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Forest Governance Learning Group

Vietnam

Narrative report for the Social Justice in
Forestry project



Nhóm
Học Hỏi
về
Quản Trị
Rừng



Author information

This report was written by The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for the Asia and Pacific (RECOFTC) on behalf of FGLG Vietnam.

About the project

For more information about this report, or the Forest Governance Learning Group and the Social Justice in Forestry project, visit <http://iied.org/forest-governance-learning-group>, or contact: James Mayers, James.Mayers@iied.org.

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International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
email: info@iied.org
www.iied.org

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1. Background

The Forest Governance Learning Group (FGLG) Vietnam is part of an international project funded by the European Union, with supplementary funding from the UK Department for International Development (DFID). The International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) coordinates project activities at the international level. The Regional Community Forestry Training Center for the Asia and Pacific (RECOFTC) is in charge of the regional coordination for Asia.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to socially just and sustainable management of forests in developing countries. Its specific objective is to achieve improved forest governance in ten countries in Africa and Asia – securing local rights, developing forest product legitimacy and combating climate change.

In order to try and achieve this objective, four outputs are to be delivered:

- Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprises: This output is about securing rights, and backing them up with the ability to do something with them to improve livelihoods and sustainability.
- Output 2: Legitimate forest products: This output is about developing the empowerment and sustainability potential of legitimate forest products – not just legality for its own sake but backed by social credibility and stakeholder support.
- Output 3: Pro-poor climate change mitigation and adaptation through forestry: This output is about ensuring that the fast emerging wave of attention to forest-based climate strategies results in good forestry practice not ‘carbon fixation’ (emissions reductions alone), and adequate consideration of adaptation functions of forests as well as mitigation functions.
- Output 4: Trans-national learning and preparedness: This output is about building on the understanding that unless international networks take on board to a greater extent the imperative of social justice in forestry, sustainability will remain elusive – a technocratic dream with all initiatives foundering on the “lack of political will”.

In Vietnam, the current phase of FGLG is the continuation from the previous one, which started in September 2006, focusing on sharing experience and learning on poverty alleviation and community forestry (CF).

This document focuses on the overall achievement that FGLG has acquired for the period of 47 months, from November 2009 to September 2013. After this introduction, Section 2 provides background information on Vietnam. After that, Section 3 briefly introduces the activities of FGLG Vietnam. It is followed by discussion on the implementation of activities and key achievements in Section 4. Section 5 elaborates on the approaches employed by FGLG Vietnam. Section 6 discusses the impact FGLG has generated. Finally, Section 7 outlines the key lessons learned from FGLG Vietnam.

2. Country contexts

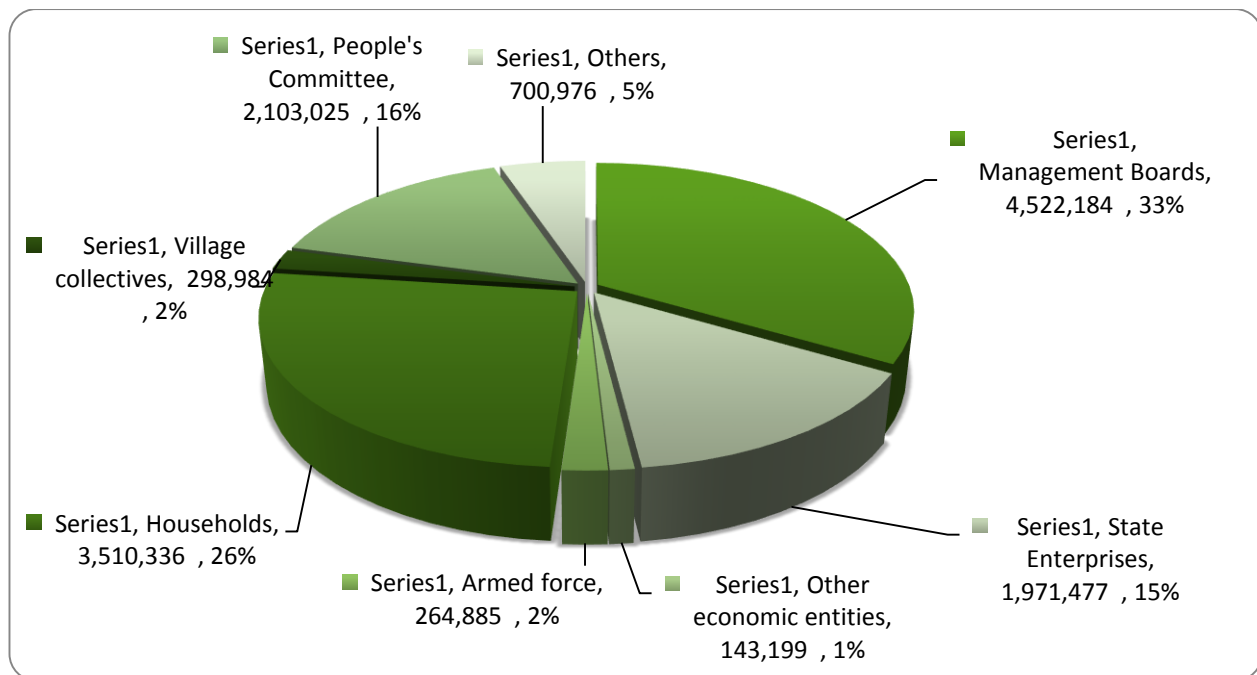
Vietnam is a tropical country located in the Indochina peninsula of Southeast Asia. It stretches between the latitudes 8°N and 24°N, and the longitudes 102°E and 110°E, covering a total area of around 330,958 square kilometres (km²). Vietnam shares a border with China to the north and with Lao PDR and Cambodia to the West. The eastern coast of the country borders the Eastern Sea. The population is estimated at 88.8 million people as of December 2012, with a density averaging 268 people per km². Around 32 per cent of the country's population live in the urban area and 68 per cent live in the rural area¹.

Forests play an important role for rural communities in upland area. Forests in Vietnam are home for over 25 million people, mostly ethnic minorities living in the upland remote areas where access to information is often limited. The approval of Forest Protection and Development Law and Land Law in early 1990s marks a starting point for the process of forest land allocation (FLA) to devolve forest management rights to local communities in Vietnam.² These two laws set out the basic framework for the emergence of novel forest management arrangements. Various decrees were then issued by the government, guiding the implementation of the FLA process. In addition to the allocation of forest rights to individuals and households, FLA also piloted allocating forests to village collectives in the 1990s. Experiments in community-based forms of forest management during this period contributed to the legal recognition of community land tenure (under the new Land Law passed in 2003) and community forest tenure (under the new Forest Protection and Development Law passed in 2004).

