

# Viet Nam REDD+ Readiness - State of Play

2013





# Viet Nam

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## State of Play

March 2013



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# Foreword

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With the understanding that deforestation contributes to as much as 20 per cent of global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) have been attempting to reach agreement on how developing countries can be supported and rewarded for protecting and enhancing the carbon stocks in their standing forests - a concept known as REDD+. For international negotiators to reach agreement on a global REDD+ mechanism presents but one challenge. Where deforestation rates have been persistently high over many years and where forest management policies have largely been ineffective in achieving their objectives, reforming governance structures, regulatory controls and incentive systems to protect forest carbon stocks, including in a manner that is socially acceptable (e.g. acceptable to all major forest stakeholders), will not be easy. The global REDD+ mechanism will also require participating countries to project future forest carbon stock changes under a business-as-usual scenario, to monitor and report actual forest carbon stock changes, and to attribute these changes to drivers. As developing countries mostly have incomplete and inconsistent forest datasets, and as some have never conducted a proper forest inventory, these present another set of difficult challenges.

The Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) is monitoring the development of national REDD+ systems in selected key REDD+ countries in the Asia-Pacific region. This work is generally based upon outputs produced through a REDD+ related project funded by the Ministry of Environment, Japan.

This report presents the results of a study on REDD+ readiness in Viet Nam, a country with forests of importance to its people and globally. I would like to congratulate the author for succeeding in bringing together this report, which I anticipate will be useful to people working on REDD+ issues from local to international levels.

Hideyuki Mori

IGES President

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The authors are solely responsible for any omissions and errors.



# Acronyms and Abbreviations

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|        |   |
|--------|---|
| 5MHPR  | five million heaters reforestation programme  |
| AD     | Activity Data   |
| BDS    | benefit distribution system   |
| BMU    | Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, (German: Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit) |
| CEMA   | National Ethnic Committee   |
| COP    | Conference of the Parties   |
| DARD   | Department of Agriculture and Rural Development   |
| DBH    | Diameter at Breast Height   |
| DOF    | Department of Forestry  |
| EF     | Emission Factor   |
| FAO    | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations   |
| FCPF   | Forest Carbon Partnership Facility  |
| FIPI   | Forest Inventory and Planning Institute   |
| FLEG   | Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade  |
| FORMIS | National Forest Monitoring and Information System   |
| FPD    | Forest Protection Department  |
| FPIC   | Free, Prior and Informed Consent  |
| FSIV   | Viet Nam Institute of Forestry Science  |
| GDLA   | General Department of Land Administration   |
| GHG    | Greenhouse Gas  |
| GIZ    | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)   |
| ha     | hectare   |
| ICI    | International Climate Initiative  |
| ICRAF  | World Agroforestry Center   |
| IDLO   | International Development Law Organisation  |
| IGES   | Institute for Global Environmental Strategies   |
| IPCC   | Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change   |
| JICA   | Japan International Co-operation Agency   |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| LEAF    | Lowering Emissions in Asia's Forest   |
| LULUCF  | Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry  |
| MARD    | Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development   |
| MB-REDD | Multiple Benefits from REDD+ in South East Asia   |
| MOF     | Ministry of Finance   |
| MOFA    | Ministry of Foreign Affairs   |
| MONRE   | Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment   |
| MPI     | Ministry of Planning and Investment   |
| MRV     | Monitoring, Reporting and Verification  |
| NRAP    | National REDD+ Action Program   |
| N.D.    | Not Dated   |
| NFDS    | National Forest Development Strategy  |
| NFI     | National Forest Inventory   |
| NFIMAP  | National Forest Inventory and Monitoring Programme  |
| NFMS    | National Forest Monitoring System   |
| NGOs    | Non-Governmental Organisation   |
| NOCCOP  | National Office for Climate Change and Ozone Protection   |
| NORAD   | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation  |
| NORDECO | Nordic Agency for Development and Ecology   |
| NRAP    | National REDD+ Action Programme   |
| NTP-CC  | National Target Programme to Respond to Climate Change  |
| PAMBs   | Management Boards for Special Use Forest  |
| PCs     | Peoples' Committees   |
| PES     | Payments for Ecosystem Services   |
| PFMNs   | Management Boards for Protection Forest   |
| RECOFTC | RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests   |
| REDD+   | Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks |
| REL     | Reference Emissions Level   |
| RL      | Reference Level   |
| R-PIN   | Readiness Programme Idea Note   |
| R-PP    | Readiness Preparation Proposal  |
| SEs     | State Enterprises   |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| SESA     | Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment               |
| SFEs     | State Forest Enterprises                                    |
| STWG     | Sub-Technical Working Group                                 |
| SUFs     | Special-Use Forests   |
| tCO2     | tonnes of carbon dioxide                                    |
| TFF      | Trust Fund for Forests                                      |
| TWG      | Technical Working Group                                     |
| UN       | United Nations  |
| UNDP     | United Nations Development Programme                        |
| UNFCCC   | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change       |
| USAID    | United States Agency for International Development          |
| USD      | United States Dollar  |
| VFU      | Viet Nam Forestry University                                |
| VIRI     | Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute |
| VNFOREST | Vietnam Administration of Forestry                          |
| WCS      | World Conservation Society                                  |
| WRI      | World Resource Institute                                    |



# Executive Summary

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- Over the last two decades, the Government of Viet Nam has introduced a range of policies and programmes on forest land allocation, reforestation and payment for ecosystem services. While these initiatives have contributed to an increase in forest cover, several regions still have high deforestation rates, and the degradation and fragmentation of natural forests continue to be serious problems. The major drivers of deforestation and forest degradation originate outside the forestry sector, and are related to economic opportunities, national development objectives and weak governance over land use sectors. REDD+ actions in Viet Nam need to address forest quality, and a cross-sectoral approach is needed for REDD+ to be incorporated into broad development objectives and mainstreamed into the land use policies and plans at the national, provincial and local levels.
- Forest land allocation has been one of the key policy issues in Viet Nam's forest sector. About 34% of total forest lands are now managed by non-state actors. Rich forest lands have often been allocated to actors with the resources to invest in forestry, whereas most of the forest lands allocated to local households have been of poor quality. In addition to addressing this issue, the Government also needs to address the weak legal status of contract-based forest users and the limited benefits they receive. Clear forest ownership and use rights are essential for local communities to participate in and benefit from REDD+.
- Issues related to climate change have received attention at high political levels, as Viet Nam is considered vulnerable to climate-related events, such as sea level rise and flooding. The National Target Plan to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC) is the commitment of the government to address climate change. It sets out a target of increasing forest cover from 44% to 47% by 2020 as a part of the country's contribution to climate change mitigation. The Government views REDD+ as one of the main instruments through which to implement the NTP-RCC. Since the 13th Convention of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2007, the Government has engaged with international initiatives to prepare the country for a future global REDD+ mechanism. Viet Nam was one of the early participants in the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).
- In order to guide the overall development and implementation of REDD+ in Viet Nam, the National REDD+ Action Program (NRAP) was formulated and approved on 27 June 2012 through Decision 799/QĐ-TTg, which sets up two implementation phases: Phase I: 2011-2015 and Phase II: 2016-2020. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) took a leading role in formulating the NRAP, in collaboration with the UN-REDD Programme. The Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) submitted to the FCPF in 2011 is another key REDD+ strategy document. It

outlines the process that the Government will follow to develop a national REDD+ system. It also describes key components of the national REDD+ system, many of which were inputs to the NRAP.

- With support from development partners and international NGOs, the Government of Viet Nam has progressed towards developing the key elements required for implementing REDD+ through a national REDD+ system. The progress made includes formulating REDD+ strategy documents; establishing an organisational arrangement for REDD+ readiness involving both state and non-state actors; analysing forest inventory data for the development of RELs/RLs; work to establish a national forest monitoring system; designing a MRV framework; and testing on the Cancun REDD+ safeguards. Various REDD+ pilots are underway and the FPIC principle has been tested at some of the pilot sites. The Government is also working on a BDS system, aiming at transparent and equitable financial management for the implementation of REDD+ actions.
- While the technical challenges associated with RELs/RLs and MRV are considerable, the greatest challenges to the implementation of REDD+ actions are associated with building cross-sectoral approaches to REDD+, coordinating different levels of the Government system, and ensuring multi-stakeholders participation in designing, implementing and monitoring REDD+ actions.
- Improving approaches for engaging local actors in natural resource management is a priority. Completing the land allocation process and strengthening the legal framework for community forestry are important. Time, resources and capacity within the Government are required to ensure that the rights and interests of local communities are reflected in the design and implementation of REDD+ actions. Approaches to ensure that REDD+ actions are accepted by a broad range of stakeholders would contribute to minimising the risks of reversals and the spatial displacement of deforestation and forest degradation drivers.
- A range of thematic matters of REDD+ have been discussed and developed by the Sub-Technical Working Groups under the REDD+ Network. This REDD+ organisational structure offers opportunities for non-state actors (development partners, NGOs and research institutions) to contribute to Viet Nam's REDD+ readiness; building the Government's capacity to coordinate the various organisations and to link their activities to national strategies is a priority. A range of sectors and groups with different ideas and interests at different levels must be engaged to develop the REDD+ system. The coordination capacity of the Government, in particular the REDD+ Office, needs to be strengthened.



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# 1. Introduction

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The concept of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing carbon stocks in standing forests (REDD+) has become an important part of the climate mitigation agenda in the negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The underlying idea of REDD+ is that developing countries will receive financial incentives to protect and increase carbon stocks in their forests, which might otherwise be lost through conversion to other land uses or degraded through unsustainable forest management (Scheyvens and Setyarso, 2010).

In the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Viet Nam), attention towards sustainable management and conservation of forests to mitigate climate change has been growing. Since the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the UNFCCC in 2007, the Government of Viet Nam has demonstrated interest in REDD+ in UNFCCC processes, and has engaged with international initiatives to undertake national REDD+ readiness activities. Viet Nam was one of the first nine countries selected to participate in the UN-REDD Programme. It is also one of the first countries to become a member of the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

A number of activities have been implemented in Viet Nam to develop a national REDD+ system. These include: formulation of a national programme to guide REDD+ development; development of an organisational framework for REDD+ im-

plementation; design of REDD+ financing and payment distribution; and progress in developing a national approach to the REDD+ safeguards. In addition, owing to its trend of an overall increase of forest area, Viet Nam's pathway to REDD+, including measures to protect and increase forest areas, and a national baseline and design for monitoring forest carbon stocks, has offered an interesting example for international discussions and other countries preparing for REDD+.

