

CON NGƯỜI, ĐẤT VÀ TÀI NGUYÊN TRONG KHU VỰC TRUNG TRƯỜNG SƠN

People, Land and Resources in the Central Truong Son Landscape



Báo cáo số 5
Central Truong Son Initiative Report No.5

PEOPLE, LAND AND RESOURCES IN THE CENTRAL TRUONG SON LANDSCAPE

Compiled by
Huynh Thu Ba

Research Team

Huynh Thu Ba
Le Cong Uan
Vuong Duy Quang

Pham Ngoc Mau
Nguyen Ngoc Lung
Nguyen Quoc Dung

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WWF Indochina

<i>Street address</i>	<i>Mailing address</i>
53 Tran Phu Street Hanoi, Vietnam	IPO Box 151 Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel: +84 (0) 4 733 8387

E-mail: Hanoi@wwfvn.org.vn

Forest Protection Department

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
2 Ngoc Ha Street
Hanoi, Vietnam

BACKGROUND TO THE CENTRAL TRUONG SON REPORTS

In response to concerns about the increasing pace of biodiversity loss and the need to increase the scale and integration of global conservation efforts - WWF together with its conservation partners have developed a new approach to conservation – ecoregion conservation. Scientists have undertaken a major analysis of the world's biodiversity and identified more than 800 ecoregions that reclassify the way we view the natural world. From this global inventory, 238 ecoregions have been identified that comprise the most valuable and representative global biodiversity. These priority ecoregions have been labeled as the Global 200.

In 1998, the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex (FLMEC) was selected as one of the first locations to initiate an ecoregion based conservation programme. With initial support from WWF-US and USAID, the programme has now been established as one world's first fully functioning Ecoregion Action Programmes (EAP).

In March 2000, over eighty scientists from Cambodia, Lao P.D.R., Vietnam, and many other countries participated in an ambitious and groundbreaking assessment of biological conservation priorities within the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex. The results of this biological assessment have since been published in the report entitled "Towards a Vision for Biodiversity Conservation in the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex".

After the biological assessment and a 'situation analysis' to examine the threats and opportunities, WWF decided to focus on two of the Global 200 ecoregions falling within the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex – the Greater Annamites and the Central Indochina Dry Forests.

The Greater Annamites comprises the most unique and diverse biodiversity within the FLMEC. The discovery of the saola (*Pseudoryx nghetinhensis*) by WWF and Vietnamese scientists in 1992 in Vu Quang Nature Reserve drew the world's attention to the biodiversity associated with this mountain chain. Since that first remarkable discovery, many other new species have been found, including a number of large mammals such as the large-antlered (giant) muntjac (*Muntiacus vuquangensis*) and the Annamite striped rabbit (*Nesolagus timminsi*). These discoveries highlight the Greater Annamites as one of the world's most remarkable and unique ecoregions. In addition to these species totally reliant on successful conservation in the ecoregion, a number of wider-ranging, highly threatened species such as the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), tiger (*Panthera tigris*) and the world's most endangered large mammal, the lesser one-horned (Javan) rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*) are found in the ecoregion.

The Central Truong Son Initiative* is a pilot initiative being developed by WWF's Greater Annamites EAP, with a view towards establishing the process of working at three scales - ecoregional/national policy, landscape and site. The aim of this fledgling initiative is to create a partnership of a broad range of stakeholders - from local communities to international organisations - working together to secure biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Central Truong Son Landscape (CTSL).

Following the methodology of the ecoregional approach, the Central Truong Son Initiative is based on coordinated conservation action, designed under a large-scale framework and guided by a long-term vision of success. The approach is based on the recognition that uncoordinated actions at individual sites are neither efficient nor effective at conserving functioning ecological systems or halting the loss of natural resources. In order to be more effective, a more ambitious coordinated effort is required that is developed and designed under an overarching strategy. The need for such a coordinated effort resulted in the establishment of an advisory group comprising 16 government institutions. This unprecedented collaboration will work as a vital support body to the Central Truong Son Initiative in its planning process towards a conservation strategy for the CTSL.

In order to develop such a comprehensive, overarching strategy, there is a great deal of information that needs to be assimilated. Through a process of lengthy and detailed consultations, the necessary information has been identified and collected. This series of reports presents that information in a format that is both suitable for informing those involved with the strategy development process, and conducive to those merely interested in the status and issues of the CTSL.

* Truong Son is also known as the "Say Phou Louang" in Lao P.D.R., and as the "Annamites" internationally. The Central Truong Son is one landscape in the ecoregion.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2002, a WWF research team of six people was commissioned to explore a number of key issues related to community-based resource management systems, and to measure to what extent these systems can contribute to a conservation strategy for the Central Truong Son Landscape (CTSL).

The key components of the research included:

- Institutional issues relevant to forest land management and traditional land-use systems;
- Land management systems;
- Community and traditional land-use systems;
- Factors that influence these systems, including immigration and new settlement;
- Needs and aspirations of the communities in regard to conservation of natural resources in the Central Truong Son Landscape.

The first part of this report focuses on both institutional issues and on the current situation of land allocation and land-use in the two focus provinces of Quang Nam and T.T. Hue. It is enriched with analyses of the communities' responses to land allocation and land-use programs. The second part of the report depicts the historical, cultural and socio-economic situations in relation to natural resource management of the ethnic groups living in the surveyed areas. The last part of the report shows the current situation of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) at the level of the Government of Vietnam (GOV) and at the community level. The needs and aspirations of the local communities involved in CBNRM are explored in the same chapter.

Key findings can be summarised as follows:

- Presently, the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) and/or the District Peoples' Committees (DPC) are the legal agencies that are responsible for issuing Red Books. All of the important steps in forest land allocation - such as mapping, land-use planning, transfer of technology, provision of forestry extensions and credits - are carried out by the Provincial Forest Protection Department (PFPD) and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD).
- While agricultural extension activities are widely practiced, forestry extension services are weak in the villages that were surveyed.
- The provincial and district forest protection units allocate land within the framework of funded projects or programmes.
- In principle, the Provincial Cadastral Department (PCD) is in charge of land allocation. The PCD is unable to fulfill its duties in forest land allocation due to a low capacity to measure and to map land in difficult terrain; the lack of capacity to deal with high populations of ethnic minority groups; and the lack of funds.
- The sudden change in the procedures and costs involved in the allocation of land, introduced by the Cadastral Department, is puzzling to communities.
- Agricultural and forest land are allocated and Red Books are granted primarily in connection with projects or with special support from the GOV. Ethnic minority peoples are not aware of the significance of land ownership through Red Books, whereas many Kinh people consider it as a vehicle to access bank credits.
- Appropriate land-use mechanisms are not yet in place, hampering the participation of local communities and failing to ensure food security.