¹ Statistics come from the General Statistics Office, available online at www.gso.gov.vn.

² After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, state management of forest resources was practiced in the whole country. A system of state forest enterprises (SFE) was set up as the state organisation in charge of forest exploitation and plantation at field level.

Figure 1: Forest land tenure by stakeholder groups in 2011



Source: www.kiemlam.org.vn

The process of devolution of forest management resulted in a major shift from exclusive state forestry towards more people-centered forestry in reality. While State Forest Enterprises (SFEs) were the dominant actors in forest management up to the 1980s, locally controlled forestry is popular at the moment with local people (households and village collectives) managing around 28 per cent of the country's forest area. In general, community forest management (CFM) has been one of the priority areas for forestry sector of Vietnam, as indicated in its sectoral strategy (MARD 2007). At the moment, Vietnam is implementing a CFM pilot project in nine provinces, which aims to build up capacity at all levels and develop policy framework for CFM implementation nationwide.

Nevertheless, the momentum for CFM in Vietnam seemed to go down after the mid 2000s, after a decade of vigorous development, as the focus in the forestry sector has been shifted to climate change and REDD+. Vietnam started with REDD+ relatively early, in late 2008. It was one of the first countries in the world to implement the UNREDD Program (starting in 2009). It was also one of the first countries to receive approval for its Readiness Project Identification Note (R-PIN) and Readiness Preparation Proposal under the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF).

The focus on REDD+ was demonstrated through rigorous REDD+ activities at the national level. In September 2009, the National REDD+ Network was established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), along with the REDD+ Technical Working Group (TWG), to create awareness of the REDD+ mechanism; to build capacity at national and sub-national levels; and to coordinate REDD+ activities by different government and donor agencies. Since the end of 2010, activities under the REDD+ TWG have been expanded under REDD+ Sub-Technical Working Groups (STWG), toward the development of the 'National REDD+ Action Plan' document. This document was issued in mid-2012, setting the objectives and guiding principles for the local implementation of REDD+. The STWGs also worked on measuring, reporting and verification (MRV); REDD+ financing and benefit distribution; private sector engagement; REDD+ governance; and safeguards. At the same time, a number of REDD+ readiness and pilot projects, as well as analytical work, have been undertaken.

Also of importance during this period were the FLEGT activities. Vietnam started with VPA negotiation in 2010. A national FLEGT working group was set up in March 2010 but after the first meeting it became dormant, as the responsibility on FLEGT within MARD was shifted from one unit to another, and the latter did not continue what started by the former. Nevertheless, though not as rigorous as REDD+, FLEGT has also caught attention of various stakeholders in the country, particularly private sector and civil society organizations (CSO). A CSO network on FLEGT has been set up, with the aim

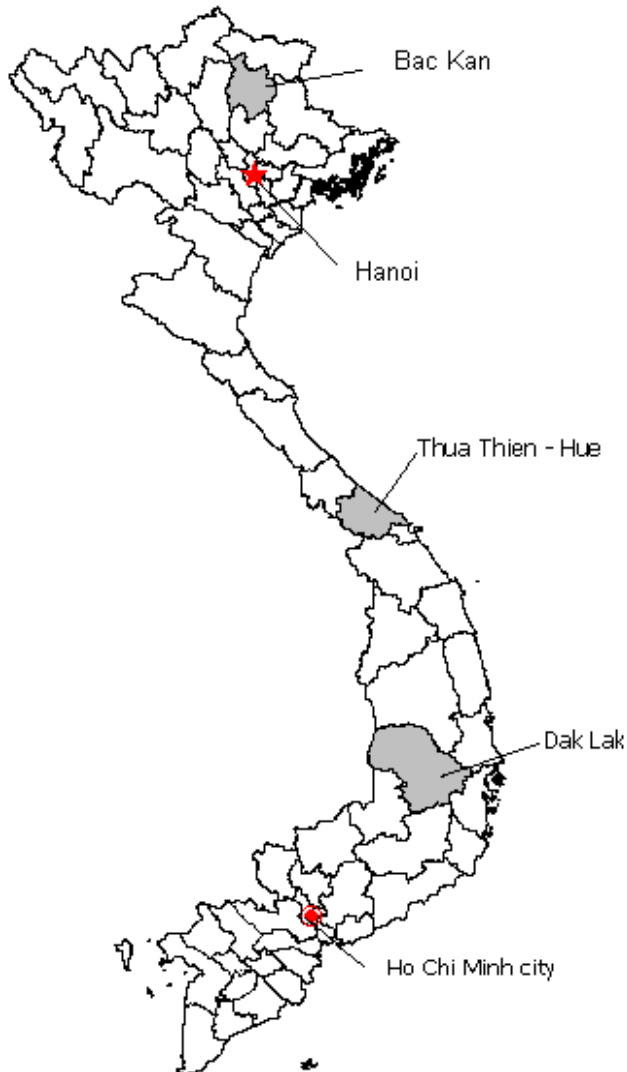
of empowering CSOs to represent their views at VPA negotiations. Several rounds of consultations have also been undertaken regarding the development of timber legality definition and verification.

In short, although the momentum in CFM has seemed to go down, the emergence of new initiatives, such as REDD+ and FLEGT, offers opportunities to further expand forest areas managed by local communities and to undertake innovative approaches to linking communities with new forms of forest governance. Among other issues, capacity building and provision of support are urgently needed to help empower forest communities in taking the lead in both combatting illegal logging and in managing the local forest resources for social, economic and environmental benefits.

3. Summary of main activities per output

For the period of 2009 to 2013, FGLG Vietnam worked in all four output areas of the global project, with strong emphasis on forest rights (Output 1), engagement with the national FLEGT process (Output 2), pro-poor mitigation in forestry sector (Output 3) and trans-national learning and sharing (Output 4). The focus of FGLG Vietnam was in the three provinces (namely Bac Kan, Thua Thien Hue and Dak Lak) where activities in phase 1 (2006 to 2009) were focused, and national level (Figure 2). Nevertheless, the learning and sharing went beyond these geographic locations when provincial teams visited other provinces to learn from their experiences and share FGLG learning.

