

**Forest Governance and Learning Group in Vietnam:
Supporting Poverty Alleviation through Community Forestry
Draft Work Plan**

24 August 2006

1 Background

IIED has succeeded in securing support for a new project in Vietnam, entitled the Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG), which is part of an international project covering seven countries in Africa, and three countries (India, Indonesia and Vietnam) in Asia. The project is funded by the European Commission, with some supplementary funding from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and will take place over three years.

At the international level, the project aims to address the challenge of not what but how to put the right leadership, institutions, policy decisions and practical systems in place. To be more specific, it aims to deliver four main outputs:

- *Poverty reduction strategies, national forest programs, decentralization programs* and related processes that better enable improved forest governance
- *Illegal and corrupt forestry that degrades livelihoods is reduced* through the adoption and spread of practical approaches to improve forest governance
- *Forestry enterprise initiatives and private sector associations* that comply with the law and spread practical approaches to improve forest governance
- *Ownership, access rights, policy and management frameworks* that are improved to support local control and benefits from forestry.

Both at national level and through international exchanging of experience, the project expects to (i) spread learning about workable approaches to good forest governance (ii) make measurable progress in improving sustainable local returns to livelihoods from law enforcement, private sector responsibility and enhanced local ownership and access rights and (iii) build long-term capacity to spread these improvements. The target groups of the FGLG Vietnam will be policy makers at national and provincial levels as well as champions in community forestry.

2 Focus of FGLG Vietnam and its justification

The focus of FGLG in Vietnam will be on sharing experience and learning on poverty alleviation through community forestry (CF). The focus is on poverty alleviation because it has been one of the major concerns in Vietnamese forest sector. Over the last decade, Vietnam has made important progress in reducing the number of people living under poverty line, from 58.2% in 1993 to 24.1% in 2004, implying a reduction of more than half of the population living in poverty in 11 years. In the forestry sector, however, it is still unclear to what extent forestry has contributed to lifting poor people out of poverty and the impacts of forestry on the poor have been vague.

In recent years, attention to poverty reduction in the forestry sector has been strengthened. With the approval of the national Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) in 2002, a challenge arises for the forestry sector of how to identify concrete actions to contribute to the national poverty reduction goal. In a recent effort to prepare

the National Forest Strategy (NFS) 2006-2020, an attempt has been made to include poverty reduction in forestry sector development direction. As part of this undertaking, a research entitled “Forestry, Poverty Reduction and Rural Livelihoods in Vietnam” has been commissioned to review the contribution of the forestry sector to poverty reduction and to prepare specific recommendations to integrate poverty reduction measures. Findings from the research show that the challenges for the forestry sector to deal with poverty reduction include provision of legal rights to local people and promotion of different forms of forest management by local people.

Furthermore, the focus of FGLG Vietnam is also on CF because CF has recently gained legal recognition by state law¹. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is preparing a guideline to help the implementation of the new law. With financial support from the Vietnam Trust Fund for Forest (TFF), the Forest Department (FD) under MARD is currently preparing to launch a Community Forest Management (CFM) Pilot Program to try out the implementation of a CF guideline, which is currently under development by MARD. The CFM Pilot Program will be implemented in two years (starting in the second half of 2006) in ten provinces, namely Dien Bien, Son La, Yen Bai, Cao Bang, Lang Son, Nghe An, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue, Dak Nong and Gia Lai². The program expects to develop and test (in these provinces) legal documents and regulations on appropriate technical and financial systems for CFM, which will be used as a basis for future government support programs.

The Vietnam FGLG will be designed in a way that it contributes to refine the CF guideline by complementing the work of CFM Pilot Program with concrete examples of how CFM works at local level and what benefit sharing arrangements have been applied in existing CF experiences from on-going projects or traditional cases. FGLG’s contribution will focus on how future state policy on CFM can contribute to alleviate poverty in the forest area through equitable and sustainable benefit sharing arrangements. With such focus, FGLG Vietnam expects to contribute to the cause of poverty alleviation of the nation in general and of the forestry sector in particular.

3 Provincial analysis

This section provides an analysis of the three proposed provinces to be covered by FGLG work. Summary of the provincial analysis is presented in Table 1. The selection of the three provinces is based on results of the consultations with different resource persons in February 2006 and on further discussion in June - August 2006.

3.1 *Son La*

Son La is situated in the Northwest mountain area of Vietnam (see Figure 1). Total population of the province is around 975 thousand people with 12 different ethnic groups. The Thai is the majority, accounting for 54% of the provincial population, followed by the Kinh (18%), the Hmong (12%), and the Muong (8%). Total physical area of the province is 1,405,500 ha, of which around 837,000 ha are classified as forest. Forested land covers an area of 571,000 (forest cover of 40.3%), including 551,000 ha of natural forest and 20,000 ha of plantation.