- CBNRM has the potential to effectively contribute to conservation of natural resources and to improve the livelihoods of local communities. However a number of factors, such as the legal status of communities that practice CBNRM; the GOV's aspirations and willingness to support CBNRM; the definition and perception of communities of CBNRM; and the community's needs and aspirations in regard to CBNRM, need to be taken into account before initiating CBNRM.
- Despite all the recent political and social changes, communities - especially the ethnic minorities - represent an ideal unit for natural resource management. A number of ethnic communities have been living in the research areas, including the Co Tu and Gie Trieng, Pa Hy and Van Kieu, Ta Oi and Pa Co groups.
- Traditional natural resource management practices existed in the past. In some areas, these systems still are valid, influenced by traditional village institutions to a certain extent. However, traditional natural resource management together with well organised village assemblies and indigenous knowledge are fading away.
- At this stage, communities do not have any legal status, making it difficult to practice CBNRM. However, there is a strong level of enthusiasm from the provincial authorities to pilot this type of management in several locations.
- Community participation in natural resource management together with the establishment of nature reserves represent positive trends in development. Local communities expressed their willingness and desire to engage in CBNRM. Nevertheless, it is important to note that there may be a discrepancy in the understanding of different stakeholders about CBNRM.
- Currently, there are a several CBNRM pilot sites nation-wide. While the ethnic minority groups possess a tremendous amount of useful resources and knowledge about CBNRM, it was found that all of the pilot cases are conducted by the Kinh ethnic group in the surveyed provinces.
- The team made two sets of recommendations regarding institutional, legal and community issues related to CBNRM.
- Regarding the legal aspects of CBNRM, it is recommended that the lessons learned from pilot studies conducted national-wide should be used to lobby the relevant authorities to recognise communities as a legal entity.
- The most important factor that determines the success of CBNRM is the clear understanding of what CBNRM means under the current political, social and environmental situations. This understanding should be gradually increased together with communities with (or without) traditional natural resource management systems.
- Before expanding or establishing more nature reserves (NR) or national parks (NP), it is recommended that studies be conducted on the possibilities to initiate or to facilitate CBNRM, where appropriate.
- The cash incentives from Forest Protection Contracts (FPC), in principle, will end in 2003. Therefore, other schemes including small pilot forest allocation to communities or family clans should be studied to ensure long-term forest management and to enhance the sense of ownership of the communities.
- We recommend examining all existing *huong uoc*¹ and its processes of development in the provinces surveyed in order to formulate guidelines that are more integrated and uniform, which allow maximum community participation; the contribution of traditional customs in natural resource management; and the avoidance of confusion within the communities.

¹ A signed written commitment on certain matters (cultural, social and environmental) including natural resource management, prepared by villages with guidance from relevant authorities

The **recommendations** related to **communities** are as follows:

- Projects and programmes should avoid imposing the trend of CBNRM on communities that are not ready to commit. CBNRM should begin with an effort to work with communities to understand and to explore the possible forms and nature of CBNRM, in relation to both traditional systems and to existing GOV systems.
- Studies on various ways to harmoniously blend the existing traditional village institutions (e.g village assemblies) and the state-sponsored village institutions to serve the purpose of natural resource management need to be carried out.
- Capacity building is recommended for communities with regard to skills in sustainable development and basic planning, in monitoring and administration. Local peoples' understanding of the GOV's policies and programmes should be enhanced to ensure the effectiveness of CBNRM.
- Information on timber and non-timber markets and the current flow of these products should be made accessible and available.
- Appropriate land allocation and land-use patterns should be decided in a more participatory manner to accommodate local needs and aspirations, and to resolve the issue of food security.
- The positive changes enabling women to participate and to make decisions in village and family affairs should be taken advantage of to involve this important portion of the population in natural resource management.

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This report

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Disclaimer

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CBNRM	Community-based Natural Resource Management
CFM	Community Forest Management
CPC	Commune People's Committee
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DEMMA	Department for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas
DOSTE	Department of Science, Technology and Environment
DPC	District People's Committee
FPCs	Forest Protection Contracts
GOV	Government of Vietnam
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NP	National park
NR	Nature reserve
PA	Protected area
PCD	Provincial Cadastral Department
PDFD	Provincial Department for Forest Development
PFPD	Provincial Forest Protection Department
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
T.T. Hue	Thua Thien Hue

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Scope

The two research teams, comprised of six researchers both from GOV institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGO) with extensive working experience in the area, spent 20 days in the field. The field visits aimed to obtain specific classifications and understanding of the current issues related to people, land, resources and CBNRM. The team members used their knowledge and experience in working on similar issues in other parts of the country, and the results from the field to write this report.

In T.T. Hue, the team went to Phong Dien and A Luoi districts. In Quang Nam, the team worked in Nam Giang district. Surveyed villages were selected based on the following criteria:

- Located adjacent to forests;
- Population is dependent on forest resources for livelihood;
- Existing or previously-existing traditional natural resource management systems;
- Both those with and without immigrants.

1.2 Methodology ²

Both RRA and PRA tools were used during the research, including the following:

- Observation;
- Group discussion;
- Check list;
- Ranking;
- Matrix;
- Mapping and transect line;
- Secondary data and document reference.

² Refer to Annex VI for definitions of the PRA tools used.

PART II: GENERAL CONTEXTS FOR CBNRM

2.1 Central Truong Son Initiative

The Central Truong Son Landscape has been identified, through a systematic global prioritisation process, as one of the world's most important areas for biodiversity conservation. In recognition of the importance of the landscape and the need for an integrated, holistic approach to the conservation of the landscape, a major conservation initiative for the Central Truong Son Landscape was launched by WWF. The Central Truong Son Initiative is a partnership of a broad range of stakeholders – from local communities to government and international organisations - working together to secure biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Central Truong Son Landscape of Vietnam and Lao P.D.R..