Figure 2: Location of the project sites



Summary of main activities follows (see Section 0 for the achievements per outputs).

Figure 3 explains the rationale for FGLG issues and strategies through a theory of change.

Table 1: Summary of activities per outputs

Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprise

- 1.1 Assess forest tenure and benefit sharing arrangements
- 1.2 Promote allocation of forest title to local communities
- 1.3 Raise awareness on legal rights and responsibilities to forests of local communities
- 1.4 Training on governance of natural resource for FGLG members and partners
- 1.5 Training on facilitating the participation of local communities in forest management
- 1.6 Support the implementation of CFM Pilot Project Phase 2

Output 2: Legitimate forest products

- 2.1 Engage in national FLEGT process
- 2.2 Conduct a study on chain of custody (CoC) for timber from smallholder forests
- 2.3 Contribute to the development of timber legality definition in Vietnam

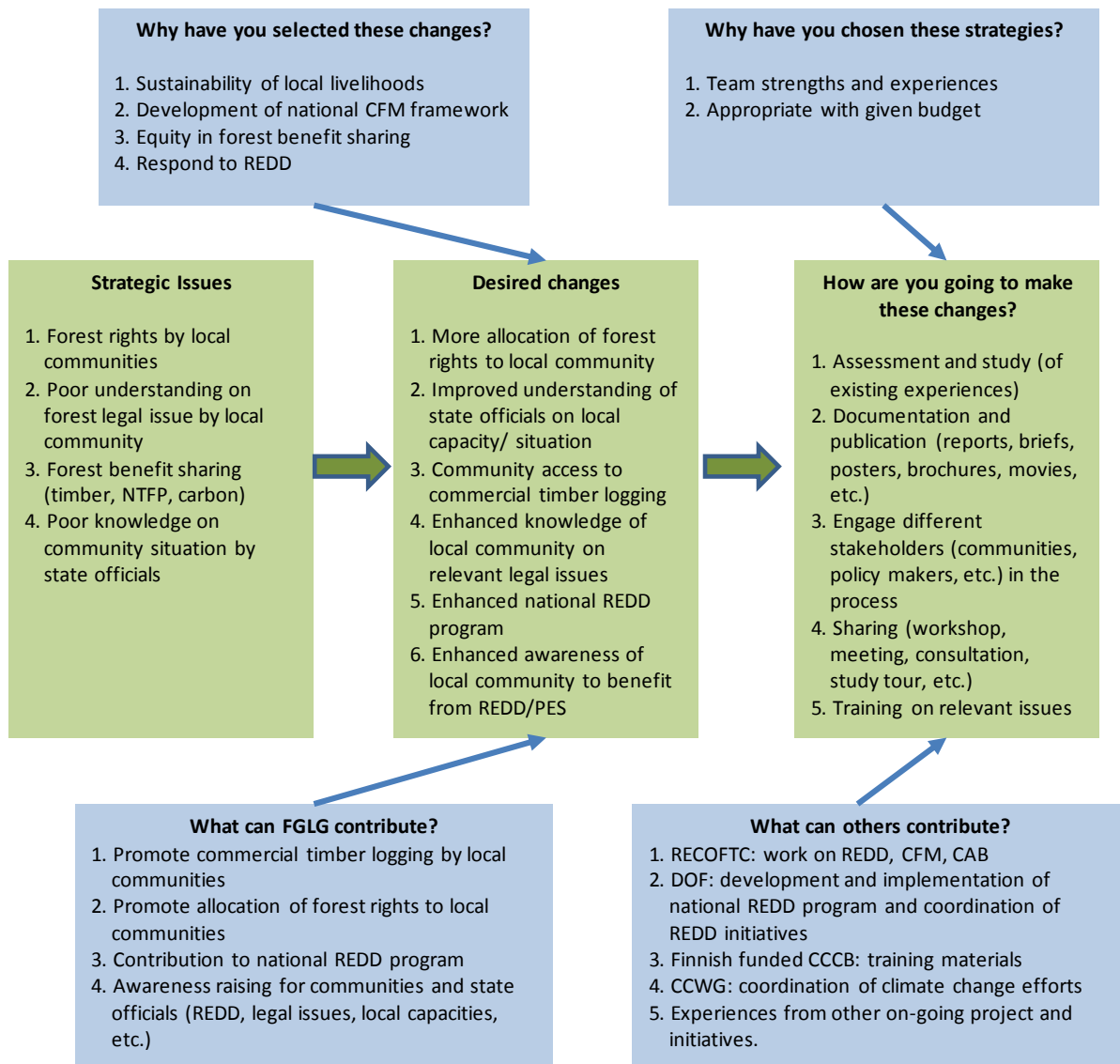
Output 3: Pro-poor climate mitigation and adaption through forestry

- 3.1 Participate in REDD+ network and national REDD+ Program development and implementation
- 3.2 Establish and strengthen links with other REDD-related initiatives in Vietnam
- 3.3. Raise awareness on climate change, particularly REDD+
- 3.4. Organize stakeholder consultation at provincial and community level on selected social safeguards issues for REDD+

Output 4: Trans-national learning and preparedness

- 4.1 Participate in FGLG global learning event
- 4.2 Present lessons from FGLG Vietnam in regional and international workshops and meetings
- 4.3 Contribute to the development of guidebook for data collection on forest governance by FAO/World Bank
- 4.4 Organise internal FGLG Vietnam learning and annual meeting
- 4.5. Document lessons learned and the story of change from project activities

Figure 3: Theory of change for FGLG Vietnam



4. Key Achievements of FGLG Vietnam

This section discusses key achievements of FGLG Vietnam per output area. A summary of activities and outputs is presented in Table 2 and a list of publication produced by FGLG Vietnam is in Table 3.

Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprise

Activity 1.1: Assess forest tenure and benefit sharing arrangements

This activity aimed to address the question of what contributions forest land allocation (FLA) has made to local communities and to forest resource management in the FGLG project sites, and what similarities and differences there were in the benefit sharing arrangements across these sites. Based on this, recommendation could be made to improve forest tenure situation and benefit sharing arrangements. The assessment was undertaken in all the three provinces where FGLG worked (i.e. Bac Kan, Thua Thien Hue and Dak Lak). A report (in Vietnamese) was prepared for each province.