One important opportunity for FGLG in Son La is the support from the provincial authorities for community forestry. After the issuance of Circular 56/1999/TT/BNN-KL

¹ Forest Protection and Development Law passed by the National Assembly in November 2004.

² Final selection of the provinces to be covered by CFM Pilot Program will be later decided in consultation with the Coordination Office of the Forest Sector Support Program (FSSP-CO) and FSSP partners.

dated 30 March 1999 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) on establishment and implementation of community-based forest management (CBFM) regulations, Son La combined the implementation of this circular with its forest land allocation (FLA) program. Between 2000 and 2004, around 825,364 ha of forest land have been allocated to 53,196 households (154,784ha), 4,462 groups of households (32,739 ha), 2,314 communities (428,599 ha), and 1,986 organizations (174,380 ha) in 198 communes. Around 90,268 land use certificates (Red Book Certificate or RBC for short) for the allocated forest have been issued. At the same time, CBFM regulations for 1,650 villages have been set up and approved by district authorities. In parallel with villages with official CBFM regulation, there are examples of customary practices on forest management by local community. Such practices used to be widely applied before nationalization of the state forest resource and were dominated by state law during the state forestry regime. At present, customary CBFM is still in existence Son La but mostly limited to sacred forest, at a scale of a few hectares per community. Nevertheless, there has been no official information on how many villages and how much forest is under customary CBFM in the province.

One of the major constraints for community forestry in Son La is the large area of forest classified for protection purpose. Around 66% of the forested area is classified as protection forest (mostly for watershed protection of the most important hydro power plant in Vietnam, the Hoa Binh Plant,). Another 11% of the total forested area is classified as special-use forest (i.e. forest to be protected for nature or biodiversity conservation purpose). Only 23% of the provincial forest is classified for production purpose. By contrast, 89% of Son La population live in the rural area and most of whom reside in or surrounding the forest area. Furthermore, Son La is the third poorest province in Vietnam with the overall poverty rate of around 63.9% (2003). Poverty alleviation has been a policy focus and the last decade has witnessed a rapid reduction in the poverty rate. Yet, disparity in economic situation remains large among local people, particularly between urban and rural population.

The fast growing number of villages with official CBFM regulation reflects a challenge for FGLG to work in Son La. The major issue is that concern has mainly been made about the quantity (number of villages being covered by CBFM regulations) rather than the quality of the regulation and its compliance with customary rules which have been observed by local people for generations. Put differently, the CBFM-supportive provincial leadership will be likely to challenge FGLG to speed up its work to cover a large number of villages.

Various initiatives are related to CBFM in Son La province.

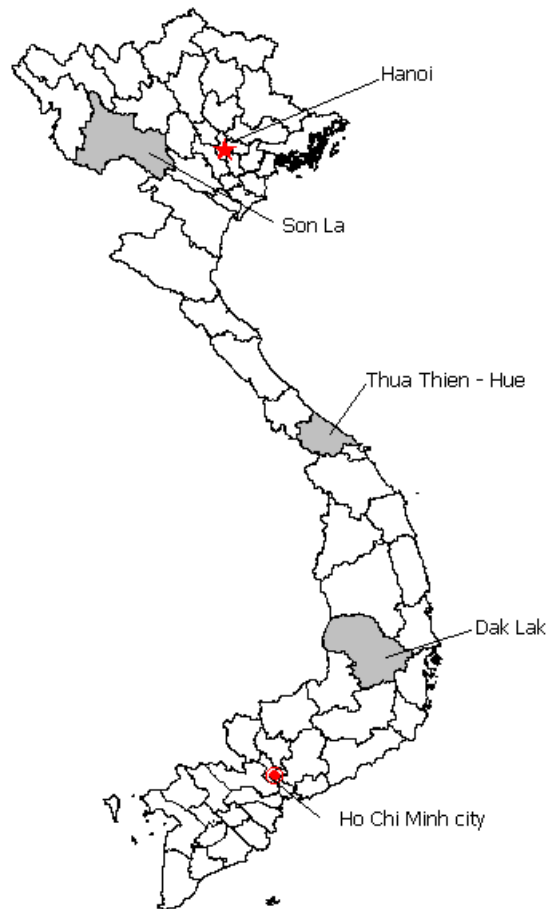
- To date, expansion of CBFM in Son La has been well connected with a German funded technical cooperation project, namely the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) Song Da. The project started in 1993 and was completed in 2004. During its lifetime, SFDP Song Da worked closely with the Forest Protection Sub-department (Sub-FPD) at the provincial level and its line agencies at district level in the allocation of forest to villagers and development of CBFM in pilot districts and expansion of the approach in the whole province.
- Between 2000-2005, an EU funded Rural Development Project also assisted Son La with participatory protection and regeneration of forest resources.

