external funding, such as REDD and/or PES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerate the development of a national policy frame and implementation strategy as a precondition for nationwide rollout of CF • Pilots for new financing mechanisms where degraded resources have been handed over • integrate CF schemes under REDD (and PES)

Source: Wode and Bao, 2009

3.5 Risks

Risks include the possible divergence in priorities at policy and central administrative levels, leading to a lack of required commitment and action in supporting decentralization to district and commune levels. This could contribute to a continuing reluctance from government organizations at different levels to hand over rich forests to rural (ethnic minority) communities and to creation of a special 'ancestral domain' category for this purpose. If the debates on recognition of customary tenure as part of the preparation of the new Land Law were to lead to legal support for customary rights then this could help to managing the risks to some extent.

Other risks are related to community management of protection forest (and to a lesser extent conservation forests) through continuing reluctance to allow small-scale commercial production (sustainable forest management) in these 'ecological forests'.

A third risk is related to the need to transform government departments at central and local levels from law enforcement agencies into forestry extension organizations. This has proven a challenge in other countries such as Nepal, and will prove to be more of a challenge in a country with a tradition of central planning, and landownership rights vested in the state.



4

RECOFTC's priorities and strategies

4.1 Problem statement

The potential for CF to contribute to sustainable forest management in the uplands and midlands of Viet Nam is not being realized because of:

- Constraints in the regulatory framework;
- Insufficient recognition of customary land rights;
- Maintenance of state control over rich forests;
- Inadequate extension support and local government capacity; and
- Lack of involvement of the private sector and CSOs.

In addition, there are no specific regulations on female representation in policy-drafting teams and the effective implementation and monitoring of national legal frameworks for mainstreaming gender into forestry policy have not been conducted. For example, although the land-use certificate (called the Red Book) can contain the names of both husband and wife, there is no regulation indicating that both parties are the forest owners or users with equal rights. Thus, only 20 percent of Vietnamese women hold land-use certificates legally. There is also a gap in exploring potential for strengthening the rights and roles of local communities in climate change mitigation and adaptation and conflict management.

4.2 Priorities

The priorities for RECOFTC's country engagement strategy in Viet Nam have been developed in line with the four thematic areas referred to earlier from RECOFTC's overall Strategic Plan 2013-2018. It is envisaged that the Viet Nam Country Program will manage a broader portfolio of projects by the end of the strategic phase. The project portfolio will be diversified across thematic areas and will include externally-funded regional or multi-country projects with components for Viet Nam, country specific funding as well as services for other partners and projects; RECOFTC's direct investment of core funds for activities in Viet Nam which will be executed through its regular annual planning process. Vietnamese participants will be invited to join various other regional activities conducted by RECOFTC and/or other partners.

A new and expanded set of priorities will be identified after greater clarity is obtained about the new land and forestry policies and legislation that are presently under revision.

Based on the priorities for CF development, the priorities for RECOFTC’s engagement in Viet Nam are to assist in: (1) development of effective institutions, policy and regulatory frameworks and approaches for securing CF; (2) enhancing community livelihoods and market access through greater benefits from active CF management and enterprise development; (3) improving the integration of CF in the national climate change adaptation and mitigation programme and (4) contributing to the development of approaches and capacity for transforming forest conflicts.

The functional approaches to address these priorities include training and learning networks; policy research, analysis and development; strategic communication and pilot and demonstration initiatives (Table 5).

Table 6. RECOFTC’s CF development priorities (thematic areas) and approaches in Viet Nam

Priorities/ approaches	Securing community forestry	Enhancing livelihoods and markets	People, forest and climate change	Transforming forest conflicts
Training and learning networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of key actors • Leadership development • Training of trainers (ToT) and training in CF facilitation, extension and conflict mediation • Develop and share training and learning materials and experiences 			
Research analysis and synthesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to policy assessments and reviews • Contribute to the development of regulatory frameworks and guidelines • Support national and subnational community forestry working groups and networks 			
Strategic communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and share communication materials • Develop web sites in Vietnamese • Make RECOFTC a knowledge hub for Vietnamese audiences 			
Piloting and demonstrating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and establish best practices in pilot/demonstration sites • Contribute to design, research, documentation and sharing of lessons related to all four thematic areas • Support network(s) of CF pilot/good practice sites 			

Immediate priorities include:

- **Securing CF:** The priority for RECOFTC – as a capacity developer – is to build and enhance appropriate capacities of all relevant stakeholders for securing CF in Viet Nam, particularly their rights and responsibilities. In addition, a CF network is established as a platform to share CF experiences. Policy analysis on CF-related issues with a focus on tenure, co-management, benefit sharing and community participation is conducted.
- **Enhancing livelihood and markets:** Initial focus will continue to be on stakeholder capacity development and introducing the topic into the CF network agenda. RECOFTC will conduct an analysis with Forest Connect for CF sustainable management and contributions to livelihoods and markets through case studies. RECOFTC will also continue to explore arrangements for developing PES mechanisms.
- **Forests, people and climate change:** Collaboration will continue with regional and national initiatives in climate change mitigation and adaptation to strengthen support to CF as a policy instrument in the emerging national strategy to address climate change. In this respect, RECOFTC will continue to focus on stakeholders’ capacity development to enhance their informed and active engagement in mitigation and adaptation projects

as well as policy processes, particularly through Norad-supported climate change and REDD training events and ASFCC-funded forest biomass training. Social analysis of climate change is conducted.

- **Transforming forest conflicts:** To expand RECOFTC's work into this area, institutional landscape assessment of forest conflict transformation is conducted. This will entail partnerships with organizations already engaging with broader specific mediation institutions and processes and developing their understanding of forestry issues.
- **Social inclusion and gender equity** has clearly laid out its key components to ensure that such inclusive approach and method are integral part of the programme plan across all thematic areas and functional approaches. Key components of SIGE are:
 - Integration of social and gender equity perspectives in regional and country specific programme and projects
 - Organizational capacity development and strengthening functions, processes and policies
 - Expansion of SIGE-specific work
 - Knowledge sharing for social and gender responsive policy and practice

The Viet Nam Country Programme is developing a national communication strategy. The formal elements of the communication strategy (production and sharing of communication materials, Web site, national forums, etc.) are presented in Table 6. Experience has shown that informal discussions, participation at meetings and workshops organized by others and maintaining regular (e-mail as well as personal) contacts with key members of the growing community of CF practitioners in Viet Nam are of crucial importance, particularly for interactions with senior members of the government (both executive and legislative). Improved management of these informal communications will be explored through better division of responsibilities amongst members of the growing Viet Nam country team and through regular reporting of the results of these communications.

4.3 Geographic focus

RECOFTC expects to capitalize on knowledge, experience and relationships in Hanoi and central Viet Nam where existing projects will continue into the near future. The rationale for this is multiple: to enable the continuity and sustainability of initiatives; to develop synergies between projects and thematic areas for logistical and cost-reduction reasons; and because important existing and potential partners such as Huế University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF) are operating in the region. Nevertheless, this does not rule out RECOFTC activities in other parts of the country. Indeed RECOFTC will actively seek some activities elsewhere to support specific strategic objectives such as developing the capacities of stakeholders engaging in climate change mitigation projects, or in order to compare and adapt approaches in different socio-economic, cultural or ecological settings, and to take advantage of funding, partnership or learning opportunities as they arise.

4.4 Partners

The main strategic partner is VNFOREST, including selected provincial forest departments. Existing collaborative arrangements with training/research and development organizations (such as universities with forestry faculties and the technical forestry colleges) will be further developed. Collaboration with international and national NGOs will also be further explored and strengthened, based on relationships established in the past and strengthened coordination and collaboration in national and regional CF working groups.

4.5 Donors

RECOFTC is grateful for the support from various donors for the existing projects under implementation: Norad (Grassroots Capacity Building for REDD), USAID (GREEN Mekong) and SDC (ASFCC). RECOFTC expects to deliver high-quality outputs with positive outcomes that will engender continued interest to support RECOFTC activities in Viet Nam. Donors and international development organizations with a demonstrated interest in supporting CF development in Viet Nam include the Government of Finland, USAID, Norad, JICA, GiZ, SDC, EU, Sida, ADB, WB, various UN organizations (including FAO and UN REDD) and international conservation organizations (including IUCN and WWF). Relationships between RECOFTC and many of these donors at regional and/or country levels have been established already and will form the basis for exploring support and collaboration in the 2013-2018 country programme.

4.6 Thematic milestones

The key principle of the roadmap is to build on the existing strengths and lessons from the Viet Nam Country Program, particularly its reputation for solid policy analysis and development, capacity development and communications. In addition to further consolidation of these activities, the main new element to be developed for the future programme is action research in collaborative pilot and demonstration projects.

The summary of the programme roadmap for 2013-2018 in Table 6 provides an overview of the strategic outcomes by priority area, the intermediate outcomes and the planned programme outputs for 2013-2018.