Activity 1.2: Promote allocation of forest title to local communities

This activity aimed to expand the allocation of rights to forest to local communities. As part of this activity, a number of study tours have been organised by the provincial teams in all the three provinces to visit models of CFM, both within the respective and other provinces. The Bac Kan team organised a visit to Lang Son and Cao Bang provinces. Thua Thien Hue organised visits to CFM models in Quang Binh and Quang Tri provinces. In Dak Lak, visits were organised to Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Lam Dong provinces. In addition to study tours, local level workshops and small group meetings were organised by the provincial teams to raise awareness of local authorities on the capacity of local people to manage their own forests and to get their support in allocation of forests to local communities.

Activity 1.3: Raise awareness on legal rights and responsibilities to forests of local communities

Lessons from the field indicated that local communities have very limited knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of themselves and other stakeholders regarding to forests. This activity therefore aimed to raise the awareness of local communities through various means, particularly interaction with policymakers and enforcers through study tours (see Activity 1.2 above) and through awareness-raising courses. The latter were mainly undertaken in the last year of the project, focusing in Dak Lak and Thua Thien Hue provinces. Overall, FGLG undertook awareness-raising events for around 200 participants. The courses served not only as an opportunity for community members to improve their knowledge of existing legal frameworks and their rights and responsibilities, but also as a forum for sharing and discussion on existing issues that they faced on a daily basis. The knowledge provided in the courses helped participating villagers to address these issues themselves.

Activity 1.4: Training on forest governance

This activity aimed to provide FGLG team members with an understanding of the governance concept, its principles and components, and how to analyse forest governance in the field. The first training took place in December 2012, with nine members of the FGLG team from Dak Lak, Thua Thien Hue and Bac Kan, and six from counterpart organisations. After this successful training, FGLG Hue were able to introduce forest governance into the training curriculum of Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF) and requested additional training for lecturers from the university. The second training was organised in August 2013, with participation of 17 people from FGLG team and its partners, particularly HUAF lecturers.

Activity 1.5 Training on facilitating the participation of local communities in forest management

This training aimed to provide FGLG team members and its partners an understanding on the concept of community forest management and the attitude and skills needed to facilitate the participation of local

communities in CFM. The training took place in January 2013 and 17 participants were present, of whom 15 were FGLG Hue team members or partners, and two were from partner organisations. The training provided participants with the opportunities to a) examine community forest management concepts and principles in the Vietnam context; b) explain the core values of a participatory approach and its application in community forest management; and c) develop basic facilitation skills and become familiar with tools to support a community forestry development process. At the end of the training, participants expressed great satisfaction with the learning they received and saw significant opportunities for using this knowledge in their daily work.

Activity 1.6 Support the implementation of CFM Pilot Project Phase 2

As indicated in Section 0, Phase 2 of the CFM Pilot Project started in 2012, with the aim to review the lessons learned on CFM from both national and international sources, in order to feed into the development of a national CFM policy framework. Sharing experiences on successes and failures from CFM initiatives from both within Vietnam and the wider region is therefore of great importance for Vietnam in developing its CFM policy. FGLG found this a relevant opportunity to contribute to the overall development of CFM policy in Vietnam. It therefore took an active role in sharing experiences of CFM pilot projects, both through interacting with the team and particularly by contributing to an international workshop on 'Community Forestry in Vietnam: Status and Policy Development Orientation', which occurred from 03 to 05 April 2013 in Thua Thien Hue province.

Output 2: Legitimate forest products

Activity 2.1: Engage in national FLEGT process

This activity aimed to contribute FGLG's experience to the Vietnam FLEGT network, emphasising the need to put local communities, particularly forest dependent people, into the centre of the discussions on forest governance and trade, so that the rights and benefits of these communities would be given adequate attention. Although no FGLG team members were present at VPA negotiation meetings due to clash of time with other commitments, the FGLG team was able to share its experience through various VNGO- FLEGT network meeting and activities (see Activity 2.3 below).

Activity 2.2 Conduct a study on chain of custody (CoC) for timber from smallholder forests

The study on chain of custody for timber from smallholder forests was undertaken by Dak Lak team. A draft report was prepared, providing a picture of the harvesting, processing and circulation of forest products in the province.

Activity 2.3 Contribute to the development of timber legality definition in Vietnam

An FGLG team member in Thua Thien Hue was invited by VNGO-FLEGT network to work as a local consultant on timber legality definition in Vietnam, as part of the VPA negotiation process.

Output 3: Pro-poor climate mitigation and adaption

Activity 3.1: Participate in REDD network and National REDD Program development and implementation

As mention in Section 0, REDD+ network and various subtechnical working groups were established to develop the National REDD+ Action Plan. FGLG members were actively involved in these activities. In the position of co-chair of governance STWG on REDD+, the FGLG convener convened several meetings to discuss REDD+ governance, local participation, and gender in REDD+. The FGLG convener was also involved in the Participatory Governance Assessment (PGA) under the UN-REDD Program, helping the PGA team with the development of the data collection tools.

Activity 3.2: Establish and strengthen links with other REDD-related initiatives in Vietnam

Through various activities under 3.1 above, FGLG established and maintained relationship with UN-REDD Vietnam Program, SNV, CCWG, VNGO-CC, GIZ, JICA, Forest Trends, FFI, and Vietnamese NGOs as well as local organisations in Lam Dong province where UNREDD Phase 1 was piloted.

Activity 3.3: Raise awareness on climate change, particularly REDD+

Local communities play an important role in any REDD+ initiatives, yet REDD+ and related issues were poorly understood by many of the actors involved. This was the basis for FGLG Vietnam to get involved in raising awareness of FGLG members, key partners and local communities on REDD and related issues. In collaboration with NORAD funded REDD+ capacity building for grassroot level (managed by RECOFTC), a Training-of-Teachers (TOT) training was organised in 2011, in which seven FGLG members from three provinces participated. After that, the FGLG convener visited each province to work with these TOT trainees to organise awareness-raising for provincial participants. The FGLG provincial team member (in collaboration with other counterparts) then delivered a series of provincial and district level workshops. Two seminars were also organised for university students by the FGLG Hue team. Altogether, more than 500 participants have benefited from FGLG awareness-raising activities to date.