This report provides an independent review of the state of REDD+ readiness in Viet Nam as of July 2013. It follows up on the IGES report 'REDD-plus readiness in Viet Nam' (Poruschi, 2010) and is a part of a regional study on national REDD+ readiness funded by the Ministry of Environment of Japan that aims to share information and lessons from readiness processes.

In Decisions 4/CP.15 and 1/CP.16, the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) sets out the basic elements of national REDD+ systems. These are: (i) a national strategy or action plan aimed at protecting and/or increasing existing forest carbon stocks; (ii) a forest reference emissions level (REL) against which the impacts of REDD+ activities can be measured; (iii) a national forest monitoring system (NFMS) to monitor changes in forest carbon stocks, as part of a monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV) framework for REDD+; (iv) a REDD+ safeguards system which can ensure that REDD+ actions do not cause negative social or environmental impacts; and (v)

demonstration activities aimed at generating information and practical experiences for the development of national REDD+ systems (Scheyvens, 2012). This report is structured to reflect these basic elements (Figure 1). In addition, the report discusses the organisational framework to implement REDD+ in Viet Nam and reviews financial and technical support for REDD+ readiness. The report begins with a description of Viet Nam's forest resources and forest cover trends, and a review of national forest policy and

governance. The information for the report was obtained from a literature review as well as from interviews with REDD+ stakeholders in Viet Nam, including state agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and donor agencies.



**Figure 1: Essential elements of national REDD+ system**

*Source: Scheyvens (2012).*



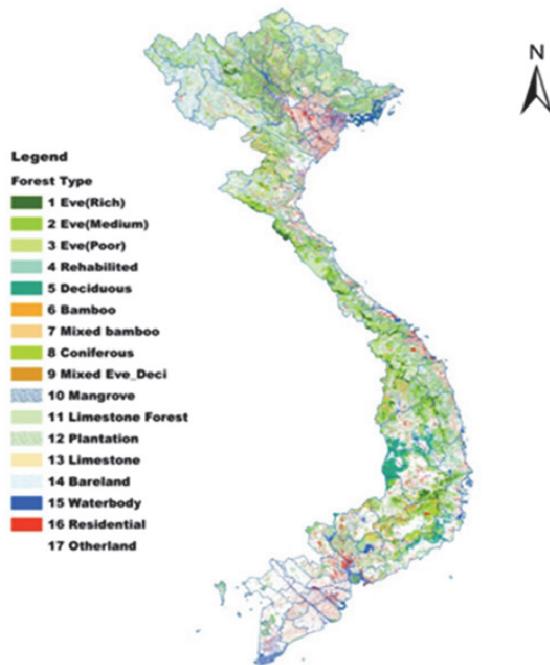
## 2. Forest Resources

### 2.1. Forests and people

Viet Nam is one of the few tropical countries which have managed to move from net deforestation to increasing forest cover (Mayfroidt and Lambin, 2009). Through an extensive reforestation programme and reforms the forestry sector, total forest cover has grown from 9.2 million ha in 1990 (27.8% of land area) to 13.4 million ha in 2010 (39.5% of land area) (FCPF, 2011; Kitamura, 2012). Of this forest land, 10.3 million ha are natural forest and 3.1 million ha are plantations (Kitamura, 2012).

As Figure 2 shows, most forested areas are found in the Central Highlands, Central North and Northeast areas, where forest cover is over 40% of the land area (FAO, 2009). In contrast, the Red River Delta, Southeast and Southwest areas have the least amount of forested lands, with forest cover at about 10-20% of the land area (*ibid.*)

The role of the forestry sector in the national economy has increased. Domestic timber consumption and wood exports have grown considerably. In 2007, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) reported that total export value of forest products had increased at more than 10% per year for the previous decade (MARD, 2007). The value of exported forest products is estimated to be USD 2.5 billion per year (Herman et al., 2012), and about 520,000 people are working in the forest product industry and related trade sector (FAO, 2009).



**Figure 2: Forest cover map 2010**

*Source: Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2013).*

Forests are also important in the informal economy, providing essential materials for rural livelihoods. Approximately 84 million people (about 75% of the total population) live in rural areas, where firewood is commonly used for cooking (FAO, 2009). About 25 million people in rural areas, about 8 million of whom belong to ethnic minorities, obtain an average of 20% of their total income from forest resources (DOF, 2005; UN-REDD Programme, 2011c).

While overall forest cover is increasing, Viet Nam has a relatively low per capita forest area and wood stock. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United

Nations (FAO) reports that Viet Nam has on average 0.15 ha of forest per capita and 9.16 m<sup>3</sup> of wood per capita, compared to the global averages of 0.97 ha and 75 m<sup>3</sup>, respectively (FAO, 2009). Given that the population is growing and predicted to reach 100 million by 2020, the pressure on forest resources, especially on natural forests, will increase (MARD, 2007). The importance of forests to the well-being of much of the population will increase, rather than diminish.

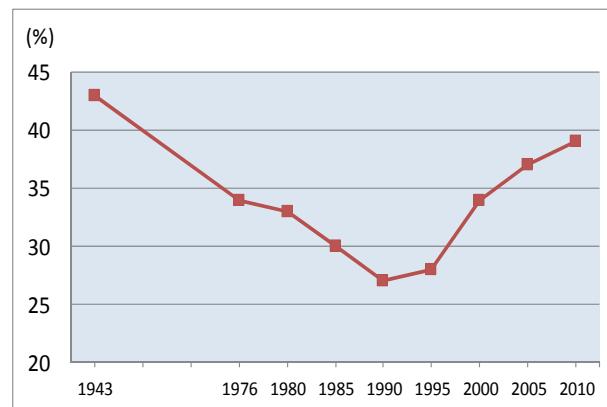
## **2.2. Rates of forest cover change**

Viet Nam's forest cover has changed dramatically over the last 50 years (Figure 3). From 43% in 1943, forest cover declined to about 27% in 1990. Between 1990 and 2000 however, as a result of the national reforestation programme, forest cover grew by an average of 236,000 ha per year (Nguyen, Oberndorf, et al., 2010). The forest cover increased at a rate of 2.1% per year between 2000 and 2005, and reached 39.5% of the total land in 2010 (FCPF, 2011; Kitamura, 2012).

Figure 4 shows the changes in the total forest area with the proportion of natural and plantation forests. Since 1995, both the areas of natural forest and plantations increased year-by-year. The area of plantation forest increased rapidly from 8.1% of the total forest area in 1990 to 18.5% in 2005.

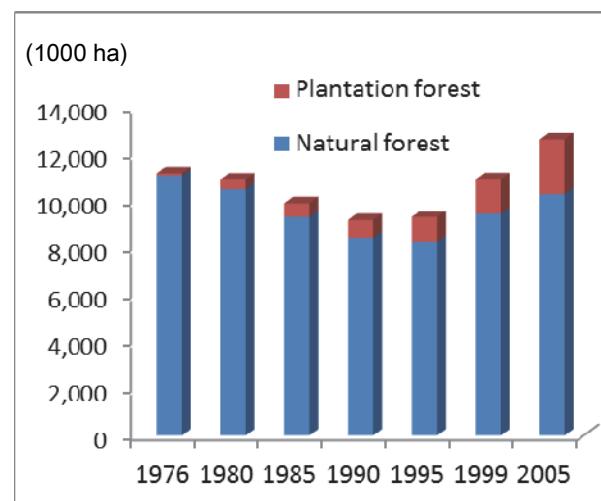
Despite an overall increase of forest area, various regions in the country, including the Central Highlands and the east of the Southern Region still have high rates of deforestation. It is estimated that the LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) sector was responsible for 10% of the country's total GHG emissions in 2000 (MONRE, 2010). The remaining natu-

ral forest faces serious degradation and fragmentation problems. More than 60% of Viet Nam's natural forests are considered degraded, and closed-canopy forests constituted only 4.6% of the total forest cover in 2004 (World Bank, 2005).



**Figure 3: Change in forest cover (1943 - 2010)**

*Source: Kitamura (2012).*



**Figure 4: Change in the area of natural forest and plantation forest (1976-2005)**

*Source: FAO (2009).*

### **2.3. Direct causes and underlying drivers of deforestation and forest degradation**

The direct drivers of deforestation and forest degradation are identified in several documents, including Viet Nam's Readiness Preparation Proposal (R-PP) (FCPF, 2011), the Revised Standard Joint Programme Document (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009), the Draft of the REDD+ Roadmap (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011) and the study conducted by Pham, Moeliono, et al. (2012). The main drivers are:

- Land conversion for plantation forest, agriculture and aqua-culture development;
- Construction of hydropower plants and the expansion of road networks;
- Forest fires (causing damage to 11,753 ha of forest during 2005-2009);
- Shifting agriculture (practiced by about 25 million people living inside or near forest areas); and
- Unsustainable timber harvesting (both legal and illegal).

The underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation are numerous and intertwined through complex processes, making them difficult to disentangle. The following causes are often described in

Viet Nam's case: (i) rapid economic growth of the country; (ii) increasing demand for forestry products and cash crops; and (iii) population growth, migration and poverty in rural areas (FCPF, 2008; Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009, 2011).

Pham, Moeliono, et al. (2012) identify several development policies that prioritise and spur agricultural and infrastructural development as a key driving force of forest conversion. Weak governance and lack of law enforcement are also critical factors underlying deforestation and forest degradation in Viet Nam. The state-led forest management system has been often criticised for ineffectiveness in administration, inadequate financial management and corruption, and insufficient capacity to manage social conflicts (Duc et al., 2012; Pham, Moeliono, et al., 2012; Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). In addition, local governments and agencies at district and commune levels often lack capacities to deliver agricultural and forestry extension services to rural communities, and to carry out appropriate monitoring in large forest areas (Duc et al., 2012; Nguyen and Enright, 2012).