The Central Truong Son Landscape comprises close to 8 million people, the majority of which depend heavily on the forest and its resources. One of the clearest threats to the forest biodiversity is unsustainable natural resource use, including the most extreme case of unsustainable forest use: clearance of forest for agricultural land and other purposes. Therefore, a crucial component of the conservation strategy is to improve land-use planning and natural resource use management. More effective resource planning should provide sustainable and equitable resource use by increasing the natural asset base for poor, rural communities while providing a better foundation for effective biodiversity management.

This study on people, land and resources aims to assess the extent to which community-based natural resource management is feasible in this landscape, and the extent to which it can be integrated in the Central Truong Son conservation strategy. The study also aims to understand the expectations of local communities from such a strategy and what role they could play³. Because the landscape is so large, the study focuses on two provinces only: Thua Thien Hue (T.T. Hue) and Quang Nam. Within those provinces, the researchers visited Phong Dien and A Loui districts in T.T. Hue, and Nam Giang district in Quang Nam.

This study forms one part of a situation analysis that will be used to develop a conservation strategy for the Central Truong Son. Other parts of the situation analysis include collation of basic socio-economic data at provincial and district levels; a feasibility study for tourism in upland forested areas; an assessment of the impact of development plans; and a specific study on the economics of hunting practices in T.T. Hue Province, Vietnam. Together with a biological assessment of the landscape, the situation analysis will provide the necessary data to create a broad conservation strategy for the entire landscape.

2.2 Legal framework for the management of the Natural Resources ⁴

In Vietnam, the new legislative instruments specifically aimed at improving the management of natural resources include the National Plan for Environment and Sustainable Development (NPESD) (1991), the Environmental Protection Law (1994) and the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for Vietnam (1994). The central responsibility for environmental matters rests with the MOSTE, and specific responsibilities for environment and resource management issues are held by its subsidiary unit, the National Environmental Agency (NEA). The Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD) maintains lead responsibility in matters relating to both water and forests.

³ WWF document

⁴ See Appendix II for a List of policies and decrees related to forest land-use and allocation

Land Law

The first land law in 1988 during *Doi Moi* defined the land as the property of the entire people, controlled by the State. Land could only be allocated and used for purposes determined by the government for certain periods of time. For instance, for agriculture, land has to be used without interruption for 12 years. According to the new clarification of this Law in 1993, supported by Decrees No. 64 for agricultural land and No. 02/CP on forest land, users of land are responsible for the protection, management, and improvement of the land. The duration of land allocation was set at 20 years for annual cropping, and at 50 years for long-term cropping and forest land. Under Decree No. 02/1993, special-use forests cannot be allocated but fall under contract between State agencies and other ‘users’ for the protection and planting of forests; ‘users’ cannot obtain a land-use certificate (‘Red Book Certificates’).

In general, the PCD is responsible for land allocation, but for forest land allocation it collaborates with DARD. The PCD has staff at provincial, district and commune level. Most agricultural land allocation has been in the peri-urban centers, whereas relatively few permanent land-use certificates have been issued in rural areas. Protected forests cannot be legally allocated to and used by individuals, though some individuals were allocated these forests in the past. Those with this land can only plant trees to assist forest regeneration and protection⁵. The protection of these forests can be arranged by way of contracts with households or groups for VND 50,000 per ha.

All over the country, the implementation of the Land Law has proven to be complex and slow. Allocating land-use rights requires mapping, determination of ‘origins’, dispute settlement and issuance of certificates of title. Nevertheless, as of 1998 ⁶, about 86 percent of the 8 million ha of agricultural land has been allocated, and around 7.8 million households out of 9.6 million have received land-use rights. Less than 15 percent of this land has been allocated to State owned enterprises (SOEs) and to communes⁷.

Nation-wide, the situation regarding the allocation of forest land is less encouraging. Although about 61 percent of the 10.8 million ha of forest land has been allocated, two-thirds has been allocated to State Forest Enterprises (SFEs), who contract land to households. Only 10 percent of the land has been allocated (to 334,446 households) resulting in an average holding of just 3.3 ha. A further 0.5 million ha have been allocated to 1,677 collectives.

According to recent reports on land allocation, forest land allocation in Vietnam is particularly challenging because of broken terrain and the fact that customary use rights commonly exist.

Forest Development Strategy

The Forest Development Strategy 2001-2010 supports two main models of forest management: state forest management and smallholder (household-level) forestry. The strategy does not explicitly discuss community-based natural resource management. There is no principle, for example, that recognises the importance of CBNRM for forest development. However, under Scientific and Technical Solutions, there is a reference to “developing social forestry and strengthening forestry extension service; reviewing and replicating productive agro-forestry and sustainable forest management models to help local people improve their economic situation”. The strategy also sets a goal of “conserving and upholding traditional culture of ethnic groups,” in which presumably existing CBNRM would play a part.

⁵ Mellac, G.M. (Op cit)

⁶ Report on Land Situation MARD 1998

⁷ The ADB Central Region Poverty Reduction Project- Agrisystems, 2000

The strategy envisions eight million hectares⁸ of forest land designated for *production* purposes under either state management by forest enterprises or smallholder forestry. Increasing numbers of individual households have received long-term land-use rights for barren land and land with natural regeneration, and in some cases for existing natural or planted forest. The smallholder forestry model has achieved remarkable results on bare forest land in areas in which households have received support by national and international reforestation programmes and where there is good market access.

In addition, the strategy envisions six million hectares of forested land designated for *protection* purposes (in critical and very critical watersheds, and in environmental protection forest). The management policy emphasises direct state control to enforce forest protection. Most forest land has not been allocated to local people but remains within the management responsibility of state organisations.

Finally, the strategy envisions two million hectares of forest land designated for special-use purposes (in National Parks, Nature Reserves and Landscape Conservation Areas). The strictest regulations for protection and management apply to this category. Under Decision 08/2001/QD-TTg, all exploitation of resources in these areas is forbidden. The land is directly managed by the state and can only be allocated to special-use forest management boards.

This clear distinction between protection and production ignores the multiple functions of forests and their importance for the livelihoods of the local people, many of whom depend on forest resources for their subsistence. This is aggravated by the fact that most forest-dependent local people in fact live in special-use forest and protection forest areas, being legally denied use of a resource that is of critical importance to them. As we will show, the field reality suggests that it is in these areas that the highest potential for CBNRM prevails. However, the legal framework is least supportive in these same areas.

