

REDD+ Strategy and REDD+ Readiness

Climate change has received an increasing political interest and support in Viet Nam. This includes a five-year action plan and a MARD steering group on climate change and mitigation which will lead the development of a REDD+ strategy, the starting points of which have already been agreed. Viet Nam has also made clear its position on REDD+ through a submission to the UNFCCC Secretariat in February 2008.

Key institutions related to forestry and REDD+ include:

- The **Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)**
- The **Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)**
- The **Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)**
- The **Ministry of Finance (MoF)**
- The **State Committee for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Area Affairs (CEMMA)**

Until the early 1990's, a system of **State Forest Enterprises (SFE)** managed Viet Nam's forest resources. By the end of the 1990's there were about 400 SFEs. However, a number of problems, including conflicts between local people and SFEs over control of forest resources and land, a lack of investment funds, and limited capacity to innovate led to recognition of the need for reform. This reform has proceeded according to Decree 200 and Circular Number 10/2005/TT-BNN.

The **Forest Sector Support Partnership (FSSP)** was established in 2001 (as the Forest Sector Support Program and Partnership). The FSSP aims to create an effective partnership between national and international forest sector stakeholders, focusing on the implementation of the National Forest Strategy (2006-2020). The general objective of the partnership is to maximize effectiveness and efficiency in the use of all resources applied to the sector, including those of government and donors, through better harmonization of policies and programs in the context of shared objectives for the sector. The partnership actively encourages and promotes the involvement of the private sector, both domestic and foreign direct investment, in the promotion of forest sector objectives. The partnership activities are open to a wide range of stakeholders who take an interest in the forest sector in Vietnam.

Coordination

Given the broad scope of REDD+, which overlaps the mandate of numerous governmental and non-governmental organizations, there is a clear need to coordinate activities in building REDD+ readiness. Furthermore, numerous multilateral and bilateral development partners are also contributing the building capacity for REDD+ readiness. In response to the current situation and need for coordination, MARD has established a **National REDD+ Network** and a **REDD+ Working Group** which are divided into **REDD+ Sub-technical Working Groups** on (i) [REDD+ Governance](#); (ii)

Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV); (iii) REDD+ Financing and Benefit Distribution; (iv) Local Implementation of REDD+; and (v) Private Sector Engagement. This will be a subsidiary body to the Steering Committee for Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation, and will include stakeholders from both Vietnamese and international agencies. The mandate of the REDD+ working group will be to provide guidance and coordination on all activities building capacity for REDD+. The UN-REDD Programme for Viet Nam represents a part of this larger picture, so the Programme Executive Board (PEB), which will be responsible for overseeing implementation of the UN-REDD Programme in Viet Nam, and which will include members of the REDD+ working group.

Social impacts and potential additional benefits

Poverty and Forests

Many of the poorest people in Viet Nam live in and around forested areas and the poor are often blamed for deforestation and forest degradation. Viet Nam has experienced some difficulties in successfully engaging local communities in forest dependent poverty alleviation activities. Some of the problems have been due to a lack of communication with the local groups on new laws and programs, the division of responsibilities between local government departments and cultural differences and interpretation of activities. However, poverty alleviation continues to be a central tenet within the country's forest strategies.

Three key ongoing initiatives should be noted: firstly, since 2006 MARD has implemented the Community Forest Management Pilot Programme 2006-2007 in 40 communes of 10 provinces, including some in the Tay Nguyen and Northern Central Region under support of the Trust Fund for Forest (TFF). This pilot project is aimed at developing and testing appropriate technical and financial systems for Community Forest Management (CFM) to enable sustainable forest resource management and utilization, as a basis for future forestry programs.

Secondly, ADB's Forest for Livelihood Improvement in the Central Highlands (FLITCH) Project has been piloted in 60 communes in 6 provinces. This project is expected to provide sufficient guidance to develop a future legal framework, technical guidance and a benefit sharing system for community forest management of at least 75 community groups and over 3 million ha of natural forests and plantations on bare land.

Thirdly, the GoV issued the Resolution No. 30a/2008/NQ-CP dated 27/12/2008 to promote rapid and sustainable poverty alleviation in the 61 poorest districts (most of them are located in the mountainous areas). The Resolution mandates that the every poor

household in these districts contracted for forest protection will receive VND200,000/ha/year and 15kg of rice per person per month.

Role of ethnic minorities in REDD+

Ethnic minorities in Viet Nam are important stakeholders in REDD+ to the extent that they depend on natural forests for their livelihoods and their tenure rights to forests and forestland, and they may make contributions to a more sustainable forest management and effective monitoring. This is probably more valid for minorities with a long history of association with particular forests than for migrant ethnic communities such as those migrating from the depleted forest regions of the north to the Central Highlands. Whether particular ethnic minorities in specific areas of interest for REDD+ interventions may add value to this effort is an empirical question to be established in each case. The GoV has paid great attention on land use rights of ethnic minorities on forests and forestland. In addition to the nation-wide policies on forests and forestland allocation, the Prime Minister has issued Decision 304/2005/QD-TTg on 23/11/2005 on forestland allocation to individual households and local communities of the ethnic minorities in the Central Highlands. The Resolution 30a/2008/NQ-CP also has some special articles to ensure the tenure rights of ethnic minorities on forests and forestland are respected and properly implemented.

The GoV officially recognizes 54-ethnic minority groups, each with its own language, lifestyle and cultural heritage. The Committee for Ethnic Minorities with branch offices at local levels, consisting of representatives from various ethnic groups, is responsible for providing consultation and advice to the government on ethnic-related issues. Most if not all of these groups are forest dependent, particularly given that they prefer to remain isolated from lowland. Some are migratory and relatively new to the forest lands they currently occupy. None of these groups have political autonomy, but rather are represented by official representatives and committees such as the Committee for Ethnic Minorities (equivalent to a ministry) and the Committee for Ethnic Minorities at the National Assembly. Up to date, no local non-governmental organizations have been registered to specifically advocate for the rights of indigenous peoples; however, several NGOs and international NGOs have mobilized efforts to promote sustainable development in these communities, which includes community-based development planning, improved community-based forest management and gender-specific activities.

A new generation of approaches to monitoring of natural resources including carbon emissions reduction makes use of locally based, participatory monitoring methods. This approach may involve monitoring of resources and their use, undertaken by local people who do not have a formal education in science. According to a paper by

Nordeco (2008: 14), the participatory approach to monitoring appears to be one of the most powerful land and resource monitoring tools, yet it does not seem to be fully included in the discussions on carbon emission reduction activities in developing countries.

In Viet Nam the approach may serve to ground-truth carbon stock data extracted from remote sensing or other data collection methods provided by the central agencies, reduce uncertainty and represent benefits in terms of incentives for participation, transparency and improved forest governance. Indigenous peoples and forest dependent communities often possess intimate knowledge of forest ecosystems they depend on for their livelihoods, which in turn may contribute to the monitoring of carbon emissions from forest degradation, which represent a challenge to current remote sensing methodology. A participatory role for ethnic minorities in forest monitoring may also provide a basis for stronger involvement in government sponsored schemes for payment for ecosystem services (PES). With appropriate benefit sharing arrangements from REDD+ and clarification of land tenure, ethnic minorities may also play a key role in efforts to tackle illegal logging and cross-border trade in tropical timber.