### 3. Forest policy

Until the end of 1980s, Viet Nam's model of forest management was described as a centralised state-controlled model (Nguyen and Sikor, 2011). Forests and forest products were considered national assets and most of the forests were managed by State Forest Enterprises (SFEs)<sup>1</sup> with the goal of maximising economic returns. This model was largely unsuccessful and by 1990 forest cover had declined to about 27% of the total land area. The Government introduced major policy reforms known as *Doi Moi* (open door) from the middle of 1980s to build a market-oriented and multi-sector economy (Ngoc, 2008). In line with these reforms, the Government has gradually reformed the state-led forest management system to improve efficiency and achieve sustainability, focusing on natural regeneration and afforestation; commercial tree plantations and wood processing; and development of social forestry schemes to reduce poverty. This shift in policy was accompanied by the reform of SFEs,<sup>2</sup> and opened up spaces for broader stakeholder involvement in forest management, including private entities, rural households and communities. Consequently, forest land allocation has become one of the key policy issues in the forest sector (Nguyen and Sikor, 2011).

#### 3.1. Legal framework and strategy for the forestry sector

The Government of Viet Nam has passed several laws and regulations to provide the legal foundation for its forest management policies. These have implications for REDD+ implementation. The Land Law (1993) (amended in 2003) defines the rights and responsibilities of land owners. The Law on Environmental Protection (2005) and the Biodiversity Law (2008) set out measures for environmental and biodiversity protection, and regulate the rights and requirements of resource users. The Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004) is the key legal instrument for the forestry sector. It defines forest classification and regulates the management and utilisation of forests, as well as the rights and responsibilities of forest owners (IDLO, 2011; Pham, Moeliono, et al., 2012). The formulation of this law is seen as evidence of the Government's commitment to reforming the forestry sector to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits.

The National Forest Development Strategy (NFDS) 2006-2020 was approved by the Prime Minister in 2007 as the main strategy document for the forestry sector. The NFDS provides strategic direction for the

---

1. State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) were the main entities to manage Viet Nam's forests. By the end of the 1980s, there were 413 SFEs in the country, managing 6.3 million ha of forestland (MARD (2001) cited by Nguyen and Sikor (2011)).

2. The reform has been conducted with the aim of separating the public and business purposes of forest entities. Depending on the management objectives and size, State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) were transformed into different entities, such as State Enterprise and Management Boards for Protection Forest (PFMNs).

management of 16.24 million ha of forest lands. The strategy consists of five programmes:

- i) Sustainable Forest Management and Development Programme;
- ii) Programme of Forest Protection, Biodiversity Conservation and Environmental Service Development;
- iii) Forest Product Processing and Trade Programme;
- iv) Programme of Research, Education, Training and Forestry Extension; and
- v) Programme on Renovating Forest Sector Institutions, Policy, Planning and Monitoring (MARD, 2007).

The recent decision approving the National Forest Protection and Development Plan for the period 2011-2020 further shapes objectives and activities for the

forest sector, specifically to (i) manage the available forests in an effective and sustainable way; (ii) increase forest cover to 42-43% by 2015 and 44-45% by 2020, and meet the demands for timber and forest products; and (iii) generate employment and income for forest-dependent people.<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2. Forest categories and key state agencies for forest management

Following the Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004), Viet Nam's forest is classified into three types based on the management purposes (Table 1). The regulatory mechanisms of each category are provided by Decision 186/2006/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister in 2006 (FCPF, 2008).

**Table 1: Forest categories, objectives and allocated area**

| Forest category            | Management objectives  | Area (% of total forest)  |
|----------------------------|--|---------------------------|
| Special-Use Forests (SUFs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To conserve nature, ecosystems, biological diversity and historical and cultural values; and</li> <li>◆ To serve for research and tourism objectives To serve for research and tourism objectives.</li> </ul> | 2.0 million ha<br>(15.1%) |
| Protection Forests         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To protect water sources and land;</li> <li>◆ To prevent soil erosion and desertification; and</li> <li>◆ To mitigate natural disasters and to regulate the climate.</li> </ul>                               | 4.8 million ha<br>(36.5%) |
| Production Forests         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To provide timber and non-timber forest products, while delivering environmental protection.</li> </ul>   | 6.4 million ha<br>(47.4%) |

*Source: Duc et al. (2012); Kitamura (2012).*

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3. Decision No. 57/Q -TTg Hanoi, 9 January 2012 on approval of the Forest Protection and Development Plan for the period 2011-2020.

In the NFDS, the Government aims to increase the forest area to 16.24 million ha, of which Special-Use Forests (SUFs) cover 2.16 million ha (13.3% of the total forest); Protection Forests, 5.68 million ha (35%); and Production Forests, 8.4 million ha (51.7%) (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011).

MARD has overall responsibility for the forest lands, and within MARD, the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) takes the lead role for forest management and development. At local levels (province, district and commune), the Chairman of the People's Committee has responsibility for forest management and development within the relevant administrative boundary, with operational support from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) under MARD (FCPF, 2008).

However, since overall responsibility for management and allocation of state lands belongs to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), forests, as a part of the land, are also under the responsibility of MONRE. This overlap between MARD and MONRE is often perceived as a drawback in the administrative process for decision-making over forest land in Viet Nam (IDLO, 2011; Pham, Moeliono, et al., 2012; Poruschi, 2010).

### **3.3. Forest ownership and forest land allocation policy**

According to the Constitution of Viet Nam, all forest resources are owned by the people and the State manages the forests of their behalf (DOF, 2005). The Government can grant use rights to individuals and various types of groups according to the forest category (UN-REDD Programme, 2010). Forest ownership/use

rights are defined by the Land Law (2003) and the Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004).

While recently the structure of ownership and use rights over forest land has changed, basically three types of forest owners are recognised:

- State agencies including: State Enterprises (SEs), Management Boards for Protection Forest (PFMNs), Management Boards for Special Use Forest (PAMBs) and Peoples' Committees at the communal level (CPCs);
- Individual, private organisations or joint venture companies;
- Village communities (for collective ownership/utilisation) (IDLO, 2011).

Over the last two decades, the Government has introduced a series of policies and regulations to promote forest land allocation to households, individuals, and rural communities. These include the Forest Protection and Rehabilitation Act (1991), which recognises the use rights of households and other non-state actors in production forests; and Decree No. 163/1999/NĐ-CP (1999), which guides the allocation and release of forest lands to organisations, individuals and households (Yasmi et al., 2010). Under the Land Law (2003), a community is recognised as one type of land owner (Ibarra el al, 2012). The Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004) approved community forest tenure and identifies requirements that local communities have to meet to achieve collective ownership of forest land (Nguyen and Sikor, 2011). Along with the development of the regulatory framework, forest ownership with use rights has been gradually granted to non-state actors (FAO, 2009).

Table 2 shows the pattern of forest ownership in December 2009. The state institutions (SEs, PFMB/PAMB, CPC and Army) are still major forest owners, managing 66% of the total forest area. About 34% of the total forest land is managed by non-state actors, of which 3.43 million ha (25.6 % of total forest area) has been allocated to households and individuals. The allocation of forest land has generally favoured actors who are able to invest in forestry. The state agencies often keep ownership of the rich forests, and most of the forest lands allocated to households have been of poor quality (IDLO, 2011; Pham, Huynh, et al., 2012; Pham, Moeliono, et al., 2012).

Rural communities manage only 1.9% of the total forest area. This is partly ex-

plained by the fact that until the issuance of the Law on the Forest Protection and Development (2004), most of the forest land that was managed de facto by villagers was allocated to households. Also, after the law was introduced, the land allocation process slowed down, as state institutions are reluctant to give up land.<sup>4</sup>

The local actors, including communities, are also able to participate in forest management through contracts with forest owners. Compared with forest ownership, contract durations are shorter and those who use forests under contracts are often in a weaker legal position with limited use and benefits (IDLO, 2011; Nguyen and Sikor, 2011).

**Table 2: Types of forest owners and distribution of forest in Viet Nam in 2009**

| Forest Owner | State Enterprises | PFMBs/<br>PAMBs | CPC  | Army | Individuals/<br>households | Community | Other | Total |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|------|------|----------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| million ha   | 2.02              | 4.49            | 2.11 | 0.25 | 3.43                       | 0.26      | 0.84  | 13.38 |
| %            | 15.1              | 33.5            | 15.7 | 1.8  | 25.6                       | 1.9       | 6.4   | 100   |

Source: MARD (2010) cited in (IDLO, 2011).

### 3.4. Policies on reforestation and payment for ecosystem services (PES)

The Government has implemented an extensive reforestation programme and developed incentive mechanisms to protect

forest lands and ecosystem services. The five million hectares (ha) reforestation programme (5MHRP) (also known as Programme 661) under Decision 661/QD-TTg was implemented from 1998 to 2010. The 5MHRP aimed at establishing five million ha of forest plantations and to protect

4. T. Sikor. 13 May 2013, personal communication.

existing forests in order to increase forest cover to 43% of the total land area by the year 2010. Its objectives also included effective management of bare land, poverty alleviation, and increasing wood supply capacity.

Another key government initiative was the implementation of a policy on Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES). Viet

Nam piloted the PES scheme under the Decision 308 /QD-TTg in two areas from 2008 to 2010 (IDLO, 2011). After testing the scheme, the Government decided to apply the mechanism to other provinces under Decree 99/ND-CP issued in December 2010, which identifies carbon absorption and storage as forest environmental services (FCPF, 2012b).

## 4. National commitment to climate change mitigation and REDD+



The issue of climate change has received high level political attention, and this is understandable as Viet Nam is considered particularly vulnerable to climate change (Phuc et al., 2012). As the country has a long coastline and much of its territory is low-lying, sea level rise and flooding will cause serious damage. MONRE (2010) estimates that with a rise in sea level of up to 100 cm, the economic loss from agriculture, aquaculture and forestry sectors will reach USD 265 billion and about 8.1% of the total population will be directly affected by flooding.

The National Target Plan to Respond to Climate Change (NTP-RCC)<sup>5</sup> is the commitment of the government to address climate change. The NTP-RCC sets a target to increase forest cover from 44% to

47% by 2020 as a part of Viet Nam's climate change mitigation strategy. The National Climate Change Strategy<sup>6</sup> commits to reduce GHG emission by 8-10% in all sectors by 2020, using 2010 as the baseline.

The Government has expressed strong interest in REDD+ and considers this one of the main instruments to implement the NTP-RCC. Since COP13 in 2007, the Government has engaged with international organisations to prepare the country ready for a future global REDD+ mechanism. Viet Nam is an early participant in both the UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank's FCPF.