In the coming years, there are a few projects related to CBFM to be implemented in Son La. The first one is, as mentioned above, the CFM Pilot Program, which proposed to take

Son La as a potential site. Two international projects are also coming soon. One is from the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), focusing on social forestry development. Estimated budget for the project is two million Euros. Another one is a financial cooperation project with ten million Euros funding from German Bank for Reconstruction (KfW), focusing on reforestation. Both projects are expected to start in 2006 but it is very likely that protocol procedures may delay the implementation until 2007.

Two organizations can be potential contact points for FGLG: the Forest Sub-department (Sub-FD) and the Sub-FPD. It is, however, suggested that Sub-FPD be the key contact for FGLG if it covers Son La. There are two major reasons. Firstly, Sub-FPD has been the catalyst organization in CBFM in the province so far. Secondly, Sub-FPD leadership is supportive of CF and is ready to improve its work on CBFM. Furthermore, it is important for FGLG to be linked up with Mr. Vu Duc Thuan, who is currently an official in charge of agriculture and forestry sector in the Provincial People's Committee. Mr. Thuan used to work for SFDP Song Da and has been a supporter to CFM in the province.

Figure 1: Location of proposed provinces



3.2 *Thua Thien Hue*

Thua Thien Hue is located in the Central Region of Vietnam. The province's total population is around one million people, most of whom are the mainstream Vietnamese (the Kinh group). Indigenous people (e.g. Ta Oi, Ka Tu, Pa Ko, Pa Hy, Van Kieu) account for around 4% of the total provincial population.

Thua Thien Hue covers an area of 505 thousand ha. Forest covers an area of around 244 thousand ha or 48% of the total land. Production forest accounts for around 31% of the total forested land. Around 23% of the forest are classified as special use forest and 46% are protection forest.

In contrast to Son La, little forest has been officially allocated to local people. In 2000, with the help of a UNDP funded Program on Forests (PROFOR) Vietnam, Thua Thien Hue started trying out allocating forest to local communities. A few other projects have also been doing forest allocation to local people since then. By the end of 2004, seven communities have been given around 4.5 thousand ha of forest for management.

One of the opportunities for FGLG to work in Thua Thien Hue is the open attitude of the provincial leadership in adopting a ‘people centered forest management regime’ (vs. one by state organizations). This attitude has been reflected in the implementation (although on small scale) of forest allocation to local community since 2000.

One important opportunity for FGLG is the existence of not only new community forest management examples (formally created and legally recognized – see above) but also those that have been maintained for generations. One example of the latter is the case of Pho Trach village where a local community has managed over 200 ha of forest for its own fuelwood production. Experiences from such cases will allow an understanding on how community forestry works in the local context.

Another opportunity is the availability of existing experience from various national and international initiatives. At present, there are more than ten different projects/ programs related to natural resources going on in the province³.

- One of them is a project entitled “Harnessing Co-Management of Phong Dien Park with Indigenous & Traditional Communities in Thua Thien Hue Province” with funding from the MacArthur Foundation. The project objective is to develop a new management structure that will encourage community participation and the involvement of local leadership in management decisions and sustainable use planning. Within its scope of activities, the MacArthur project develops a model of community management of protected areas and tries to promote learning and experience sharing with regard to CFM.
- Another project is the Green Corridor Project, which is co-funded by GEF, Government of Vietnam (GOV), WWF, SNV and several other donors. The ultimate purpose of the project is to protect and maintain the high global conservation value of the productive landscape in the Green Corridor. One of the focal points of the project is to support local communities to obtain forest land title and to improve their livelihoods (through different incentive schemes).
- In addition, SNV has also been working in Thua Thien Hue on experimental allocation of natural resources to local households. It also helps with development of allocated forest.
- Within the scope of FLEG funding from EU, IUCN is preparing a project entitled “Strengthening Voices for Better Choices” in Thua Thien Hue province. The ultimate purpose of the project is to promote the establishment and implementation of forest governance arrangements that facilitate and promote sustainable and equitable forest conservation and management in project countries. The project is still in the

³ With funding from ADB, CECI, CIDSE, GEF, WWF, SDC, JBIC, SNV, Tropenbos International, World Bank, World Vision and some others

preparatory stage with current work on assessment of economic, social and legal barriers influencing an equitable and sustainable management of natural resources. The results of this assessment will be available by the end of the year and will be used as the basis for the ground work which starts next year.

- Another initiative related to FGLG activities in Thua Thien Hue is the Extension Training and Support Project for Forestry and Agriculture in the Upland (ETSP). The project is funded by Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by Helvetas Vietnam. One of its main objectives is to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor. Until now, ETSP has supported training in CFM and documented and developed a set of CFM documents based on available documents on CFM and the practical experiences and lessons gained from the field work.

At present, all the foreign support projects in Thua Thien Hue province are being coordinated through a project management board under the Provincial People's Committee (PPC). FGLG can later coordinate with relevant projects in the province through this body.