Activity 3.4: Organise stakeholder consultation at provincial- and community-level on selected social safeguards issues for REDD+

This activity aimed to contribute to the development of social safeguards in the implementation of REDD+ in Vietnam. It started with a review of REDD safeguards issues for Vietnam. After that, various consultations on social safeguard issues were undertaken at different locations for different groups of stakeholders. In Thua Thien Hue, consultation was undertaken with university lecturers from HUAF. In Hanoi, various stakeholders (government and non-government) at national level were consulted in one meeting, and with members of the mitigation sub-theme of CCWG (from NGOs). Another consultation was conducted with FGLG members during its annual meeting in October 2012. All consultations focused on what constitute the important social safeguards for REDD+ in Vietnam and how to measure them (the indicators for safeguards).

Output 4: Trans-national learning and preparedness**Activity 4.1: Participate in FGLG global learning event**

FGLG Vietnam was represented in all the global learning events organised during this period, including:

- The learning event in 2009 in Indonesia: two members from FGLG Vietnam (Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan and Mr. Hoang Huy Tuan) took part.
- The learning event in 2010 in Mozambique: one member from FGLG Vietnam (Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan) was present.
- The learning event in 2012 in Vietnam. This event took place in Hue city in Vietnam, from 27 to 30 March 2012. It was an opportunity for FGLG Vietnam to learn from the experience of other countries and to share with international colleagues the work that we are doing. The event also demonstrated the wider the work FGLG and the different interest areas of the national and international partners. It was also an opportunity to discuss issues specific to Vietnam, as expressed by both VNFOREST and HUAF representatives at the opening of the meeting.
- The learning event in 2013 in China: two members from FGLG Vietnam (Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan and Mr. Hoang Huy Tuan) took part.

Activity 4.2: Present lessons from FGLG Vietnam in regional and international workshops/ meetings

FGLG members were present in various meetings in Vietnam and internationally, to share the experiences from FGLG. The key ones include:

- In 2010: TFD Workshop on REDD+ in Seam Reap, Cambodia; FAO Workshop on REDD Governance Monitoring in Hanoi, Vietnam.
- In 2011: RRI International Conference on Forest Tenure, Governance and Enterprise in Lombok, Indonesia.
- In 2012: UNREDD meeting on FPIC manual development in Geneva, Switzerland; UNREDD Regional FPIC workshop in Bogor, Indonesia; ASFN annual meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam; FLEGT awareness raising for Vietnamese NGO in Hanoi, Vietnam; FAO-WB meeting on development of guiding document for governance monitoring data collection in Brussels, Belgium (see more details in Activity 4.3. below).
- In 2013: FAO-WB meeting on development of guiding document for governance monitoring data collection (second meeting) in Washington DC, the USA.

Activity 4.3: Contribute to the development of guidebook for data collection on forest governance by FAO/World Bank

The Vietnam FGLG convener was invited to join a team of experts to share experience on forest governance at the international level, in order to develop guidance for data collection on forest governance. The first meeting was organised in Brussels in November 2012. The second expert group meeting was organised in June 2013 in Washington DC, to discuss the first draft of the guidelines.

Activity 4.4: Organise internal FGLG Vietnam learning and annual work planning

An FGLG group meeting was organised once a year for representatives of provincial and national groups to meet up to: 1. look back at the activities done in the past year and 2. plan for the coming year. The event was organised in Hanoi in 2010, Hue in 2011, and Dak Lak in 2012. In addition, team members also met up on an ad hoc basis when there was a related event that involved the attendance of FGLG members.

Activity 4.5 Document lessons learned and the story of change from project activities at all levels

In 2012, FGLG Vietnam, with support from RECOFTC Headquarters in Bangkok, documented the story of change in Thua Thien Hue and Dak Lak provinces. The stories traced back to the time before FGLG began and compared it with the current situation. The stories were presented in the forms of a photo book, a calendar, diaries, video, and TV show.

At the wrap-up of the project, lessons learned from FGLG were documented, together with the writing of participants of the governance training (see Activity 1.4 above), and published in a special issue on forest governance development in the national journal on agricultural and rural development (available as of December 2013).

Table 2: Summary of FGLG activities and output

Main activities	Concrete activities and timeline	Description of key outputs
Output 1: Forest rights and small forest enterprise		
Assess forest tenure and benefit sharing arrangements	<p>From 2010-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Review existing documents.</p> <p>Development of survey tool.</p> <p>Data collection.</p> <p>Data analysis and reporting.</p> <p>Consultation.</p>	<p>An assessment report in Vietnamese, portraying a picture on the process and outcome of forest tenure and benefit sharing arrangements in each province.</p> <p>Grounded recommendations for future Forest Land Allocation and benefit sharing.</p>
1.2 Promote allocation of forest title to local communities	<p>From 2010-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Organisation of meetings with villagers and local officials.</p> <p>Study tours and exchange visits for government officials to CFM sites.</p> <p>Publication and distribution of journal articles, communication materials and policy briefs, etc.</p>	<p>Publications produced, meetings and study tours organised for key stakeholders.</p> <p>Improve the understanding of concerned stakeholders on the ability of local communities to manage forest in a sustainable way. A step toward land titling to communities with traditional CFM.</p>
1.3 Raise awareness on legal rights and responsibilities to forests of local communities	<p>From 2011-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Finalisation of training materials (session plans and handouts).</p> <p>Organisation of awareness raising events for local stakeholders.</p>	<p>Training materials (session plans and handouts) prepared in Vietnamese.</p> <p>Awareness raising events organised for local people.</p>
1.4 Training on governance of natural resource for FGLG members and partners	<p>In 2012 and 2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Translation of governance training manuals from English into Vietnamese.</p> <p>Organisation of training.</p> <p>Finalisation of local resource governance cases (for publication in a national journal).</p>	<p>Training manual in Vietnamese.</p> <p>Training events organised.</p> <p>Natural resource governance cases documented in the form of journal article.</p>