Table 7. Thematic areas, outcomes and outputs for 2013-2018

Thematic areas		Securing Community Forestry (SCF)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes	Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective			
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
Intermediate country outcomes/targets	1) Capacity to support CF development is cultivated and enhanced 2) CF networks are set up as a platform to share CF experiences	Enabling CF related policies are implemented for securing CF	Different communication tools are used to enhance people's awareness and knowledge on CF	Effective CF practices are adopted and shared
Consolidated programme outputs/activities (2013-2018)	1) At least two sets of training materials on facilitating community participation & rights and responsibilities in CF 2) At least two ToTs on facilitating community participation for a total of 40 trainers	1) Analysis of CF-related policy issues, such as tenure, co-management, benefit sharing, community participation 2) Assessment of components of the national CF programme	1) A web page in Vietnamese set up and maintained 2) At least five policy brief/communication products on CF 3) Quarterly Vietnamese e-news 4) At least nine RECOFTC publications translated into Vietnamese	1) At least two IFRI site surveys 2) At least four demonstration sites on effective CF practices 3) Documentation of lessons learned

Thematic areas		Securing Community Forestry (SCF)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes		Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective		
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
	3) At least six training events on CF (rights and responsibility) for 50 practitioners from various sectors; in total 300 practitioners trained 4) A CF network set up with two meetings each year	3) A recommendation document for revised forest protection and development law	5) A National CF Forum on SCF 6) At least two videos on VCP/CF and climate change 7) At least four CF communication events at International Forestry Week 8) A story of change for CF	1) At least two IFRI site surveys 2) At least four demonstration sites on effective CF practices 3) Documentation of lessons learned

Thematic areas		Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets (ELM)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes		Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices		
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
Intermediate country outcomes/targets	1) Enhanced capacities to support livelihoods and markets are used by key stakeholders 2) The CF network incorporates agendas relevant to ELM for sharing experiences	Enabling CF related policies are implemented for ELM	Different communication tools are used to enhance people's awareness and knowledge on forest livelihoods and market	CF practices with integration of forest livelihoods and markets are adopted and shared

Consolidated programme outputs/activities (2013-2018)	1) Training materials on ELM-related topics developed 2) At least two ToTs on ELM-related topics for 40 trainers in total from different sectors 3) At least six training events on ELM-related topics for 300 practitioners in total from the grassroots level 4) CF network meetings to discuss CF experience with ELM dimensions (CSOS, academia, government)	1) At least two studies on forest livelihoods and markets under Forest Connect; and on benefit mechanisms in CF 2) Recommendation documents for revised forest law and other organic laws	1) A web page in Vietnamese set up and maintained 2) At least five policy brief/communication products on CF 3) Quarterly Vietnamese e-news 4) At least eight translated publications on ELM 5) A National CF forum on ELM	1) At least two IFRI site surveys 2) At least two demonstration sites established with continued support 3) Documentation of lessons learned
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Thematic areas		People, Forests and Climate Change (PFCC)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes	Enabling conditions for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change are strengthened			
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
Intermediate country outcomes/ targets	Trainers and practitioners trained in PFCC-related topics provide quality support to local communities	Improved REDD+ in specific and CF/ PFCC action plan are implemented in Viet Nam	Different communication tools are used to enhance people's awareness, knowledge and engagement in CC interventions	CF practices with an integration of forest climate change adaptation and mitigation are adopted and shared
Consolidated programme outputs/ activities (2013-2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Training materials on CC-related issues developed such as forest biomass and CC 2) At least two ToTs on PFCC for 40 participants 3) Training events on CC and REDD for 2,000 practitioners/ community members in total (including the Norad project) 4) Training on forest biomass (funding from ASFCC) 5) Engagement in REDD- and CC-related networks 6) CF network meetings organized to discuss CF experience with PFCC dimensions (among CSOs, academia, government) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) An analysis on CC-related social issues – stakeholder engagement, FPIC, social safeguards, REDD and CF, adaptation 2) A review of REDD action plan implementation 3) An assessment of Viet Nam's readiness 4) Support to the development of national and provincial REDD action plans 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A web page in Vietnamese set up and maintained 2) At least six communication products on PFCC 3) Quarterly Vietnamese e-news 4) At least nine translated publications on PFCC 5) A National CF forum on PFCC 6) At least ten radio episodes on CC and REDD+ 7) A short video on CF and REDD+ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least two demonstration sites established with continued support 2) Documentation of lessons learned