⁸ The figures provided in this chapter are planning figures cited from the Forest Development Strategy 2001 - 2010.

PART III: MAIN FINDINGS

3.1 Land-use and allocation in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam

3.1.1 Institutional arrangement and administrative issues

Since the shift of responsibility for land allocation from the Provincial Forest Protection Department (PFPD) to the Provincial Cadastral Department (PCD) took place in 1997, the provincial and district FPD units have allocated land only where there is a strong demand from the communities or where projects with funded components supporting land allocation are operating.

T.T. Hue PFPD has a core of district staff comprised of 19-35 people with 6 to 18 forest engineers who are capable and experienced in completing all required steps for forest land allocation. The staff has extensive skills working with various ethnic communities in different types of terrains and under diverse natural and socio-economic conditions. Since 1997, Hue FPD has officially handed over the task to the PCD. They, however, remain supportive and cooperative in awareness-raising activities and in identifying suitable crops for forest land-use.

In Quang Nam, the PFPD has 296 staff working in one provincial office and in another 16 district units. At the commune level, there are 151 forestry collaborators⁹ in total. In the dry season, the number of staff increases by 81 people in order to provide extra support fire prevention activities. However, the responsibilities of the provincial and district FPD units remain restricted to the protection and management of forest resources. Similar to the situation in T.T. Hue, Quang Nam PFPD and DFPD are active in giving support to the PCD in allocating forest land.

Currently, there are nine SFEs operating in Quang Nam. In the last ten years (1990-2000), these SFEs have allocated 11,879 ha of forest land to the surrounding households, accounting for 43% of the total land area to be allocated within the framework of Decree No. 388 (issued in 1991). According to their master plan following Decree 187/TTg, these SFEs plan to allocate another 91,008 ha of forest and forest land, which accounts for 13.9% of the total forest land area of the whole province¹⁰.

Presently, the PPC and/or the DPC are the legal agencies responsible for issuing Red Books. All of the initial steps in allocating forest land such as mapping, land-use planning, technology transferring, forestry extension and credits are done by the PFPD and DARD. While agricultural extension activities are widely practiced, forestry extension services are weak in the research villages.

In principles, the PCD is in charge of land allocation. However, their involvement in forest land allocation is restricted to the compilation and submission of all of the documents required in order to gain approval from the PPC or the DPC. The PCD in Quang Nam has only five staff specialised in land allocation. At the district level, there are 30 staff for the whole province. Most of these staff are equipped with general knowledge and techniques in land allocation. In Ca Di commune, the only person in charge of this business is working part-time and with insufficient technical knowledge. In T.T. Hue, PCD has 11 staff at the provincial level, nine at

⁹ Forestry collaborators are the people, who are contracted by forest protection units to work on forestry issues for a small monthly compensation.

¹⁰ Annual report "Land use and management of Quang Nam province" dated 28th Dec 2001

the district level and another 150 collaborators at the commune level, that are involved in land allocation. Most of the collaborators at commune level only deal with paper work and accompany the district staff in the field. They do not have any technical skills or knowledge related to physical land allocation. At the provincial level, there are only two professionals that work with measuring and mapping.

BOX 1: Limitations of the Provincial Cadastral Department in land allocation

The PCD is unable to fulfill its duties in regards to forest land allocation, due to a number of internal and external factors, including:

- Although the PCD was designated to be responsible for allocating land, including forest land, the staff has not received any technical training to deal with the classification, allocation or measurement of forest land. The first effort to strengthen the capacity of the department to take on this new task is shown in the recent attempt to collaborate with the PDFD in collecting the documents available on forest land allocated and forest land classification. Experience elsewhere suggests problems with record keeping, precise definition of plots and hence accuracy, lack of objective allocation criteria, and ignorance of land-use options. The skills and equipments required for mapping do not meet acceptable standards. In Quang Nam, maps of the same area that are produced by several responsible agencies appear to be different. Even maps that are made by the PCD are sketched drafts populated with incorrect data and information. According to the vice-director of Hue PDFD, without support from the forestry sector, the PCD is unable to accomplish forest land allocation.
- Furthermore, there is often a conflict between formally institutionalised land-use rights and customary recognised 'rights' over the use of land and forest resources, which often bears little relationship to legal tenure. For instance, in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park (T.T. Hue province), Can Tua villagers regard the forest as belonging to them, not to the State. The staff of the PCD at the community level often are reluctant to deal with ethnic minorities due to their lack of skills and experience in resolving conflicts and in raising awareness.
- The lack of trained staff and skills is cited as an obstacle hampering the forest land allocation process. Presently, the PCD is already overloaded with the allocation of residential and agricultural land, which is the number one priority identified by the central GOV. The availability and capacity of the staff at district level is limited with small budgets allocated, making it a disincentive to travel long distances to remote settlements.
- A senior officer from the PCD mentioned the lack of funds to cope with increasing demands for land allocation as another hindrance. Quang Nam is one of the very few provinces left in Vietnam without a socio-technological standard for forest land allocation. This causes difficulties for the PCD in sub-contracting other professional agencies to share the work load. The PCD is expecting the community to contribute financially to the forest land allocation process.
- The recent reorganisation in T.T. Hue, involving the merge of the PCD into DARD, has resulted in some confusion over administrative procedures that remain unresolved between the two agencies. Effective collaboration has not yet been established to resolve the outstanding issues related to forest land allocation.

The current land allocation done by the provincial and district FPDs merely aims to reduce shifting cultivation and to facilitate the implementation of other GOV projects, such as the former Programme 327 on re-greening barren land and hills or Programme 135 on poverty reduction and hunger elimination. Land is also allocated to immigrants within the framework of the Resettlement Programme of the GOV. In some areas, this process does not receive support from the indigenous people or the people who settled there previously. The immigrants, who are alien to the area, do not feel the same attachment and enthusiasm to cultivate and develop the land. Consequently, land remains unused after all these efforts. According to the head of the PFPD, land allocation is not designed to reflect the desire and demands of local people in many areas.