5. Decision 158/QD-TTg of Prime Minister in December 2008.

6. Decision 2139/QD-TTg of Prime Minister in December 2011.



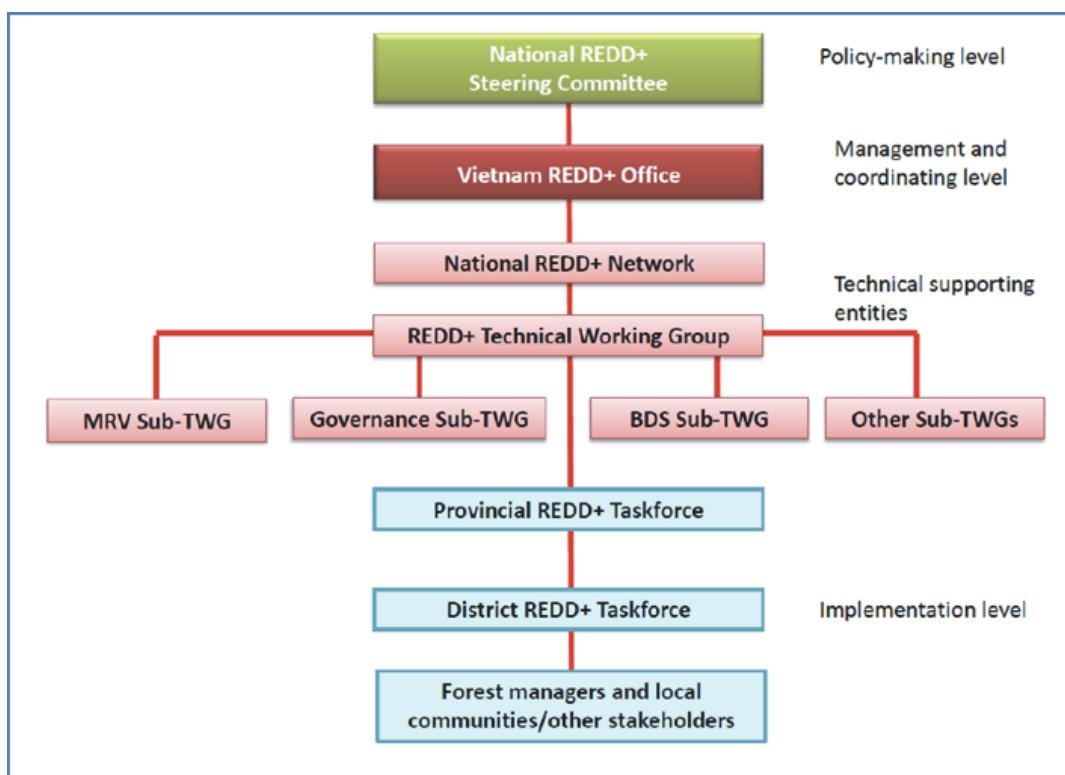
## 5. Organisational framework for REDD+

Reflecting its mandate to govern the forest lands, MARD has been the leading Government agency in the development of national REDD+ readiness. Under MARD, VNFOREST serves as the focal point for REDD+ and coordinates several activities related to REDD+, with support from development partners and NGOs.

MONRE is another key ministry for national REDD+ readiness. MONRE is the focal agency for the UNFCCC with responsibility for overall management of climate change programmes. The complexity of REDD+ and its anticipated benefits has

prompted the involvement of other state institutions, including the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of Science and Technology, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the National Ethnic Committee (CEMA).

With support from development partners and NGOs, the management arrangements for REDD+ readiness have rapidly evolved. Figure 5 shows the proposed organisational framework for REDD+ in Viet Nam.



**Figure 5: Institutional arrangement for the REDD+ implementation in Viet Nam**  
Source: FCPF (2012b).

### **5.1. National REDD+ Network**

Supported by the UN-REDD Programme, the National REDD+ Network was established by MARD Decision 2614/QĐ-BNN-LN in 2009 with the purpose of coordinating stakeholders for the development of REDD+ readiness. Its main tasks include (i) to prepare an action plan; (ii) to set up milestones for developing each component of the action plan; (iii) to coordinate support from international development partners; (iv) to conduct reviews and assessment of the implementation status of the action plan; (v) to ensure activities are consistent with the action plan; and (vi) to carry out other tasks assigned by the chair.<sup>7</sup>

The Network, chaired by the Vice Minister of MARD together with the Norwegian Embassy, is open-ended, and its members include government agencies, academic institutions, international development partners and NGOs. Currently the Network includes 24 organisations, of which 11 are state agencies (Table 3). The members from development partners are: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); FAO; Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); and the Norwegian, Dutch and Finnish Embassies. The Network also includes the RECOFTC - The Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC), SNV Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI).

**Table 3: The REDD+ Network members from State agencies in 2012**

| State agencies                                   | Ministry | Major role  |
|--|----------|---|
| VNFOREST   | MARD     | Focal point for REDD+ activities in Viet Nam  |
| Forest Science Institute of Viet Nam (FSIV)      | MARD     | Forestry research   |
| Department of Legislation                        | MARD     | Legal issues related to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, irrigation, and rural development |
| Department of Science Technology and Environment | MARD     | Issues related to science, technology and environment                                       |
| Finance Department                               | MARD     | N/D   |
| Planning Department                              | MARD     | N/D   |
| International Cooperation Department             | MARD     | Multilateral and bilateral cooperation within the ministry                                  |

7. Decision 2614/QĐ-BNN-LN: Establishment of the National Network and Working Group for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation.

**Table 3: The REDD+ Network members from State agencies in 2012 (continued)**

| State agencies  | Ministry | Major role  |
|---|----------|---|
| Coordination Office of the Forest Sector Support Partnership (FSSP) | MARD     | To coordinate donor collaboration, focusing on the implementation of the National Forest Strategy (2006-2020) |
| Office of Government  |          | Assist the Government and the Prime Minister  |
| Agro-economic Department  | MPI      | N/D   |
| Department of Meteorology and Climate Change                        | MONRE    | Focal point for overall climate change issues   |

Source: <http://www.vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?tab=member&zoneid=108&subzone=112&child=115&lang=en-US> (accessed 05/03/2013).

## **5.2 Technical Working Group on REDD+ and Sub-Technical Working Groups**

A Technical Working Group (TWG) on REDD+ and a number of Sub-Technical Working Groups (STWG) have been created to support the REDD+ Network on a range of thematic matters.<sup>8</sup> The STWGs are:

- STWG on Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) - works on the technical issues of, and development of the operational framework for, the national MRV system;
- STWG on Governance - works on REDD+ governance including government structure and capacity building, forest policies, and linkage with other initiatives such as Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT);
- STWG on Local Implementation - works on REDD+ implementation at district and community level, including capacity building and community participation;
- STWG on Safeguards - supports the development of a national approach to REDD+ safeguards and promotes social and environmental co-benefits of REDD+.

8. <http://www.vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?ab=intro&zoneid=108&subzone=113&child=147&lang=en-US> (accessed on 10/03/2013).

### **5.3. Steering Committee for implementing REDD+ and REDD+ Office**

The Steering Committee for implementing REDD+ was created in January 2011 in order to provide oversight and high-level cross sector coordination for REDD+ implementation. Its main tasks include (i) to propose policies and solutions for REDD+ issues including performance-based payments to MARD and the Steering Committee for the NTP-CC; (ii) to assist the Minister (MARD) to guide relevant MARD agencies; (iii) to address the formulation and implementation of a Viet Nam REDD+ Programme, and (iv) to implement other REDD+ related tasks as designated by the Minister.<sup>9</sup> The members of the Steering Committee include representatives from the Office of the Government, MONRE, MPI, MOF, MOFA, CEMA and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

The Viet Nam REDD+ Office was established within VNFOREST in January 2011 to support the Viet Nam REDD+ Steering Committee, and to provide coordination and services for the National REDD+ Network. The REDD+ Office conducts day-to-day activities on REDD+ readiness at the operational level, and coordinates REDD+ related activities implemented by the development partners and NGOs.

### **5.4. Institutional arrangement for REDD+ implementation**

The Steering Committee involves a range of state agencies at the decision-making level, and because the Network and Technical Working Groups are open-

ended institutions, Viet Nam's REDD+ organisational framework has the potential to provide coordination within government agencies as well as between state and non-state actors including donor agencies and NGOs.

At the technical and operational levels, REDD+ is managed according to the existing institutional structure and arrangements. MARD serves as the key ministry (as can be seen by the fact that most of the state participants in the REDD+ Network and the Working Groups are from MARD), and is expected to work closely with MONRE.

Pham, Moeliono, et al. (2012) point to the complexity of the horizontal and vertical administrative structure in Viet Nam's environmental and forestry sectors, which involve different ministries and agencies. Such administrative complexity is often associated with overlapping mandates, cost ineffectiveness and difficulties in implementing activities at the local level. A priority is for the Government to ensure coordination and clear roles for those involved in the forestry and the land use sector at all levels (IDLO, 2011). The Government proposes to establish Provincial and District REDD+ Taskforces, with the aim to provide a co-ordination mechanism across levels of government. However, the R-PP does not explain exactly how the formal decision-making mechanisms will be structured based on the existing institutions (WRI, n.d.). In addition, adequate capacity building, in particular for the REDD+ Office and local governments, will be need-

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9. <http://vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?tab=newsdetail&zoneid=107&subzone=157&itemid=165&lang=en-US> (accessed on 10/03/2013).

ed for different levels of government and sectors to be involved in REDD+.

## 6. Technical and financial assistance for REDD+ readiness



With support from a number of bilateral and multilateral development agencies, as well as international NGOs, Viet Nam is developing its national capacity and ar-

chitecture for REDD+. Table 4 summarise key international support for REDD+ at the national level.