In addition to on-going initiatives, it is important to mention an already completed UNDP Program for Forestry (PROFOR) (1998-2002). In general, PROFOR was not an implementation project, but a process of policy research with activities in the field and at the national level. It aimed to improve strategies towards sustainable forest management and sustainable livelihoods within the framework of the existing government programs for sustainable forest management. In Thua Thien Hue, PROFOR supported testing of different SFM models that benefit local people; one of which was a trial allocation of forest to local community.

Nevertheless, the presence of a large number of national and international initiatives in the province also implies some challenges for FGLG to work in Thua Thien Hue. First of all, people have been tired of seeing outsiders coming and going (for doing feasibility studies, initial surveys, and the likes) and have to wait for a long time before anything happens on the ground. The challenge for FGLG is to get any preparatory steps done as quickly as possible and start with the implementation before the eagerness of concerned people fades out. Another challenge for FGLG is with the size of the project. Compared to hundreds of thousands or millions US\$ projects, FGLG's funding sounds really small. As a result, it is important for FGLG to carefully deal with the expectations from the province and to clarify the project's purpose for the concerned people.

Sub-FD in Thua Thien Hue can be a good contact point for FGLG to work with in the province. The organization has strong leadership and experience in forest land allocation and CFM. Mr. Ho Hy, the vice director of Sub-FD, should be the focus point of FGLG in Hue, given his experience and commitment to promote forestry by local people. In addition, it is strongly recommended that FGLG be linked up with the Forestry Faculty of Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry given the experience in CFM it has accumulated so far. For contact with on-going projects in the province, it is recommended that FGLG be linked up with the project management board under the PPC.

3.3 *Dak Lak*

Dak Lak is located in the center of Central Highlands Region. Its population is around 1.7 million people, most of whom have arrived in Dak Lak over the last three decades. There are around 44 different ethnic groups in the province with the Kinh being the largest group (over 70% of the total population). Indigenous groups (e.g. the Ede, Jarai, M' nong) account for around 20% of the total population.

Total physical area of the province is around 1.3 million ha, of which 609 thousand ha are forested land. One of the opportunities for FGLG to work in Dak Lak is the abundance of production forest in the province. There are around 250 thousand ha (41% of the total forested area) classified as production forest. Protection forest accounts for 25% (151 thousand ha) and special use forest is 34% (207 thousand ha).

Similar to Son La, one of the opportunities for FGLG to work in Dak Lak is the initiative the province has taken to allocate natural forest to local communities. Dak Lak initiated its program on allocation of natural forest to local people in 1998. Forestland use title (or Red Book Certificate - RBC) has been given to local forest manager, including individual households, groups of households and communities. In addition, local forest managers are also legally entitled to use part of the forestland for cropping purpose, and to harvest timber and NTFP for domestic consumption. Between 1999 - 2002, the program allocated 24,900 ha of forestland to local people, of which 14,300 ha to 3,243 individual households, 1,600 ha to 10 household groups, and 9,000 ha to 24 communities. To date, an additional area of around 7.7 thousand ha has been allocated to 18 household groups and 7 communities.

Another opportunity in Dak Lak is the presence of both customary practices on CFM of forest resources as well as that under state law. Currently, Dak Lak is testing the benefit sharing arrangement at community level where local communities are entitled to take timber from the local forest for commercial purpose. These cases can potentially serve as important examples for FGLG to promote the idea of improving livelihoods and reducing poverty through community forestry. Furthermore, as Dak Lak is not in the proposed site of CF Pilot Program, existing cases from Dak Lak can provide further empirical evidence on CF, which contribute to the development of CF guideline.

An important opportunity to work in Dak Lak is the catalytic thinking of provincial leadership in supporting local people to improve their livelihoods through forestry approach. So far, Dak Lak has been the first one to try out allocation of natural forest with standing timber stock to local people along with RBC. In addition, the community based benefit sharing arrangements that Dak Lak is testing are also very new in Vietnam.

As for constraints for FGLG, it is important to take into account that Dak Lak is a sensitive area at the moment after the outbreak of two demonstrations by local ethnic people in 2001 and 2004. Visit by foreigners to the province must be informed with and approved by provincial authorities well in advance. In principle, as the MoU has been signed between MARD and RECOFTC for FGLG there is no problem to have people from outside of Vietnam visiting Dak Lak within the scope of this project. However, the constraint for FGLG is that such visits must be planned well in advance to make sure that they can take place.

Three important initiatives related to development of CBFM in Dak Lak so far need to be mentioned.