Statistics from a report produced by Hue PFPD, most SFEs and the management boards of Nature Reserves and National Park have not embarked on forest land allocation following the accurate procedures stipulated in the Land Law. Some SFEs, due to their insufficient skills and knowledge in mapping, have even allocated land, which belongs to some local agricultural cooperative, to other individuals. According to the GOV's regulations, SFEs are not responsible for land allocation. In the past, SFEs were in charge of a number of tasks including administration and national defense, which contributed to fostering a good cultural and social life in the local communities, as well as to the management of forests and forest land. As a result, their influence and capacity to work with forest and communities issues are strong. Some GOV agencies seek their assistance for land allocation. In Dak Lak for instance, SFEs continue to allocate land to people despite the lack of legal status to conduct this task.

Table 1: Land Allocation in Quang Nam

Land type	Total	Management bodies						
		State-Owned Enterprise	Mgmt Boards of Protection Forests	Mgmt Boards of Special use Forests	Households or collective units	Army forces	PFPD	Others
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Total	1,040,514	223,090	17,873	4,873	23,686	34,040	535,737	201,215
Land with forests	425,921	131,997	7,968	3,142	15,223	23,017	242,918	1,656
Barren land	368,977	75,640	6,602	1,355	5,346	9,882	264,613	5,539
Others	245,616	15,453	3,303	376	3,117	1,141	28,206	194,020

3.1.2 Current situation of land allocation

In all of Quang Nam, only 15% of land owners living on the plains have been granted Red Books. The situation in Nam Giang district is less encouraging, with no certificates having been granted after land allocation. Table 1 describes the land allocated to various target groups in Quang Nam province.

The process of issuing Red Books is slow and barely responsive to the demands of local people and communities. According to Quang Nam provincial statistics dated Dec 2001, the total land allocated to 17,506 owners is 317,430 ha. Among the 23 organisations with 294,373 ha of land allocated, only eight organisations received Red Books for a total of 2,150 ha of land. The total number of Red Books issued for households is 3,603 with 5,766 ha of land. The amount of forest land allocated to households in mountainous areas like Hien, Nam Giang, Tra My and Phuoc Son is minimal.

In T.T. Hue's plain areas, 99% of agricultural land has been allocated with Red Books. In towns, the PCD has completed 30% of residential land allocation. People in these areas are actively engaged in this exercise due to their awareness of the significance of having been allocated land with Red Books. However, in rural areas, the process is taking place at a much slower pace. Only 26% of agricultural land has been mapped. Regarding forest land allocation, from the point of view of the PCD, the two main target groups are households and SFEs. They expressed a reluctance in dealing with the so-called "community" due to the ambiguousness of the term and to the lack of required legal status. With regard to Decree 187, it is apparent from interviews with PCD staff that they are ignorant about the amount of land belonging to SFEs and the amount of land available for allocation to people, even though the relevant documents are available. In 2002, the province of Hue is ambitiously thriving to complete land allocation in all categories.

Recent research by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on "Poverty and Ethnic Minorities" in Kon Tum and Gia Lai revealed that most of the poorest indigenous people interviewed either have no idea about the importance of the Red Book or have not yet been granted one. In Chu Pha district, only 21% of the total agricultural land has been mapped and granted Red Books. The fee for measuring is 100,000 VND/ha. However, since early 2001, this fee has been abolished. According to the district officers, the indigenous people do not appreciate the significance and security over land provided by the Red Books. Their concept of customary rights over land still strongly exists. The indigenous people basically are told to apply for Red Books in spite of a lack of understanding of the meaning and the rights provided by the document. The allocation process frequently becomes locked in dispute when land allocation rights are sought over an area that is claimed by others under customary systems.

BOX 2: Difficulties faced in forestland allocation

There is a lack of an integrated land and forest classification system, which creates confusion and difficulties in land-use planning and forest allocation at micro and macro levels. In some areas, unused land without any economic potential is automatically classified as forest land. In other areas, old shifting cultivation fields are considered forest land while a more accurate description is agro-forestry land. This confusing system continues in the absence of a clear and comprehensive land allocation strategy and land-use plan for the surveyed provinces.

The sudden change in procedures and costs involved in land allocation has puzzled local people. As mentioned above, before 1997, forest land allocation was carried out by the provincial and district FPD units. The process often started with activities to raise awareness of local people about the possible benefits of receiving and investing in land. The fee of 15,000 VND/ha was subsidised by MARD. Local people received Green Books (Lam ba)¹¹ as land-use certificates. All the required steps were completed in a short period of time with facilitation by the FPD staff at district levels.

Nowadays, the sudden change presented in the complicated, lengthy and costly procedures introduced by the PCD poses a dilemma for the people who want to apply for land allocation. The methodology used by the PCD requires four types of maps to be produced both at the commune level (at a scale 1:10,000) and at the village level (at a scale 1:5,000), covering:

- Present land-use and forest cover;
- Site (Site classification);
- Proposed land-use (for agriculture, forestry, and other purposes);
- Forestland allocation (boundaries and areas of each parcel of forest land allocated).¹²

However, the current Red Books issued by the PCD contain insufficient information on land area without clear maps and land demarcation. This causes confusion in land-use for households. Probably the major element that contributes to the stagnant situation of land allocation in Hue is the cost required by the PCD for land measuring and allocation. Apparently, to measure one ha of forest land costs 200,000 VND with an extra 20,000 VND to complete necessary paperwork. Depending on the target groups/individuals, a certain level of tax will be applied. For instance, Hue PCD recently charged a WB project on agricultural diversification 22 USD for one ha of land allocation.

Demarcating land for allocation in some areas is not done in a transparent manner. Conflicts within the communities arise due to this lack of transparency. The mentality of working only to meet the GOV's targets has a number of negative impacts. In a surveyed commune, the cadastral staff tried to reach the annual target and measured land inaccurately. In a surveyed commune in Quang Nam, a number of Red Books were stuck at a CPC for a long time since the local people refused to receive the Red Books prepared on the base of this wrong measurement.

¹¹ Lam Ba is also considered as forest protection contracts.

¹² The ADB Central Region Poverty Reduction Project- Agrisystems, 2000

The awareness and information about land allocation rights is low and unavailable.