**Table 4: Key multilateral and bilateral support to Viet Nam REDD+ at national level**

| Project Name   | Objectives   | Donor          | Executing Agency     | Period    | Total amount    |
|--|--|----------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Viet Nam UN-REDD Programme (Phase I)   | To assist the government in developing an effective national REDD+ regime                | UN-REDD, NORAD | MARD, VNFOREST       | 2009-2012 | USD 4.5 Million |
| Viet Nam UN-REDD Programme (Phase II)  | To enhance Viet Nam's ability to benefit from future results-based payments of REDD+     | UN-REDD NORAD  | MARD, VNFOREST       | 2012-2015 | USD 30 Million  |
| FCPF: REDD+ readiness preparation support  | To support REDD+ readiness activities  | FCPF           | MARD, VNFOREST       | 36 months | USD 3.8 million |
| Support to National Assessment and Long Term Monitoring of the Forest and Tree Resources | To assist development of the National Forest Inventory and Monitoring Programme (NFIMAP) | FAO            | FIPI, VNFOREST, MARD | 2011-2014 | USD 2,763,500   |

**Table 4: Key multilateral and bilateral support to Viet Nam REDD+ at national level (continued)**

| Project Name  | Objectives   | Donor                   | Executing Agency                                    | Period              | Total amount  |
|---|--|-------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|
| Study on Potential Forests and Land related to “Climate Change and Forests”         | To identify the potential areas for A/R CDM and REDD+  | JICA                    | JOFCIA, JAFTA                                       | 2009-2012           | N.D.          |
| Development of Management Information System for Forest Sector in Viet Nam (FORMIS) | To provide accurate information for making decisions in forestry   | Finnish government, TFF | VNFOREST  | Phase 1 (2009-2013) | EUR 3,998,487 |
|   |  |                         |   | Phase 2 (2013-2015) | N.D.          |
| Technical Assistance in the Development of the National REDD Programme of Viet Nam  | To analyse trends of the changes of forest resources and carbon stock, and establishment of the interim baseline reference scenarios | Embassy of Finland      | NORDECO, FIPI, VNFOREST                             | 2009-2010           | EUR 222,746   |
| Poverty and sustainable development impacts of REDD architecture                    | To explore different options for REDD design and policy in terms of emission reduction and co-benefits                               | NORAD                   | SNV, IIED, the University of Life Sciences (Norway) | 2010-2013           | USD 178,070   |
| Multiple Benefits from REDD+ in South East Asia (MB-REDD)                           | To support implementation of REDD+ programme that facilitate social and environmental multiple benefits                              | BMU, ICI                | SNV, VNFOREST                                       | 2010-2016           | N.D.          |

Source: Embassy of Finland (2010); FAO (2011); FCPF (2011); UN-REDD Programme (2011c, 2012c); the REDD Desk (2013b); SNV (n.d.).

The UN-REDD Programme and the World Bank's FCPF are providing important support for the development of Viet Nam's REDD+ system. The Viet Nam UN-REDD Programme Phase I: 2009- 2012 focused on analytical work and capacity building for developing MRV, RELs/RLs and a benefit distribution system (BDS), and tested

free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) processes in two pilot districts. The Viet Nam UN-REDD Programme is currently moving into Phase II. The UN-REDD+ Programme supports the Government with the aim of building national capacity and infrastructure, including the National REDD+ Fund, the National Forest Monitor-

ing System (NFMS) and safeguard mechanisms, which are expected to be operationalised by the end of Phase II (UN-REDD Programme, 2012c).

The FCPF is providing USD 3.8 million in funding to Viet Nam to support the REDD+ readiness activities described in the R-PP. The Government has expressed interest in applying to the new FCPF Carbon Fund (Emissions Reduction Program: FCPF ER) (FCPF, 2012b).

FAO is providing support for the analysis of forest information, with the aim of developing a reference level and the MRV system for REDD+. Its support builds on a study conducted by JICA, which focused on designs of reference levels for Viet Nam (FAO, 2011). JICA has identified what it considers potential forests for REDD+, and is currently implementing a REDD+ demonstration project in Dien Bien province.

The Government has been working closely with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) through projects on sustainable forest management and biodiversity preservation, with a view to mitigating climate change. GIZ has also worked on the PES scheme and supported the UN-REDD Programme's study on BDS. In addition, GIZ is currently supporting the Quang Binh provincial government for

the preparation and implementation of REDD+ pilot activities.

Other major donors providing assistance for REDD+ and forestry projects in Viet Nam include the Government of Norway and the Government of Finland. In 2012, Norway signed a USD 30 million financing agreement with the United Nations (UN) to support the Viet Nam UN-REDD National Programme Phase II. The Government of Finland is supporting the implementation of the NFDS by funding the multi-donor Trust Fund for Forests (TFF)<sup>10</sup>, which was established in 2004 (Embassy of Finland, 2010). Currently, the TFF is financed by Finland, the Netherlands and Switzerland, with Germany offering technical support. In addition, Finland is assisting Viet Nam to develop an information system for the sustainable management of forest resources through the Development of Management Information System for Forestry Sector (FORMIS) project.

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10. The TFF is a financial mechanism for the effective use of assistance to address sector priorities defined by agreed policy frameworks, such as the NFDS ([http://www.vietnamforestry.org.vn/list\\_news.aspx?cid=86](http://www.vietnamforestry.org.vn/list_news.aspx?cid=86)).

## 7. National REDD+ strategy and action plans



### 7.1. Process of developing the National REDD+ strategy

In 2011, the Government started preparing the National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) with the aim of guiding the overall development and implementation of REDD+ in Viet Nam. After several national workshops and discussions under the National REDD+ Network, the NRAP was approved on 27 June 2012 through Decision 799/QD-TTg.<sup>11</sup> The UN-REDD Programme (2012c) states that a broad range of stakeholders were consulted to review the draft NRAP document, including international partners, national ministries and local authorities. However, the process seemed to be mostly closed within the Government. Pham, Moeliono, et al. (2012) argue that scientists and forestry officials dominated the discussion on REDD+ and that the consultation process for the NRAP did not include all relevant parties.

The R-PP, submitted in 2011 to the FCPF, outlines the process that the Government will develop for the national REDD+ system. It also sets out key components of the national REDD+ system, and much of this was incorporated into the NRAP (FCPF, 2011). In the R-PP, the Govern-

ment demonstrates a commitment to the inclusion of a broad range of stakeholders in REDD+ activities, providing a list of stakeholder groups with a detailed stakeholder analysis (WRI, n.d.). However, the consultation process at pilot sites was limited due to time and budget constraints. In addition, due to the absence of functional FCPF management in the Government, the R-PP has not been referred to in REDD+ discussions.<sup>12</sup>

### 7.2. The National REDD+ Action Programme 2011-2020 (NRAP)

The National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) is aimed to reduce net GHG emissions as well as to contribute to sustainable forest management, biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. The NRAP supports the objectives of the National Target Programme on Climate Change, the National Strategy on Green Growth, the National Strategy on Biodiversity Conservation and the National Forest Development Strategy (FCPF, 2012b).

With the aim of the full implementation of REDD+ on a national scale by 2021, the NRAP has set out two periods – Phase I:

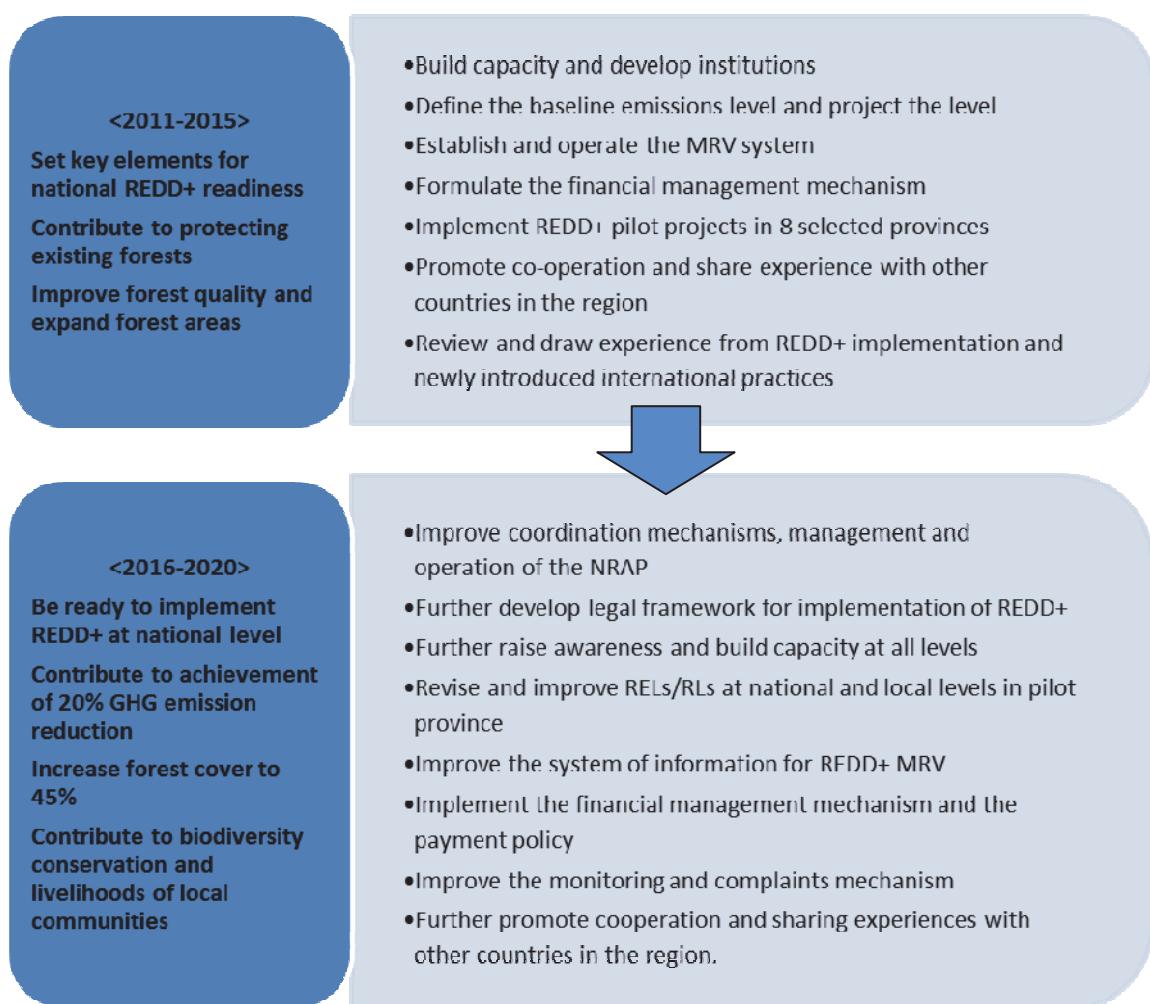
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11. Decision 799/QD-TTg on approval of the National Action Programme on Reduction of Green-house Gas Emissions through Efforts to Reduce Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forest Resources, and Conservation and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks 2011 – 2020.