- The first one is a German funded project on Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Lower Mekong River (SMRP). Between 1998-2002, SMRP assisted Dak Lak in allocating natural forest to local people. It was also with the assistance of SMRP that a provincial Consultative Working Group (CWG) on forest land allocation was set up and run. The group was set up with membership from various departments in the province with the aim to assist the provincial authorities in facilitating the implementation of forest land allocation. Experiences from Dak Lak show that CWG can serve as a forum for discussion on and sharing of issues related to forest land

allocation. After the completion of SMRP in 2002, there was a pause in CWG activities until a German funded Rural Development Project in Dak Lak province (RDDL) was launched (see discussion about RDDL later).

- The second initiative is RDDL, whose interest is to promote CBFM in its pilot areas. Based on the work done and methodology developed by the SMRP, RDDL has been experimenting in community based natural resource management in two districts. The pilots have become a first case in Vietnam where a community can legally harvest the timber (and non timber) products from forest for commercial purposes.
- The third initiative is a small grant project from UNDP, based on the previous work of SMRP. The project is currently under the responsibility of Dak Lak Union for Science and Technology (UST). The focus of the project is on one village where forest has been allocated to five groups of users. A grant has been given to the villagers as the seed for a rotational fund, which can be used for on-farm production activities (including those related to the allocated forest).

In the near future, an ADB (Asian Bank for Development) funded project entitled “Forest for Livelihood Improvement in the Central Highlands of Vietnam” will be launched in Dak Lak (and five other provinces in the Central Highlands). The project is planned for 10 years, with the expected start date in the second half of 2006. The immediate objective of the project is to increase benefits from sustainable forest management and use by grass root level (villages and communes), state and non-state entities for improving livelihoods of people in forest dependant areas. It will help reduce deforestation and land degradation on which the rural poor communities depend for subsistence through encouraging the local communities in participatory management of forests, introduction of site specific and need based commune development plans. In addition to ADB, a DANIDA (Danish Development and Cooperation Assistance) funded project in the field of agriculture and rural development in Dak Lak province is also important to mention. The project is expected to start in 2007 and will last for 5 years. The focus of the project is on capacity building of grass-root organizations. As part of its activities, the project will do land (re)-allocation in two districts and assist local people in improving knowledge in natural resource management and marketing.

In addition, there is a potential study on the contribution of forest land allocation to poverty alleviation in Dak Lak. The study is under support from Humboldt University Berlin and Overseas Development Institute (ODI). A similar study is also planned by GTZ and it is very likely that the two studies will be combined⁴.

The most suitable body for FGLG to work with in Dak Lak is the CWG. The multidisciplinary nature of this group allows FGLG to extend its effects on various sectors. It is important for FGLG to identify any past issues or challenges faced by CWG so that they can be taken care of or addressed in the FGLG case. In addition, the experience in CBFM that CWG has accumulated so far will be of great use of FGLG to share with other province(s). However, as CWG is only an informal organization, it is still important for FGLG to be linked up with a formal organization. It is suggested that FGLG be affiliated with Dak Lak Forest Sub-Department (Sub-FD) due to the experiences Sub-FD has in FLA and CBFM in the province. In addition, it is also suggested that FGLG be linked up with Department of Forest Resource Management at Tay Nguyen University.

⁴ Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan, the convener of FGLG Vietnam, is expected to be the national team leader of this study

The department has together with SMRP and RDDDL promoted development of FLA and CBFM. The experience it has will be valuable for FGLG.

3.4 Selection of provinces

This section has provided an analytical discussion on the three proposed provinces. One of the first activities of the Learning Group will be to decide whether to work in two or three provinces; and if two, which two provinces would be most appropriate. Some options are given below:

- One option is to select one province with CFM Pilot Program and one without it. Ideally this would be Thua Thien Hue and Dak Lak. The two provinces provide different pictures of CFM: one with lots of official CFM villages (Dak Lak) and the other one with lots of traditional CFM examples (Thua Thien Hue). Thua Thien Hue is recommended to start with as a province with CFM Pilot Program because there are various cases where local people have managed their forest in a communal ways for generations. Compared to Son La, the other province with CFM Pilot Program, the existence of traditional CFM is more 'visible' in Thua Thien Hue. In other words, there are real examples of traditional CFM in Thua Thien Hue which we can use to contrast to the case of official CFM in Dak Lak province. The existence of traditional CFM in Son La is not quite clear as local rules are still dominated by official rules in the villages where traditional CFM is being practised. By contrast, local rule dominates official rules in the traditional CFM cases in Thua Thien Hue province.
- A second option is for FGLG to work in both provinces covered by the CFM Pilot Program. In this case, Thua Thien Hue and Son La will be selected as the project sites. However, it is recommended to work in Dak Lak as the province has been known for being a catalyst in participatory forest management. The examples of local communities in Dak Lak benefiting from commercial forestry (timber produce) are rather unique in Vietnam and will serve as important field experience for the formulation of benefit sharing arrangement in CF guideline.
- A third option is to work in all three provinces. If this is the case, it is recommended that the Group start its work in two provinces, preferably Dak Lak and Thua Thien Hue (as in option 1), and then expand to the third province in the later phase.