Knowledge about land rights is very important to ensure efficient land-use. In most cases, this awareness is low and when its level increases, the opportunity to receive land has gone. A number of people view land allocation merely as a vehicle to secure Red Books, which creates access to bank credits. A large portion of mountain residents are neither familiar with Red Books nor with the significance of land allocation. At the commune level, the capacity to manage the Reserved Land Bank¹³ is weak. This reality has resulted in the inequitable distribution of land. Quicker-minded people possess disproportionately large areas of land while the commune is left with no land to allocate to the late comers. At a higher management level, authorities' perception on land allocation reflects their intention to meet the national target. Their affirmed concept behind the acceleration of land allocation lies in the fact that land can be used effectively only when it has a real owner. There is not much attention paid to the capacity of local communities to understand and to use land efficiently.

Participatory land allocation with special attention to traditional boundaries and land-use planning through local consultations on the use of indigenous species are the two major components within the framework of a FAO-funded project, working in collaboration with Hue PFPD. Their participatory exercise in Nam Dong district resulted in 137 Red Books secured by villagers for 201.1 ha of forest land allocated. According to the head of the PFPD, the participatory process should be replicated in the whole province. However, this lengthy operation requires big investments, which are often provided only by foreign-funded projects.

The SNV project “*Strengthening Forestry Management Capacity*” in T.T. Hue province has been implementing its activities on Forest Land Use Planning & Forest Land Allocation (FLUP & FLA) in Nam Dong and Phu Loc districts. Study tours to Son La province were conducted before the FLUP & FLA Management Boards were established to guide the implementation of this exercise and ensure proper collaboration between the stakeholders. The Boards are chaired by the DPC and represented by all major stakeholders. Presently, FLUP & FLA is being conducted in two communes of the two pilot districts. It is expected that the exercise will be finalised during the first quarter of 2002 with the delivery of Red Books to all households in the pilot communes. Since the Cadastral Service in both districts is not able to conduct the FLUP & FLA exercises, it was decided by the DPC that the Forestry Protection Units will take charge and sign an implementation contract with the project¹⁴.

However, the two approaches used in FAO and SNV projects for land allocation proved to be different in Nam Dong district. According to the SNV project development advisor, the difference between the FAO and the SNV projects was the fact that the FAO project did not include appropriate land-use mechanisms in their working agenda.

3.1.3 Current official land-use and natural resource management

Presently, the three GOV agencies responsible for land and natural resource management of eight communes and one town in Nam Giang district, Quang Nam province are Ca Di SFE, the Management Board of Song Thanh Nature Reserve, and the DPC.

¹³ The amount of land reserved by the CPCs for future usage

¹⁴ Annual report of SNV project Strengthening forestry management capacity in T.T. Hue province, 2001

Table 2: Land-use situation in Nam Giang

GOV agencies	Communes/ Town	Total			Land type		
		Land area	Agricultural land	Forestry land	Used land	Residential land	Unused land
	The whole district	183,650	3,895.90	90,356,0	268.5	119.3	89,010.20
DPC	Thanh My Town	20,900	794.7	9,284,0	76.2	32.5	10,712.60
Ca Di SFE	Ca Di	20,000	493.8	9,372,0	45.6	17	10,071.60
Management Board of Song Thanh Nature Reserve	Ta Bhing	22,800	474	1,166,0	51.3	18.6	10,595.10
	Chaval	12,840	403.6	3,341,0	31.6	13.3	9,050.50
	La Dee	18,220	430.7	11,720,0	20.9	11.2	6,037.10
	La ee	24,100	404.7	11,550,0	16.3	8.5	12,120.50
	Dac Pring	30,900	271.3	22,036,0	11.9	4.3	8,576.50
	Dac Pree	9,840	297.2	5,285,0	7.2	6.9	4,243.60
	ZuoiH	24,050	325	6,108,0	7.5	6.8	1,762.70

Source - Statistics book of Nam Giang district

Although, there is a clear distinction between the land areas managed by these three agencies, a complete map for land-use of the whole province does not yet exist. Song Thanh NR has not been able to demarcate its boundaries and the Ca Di SFE has not finished its Master Plan following Decree 187 CP. Therefore, land allocation and land-use will be fluctuating in the near future.

Forest management and forest land-use of Ca Di SFE

Ca Di SFE is directly managed by DARD. The enterprise is currently in charge of a total area of 20,000 ha with 11,942 ha of forest land. Production forest area is 7,150 ha and accounts for 35.5% of the total area managed by the SFE, while protection forest accounts for 23.9%. Apart from the common tasks assigned by the GOV, Ca Di SFE is implementing a number of activities within Programmes 327 or 661. Forest protection contracts (FPCs) have been signed with a number of households in the adjacent areas.

Since Ca Di is located in a mountainous area with high populations of ethnic minority groups, the nature of forest allocation for protection has different characteristics. It was found that FPCs do not have positive results due to the lack of understanding of the ethnic communities living in the area. The sense of equality within these communities is relatively strong. A number of households without FPCs encroach the land belonging to Ca Di SFE and extract forest resources for daily consumption and sale. A few key informants told us: “*If you want to protect forests, FPCs should reach all of us not just a portion*”. Apparently, some households were selected based on personal contacts.

Forest management and forest land-use of Song Thanh Nature Reserve.

The NR was established in 2000 and currently managed by Quang Nam PFPD. Song Thanh NR is located within the territories of seven communes, out of the total nine communes of Nam Giang district. These seven communes are situated in mountainous areas with complicated terrain and difficult access. The total area of the NR is 142,750 ha, in which forest land accounts for 42.8%. The area of unused land is relatively large accounting for 47.8% of the total land area.

At present, Song Thanh NR has not yet embarked on any major conservation activities due to the shortage of funds. There are a couple of conservation initiatives funded by the WWF, Indochina Programme. *The Tiger Conservation* project activities mainly aim at awareness-raising. The second project aims at providing support to the management and administration

of the NR. Logistics and infrastructure support includes the provision of computers, office supplies, cameras, motorbikes, allowance supplement for 16 reserve staff and construction of a mini hydro-electric dam. The project also aims at enhancing community participation by conducting training courses on PRA community liaison for forest guards and setting up two community outreach posts, which are the interface between the communities and the state.

The NR management board has not been able to map out a conservation strategy to increase the participation of local people. One of the constraints faced by the NR is the lack of trained staff. Most of the staff currently working in the NR was transferred from the DFPD without any training to conduct conservation work. A forestry and agricultural extension unit does not exist as a part of the NR management board.

Song Thanh NR is a newly established conservation agency responsible for a large area of forest and forest land. Yet, at this point, the management board is working in isolation from other relevant agencies and does not receive any financial, administrative or technical support.