12. S. Swan, 20 December 2013, personal communication.

2011-2015 and Phase II: 2016-2020 - each of which has a set of objectives and key tasks (Figure 6). Through the implementation of the two phases, capacity for REDD+ will be built and the key components of the REDD+ system, including

REL/RL, MRV, and the management of REDD+ finances, will be developed. Detailed guidelines for developing the components of the REDD+ system are still to be developed.



**Figure 6: Objectives and key tasks in each phase of the National REDD+ Action Programme**

*Source: Adapted from FCPF (2012a) and Socialist Republic of Vietnam (2012).*

### 7.3. Key policies and programmes to address deforestation and forest degradation

For the last two decades, the Government has introduced various policies and programmes to reduce deforestation and forest degradation, and to increase forest cover. Table 5 summarises these policies

and programmes, spells out potential linkages with REDD+, and identifies implementation challenges.

**Table 5: Key policies and programmes to address deforestation and forest degradation**

| Key policy / programmes   | Progress in implementation   | Potential to contribute to REDD+  | Challenges to implementation  |
|---|--|---|---|
| Forest land allocation and distribution of forest use rights                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Development of legal framework on forest land allocation, identifying forest owners and their rights</li> <li>◆ Development of guideline and procedures for land allocation, such as Circular No.38/2007/TT -BNN</li> <li>◆ Improvement in coordination between MARD and MONRE through Circular No.07/2011/TTLT-BNNPTNT-BTNMT</li> <li>◆ Over 25% of the forest land allocated to local people (households and villages)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Forest land allocation is a key REDD+ strategy discussed in the R-PP</li> <li>◆ Forest use rights form an important legal basis to participate in REDD+</li> <li>◆ Forest land allocation provides incentives and enables local actors to engage in sustainable forest management and forest protection</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Limited funds and personnel to carry out proper land demarcation and allocation</li> <li>◆ Inconsistency between the state-led forest allocation and actual land use by local people</li> <li>◆ Lack of financial and technical support to invest in the allocated forests</li> <li>◆ Corruption in the process of issuing the Land Use Rights Certificates</li> </ul> |
| Control of illegal forestry activities and Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Regulation of prohibited actions under the Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004)</li> <li>◆ Establishment of the Department of the Environmental Police under the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) in 2006</li> <li>◆ Agreement to prepare a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the EU in 2010</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Law enforcement and good governance would help to curb illegal logging</li> <li>◆ FLEGT tackles illegal timber practices and promotes improved forest governance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Lack of capacity of local authorities in implementation</li> <li>◆ A lack of regulations on inspection of sawmills and wood processors</li> <li>◆ Increasing demand for timber</li> </ul>  |

**Table 5: Key policies and programmes to address deforestation and forest degradation (continued)**

| Key policy / programmes  | Progress in implementation   | Potential to contribute to REDD+   | Challenges to implementation   |
|--|--|--|--|
| Sustainable forest management and development, including community-based forest management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Clear orientation towards sustainable forest management in the Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004) and the NFDS (2007)</li> <li>◆ Around 600 km of the permanent forest estate demarcated</li> <li>◆ Programme 147 ‘Support for Development of Forest Plantations’ on production forest</li> <li>◆ Community-based forest management piloted in ten provinces</li> <li>◆ 61,488 ha of forests recognised and awarded for sustainable forest management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Sustainable forest management is one of the five REDD+ activities</li> <li>Community involvement will potentially help secure the social safeguards of REDD+</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Lack of clear boundaries and legal land use certificates</li> <li>◆ Lack of proper monitoring for sustainable forest management</li> <li>◆ Limited financial assistance and shortages of trained staff to support community-based forest management</li> <li>◆ Limited forest area under collective ownership of local communities</li> </ul>               |
| Reforestation and afforestation under 5MHRP  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Under 5MHRP, the total area of plantations and zoning for regeneration of forest reached 4,675,006 ha (93.5 % of the target area)</li> <li>◆ Involvement of local communities, providing benefits through job creation and income (1,249,602 households with 4,657,000 workers are participating in the 5MHRP)</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Contribution to forest carbon enhancement</li> <li>◆ Benefits distribution system under 5MHRP provides lessons for REDD+</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Lack of monitoring and evaluation of planted areas</li> <li>◆ Overall increase in the forest area does not necessarily equate with the protection and enhancement of carbon stocks</li> <li>◆ Low productivity in plantation forests</li> <li>◆ Trade-off with forest diversity</li> <li>◆ Inappropriate management of funding for reforestation</li> </ul> |

**Table 5: Key policies and programmes to address deforestation and forest degradation (continued)**

| Key policy / programmes                                     | Progress in implementation  | Potential to contribute to REDD+  | Challenges to implementation  |
|---|---|---|---|
| Forest protection and biodiversity conservation through PES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Piloting Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) in Lam Dong province and Son La province (2008-2010) under Decision 308/QD-TTg</li> <li>◆ Establishment of Forest Protection and Development Fund in 2008 to manage environmental payments</li> <li>◆ Implementation of payments (270,000 to 400,000 VND/ha/yr in Lam Dong; 85,000 to 136,000 VND/ha/yr in Son La)</li> <li>◆ Issuance of Decree 99/ND-CP on PES, which has been in effect at national level since 2011</li> <li>◆</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ PES scheme can contribute to engage local people in forest protection and sustainable forest management</li> <li>◆ Scope of Decree 99/2010/ND-CP on PES includes carbon sequestration and storage</li> <li>◆ The PES scheme offers useful experiences for designing REDD+</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Unclear legal status of forest contractors</li> <li>◆ BDS has to consider the local contexts which vary among provinces or sub-national areas</li> <li>◆ Low economic return that cannot compete with agriculture</li> <li>◆ Lack of collaboration between different line ministries and agencies</li> <li>◆ Elite capture of land and benefits, and corruption</li> <li>◆ Restriction of community access to forests</li> <li>◆ Low involvement of the poor and indigenous people</li> <li>◆ Limited funding for forest protection</li> </ul> |

Source: Author's elaboration based on Duc et al. (2012); FAO (2009); FCPF (2008, 2011); FSSP (2011); Hess and Huong (2011); IDLO (2011); MARD (2007); McNally et al., (2009); Nguyen, Oberndolf, et al., (2010); Nguyen and Sikor (2011); Pham, Moeliono, et al., (2012); WRI (n.d.).

The above policies and programmes have contributed to reducing deforestation and forest degradation, as reflected in the overall increase in forest cover for the last two decades. However, as noted

above, forest degradation and fragmentation remain serious problems and the quality of both natural and plantation forests are low and characterised by relatively low biomass. While these policies

and programmes are likely to be promoted and strengthened under REDD+, the Government needs to address the issue of forest quality, and to move towards a cross-sectoral approach to achieve its mitigation goal. Deforestation and forest degradation are driven largely by economic opportunities and development policies to convert forest lands to other land uses. Expansion of cultivated land, construction of hydropower plants, and development of road networks and other infrastructure facilities are Government priorities that present potential conflicts with REDD+ objectives. A major concern, therefore, is how REDD+ can be harmonised with and mainstreamed into the broad socio-economic development objectives of the country (WRI, n.d.). The solutions to this challenge described in

the NRAP and the R-PIN are: to analyse policies and measures, and cost-benefits of emissions reduction potential; to reform forest policies, legislation and administration; to introduce land-use planning and zoning; to improve forest tenure security; to enforce planning and environmental requirements; and to promote alternatives to forest conversion and forest degradation (FCPF, 2011; Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011). Efforts to integrate REDD+ into sector policy targets and plans at national, provincial and district levels are a priority (IDLO, 2011).

## 8. Forest reference emissions level (REL) and reference level (RL)



To receive performance-based payments for REDD+, the Government aims to establish a single national REL/RL for all activities within the scope of REDD+ (i.e. avoided deforestation, avoided forest degradation, conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of carbon stocks). RLs refer to the reduction of emissions through avoided defores-

tation and degradation, while RELs refer to a net reduction in emissions, taking into account carbon stock enhancement.<sup>13</sup> The R-PP notes that in discussions on baselines in Viet Nam, a distinction has been made between retrospective RELs based on historical data and prospective RLs based on extrapolation of past trends or forecasting based on modelling (FCPF,

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13. These definitions are provided by the REDD Vietnam website, which was developed with the support of the UN-REDD Vietnam Programme (<http://www.vietnam-redd.org/Web/Default.aspx?tab=theme&zonedid=109&itemid=58&lang=en-US>).

2011).

The following achievements are relevant to the development of RELs/RLs, and were made possible through support from international partners such as the Government of Finland, FAO, JICA and the UN-REDD Programme:

- Historical National Forest Inventory (NFI) data (1990, 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2010) were improved by using remote sensing imagery with data screening;
- Interim national and sub-national RELs/RLs were developed based on the improved NFI data (both forest maps and field measurements) and default values.
- Eight eco-regions with 47 sub-regions were identified based on climate, topography, forest-ecology and soil types through the study on forest ecological stratification funded by the UN-REDD Programme Phase I (FCPF, 2011; UN-REDD Programme, 2011a, 2012c).

Discussions through the STWG on MRV arrived at some understanding on methodologies, as described in the R-PP and the UN-REDD National Programme document. This understanding includes:

- A historical REL for deforestation will be developed based on historical deforestation trends for the last two decades;
- Prospective RELs for reduction in emissions from deforestation will be developed based on the estimated carbon stock per eco-region using the NFI data in combination with socio-economic factors;
- Sub-national RELs/RLs will be developed based on forest stratification. While there is a discussion on the principles of stratification, eco-regions developed by the Vietnam UN-REDD Programme will be the starting point;
- Prospective RLs will first be developed based on the bio-physical features of each eco-region, and then will be combined with the socio-economic conditions at provincial level;
- The Social and Economic Development Plan and the NFDS will be considered for the prediction of the socio-economic conditions (FCPF, 2011; UN-REDD Programme, 2012c).

Despite this progress, uncertainty about the approach for developing RELs/RLs remains. Rules and criteria to define sub-national boundaries are yet to be decided. The current discussion includes two options: using existing administrative boundaries or the ecosystem/eco-regions that are being developed mainly by the UN-REDD country programme (Phuc et al., 2012). Another key discussion is taking place on how to integrate the sub-national RELs/RLs into national RELs/RLs. The challenges to establish a multi-level accounting system include not only issues related to establishment of baselines and boundaries, but also the issues of additionality, leakage and permanence. Existing institutional arrangements and the MRV system also need to be considered for designing the forest sector carbon accounting system. In addition to meeting these technical challenges, the Government has to ensure that processes to develop RELs/RLs are accountable, transparent and inclusive (engaging a range of state ministries, sub-national govern-

ments and non-state actors), because RELs/RLs will define how the country and different regions benefit from REDD+ im-

plementation.