Table 1: Summary of provincial analysis

	Son La	Thua Thien Hue	Dak Lak
In CFM Pilot Program	Yes	Yes	No
Opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Large area of forest allocated to local communities 2. Support from province for CFM 3. Existence of official and traditional CFM 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some forest allocated to local communities 2. Support from province for CFM 3. Existence of traditional CFM (and official CFM) 4. Presence of various initiatives 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forest allocated to local communities 2. Support from province for CFM 3. Existence of official and traditional CFM 4. First province with example of community benefiting from commercial forestry
Constraints	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited area of production forest while large number of rural upland people 2. Concern of the province to upscale project activities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Various initiatives have already been present in the province 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sensitive area to foreigners, visits by outsiders must be made well in advance
Related initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SFDP Song Da on social forestry ▪ EU funded project on rural development <p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTZ funded on social forestry ▪ KfW funded project on reforestation ▪ CFM Pilot Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ MacArthur funded project on co-management of protected area ▪ Green Corridor project on community based nature conservation ▪ SNV project to work on forest allocation ▪ EU funded FLEG project by IUCN on forest governance ▪ Extension Training and Support Project that provides training in community forestry ▪ PROFOR project that promoted forest land allocation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ GTZ funded SMRP project that promoted allocation of forest to people and operation of consultative working group on FLA ▪ UNDP small grant project that support livelihood improvement after forest land allocation ▪ GTZ funded rural development project that supports CBFM <p>Future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ADB funded forest for livelihood project ▪ DANIDA funded project on capacity building at grassroot

		forest land allocation	level
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study on contribution of forest land allocation to poverty alleviation
Key organizations/ individuals	Sub-FPD (Sub-FD) Mr. Vu Duc Thuan of PPC	Sub-FD Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry Management board for foreign support projects in the province	CWG Sub-FD Tay Nguyen University (Department of Forest Resource Management)

4 Potential members of FGLG Vietnam

The FGLG Vietnam will be convened by Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan, an independent researcher with experience in forest livelihoods, governance, devolution and poverty alleviation. Membership of FGLG will not be based on organizational representation but on individuals' experience and commitment to having a better forest governance structure for the benefit of the forest (poor) people. Initially, one person from MARD and one from a university, ideally involved in forest policy formulation, will be involved as a link between FGLG and policy makers. In each province, around two to three persons will be involved in the group (see Table 2). Over time, membership of the group may change and more people may be invited to join the group (e.g. people from the community). The list also includes potential members from Son La province in case the final decision also includes Son La. The three national FGLG members will participate in the activities at the provincial level, but the convener will be involved much more than the other two.

Table 2: List of initial potential members of FGLG Vietnam

Name and title	Background/ Affiliation	Role in/ contribution to FGLG Vietnam	Contact details
National level			
Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan	Resource Economist, an independent researcher with experience in forest livelihoods, governance, devolution and poverty alleviation	Convener, coordinate FGLG activities in Vietnam and with RECOFTC and IIED	79 To 4, Van Quan, Van Mo, Ha dong, Ha Tay Tel: (+84) (0) 912 902 785 Email: tananh@hn.vnn.vn
Dr. Pham Xuan Phuong	Agricultural Economist, senior planning expert and vice director of Legal Department under MARD	Link between FGLG and the formulation of CF guideline and forest policy makers	Legal Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2 Ngoc Ha, Hanoi Tel: (+84) (0) 914 623 078 Email: pxuanphuong@fpt.vn
Dr. Nguyen Ba Ngai	Agricultural Economist, Head of Department of Science and International Relations - Vietnam Forestry University.	Link between FGLG and the formulation of CF guideline and CFM Pilot Program, introduce experiences in CFM and poverty alleviation	Department of Science and International Relations - Vietnam Forestry University, Xuan Mai, Chuong My, Ha Tay. Tel: (+84) (0) 912 062 171 Email: Ngai-xm@hn.vnn.vn
Son La province			
Mr. Vu Duc Thuan	Forester, official in charge of forest and agriculture in Provincial People's Committee	Introduce experience with CFM from SFDP Song Da and feed lessons learnt from FGLG to provincial forest policy formulation	Provincial People's Committee, Son La Town, Son La province Tel: (+84) (0) 913 024 864 Email: thuanvd@sonla.gov.vn
Mr. Nguyen Van Luan	Forester, Vice Director of Son La Sub-FPD	Introduce experience with CFM from Sub-FPD and feed lessons learnt from FGLG to provincial forest policy formulation	Son La Forest Protection Sub-Department (Chi Cuc Kiem Lam), Son La Town, Son La province Tel: (+84) (0) 913 252 204