<p>1.5 Training on facilitating the participation of local communities in forest management</p>	<p>In 2013. Activities included: Adaptation of training materials (session plans and handouts). Organisation of training.</p>	<p>Training materials. Training events organised.</p>
<p>1.6 Support the implementation of CFM Pilot Project Phase 2</p>	<p>Between 2012-2013. Activities included: Meetings with CFM Project team member to share experience on CFM. Sharing of publications and documents. Co-organisation of International Workshop on Community Forestry in Vietnam: Status and Policy Development Orientation. Inputs to the preparation of the workshop proceedings.</p>	<p>Experiences and publications shared. Workshop organised, with inputs from FGLG on both organisational and technical aspects. Workshop proceeding prepared.</p>
<p>Output 2: Legitimate Forest Products</p>		
<p>2.1 Engage in national FLEGT process</p>	<p>Between 2010-2013. Activities included: Sharing experience through VNGO- FLEGT network meetings.</p>	<p>Experience shared.</p>
<p>2.2 Conduct a study on chain of custody (CoC) for timber from smallholder forests</p>	<p>Between 2012-2013. Activities included: Development of assessment tool. Data collection (interview of 20 stakeholders). Data analysis and reporting.</p>	<p>Report in Vietnamese on chain of custody of timber from smallholder forest.</p>
<p>2.3 Contribute to the development of timber legality definition in Vietnam</p>	<p>In 2011-2012. Activities included: Comments on the draft legality definition.</p>	<p>Written comments shared with MARD.</p>
<p>Output 3: Pro-poor climate mitigation and adaption through forestry</p>		
<p>3.1 Participate in REDD network and national REDD Program development and implementation</p>	<p>Whole project life. Activities included: Participation in REDD+ network and STWG events.</p>	<p>Experiences and lessons from FGLG shared to contribute to the development of national REDD+ Action Plan (approved in mid-2012).</p>

	<p>Chairing STWG – Governance meetings (2012-2013).</p> <p>Chairing CCWG mitigation theme meetings.</p>	
3.2 Establish and strengthen links with other REDD-related initiatives in Vietnam	<p>Whole project life. Activities included:</p> <p>Sharing of experience with different organisations</p> <p>Participation in REDD+ related events organised by other organisations.</p>	Experiences and lessons shared.
3.3. Raise awareness on REDD	<p>From 2011 – 2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Training of trainers for FGLG team members.</p> <p>Adapting training materials.</p> <p>Awareness raising for provincials, district and local stakeholders.</p> <p>Climate change seminars for HUAF students.</p>	<p>FGLG provincial team members trained in TOT in climate change.</p> <p>Improved understanding of concerned actors (FGLG members, partners and local communities) on REDD related issues.</p>
3.4: Organise stakeholder consultation at provincial and community level on selected social safeguards issues for REDD+	<p>Between 2012-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Review of the current safeguards issues in Vietnam.</p> <p>Organisation of consultations with different stakeholders in different locations.</p> <p>Preparation of brief document on REDD+ safeguards in Vietnam.</p>	<p>Brief on key issues for safeguards in Vietnam.</p> <p>Consultations organised.</p> <p>Brief on how to move forward with development of REDD+ safeguards in Vietnam.</p>
Output 4: Trans-national learning and preparedness		
4.1 Participate in FGLG Global learning events	<p>From 2009-2013. Participation in all the global learning events, organised in Indonesia (2009), Mozambique (2010), Vietnam (2012) and China (2013).</p>	Sharing lessons among FGLG country teams and to extend collaboration between Vietnam and others.
4.2 Present lessons from FGLG Vietnam in regional and international WS/ meetings	<p>From 2009-2013. Participation in various events both in Vietnam and abroad, organised by different organisations.</p>	Sharing experiences from FGLG Vietnam

4.3 Contribute to the development of guidebook for data collection on forest governance by FAO/World Bank	<p>From 2012-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Participation in expert groups meetings in Brussels (2012) and Washington DC (2013) to develop the guidebook.</p> <p>Provision of comments and inputs to the draft document.</p>	Contribution to the guidebook made.
4.4 Organize internal FGLG Vietnam learning and annual work planning	<p>From 2010-2013. Annual meetings were organised in Hanoi (2010), Hue (2011), Dak Lak (2012).</p>	<p>Sharing experiences and drawing out lessons from FGLG work.</p> <p>Joint preparation of plan for coming year.</p>
4.6 Document lessons learned and the story of change from project activities	<p>In 2012-2013. Activities included:</p> <p>Development of concept notes.</p> <p>Collection of evidence (shooting of film and taking pictures).</p> <p>Preparation of outputs (video clip, photo book, calendar, diary, and TV show).</p> <p>Preparation of end of the phase stories in the form of journal articles.</p>	<p>Video clip</p> <p>Photo book</p> <p>Calendar</p> <p>Diary</p> <p>TV show</p> <p>Journal articles</p>

Table 3: List of publications produced by FGLG Vietnam

Title of publication†	Type of publication	Publication date
Sự thành công của chương trình REDD+ tại Việt Nam không thể thiếu vai trò của người dân địa phương (the success of REDD+ in Vietnam will not be possible without the recognition of the role of local people)	Article in Go Viet magazine	January 2012
Participation in natural resource governance	Article in Forest Sector Support Partnership (FSSP) Newsletter Issue No 32-33 on governance	February 2012
REDD+ Safeguards for Vietnam: Key Issues and the Way Forward.	Brief	March 2012
Giao Đất Giao Rừng: Chính sách và Kết quả thực tiễn (Forest Land Allocation: Policy Framework and Actual Outcomes).	Journal article in Journal of Anthropology. Issue 2 (No 176).	April 2012

Lâm nghiệp Cộng đồng: Tiềm năng, Tồn tại và Hướng đi Trong Tương lai (Community Forest Management: Potentials, Limitation and Direction for the future).	Journal article in Journal of Anthropology. Issue 3 (No 177).	June 2012
Community Forest Management: Overview and Practice in Vietnam	Article in Forest Sector Support Partnership (FSSP) Newsletter Issue No 36-37 on community forest management	January 2013
Story of change from FGLG Vietnam, in the form of: A video clip entitled “capacity building for local community for more effective forest governance” Wall calendar Photobook Diary		2013
Special issue on forest governance in Vietnam	Special issue on forest governance in Vietnam in Journal of Agricultural and Rural Development of Vietnam	December 2013

† Note: this list does not include ‘grey zone’ reports and training materials prepared by the team

5. The approaches employed by FGLG Vietnam

To acquire the achievements as described in Section 0, FGLG Vietnam team employed various approaches. The followings are the key ones:

- Participatory assessment of relevant issues to demonstrate the importance of paying attention to key governance topics. The participatory assessment was applied widely in FGLG during the field exchange visit. It has proven to be useful to combine learning and sharing of experiences among different stakeholders, particularly policymakers and local people. It also helped bring state and local actors together to discuss real life issues happening at the field level, and collect field evidence and perspectives of different stakeholders.
- Cascaded capacity building: to ensure its sustainability and that more people would be able to benefit from capacity building activities of FGLG, a team of key trainers (from the provinces) were trained during the FGLG project. They were the ones that provide training to other people later.
- Creation of platform for multistakeholder information exchange and dialogues: through various field exchange visit and learning events, a platform was created for FGLG Vietnam team members, including key individuals of different disciplines (policymakers, practitioners, researchers) from national and provincial levels, to interact with the others and with local communities.
- Use of media (TV and newspaper) for policy advocacy: to get the attention of key people and communicate what FGLG was doing and to contribute to forest governance improvements in Vietnam.