## 9. Forest Monitoring System for monitoring and reporting REDD+ activities



### 9.1. National Forest Inventory (NFI) and existing dataset

The National Forest Inventory (NFI) is a critical element for the national REDD+ system. It supports estimation of forest biomass and carbon stocks, and development of country specific emission factors. The NFI has been conducted every five years since 1991 by the Forest Inventory

and Planning Institute (FIFI) of MARD through the implementation of the National Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Programme (NFIMAP) (FIFI, 2009a). The NFI has been carried out based on a combination of forest cover mapping using remotely sensed images and field measurement using a systematic sampling method (Table 6).

**Table 6: Data used for National Forest Inventory 1991-2010**

| Year      | Satellite imagery | No. of sample plots |
|-----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1991-1995 | Landsat MMS/TM    | 3,000               |
| 1996-2000 | SPOT 3            | 3,800               |
| 2001-2005 | Landsat ETM+      | 4,200               |
| 2005-2010 | SPOT 5            | 2,100               |

*Source: Pham and Suzuki (2011).*

Regarding the ground-based survey for the NFI, one standard permanent sample plot consists of 40 rectangle sub-plots of 20 m x 25 m, and these are set up as a grid of 8 km x 8 km (FIFI, 2009b; UN-REDD Programme, 2012c). In each plot, every tree with a diameter at breast height

(DBH)  $\geq$  6 cm is measured. The data recorded are DBH, height of the top and bottom of the crown, and growth status (UN-REDD Programme, 2012c).

In addition to the NFIMAP conducted by FIFI, the Forest Protection Department (FPD) under MARD has implemented an

annual forest monitoring programme since 2002. The forest monitoring by FPD contributes to annual updates on forest information relating to conversion of forests, incidence of forest fires, forest concessions, reforestation, regeneration, illegal activities, etc. However, the annual monitoring has not been integrated into the inventory data of FIPI, due to the different types of forest information gathered under the two systems; unlike the data collected for the NFIMAP, the FPD data is not spatially explicit (Suzuki and Saito, 2012). The Government thus needs to improve the system of forest data collection and management, as well as information sharing, in order to provide consistent and updated forest information. In addition, support is required for the ground-based annual monitoring on capacity building of local forestry staff, data verification processes, and the creation of accurate forest cover maps at the village and commune levels (D. K. Nguyen and Nguyen, 2013).

## **9.2. Designing the MRV system for REDD+**

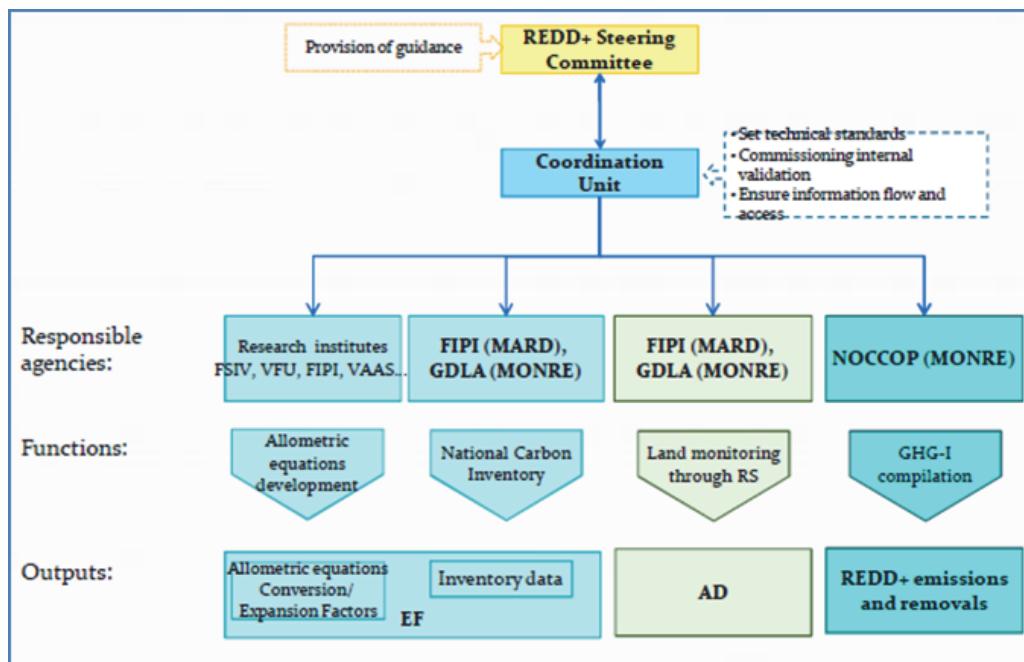
In line with the good practice guidelines set out by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Viet Nam's MRV system for REDD+ will have three components: (i) activity data drawn from monitoring land use and land use change; (ii) emission factors based on carbon inventory and allometric equations; and (iii) a REDD+ greenhouse gas inventory (UN-REDD Programme, 2011b). Reflecting their mandates and expertise, the following organisations will be involved in the establishment of the MRV system:

- VNFOREST - has overall responsibility to monitor forest land and allocates

this task to FIPI and FPD

- FIPI - is responsible for the NFIMAP
- FPD - is responsible for the annual monitoring of forests and forest land use changes
- General Department of Land Administration (GDLA) under MONRE - is responsible for monitoring land use and land use change
- The National Office for Climate Change and Ozone Protection (NOCCOP) under the Department of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change of MONRE - is responsible for compiling the GHG inventory
- Research institutions including the Viet Nam Institute of Forestry Science (FSIV) and Viet Nam Forestry University (VFU) - are involved in the development of ecological categorisation and forest growth equations (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011; UN-REDD Programme, 2011b).

The national MRV Framework is currently under development by the STWG on MRV in collaboration with FAO and the UN-REDD Programme. Figure 7 depicts the institutional arrangement for MRV proposed under the Viet Nam UN-REDD Programme. In terms of their roles in developing the MRV system, research institutions such as FSIV, VFU and FIPI are expected to develop allometric equations, while a National Carbon Inventory will be established and managed by FIPI (MARD) and GDLA (MONRE). For generating activity data, collaboration between MARD and MONRE is required, as FIPI under MARD is responsible for producing forest cover maps and GDLA under MONRE is responsible for the non-forest land (UN-REDD Programme, 2011b). The GHG inventory for REDD+ will be managed by NOCCOP under MONRE.



**Figure 7: Proposed institutional arrangement for REDD+ MRV system**

Source: FIPI (2012).

Capacity building for and improved coordination between relevant agencies (in particular between FIPI/MARD and GDLA/MONRE) are crucial to harmonise land classification standards; clarify the boundaries between forest land and non-forest land; and to manage, process and report data (STWG on MRV, 2011; UN-REDD Programme, 2011a). In 2010, MONRE submitted the Second National Communication to the UNFCCC, while MARD

provided information on forest carbon stock for FAO's Forest Resource Assessment 2010. The two reports used different sources of data and methods, resulting in inconsistency between the reports for the same year (STWG on MRV, 2011).



## 10. Safeguards

The Government has been undertaking several activities related to REDD+ safeguards, with support from the UN-REDD Programme, other development partners and NGOs. The activities include piloting the concept of free prior informed consent (FPIC)<sup>14</sup> at a UN-REDD Programme project site; designing a REDD-compliant benefit distribution system (BDS); and drafting the Measurement, Reporting and Verification Framework Document, which illustrates the linkage to the safeguards information system (UN-REDD Programme, 2012c). The STWG on Safeguards was established in 2012 under the REDD+ Network to deliver co-ordinated technical assistance to these efforts. The STWG on Safeguards, chaired by VNFOREST and co-chaired by the SNV REDD Programme, is a multi-stakeholder platform open to all interested entities including public, private and civil society sectors (TWG, 2012). In 2013, the Vietnam REDD+ Office, with technical assistance from SNV, released the draft Roadmap for Environmental and Social Safeguards for the NRAP. Based on a legal gap analysis of Viet Nam's existing policies laws and regulations, the draft Roadmap made preliminary suggestions about a country safeguards approach considering information systems and grievance mechanisms (STWG-SG, 2013).

### 10.1. Free, prior and informed consent under the UN-REDD Programme

Respecting the FPIC principle is considered critical for the successful implementation of REDD+ in Viet Nam, where around 25 million people live inside and near forests, about 8 million of whom belong to ethnic minorities (UN-REDD Programme, 2011c). UN-REDD Programme (2012a) reports that a series of extensive consultations based on the FPIC principle were held to implement the programme activities covering 78 villages in the two pilot districts of Lam Ha and Di Linh in Lam Dong province. However, an independent evaluation conducted by RECOFTC found a number of difficulties and challenges for the proper implementation of FPIC in the piloting. Key findings include: (i) incomplete information provided to local people, particularly the risks and costs associated with the programme; (ii) lack of time for internal discussion in the village; and (iii) a lack of a review mechanism to consider any complaint made by the local people engaged in the process (Nguyen, Luong, et al., 2010). The RECOFTC review points to the need for further work by the UN-REDD Programme, the Government and other REDD+ stakeholders on how to implement the FPIC principle for REDD+ activities.

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14. Though not explicitly discussed in the Cancun REDD+ safeguards, the concept of FPIC is upheld in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which is “noted” in the REDD+ safeguards. FPIC can be described as a principle to form consent that is given freely by people fully informed of the consequences, prior to any decision being made (Edwards et al., 2012).

## **10.2. Designing the Benefit Distribution System**

Designing an equitable BDS for REDD+ is highly relevant to the governance and social safeguards defined in the Cancun Agreements. Governments should ensure transparent processes and effective participation of relevant stakeholders in the establishment and implementation of their BDS, as the BDS will determine who receives benefits for REDD+ actions.