Thua Thien Hue province			
Mr. Ho Hy	Forester, vice director of Thua Thien Hue Sub-FD, an advocator of CF	Introduce experience with CFM from TTH, feed lessons learnt from FGLG to provincial forest policy formulation, link between FGLG and CFM Pilot Program in TTH	Forest Sub-Department, 3 Le Hong Phong, Hue City, Thua Thien Hue province Tel: (+84) (0) 914 015 106
From Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry (to be identified)		Introduce experience with CFM and poverty alleviation from TTH and elsewhere	
Dak Lak province			
Mr. Nguyen Van Xuan	Forester, Vice director of Dak Lak DARD	Introduce experience with CFM from Dak Lak, feed lessons learnt from FGLG to provincial forest policy formulation	Dak Lak Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, 47 Nguyen Tat Thanh, Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak. Tel: (+84) (0) 913 493 574
Prof. Dr. Bao Huy	Forester, head of Department of Forest Resource Management, Tay Nguyen University.	Introduce experience with CFM and poverty alleviation from Dak Lak and elsewhere	Department of Forest Resource Management, Tay Nguyen University, 567 Le Duan, Buon Ma Thuot, Dak Lak. (+84) (0) 983 084 145 E-mail: huy_bao@vnn.vn
Mr. Dang Thanh Liem	Forester, staff of RDDDL and former staff of SMRP in Dak Lak	Introduce experience with CFM and poverty alleviation from SMRP and RDDDL	Rural Development Dak Lak, Department of Planning & Investment, 17 Le Duan, Buon Ma Thuot City, Dak Lak Tel: (+84) (0) 913 421 110 Email: d.liem@gtz-rddl.org

5 Implementation arrangements

Inception workshops to launch the project: the project will start in September 2006 with two inception workshops in the two proposed provinces (or in two of the three provinces). To avoid over-expectation, the inception workshop will include only key participants: representatives of local authorities, potential members of the FGLG group, and representatives from RECOFTC and IIED. The purpose of the workshop is to officially launch the project in the respective province, to introduce overall framework of the project and to discuss the workplan for the first phase.

Start in both provinces: given the nature of exchange learning, it is recommended that FGLG start with both provinces at the same time. The main idea is to accelerate the process of cross visits for exchange of experiences between the two provinces in order to document necessary lessons to timely contribute to the development of CF guideline. Starting in two provinces at the same time will also allow the similar implementation process in both provinces, which will facilitate organization of joint events such as workshops.

Document both strengths and weaknesses: the core point of mutual learning is to learn from failure. It is important that not only strengths but also weaknesses of each CFM example be fully documented and shared with other people. FGLG team members will encourage local people to share their success as well as failure stories.

Organization and responsibility: the FGLG Vietnam will be convened by Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan, who is responsible directly to RECOFTC and IIED for the implementation. The group will also report to Dr. Pham Duc Tuan from FD, who is currently the focal point of RECOFTC in Vietnam, or his nominee. At the provincial level, a sub-group will be set up in each province and one person will be asked to take the main responsibility for the province's activities.

Communication and coordination within FGLG Vietnam team: communication and coordination within FGLG Vietnam team will be done on monthly basis by electronic means. At a minimum of three months, personal contact should be made between the sub-team members and the convener (and other team members at national level). All team members should meet up every six months for discussion of work progress. All urgent matters will be communicated immediately and be dealt with as early as possible. In addition, communication and coordination among team members will be done on an ad-hoc basis for specific events/ activities.

Communication with RECOFTC and IIED: the convener will take the responsibility to communicate directly with RECOFTC and IIED. A brief overview of implementation progress will be provided electronically every month and for each major event (e.g. provincial and national workshops). (Brief) country progress reports will be prepared quarterly and annually. Personal contact should be made between FGLG Vietnam (its convener) and RECOFTC/ IIED at least every six months.

Refinement of workplan: the current workplan is in draft form and will be subject to discussion within the Vietnam FGLG, and with other country Learning Groups and IIED staff and consultants associated with the international Forest Governance Learning Group initiative. Following two international FGLG meetings, and further discussion both within the Vietnam Group and further interactions in Vietnam, the convener will review the workplan after a period of about six months. The revised workplan will be finalized in consultation with RECOFTC/IIED, and will include final selection of provinces.

Financial accounting and cash flow: funding for the project will be transferred to an account held by the convener, who is responsible directly to RECOFTC/IIED for the financial matters for Vietnam FGLG. He will prepare a financial statement for FGLG Vietnam every three months and send it to IIED, with a copy to RECOFTC. The convener will keep original receipts. Within Vietnam, the convener will, on behalf of RECOFTC/IIED, sub-contract relevant individuals/ organizations for implementation of the activities specified in the workplan. The sub-contractees will report to the convener about the use of the money in accordance with the terms and conditions of the sub-contract.