Forest management and forest land-use of the DPC

Forestland allocation and management is done at district level by the DPC with full support from the forestry and agricultural unit. The DPC deals particularly with issues related to forest management, granting Red Books, and illegal logging. The DFPD is working in close collaboration with the DPC. In addition, an inter-sectoral unit headed by the vice-chairman of the DPC was established to give further support to the DFPD. However, the staff working in this field are receiving a relatively low compensation of VND 6,000/day¹⁵.

With regard to the district forest land allocation, the DCD in both surveyed provinces is not yet confident with the new task of measuring forest land in mountainous areas. In addition to this lack of technical skills, to work with more ethno-diversified communities and to deal with the existing strong sense of community ownership and traditional rules, appear to be challenging for this agency.

Table 3: Land use of Thua Thien Hue surveyed areas in 2001 (Unit: ha)

Land types	Ha Long village	Khe Tran village	Luu Hien Hoa village	A Roang commune	Ta Vai village
Rice cultivation	6	170	165.6	5	
Other crops (maize, potatoes, beans and peanuts)	1.5	3	20	28	
Cassava	15	3		73	11
Industrial crops		20 (Rubber)			
Plantation forest allocated to households	135	154	215	167	15
Natural forest protection areas allocated to villages				140	

¹⁵ Equivalent to USD 40 cents.

Apart from the formally recognised management rules and regulations, the T.T. Hue forest management officials manage their work at the community level through forest protection rules (*Quy uoc bao ve rung*). This set of rules is often developed by the staff of the DFPD by consultation with local people. These rules reflect the basic laws and regulations of the GOV with specific attention paid to local settings and environment. Examples include the rules for *Bambusa balcoa* forest protection in Luu Hien Hoa village in Hue¹⁶, whereby illegal forest resource exploitation will not only be handled by the GOV's official rules, but also be punished according to the village rules. Serious cases can result in exclusion from the community activities.

In all surveyed villages of T.T. Hue, only two villages in A Luoi district are engaged in forest protection with the A Luoi SFE. Most surveyed villages have received Red Books for agricultural land except for A Roang commune. A large number of households have signed the FPCs with their local SFEs or with forest protection units. FPCs have become the most common form of involvement of local people in protection of forests in Vietnam, currently covering about 1.6 million hectares involving 247,000 households¹⁷. Currently in Hue more than 20,000 ha of forest allocated to households is protected and managed well. DARD plants to allocate up to 63,000 ha till 2003.

BOX 3: A case study of forest management at the household level

Mr Nguyen Dinh Dinh in Thuy Phuong commune, Huong Thuy district, T.T. Hue province has been allocated 100 ha of barren land since 1991. With the initial capital of 30 million VND, Mr Dinh annually grows 15-20 ha of eucalyptus and acacia. Up to now, he has managed to plant 150 ha of these two species (the allocation of the extra 50 ha of land is being processed. Legally each person is allowed to receive only 30 ha). In 1997 alone, Mr Dinh made 15 million VND from selling timber. On the same piece of land, 120 cows and more than 30 goats are currently grazing. Together with other incomes from husbandry, Mr Dinh makes an average of 35-40 million VND a year.

In a report prepared by the head of Hue PFPD, although forest and forest land has been allocated, the capacity of the forest "owners" to manage resources is inadequate. Therefore, the staff of FPD units are involved in forest protection tasks even where they are not responsible for protection.

BOX 4: Difficulties faced in land-use

The land areas reserved for agricultural and forestry purposes are continuously encroached for different uses due to provincial shifts in the socio-economic goals. In T.T. Hue, the unused land areas allocated to households and collective units to grow eucalyptus and acacia in some areas have been converted to grow sugarcane and rubber, according to the new provincial zoning plan. The land is scheduled to be converted again to grow protection forests after these processing factories leave the area. The reason used to explain this shift is failure of the land zoning process. The GOV encourages provinces to grow protection forest without clear directions as to what type of land should be reserved for this purpose. The fee of 2,700,000 VND/ha (from Programme 661) is attractive enough for local authorities to engage in this scheme.

¹⁶ See case study page 47

¹⁷ MARD 2001

The land-use mechanisms introduced by the government are inadequate and inappropriate. After allocating land, the relevant authorities fail to guide the households to invest and use land effectively. The government specifies how allocated land should be used, which indirectly serves as a vehicle to control the use of land. The whole process is often based on trying to achieve national targets and therefore, fails to take into account the traditional land-use practices and the implementation capacity of local people. While the local villagers prefer the species with short rotational cycles of capital, the government introduces species to improve soil fertility and increase forest cover. Consequently, villagers do not look after plantations due to the long rotations of 30 to 40 years. As the waiting time is so long, interest often wanes and maintenance remains low. In coastal areas, only protection forest is encouraged to grow. According to the local inhabitants, this type of forest does not interest them due to its low economic benefits.

Decree 02/CP¹⁸ stipulates “there must be a document outlining the proposed management and use of the land”. Thus, land-use planning should be undertaken before land allocation. In practice, there have not been dialogues or discussions among relevant stakeholders regarding land-use. The capacity of provincial authorities to map out effective and appropriate land-use planning is weak. After land is allocated and developed by farmers, external factors can influence the land-use process including market-driven forces, policy changes, and other factors related to climate, weather, etc. Land use planning is not designed to be adequately flexible to accommodate possible adaptations and changes. Villagers did not recognise the government’s jurisdiction so could not agree on the need to allocate the land to individual households. Needs and demands of local people are not understood by local authorities. “The people in our commune are generally happy with what they have been allocated”- a commune leader. In actual fact, a number of households in this commune have food security for only three months in a year and they cited the reason as lack of agricultural land. It appears that local authorities are not flexible enough and do not take the initiative to tailor their activities based on GOV’s policies to meet the specific demands of local people.

In general, desertion after being allocated forest land, is becoming more popular in the surveyed areas. Local people sometimes perceive forest land allocation without timely and appropriate land-use planning as a way to legalise shifting cultivation or forest destruction. Hence, a common ground between the government and land users is not reached to ensure that the entire positive concept and intentions for land allocation are met. As a result, land is left unused or used for different purposes after being allocated. In Vietnam as a whole, only 20-30% of the land areas allocated have been developed following the government’s land-use plan¹⁹.