Design of the BDS for REDD+ has received a great deal of attention in Viet Nam due to expectations for REDD+ payments, the notion of performance-based payments and concerns over equity and transparency. Together with SNV and GIZ, the UN-REDD Programme conducted a series of studies on BDS issues and options to assist the Government in designing a BDS. The report published in December 2010 identified four critical issues for establishing a BDS in Viet Nam: (i) participation of rural communities in REDD+ actions; (ii) need for a legal framework for community forestry; (iii) use of a decentralised approach; and (iv) development and application of instruments to determine the appropriate distribution of REDD+ benefits (UN-REDD Programme, 2010).

## **10.3. Designing a safeguards information system**

UNFCCC COP Decisions (1/C.P.16 and 12/C.P.17) require countries preparing for REDD+ to be responsible for reporting how the Cancun safeguards are addressed and respected through a Safeguards Information System. The MRV Framework document version one, published under the UN REDD Viet Nam Programme in 2011, describes an information-sharing platform in which the safeguards information system is linked with the REDD+ MRV system. In the NRAP, the Government

proposes to integrate safeguard procedures into the future MRV system, with emphasis on the rights of ethnic minority groups and local communities, conservation of biodiversity, ecosystem services and other social and environmental benefits (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2012). However, this idea is only at an early stage of development and needs elaboration.

The draft Safeguards Roadmap provides information on Viet Nam's existing safeguards policy frameworks, demonstrating consistency and gaps with the Cancun safeguards. The draft Roadmap does not give detailed guidance on safeguards information systems, but suggests that the information systems should be developed during the implementation of the Strategic Environmental and Social Assessments (SESAAs) of the FCPF process (STWG-SG, 2013).

## **10.4. Other relevant initiatives**

The Government aims at implementing SESAAs for the NRAP, as part of the requirements for the FCPF readiness grant. SESAAs are part of the World Bank's common approach to environmental and social safeguards for the FCPF. The R-PP suggests the following steps for implementing SESAAs in the REDD+ context: (i) define scope of the assessment; (ii) conduct baseline analysis; (iii) evaluate potential effects; (iv) define mitigation and enhancement measure; (v) define monitoring frame; and (vi) establish reporting system (FCPF, 2011).

With support from the German Environment Ministry (BMU), SNV has been exploring participatory approaches to forest monitoring, recognising that communities can make an important contribution to monitoring. The project aims at contributing to the national

monitoring systems for REDD+, covering a range of forest monitoring variables, including biomass, biodiversity and the social impacts (positive and negative) of REDD+ (SNV, 2012).

The National Forest Monitoring and Information System (FORMIS) supported by the Finnish Government and the FSSP is also relevant to the safeguards, as the FORMIS indicators cover bio-physical, environmental, socio-

economic, and financial issues (FIFI, 2009b). While FORMIS has just embarked on a second phase of operations and further resourcing and capacity building are required, its approach to information standards and information sharing can serve as a basis for developing the safeguards information system.

## 11. REDD+ Demonstration Activities



REDD+ demonstration activities can provide the Government with lessons and ideas for preparing its national REDD+ strategy and architecture in relation to actions to counter the drivers of deforestation and degradation, approaches for engaging local stakeholders, methodologies for RELs/RLs and developing the national forest monitoring system. With the aim of providing coordination and information sharing across pilot projects, the STWG on Local Implementation was established in 2010 under the REDD+ Network. The STWG will play a role in linking lessons from on-the-ground activities to the development of the NRAP.

The UN-REDD Programme Phase I piloted a REDD+ mechanism in the districts of Di Linh and Lam Ha in Lam Dong Province, with the aim of building local capacity for

REDD+, developing methodologies for carbon stock monitoring and benefit distribution, and improving forest resource management at provincial and district levels. During Phase II (2012-2015), the UN-REDD programme plans to develop sub-national actions in Bac Kan, Lao Cai, Ha Tinh, Binh Thuan and Ca Mau provinces.

Other organisations are also engaged in building local capacity and piloting REDD+ at the sub-national and project levels. The REDD Desk<sup>15</sup> lists a range of REDD+ initiatives in Viet Nam, and the following are recognised as the REDD+ pilot projects (Table 7) .

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15. The REDD Desk is an online knowledge platform to disseminate information on REDD+ readiness, launched by the Global Canopy Programme in 2009 (<http://therreddesk.org/what-redd-desk>).

**Table 7: REDD+ demonstration activities in Viet Nam**

| Project                                  | Objectives  | Proponents   | Location  | Period                         |
|--|---|--|---|--------------------------------|
| Dien Bien REDD+ Pilot Project            | To build technical and institutional capacity for REDD+ implementation in Dien Bien province through preparation of the provincial REDD+ Programme.   | JICA, VNFOREST, the Provincial People's Committee of Dien Bien, DARD     | Dien Bien province  | August 2010 - August 2015      |
| Cat Tien Landscape Pro-Poor REDD Project | To support local institutions in the establishment of a forest carbon monitoring facility and to explore forest carbon financing for biodiversity conservation in the Cat Tien National Park. | SNV, DARD, International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED) | Cat Tien district and Bao Lam district, Lam Dong province   | January 2010 - March 2012      |
| Mangroves and Markets                    | To support mangrove protection through the restoration of abandoned shrimp firms, sustainable shrimp production and carbon finance  | SNV, DARD  | Ca Mau province (and Chanthaburi province in Thailand)  | September 2012 - February 2016 |
| The CarBi project                        | To halt deforestation and conserve biodiversity through improving the management of the protected areas and capacity building to provincial-level governments                                 | WWF, DARD, Saola Nature Reserve and Bach Ma National Park                | The Sao La Nature Reserves and the Bach Ma National Park (and the Xe Sap National Protected Area in Laos) | 2011 - 2014                    |

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the REDD Desk (2013a)- [http://theredddesk.org/countries/search-countries-database?page=1&f\[0\]=type%3Aactivity&f\[1\]=field\\_locations%3A140](http://theredddesk.org/countries/search-countries-database?page=1&f[0]=type%3Aactivity&f[1]=field_locations%3A140) -

In addition to these demonstration activities, GIZ is currently supporting Quang Binh province for the preparation and implementation of REDD+ pilot activities through the Nature Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources project in the Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park (GIZ-PNKB). The Lowering

Emissions in Asia's Forests (LEAF) programme, which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is supporting sub-national interventions in Nghe An and Lam Dong provinces. With support from these partners, the Government will pilot REDD+ in at least nine provinces by 2016 (UN-REDD

Programme, 2012c).

Furthermore, there are several REDD+ related activities initiated by non-state actors. These include work by Winrock International on baseline measurement for carbon stock estimation for the Da Nhim watershed; a survey by the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF) on REDD+ op-

portunity costs, including on payment schemes; and development of approaches to engage local communities in forest monitoring by the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).

## 12. Conclusion

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With support from development partners and international NGOs, the Government of Viet Nam has progressed towards developing the key elements required for implementing REDD+ through a national REDD+ system. The progress made includes formulating REDD+ strategy documents; establishing a (unique) organisational arrangement for REDD+ readiness involving both state and non-state actors; analysing forest inventory data for the development of RELs/RLs; work to establish a national forest monitoring system; designing a MRV framework; and testing on the Cancun REDD+ safeguards. Various REDD+ pilots are underway and the FPIC principle has been tested at some of the pilot sites. The Government is also working on a BDS system, aiming at transparent and equitable financial management for the implementation of REDD+ actions.

Implementing REDD+ actions in Viet Nam at a national scale requires several challenges to be met. First, while forest cover has been increasing because of the Government's massive planting programmes, forest biomass is relatively low

and forest degradation and fragmentation remain serious problems. Increasing forest cover does not necessarily equate with the protection and enhancement of carbon stocks (Pham, Moeliono, et al., 2012). Addressing the issues of forest degradation and fragmentation will require tackling drivers that originate outside the forestry sector related to economic opportunities, national development objectives and weak governance over land use sectors. The Government has to integrate REDD+ objectives and activities into broader development goals and land use plans at the national and sub-national levels.

Second, REDD+ requires effective communication and coordination across different sectors and levels of the Government system. The establishment of the Steering Committee for REDD+ can contribute to the high level policy coordination needed for a cross-sector approach. However, at the technical and operational levels (REDD+ Network and Sub-Technical Working Groups), participation from line ministries is very limited. In addition, the cur-

rent REDD+ organisational framework consists mostly of national level institutions, and a coordination mechanism to engage sub-national governments is still being designed.

Third, Government capacity, including human resources, to direct and guide REDD+ actions is limited (Stewart and Swan, 2013). The UN-REDD Programme and the REDD+ Network play an important role in coordinating development partners, NGOs and research institutions. A range of thematic matters have been discussed and developed by the Sub-Technical Working Groups under the REDD+ Network. Whereas this REDD+ organisational structure offers opportunities for non-state actors to contribute to Viet Nam's REDD+ readiness, the Government's capacity for coordinating the Network members and their activities is limited and building this capacity should be considered a priority.

Building the coordination capacity of the Government is also necessary for developing specific elements of the national REDD+ system. For example, both the development of forest RELs/RLs, which will define whether and how Viet Nam can benefit from REDD+, and integrating actions under sub-national REDD+ pilots into a national framework, involves different sectors and groups, reflecting a range of ideas and interests at several levels. Building the capacity of the REDD+ Office to co-ordinate and guide initiatives related to RELs/RLs, piloting, etc. towards the targets outlined in the NRAP is thus critical.

A fourth challenge is related to the participation of civil society, the private sector and local communities, including eth-

nic minorities, in REDD+. In the NRAP and the R-PP, the Government recognises the importance of multi-stakeholder participation in designing and implementing REDD+ actions at all levels. However, it appears that forestry officials have dominated the discussion on REDD+ strategy documents, and that the consultation processes did not include all relevant stakeholders, particularly local communities. There is a strong need to improve approaches for engaging local communities and other actors, not only in the national planning for REDD+, but also in natural resource management. Completing the land allocation process and strengthening the legal framework for community forestry are important. Approaches to ensure that REDD+ actions are accepted by a broad range of stakeholders would contribute to minimising the risks of reversals and the spatial displacement of deforestation and forest degradation drivers.

In short, REDD+ is providing strong support in Viet Nam to contribute to solving deeply rooted problems in the forestry sector (Poruschi, 2010). While the technical challenges associated with RELs/RLs and MRV are considerable, the greatest challenges are in building a cross-sector approach to REDD+, coordinating different levels of government, and ensuring multi-stakeholder participation in designing, implementing and monitoring REDD+ actions.



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