Thematic areas		Transforming Forest Conflicts (TFC)		
RECOFTC's strategic outcomes	Enabling conditions for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change are strengthened			
Functional approaches	Training and learning networks	Research, analysis and synthesis	Strategic communication	Piloting and demonstrating
Intermediate country outcomes/ targets	Trainers and practitioners trained in transforming forest conflicts apply their learning	Findings from CF-related issue and policy analysis contribute to national level institutional policy making	Different communication tools are used to enhance people's awareness and knowledge on transforming forest conflicts	Improved practices adopted in transforming forest conflicts are effectively replicated
Consolidated programme outputs/ activities (2013-2018)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Training materials on collaborative conflict transformation 2) At least two ToTs on conflict transformation for 40 trainers in total 3) At least six training events on TFC (for 300 practitioners from the grassroots level) 4) CF network meetings organized to discuss CF experience with TFC dimension (CSO, academia, Government) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assessment of institutional capacity in conflict transformation 2) A review of the current Forest Protection and Development Law on TFC 3) Recommendation documents for revised forest protection and development law on TFC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A web page in Vietnamese set up and maintained 2) At least four communication products on TFC 3) Quarterly Vietnamese e-news 4) At least eight translated publications on TFC 5) A National CF forum on TFC 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At least two demonstration sites established with continued support 2) Documentation of lessons learned





5

Resources

5.1 Human resources

There are currently five officers (country programme coordinator, administrative officer, training coordinator, CF partnerships coordinator and assistant communication officer) presently engaged in the RECOFTC Viet Nam Country Program as core programme staff.

Additional project staff will be hired, part time (including provision of an additional daily subsistence allowance for government staff) and full time, depending on progress in approval of project proposals.

RECOFTC Viet Nam also recruits national interns on an annual basis – where possible seconded from national government or non-government institutions engaged in CF development.

5.2 Fundraising

Funding has been secured for many of the activities planned for the first two years of programme implementation. Exploring interest from donors to support activities and outputs foreseen for year 2 to 5 for which funding has not been secured yet, will be explored through concept notes, discussion and preparation of project proposals in consultation with RECOFTC programme management and interested donors.



6.1 Impact and outcomes

The desired impact of all RECOFTC's CF development activities is that 'empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes'.

The synthesis of research results and CF project experiences in Viet Nam presented in the preceding chapters suggests that more effective engagement of local people requires:

- More secure rights to use and manage forest resources;
- Greater benefits from forest management;
- Better arrangements for resolving conflicts to improve forest governance; and
- Enhanced resilience of communities and strengthened support for their engagement in climate change initiatives.

Hence the outcomes (i.e. changes in capacity and behaviour) that RECOFTC proposes to contribute are in the form of enhanced effectiveness of institutions:

- To secure communities' property rights (rights of access, use, management and exclusion);
- To enhance livelihoods and access to markets (to enable communities to obtain greater benefits from forest resources);
- To reduce communities' vulnerability to shocks, enhance their resilience and strengthen their roles in policies related to climate change; and
- To transform conflicts over forests, from problems into opportunities for better forest governance.

RECOFTC recognizes that none of these changes can be made by RECOFTC on its own. Hence the emphasis on strategic partnerships, strengthening of arrangements for coordination, collaborative planning and implementation, and support to the development and implementation of a national CF development programme as a shared framework for coordination, planning and implementation.

Impacts and outcomes are therefore the result of activities by many actors and influenced by events that are not under RECOFTC's control. However, there is also a need to assess the effectiveness of the activities and outputs that are controlled by RECOFTC.

This requires the design and implementation of an M&E approach that enables both RECOFTC and its partners to assess the quality and relevance of RECOFTC's activities and outputs and how these have contributed to changes in institutional capacity and performance as well as how these changes have impacted the effectiveness of local people's engagement in sustainable forest management.

6.2 Participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E)

For RECOFTC's overall programme, the PM&E system with indicators and means of verification has been developed; it forms the basis for adaptation and development of the M&E system for the Viet Nam Country Program. In order to conduct strategic monitoring and evaluation at different levels, RECOFTC will have three tiers of M&E - routine activities monitoring, some targeted impact and outcome documentation every year and overall country program evaluation at the end of the strategic phase. However, the M&E will be conducted with relevant stakeholders, not only as a tool to collect data, but the tools to generate learning together.

The country programme will conduct monitoring of activities and the outputs regularly. A participatory monitoring and evaluation system will be developed with the partners and community groups to assist them to monitor their activities and outputs, effectively.