Communication and coordination with CFM Pilot Program: communication and coordination of activities between FGLG and CFM Pilot Program should be done at all levels. At the national level, communication between the convener and Dr. Pham Duc Tuan (who is responsible for CFM Pilot Program at the national level) will be done on a regular basis. In addition, the other two members at the national level can bring experience from FGLG in the CF guideline development as they are directly involved in the formulation of the guideline. In the province with CFM Pilot Program, it is very likely that one of the sub-group members is also involved in CFM Pilot Program in the province. If this is the case, communication and coordination between the two projects will be rather simple. If not, provincial members of FGLG will take the main responsibility to communicate with CFM Pilot Program.

Coordination with other FLEG projects in Vietnam: At present, the International Cooperation Department (ICD) under MARD is leading a formation of a FLEG working group, which involved all EU funded FLEG projects in Vietnam. The convener of FGLG will join this working group as representative from FGLG. In addition, FGLG can coordinate at the field level in Thua Thien Hue with a FLEG project implemented by IUCN. This coordination can be done by both FGLG sub-group members in Thua Thien Hue and by the national convener.

6 Activities for Vietnam FGLG

The total timeline of FGLG Vietnam will be around 28 months, from September 2006 through January 2009. The whole project will be split into three phases, taking into account the time horizon of CFM Pilot Program in order to contribute in a timely way to the refinement of the CF guideline.

Phase 1 (September 2006 – August 2007): the main objective of this phase is to get a clear idea of what is going on in terms of CFM and its connection with poverty alleviation in the two (or three) selected provinces. Outputs of this phase will be used to guide the direction for the next phase. Main activities of this phase will include:

- *Survey existing CFM examples:* in each province, a survey of existing CFM examples will be conducted to understand the current state of community forestry in the province. The survey will be conducted by provincial sub-group members, with support from national members. The survey will need to answer the following questions: 1) what is the history of the CFM example being studied? 2) what is the existing governance structure and how does it function? 3) what kind of internal (intra-community) arrangements being applied that govern the distribution of forest benefits among community members? and 4) what kind of interventions from outside (e.g. from the state or private companies) have been applied and how has the community dealt with them? Findings from the survey will be documented in a report in Vietnamese language.

- *Organize workshops to discuss CFM survey findings and future FGLG activities:* Once the draft report is ready, there will be a workshop in each province to discuss findings from the survey with relevant organizations and individuals. In addition to the provincial workshops, one workshop in Hanoi will also be organized to present and discuss findings from two provinces with organizations at national level.
- *Prepare and translate CFM reports:* Results of discussion from the workshops will be documented and integrated in the provincial reports. On the basis of which, a synthesis report will be prepared by the convener and other national team members. The reports will discuss key findings and implications as well as the activities for the next phase. The provincial reports will be prepared in Vietnamese and translated into English. To facilitate discussion with RECOFTC and IIED, the national report will be prepared in English and translated into Vietnamese.

Outputs of phase 1

- Two provincial reports documenting results of survey on existing CF in the respective provinces and the proposed activities for the coming phase.
- A national synthesis report summarizing key findings, implications, and activities from the provincial reports

Phase 2 (September 2007 – August 2008): the main focus of this phase is to promote mutual learning among local communities (through cross-site exchange visits and study tours) and more pro-poor distribution of forest benefits. Concrete activities to be undertaken will depend on the outcomes of the previous phase. The idea is that the main problem hindering good governance of forest and its impact on poverty alleviation is not always lack of money, but can be due to unclear legal framework or poor access to information. With a limited budget, FGLG Vietnam can choose to assist making available a workable framework that promotes better derivation and distribution of forest benefits. Based on findings and recommendations from the survey in the previous phase, the project may also do some work at the pilot sites, for example: supporting action research to capture lessons from the pilot project implementation process.

By the end of the second phase, FGLG Vietnam should have organized various exchange visits and assisted up to two communities in each province to deal the selected problems identified in the CFM survey in the previous phase.

Tentative outputs of phase 2

- Exchange visits and study tours on CFM and forest benefit sharing are organized for local people and officials
- Up to two communities in each province are assisted to deal with some major problems identified in CFM survey to promote more pro-poor derivation and distribution of benefits from CFM

Phase 3 (September 2008 – January 2009): this last phase will focus on documenting lessons learnt, preparing recommendations to the refinement of CF guideline and discussing them with key policy-makers, and disseminating findings from the project to relevant audiences. Main activities of this phase include:

- Document lessons learnt from field experiences
- Prepare recommendations for refinement of CF guideline
- Discuss lessons learnt and recommendations with key policy-makers

- Prepare and disseminate final findings and results to relevant audiences

Outputs of phase 3

- A final report (English and Vietnamese) on lessons learnt and policy implications
- A policy brief (English and Vietnamese) summarizing major findings and policy recommendations