Not all of the approaches employed by FGLG team started at the beginning, however, as many of them were only taken on in the course of the implementation. For example, FGLG started with a multi-stakeholder approach, which involved actors from different disciplines and levels in its learning and information sharing events. By the end of phase 1 (2008), when communication of the learning from FGLG beyond its team members became necessary, the use of media for policy advocacy was taken up. It soon proved useful to bring the learning from FGLG to policymakers. As the project evolved, along with the need to build up the capacity of not only FGLG team members but also their counterparts and local communities, cascaded capacity building was then employed.

The approaches employed by FGLG Vietnam and its flexible structure proved to be a useful way of working, particularly the following aspects:

- Awareness raising and capacity building for group members, partners and communities (from FGLG capacity building and policy advocacy work): group members are now capable of doing capacity building work under other initiatives that they would not be able to do otherwise.
- The ways of working of group members has also changed. Group members agree that they adopt more participatory approaches now than before. In addition, more effective ways of working have also been indicated by members, from planning, implementation, monitoring (internal group governance), networking with others.
- Through FGLG, key issues have been identified and critically constructive comments communicated to provincial and national government, including the weaknesses of community forestry in Vietnam. Such information helped raise the understanding of important actors, particularly policy makers, on CF. There is therefore a high hope that FGLG learning will be able to contribute to the preparation of national policy on CF when the time comes (expected to be in 2014-2015, when the national CF Pilot project finishes).

Nevertheless, there was also bottleneck in the flexible approach that the team employed. It was generally difficult to keep the work on track and to manage a diverse group whose members were also busy on other daily work. Implementation of FGLG activities therefore required great extent of flexibility.

6. Impacts of FGLG activities

6.1. Impact of FGLG activities to the team members

First of all, through FGLG activities, a partnership has been established among team members from national and provincial levels, creating a basis for networking and collaboration. FGLG Vietnam team members have tried to develop other actions together. For example, in May-June 2013, RECOFTC (convener of FGLG in VN), DaFa (convener of FGLG in Dak Lak province) and HUAF (convener of FGLG in Hue) jointly developed a proposal to EU on FLEGT. FGLG VN team members also worked together in other initiatives on climate change and community forestry. Furthermore, the work of FGLG has been heard by many different individuals and agencies from within Vietnam and beyond. FGLG partners, particularly RECOFTC, have received a number of requests for partnership from different organisations after they have learned about FGLG work (for example, in early 2012, an US-based organisation asked RECOFTC to work together in a joint proposal after they read about FGLG in Vietnam).

Through FGLG activities, the capacity of the team members has been enhanced, which helps them perform work that they would not otherwise been able to carry out. For example, FGLG members can deliver training, facilitate local-level meetings, conduct policy analysis and manage communications in the later stage of the project. Most importantly, the participatory approaches that FGLG employed have been useful for the team members and will be used in their work. Through participation in various global learning events, FGLG members have built up their event organisation skills and networking, which are extremely relevant for their daily work.

6.2. Contribution from FGLG to the national and local processes

At the project level, the FGLG team has not only been able to identify and communicate key issues to the decision-makers, it has also been able to raise the awareness of concerned stakeholders. Yet the change in forest governance has not materialised. Changes often take time and are affected by various reasons, not only by the team but also other stakeholders and external conditions.

Nevertheless, FGLG has contributed to various national and local processes. FGLG has contributed to bring civil society organisations (CSOs) into the CFM platform more closely. FGLG has served as the bridge between CSO, local communities and government bodies. FGLG is the unprecedented 'network' in Vietnam that involves multiple stakeholders working at different levels. The work under FGLG has enhanced the relationship between CSO, particularly FGLG partners, and the government. In Dak Lak, for example, DaFa received more attention and has been asked to join government initiated work or deliver capacity building services (for local communities and government officials) more often than before.

At the output level, the contribution FGLG Vietnam made varies:

- With regard to output 1 (Forest rights and small forest enterprise), changes have been observed in the project provinces. In Dak Lak, for example, the provincial forest land allocation (FLA) plan took into account FGLG recommendations on placing the emphasis on allocation of rights to local communities, and community forest management is included in the plan. Also in Dak Lak, the right to use land title as part of the contribution to joint venture is now included in provincial FLA. This legal term has been recognised by law before but not been put in practice, as the provincial government was unsure whether local communities were capable of doing it. In Thua Thien Hue province, Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry agreed to include forest governance as part of their forestry training curriculum for undergraduate students. At the national level, FGLG provided capacity building to team members and partner organisations, and provided various publications on forest rights and governance. There has been no evidence that the information shared by FGLG has been put in policy at the national level yet. Nevertheless, there was evidence that the lessons shared by FGLG were recognised by the government organisations at national level – see <http://www.monre.gov.vn/v35/default.aspx?tabid=428&CateID=24&ID=126786&Code=FSKV126786>

- In output 2 (Legitimate forest products), the FGLG contribution was rather limited. Activities have only been undertaken to indicate the key problems to policymakers through assessment and comments on the definition of timber legality.
- Concerning output 3 (Pro-poor climate change mitigation and adaptation through forestry), FGLG was very active in capacity building over climate change mitigation. It established a trainers group from the participating provinces, who have been able to deliver capacity building activities to other stakeholders and local communities. At the national level, an FGLG team member co-chaired the REDD governance technical working group. In addition, various publications related to climate change were produced by FGLG, based on its learning. They were targeted to policymakers and made available to the public. Nevertheless, there has been no evidence that the information shared by FGLG has been put in policy yet.
- Last but not least, output 4 (Trans-national learning and preparedness) has been useful for FGLG in bringing attention to CFM, through different learning and experience sharing events. In addition, through its members, FGLG has been able to introduce the forest governance concept into the current discussion in Vietnam (e.g. Forest Governance Monitoring, Participatory Forest Governance).