In order to monitor the progress to strategic and intermediate outcomes, there will be at least one impact evaluation planned and conducted every year. The impact evaluations will help RECOFTC to find the trends towards the outcome as well as address the deviation in a timely manner. These evaluations include impacts of RECOFTC works on national and sub-national regulatory frameworks, CF as institutions and different groups of local community members – men and women, youth, landless poor, and ethnic minority. In addition, case studies, success stories and stories of change will be documented and used to improve programme planning and decision making; and leveraging cross learning at the sub-national, national, regional levels.

The country engagement strategy sets the basis for overall evaluation of the country programme at the end of the current strategic phase. The evaluation results will be the foundation for the design and development of following strategic phase for the country programme.

In addition, RECOFTC partners will develop self monitoring skills of community users groups. These groups will control their information needs and track their progresses and impacts through their active engagement to control over the content, process and results.

Table 8 presents the indicators, means of verification and targets for the programme goal and strategic outcomes.

Table 8. Indicators for the programme goal and strategic outcomes

Goal: Empowered local people are effectively and equitably engaged in the sustainable management of forested landscapes				
Indicators	Remarks	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Target
Number of CFs	Distinguish types (CF, village, user group, household, indigenous people, forest, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government statistics Project documents 	59 communities (in 35 communes) in 9 provinces	10% increase
Area under CF	Total area of increased CF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government statistics Project documents 	In 2013: 3 414 360 ha under household management and 524 477 ha under village communities	10% increase
Number of people participating in CF	Specify ethnicity, gender and poverty issues that MoV allow for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government statistics Project documents 	No clear statistical data but around 25 million villagers living in uplands and midlands rely on forest for their sources of livelihoods	10% increase
Documented cases that show achievements for Viet Nam	Scales of 'effectively' and 'equitably' are difficult to quantify, best practices and examples will be presented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stories of change (qualitative) Case studies (qualitative) Project reports Survey reports 	0	1 case
Strategic Outcome 1 – Securing Community Forestry Institutions and resources for securing CF are more effective				
Percentage of CF members reporting improved support from the government and other institutions	Improved support from government and non-government institutions can include both financial resources and advisory services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder/ community survey Country policy analysis Stories of change (qualitative) Case studies (qualitative) 	0	60%
Strategic Outcome 2 – Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices				
Number of new or enhanced components of the CF programme to promote local livelihoods through sustainable CF by both the government and NGOs	CF approaches clearly included in livelihood and poverty alleviation strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy analysis Policy briefs Forest management plans with business component 	0	1 component

Strategic Outcome 2 – Enhancing Livelihoods and Markets
Institutions are actively enhancing local livelihoods through sustainable CF practices

Percentage of communities where RECOFTC has a presence that have increased income from CF-related activities	40% of participating community members (50% women) has an increased income of 30% from their involvement in CF-related activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies • Stakeholder survey • Value chain studies • ELM project reports 	0	40% of members have increased income of 30% from CF
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Strategic Outcome 3 – People, Forests and Climate Change
Enabling conditions for local people's engagement in forested landscapes in the context of climate change are strengthened

Percentage of communities that include CCM and/or CCA in new or revised CF management plans	Both formal and informal management plans are assessed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CF management plans, land-use plans, other relevant rules or regulations 	0	50% of new and revised plans
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Documented cases where people are engaged and benefiting from mitigation and adaptation activities	Including also current regional projects in Viet Nam such as ASFCC, GREEN Mekong, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey and case studies • Project monitoring reports 	0	1 case
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Strategic Outcome 4 – Transforming Forest Conflicts
Institutions to transform conflict are in place and increasingly more effective

Increased number of institutions for CF conflict resolution	Both GO and NGO institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country analysis • Stakeholder/ • Community surveys • Stories of change (qualitative) • Case studies (qualitative) 	0	2
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Documented conflict cases successfully mediated following the practices developed by the mediators, resulting in a win-win solution for all actors involved	A short description of the cases, not yet fully developed stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country analysis • Stakeholder/ community surveys • Stories of change (qualitative) • Case studies (qualitative) 	0	1 case
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During year 1, the indicators will be adjusted and the baselines and targets identified and defined where necessary. The monitoring of the intermediate outcomes is expected to assist in the necessary adjustments and identification of baselines and targets of the strategic outcomes (Table 9).

Table 9. Indicators for monitoring of intermediate outcomes

Intermediate Outcome 1 – Enhanced capacities are used by key stakeholders to provide quality support and professional advice to local communities				
Indicators	Description	Means of verification (MoV)	Baseline	Targets
Extent to which training participants have applied the acquired knowledge and skills	Self-perceived evidence of trainees (disaggregated into male/female, topic, geographical)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirkpatrick level 3 surveys • Documented case studies and stories of change • Reports on RECOFTC-organized capacity development events • Project reports 	80% (survey from 2012/2013 training)	50%
Organizational adaptation of knowledge and skills from RECOFTC training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opinions of managers of attending organizations • Opinions of clients/beneficiaries of organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kirkpatrick level 4 • Percentage of organizations which adapt new knowledge and skills acquired by their staff members through RECOFTC training or capacity development events 	0	40%
Number of active learning networks that RECOFTC engages with by thematic areas each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Active’ means regular interaction towards a specific goal • A learning network has an objective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking documentation • Internal Annual Report 	ELM (1) PFCC (2)	SCF (1) ELM (1) PFCC (2)
Intermediate Outcome 2 – Enabling policies and regulatory instruments are adopted to enhance local people's rights, improve forest governance and ensure a fairer share of benefits				
Percentage of changed policies, laws and regulations at the subnational and national level that are assessed as enabling improvements for: i) securing the rights for local people to benefit from forest management ii) good forest governance lii) equitable sharing of benefits	80% of changed policies, laws and regulations that are assessed as ‘overall positive’ for local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy/regulatory framework analysis (including involvement of local people and processes in policy-making); • Reviewing documents on working group composition or representation; assessment of benefit-sharing mechanisms • Interviews, questionnaires 	0 (only new policies etc. after 1 October 2013 are considered)	80%

Intermediate Outcome 3 – Communication strategies are used to enhance awareness, attitude and behaviour of target audiences

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of references made to RECOFTC knowledge products Number of times RECOFTC is quoted 	A high number of references to RECOFTC publications indicates that the provided information is highly appreciated by relevant target audiences and further disseminated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal tracking methods Peer-reviewed (internal and external) information based on research translations Citation analysis 	0	10% increase each year
Changes in awareness/ knowledge of target audiences as a result of RECOFTC communication tools/ activities	Percentage of target audience that reports an increase in awareness/ knowledge as a result of RECOFTC communication tools/ activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder survey: Interviewees should include representatives of policy-makers at ministries, academics, NGO managers, research institutes Communication surveys 	0	80% report increased awareness and knowledge
Documented cases of action taken as a result of RECOFTC's strategic communications strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A short description of cases, not yet fully developed stories Including all RECOFTC communication activities, not only publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies Stories of change 	0	At least 1 case

Intermediate Outcome 4 – Improved practices adopted in CF are effectively replicated

Number of innovative improved practices introduced by RECOFTC that are replicated beyond RECOFTC projects	A list of innovative improved practices promoted by RECOFTC is available in the M&E package	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys Case studies Stories of change Direct observation 	0	2 best practices
Percentage of CF practices through RECOFTC support that are still active	Still active by end of programme/ project or after support ends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country programme reports Project documentation Surveys 	0	95%

The results of the monitoring of the strategic and intermediate outcomes are shared with the other RECOFTC country and regional programme staff in the annual programme review and direct annual planning. Results are also shared with donors and partners through annual reports. Where monitoring results indicate the need, proposals for adjustment of the country programme are presented, discussed and adopted when justified.

6.3 Learning and leveraging at regional and country levels

The RECOFTC programme framework and particularly its linkages with the framework for national CF programmes, enables sharing of experiences and drawing lessons amongst other country programmes and with regional programmes, e.g. CF Champions Network, Global Alliance for Community Forestry, biennial forums for people and forests, regional training courses, regional and multicountry projects, etc.

This is expected to contribute to more effective leveraging of change for CF development in Viet Nam and to more effective application in other countries of the lessons learned in Viet Nam.



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THE CENTER FOR PEOPLE AND FORESTS

RECOFTC's mission is to enhance capacities for stronger rights, improved governance and fairer benefits for local people in sustainable forested landscapes in the Asia and the Pacific region.

RECOFTC holds a unique and important place in the world of forestry. It is the only international not-for-profit organization that specializes in capacity development for community forestry. RECOFTC engages in strategic networks and effective partnerships with governments, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, the private sector, local people and research and educational institutes throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. With over 25 years of international experience and a dynamic approach to capacity development – involving research and analysis, demonstration sites and training products – RECOFTC delivers innovative solutions for people and forests.

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