6.3. Factors influencing the impacts of FGLG

It is also important to note that the impacts FGLG Vietnam has been able to generate are constrained by a number of factors that exist externally of FGLG:

- Dominance of centrally controlled state forestry for a long time: centrally-controlled state forestry has been practiced in Vietnam since 1976 and forest officials have been used to considering the state as the most important actor in forestry, and that local communities are backward and incapable of managing the forest. Although there has been radical recognition of the importance of local communities in forest management, the classical mindset among forestry officials still dominates.
- National policy to restructure the forestry sector is underway. Although the lessons learned from FGLG are welcomed and appreciated by many actors, until such restructuring has been completed it will be too optimistic to expect any changes to materialise.
- Limited resources to intensify the activities: although FGLG has been very efficient within the allocated resources, the impacts are only moderate as the resources have been very limited (only around €200,000 for seven years, in two phases).
- Changes in FGLG team members in Bac Kan (twice): compared to the other two provinces, the impact of FGLG in Bac Kan has been less impressive, due to the change of the provincial team leader twice during the past four years. Such changes were due to the movement of human resource in the team leaders' organisations and the FGLG team was not aware until a few months before the change took place. While in both cases the movements were for good for the FGLG team leaders, it left a few months for the team to catch up.

7. Lessons learnt from FGLG

- It is important to raise the awareness of local officials on the role of local communities in forest management, as the former often doubt the capacity of the latter in managing local forests. There should be a combination of various awareness raising activities, such as organisation of field visits, the publication and distribution of policy briefs, and the organisation of regular meetings with local people and officials. It is hard to say which of these means of awareness raising work best, as it is believed that a combination of them will together contribute to the expected impacts.
- Involve civil society organisations (CSOs) in helping local communities with forestry activities: though CSOs may not always possess the strongest technical knowledge about forest management, they often hold a comparative advantage over governmental agencies through their organisational flexibility and ability to respond to local communities' requirements and aspirations. Enabling legal and financial frameworks should be available to involve CSOs in helping local communities with forestry activities.
- Importance of documentation and sharing lessons learned and experience widely: documentation of lessons learned in writing, and the wide sharing of this, appears to be effective in enabling the learning to go beyond the team. Most importantly, documented lessons can provide rich evidence for policy advocacy work that they can affect millions of others.
- Combine learning with assistance to improve livelihoods: while it is good to promote learning and improve knowledge, it is more important to help to translate the learning into action. Along with helping local communities to acquire legal rights to their forest, it is important to assist them to enhance or acquire benefits from forest resources for the livelihoods.
- Equitable award and sanctioning system: equity in awarding the good deeds and (graduated) sanctioning for bad behaviour is likely to create incentives for local communities to participate in forest management. Lessons learned from the field indicated that when the 'rule of law' does not apply, local people may feel insecure in investing any resources to preserve the forests.
- Focus should also be on the implementation of the policy, as great policy ideas may be misinterpreted and wrongly implemented in the field.
- Full and active participation of local communities in forest management and REDD+ initiatives depends largely on how they are incentivised. Absence of clear and secure benefits, local communities are unlikely to actively participate in any (forest related) activity.

Annex 1: Members of FGLG Vietnam

FGLG Vietnam was convened by RECOFTC Vietnam. Its membership was not based on organisational representation but on individuals' experience and commitment to having a better forest governance structure for the benefit of forest (poor) people (see Table 4).

Table 4: List of current members of FGLG Vietnam

Name and title	Background/ Affiliation
National level	
Dr. Nguyen Quang Tan (Convener)	Resource Economist, Vietnam Country Program Coordinator of RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests
Ms. Nguyen Thi Mai Phuong	RECOFTC – The Center for People and Forests
Prof. Dr. Nguyen Ba Ngai	Agricultural Economist, Deputy General Director, Directorate of Forestry of Vietnam
Dr. Pham Xuan Phuong	Agricultural Economist, senior planning expert and vice director of Legal Department under MARD
Bac Kan province	
Mr. Nguyen Dinh Diep	Forester, Head of Planning Section, Bac Kan DARD
Mr. Pham Ngoc Kien	Forester, Bac Kan Sub-department of forestry
Mr. Nguyen Van Viet	Forester
Mr. Than Duc Hung	Forester, Planning Section, Bac Kan DARD
Ms. Cao Thi Hong Thang	Cultivation engineer, Planning Section, Bac Kan DARD
Mr. Dinh Tien Toan	Forester
Thua Thien Hue province	
Mr. Hoang Huy Tuan	Forester, lecturer of Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Mr. Nguyen Huu Huy	Forester, expert from Forest Sub-department of Thua Thien Hue
Ms. Tran Thi Thuy Hang	Lecturer at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Vu Thi Thuy Trang	Lecturer at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Ms. Ngo Thi Phuong Anh	Lecturer at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Ms. Le Thi Phuong Thao	Lecturer at Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry
Mr. Tran Vu Ngoc Hung	Forester, expert from Forest Sub-department of Thua Thien Hue
Dak Lak province	
Dr. Tran Ngoc Thanh	Forester, head of Agriculture and Forest Product Processing Unit of Dak Lak DARD and Secretary of Dak Lak Association for Forestry Science and Technology
Mr. Le Thanh Thinh	Forester, expert of Dak Lak Association for Forestry Science and Technology
Mr. Ho Viet Sac	Forester, expert of Dak Lak Association for Forestry Science and Technology

Mr. Tran Dang Khoa	Forester, expert of Dak Lak Association for Forestry Science and Technology
Prof. Dr. Bao Huy	Forester, Lecturer of Tay Nguyen University
Ms. Tran Ngoc Dan Thuy	
Ms. Nguyen Thi Phuong Uyen	
Mr. Ngo Nhat Khanh	

The Forest Governance Learning Group is an informal alliance of in-country groups and international partners currently active in seven African and three Asian countries. We aim to connect those marginalised from forest governance to those controlling it, and to help both do things better.

This report gives an overview of the activities and achievements of the Vietnam FGLG team between 2009 and 2013.



Project materials

Forests

Keywords:

Forestry, Forest Governance Learning Group, Natural resource management



International Institute for Environment and Development
80-86 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8NH, UK
Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 7399
Fax: +44 (0)20 3514 9055
email: info@iied.org
www.iied.org

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