The population distribution in Hue is presenting some challenging issues for land-use planners. In the densely populated areas, forest land is limited while the demand for land allocation is high. In remote and mountainous areas with complicated terrain and weak infrastructure, where there are mostly ethnic minorities, forest land is more available. In addition, most forest land currently belongs to SFEs so that where there is high demand, such as in Nam Dong district, the land available to allocate to farmers is limited. In Hue the quality of forest land, in general, is quite poor with numerous barren hills located far away from villages (in some areas, the distance is 20 km). Conflicts have arisen over the collection of firewood and the grazing of cattle, as villagers often go to the nearest plot and ignore their allocated plot if it is far away.

¹⁸ Now it is known as the Decree 163

¹⁹ Elaine Morrison and Olivier Dubois, SIDA report on Sustainable Livelihoods in Upland Vietnam, Land allocation and beyond, 1998

There is a risk that in areas where there is a large influx of migrants and where fertile forest land can be changed into agricultural land, newly settled people have a great need to purchase land. However, migration patterns in Hue are rather simple. Intra-communal migration takes place with the control of the CPCs. The Department for Migration and NEZs has the responsibility to provide initial support to these migrants. Serious spontaneous migration from other provinces does not occur in this area due to the low quality of soil. A Luoi commune has moved a Pa Co community in 1992 to a location that is seriously polluted by war defoliants. The research team saw a sign warning people of the level of the toxicity in the middle of the village.

Bottom-up issues related to forest land-use originate from low commitments in big and long-term investments. Due to its geographical position and climate conditions with heavy and concentrated rainfall throughout September to December, Hue is prone to natural calamities. Every year, the province suffers from eight to ten storms, which cause serious flooding and other disasters. Without adequate support from the GOV in extension services, in creating incentives and providing appropriate crops, farmers remain reluctant to put investment into developing forest land, especially in remote areas.

The market for forest products is not stimulated or facilitated by the GOV. Often forest products have to be transported to other provinces for sale. Furthermore, farmers themselves have to be responsible for this process and the related costs without any support.

Implementation of Decree 187 in T.T. Hue.

The government passed Decree No. 187/1999/QD-TTg, dated September the 16th, 1999, on the renovation of SFEs. The PPC is responsible for implementing and planning for this process to take place.

According to the deputy director of DARD, the responsible provincial authorities are still confused as to how to carry out this process, despite several training sessions conducted at the central level to facilitate the implementation of this decree. A director of a relevant provincial department confessed that Decree 187 has not yet been studied or read by the staff at his office. At district level, a number of staff working in responsible agencies was not aware of this decree.

DARD has completed a master plan for all the SFEs in the whole province. This Master Plan is prepared to present at a provincial workshop to invite comments and contribution from relevant agencies and organisations. DARD is pushing for this workshop to take place early this year. The Master Plan consists of an evaluation of the operations of forestry agencies, with a special part pointing out the confusing roles played by SFEs.

Two proposals for renovation are presented in the document. The preferred proposal suggests five action plans including:

- A few SFEs are recommended to maintain their activities and further develop;
- A couple of SFEs should be integrated into one and work as a forestry trading company;

- Several SFEs will be turned into protection forest management boards to strengthen the existing boards;
- Establishment of three new special-use forest management boards (west-Phong Dien with 40,396 ha, south-west Hue with 1,260 ha, north Hai Van with 14,028 ha);
- To disintegrate two forestry agencies.

The SNV project Strengthening Forestry Management Capacity in T.T. Hue province proposed a number of activities to speed up the SFEs' renovation process. A provincial workshop was organised to discuss the renovation plans and give inputs for defining guidelines. A second workshop chaired by the PPC is scheduled to take place in January 2002. In addition, one of the project activities is designed to facilitate two pilot SFEs in designing their management and business plans. According to the 2001 annual report of this SNV project, the progress of this renovation process heavily depends on the political support from the PPC as well as other agencies in the coming months.

3.2 A survey of the communities

3.2.1 Socio-economic features in surveyed areas

- A subsistence economy based on shifting cultivation is essential within these communities. The table below lists sources of income in surveyed villages in Hue. Through this exercise, the villagers were able to rank their sources of income (mark 10 is most important; mark 1 is least important).

Table 4: Ranking of sources of incomes

Products	HaLong Village	Luu Hien Hoa Village	Khe Trang Village	Ta Vai Village	A Roang commune
Rice	8	10		4	10
Peanuts	8	9	10		
Beans			5		
Cassava and potatoes	7		6	10	6
Maize			2	2	
Pepper			9		
Rubber	4		10		
Banana				6	6
Animal husbandry	8	9	8	10	6
Forest plantation fee	6	8	10	2	
Forest protection fee		7		2	
Timber extraction for construction			1	8	10
Wildlife	3		3	4	5
Fishing	5	3	2	6	4
Rattan	4		1	3	
Non leaves collection	4		1		
Fuel wood	4	2	10	10	10
Bambusa balcoa collection		10			6
Trading		8			

Source - Group ranking in the surveyed villages and commune

- Rice productivity is low. In A Roang commune, the average productivity is 2,650 kg/ha/crop, while in Dong Son commune it only stands at 1,380 kg/ha/crop and in Phong My district as a whole, rice yields 3,400 kg/ha/crop.
- Home-made tools and simple cultivation techniques without intensive inputs and investments are still used in agricultural production. In Khe Tran and Ta Vai villages, using draught animals is still a new concept for the residents, so knives and axes are used for land clearing. Animal husbandry is not widely practiced. The traditional cattle and poultry, including buffaloes, cows, pigs and chicken, are not kept for commercial purposes. Kinh people breed draught cattle while the ethnic minorities often use them as food for village ceremonies. On average, each household has one buffalo, 1-2 pigs and 15 chickens.

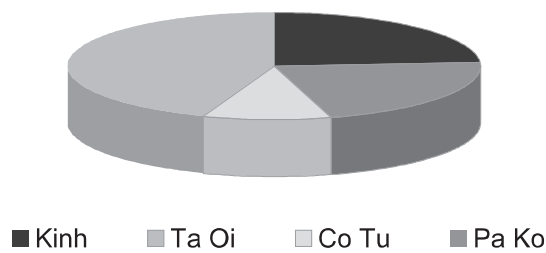


Chart 1: Ethnic Composition in A Luoi district, Thua Thien Hue province

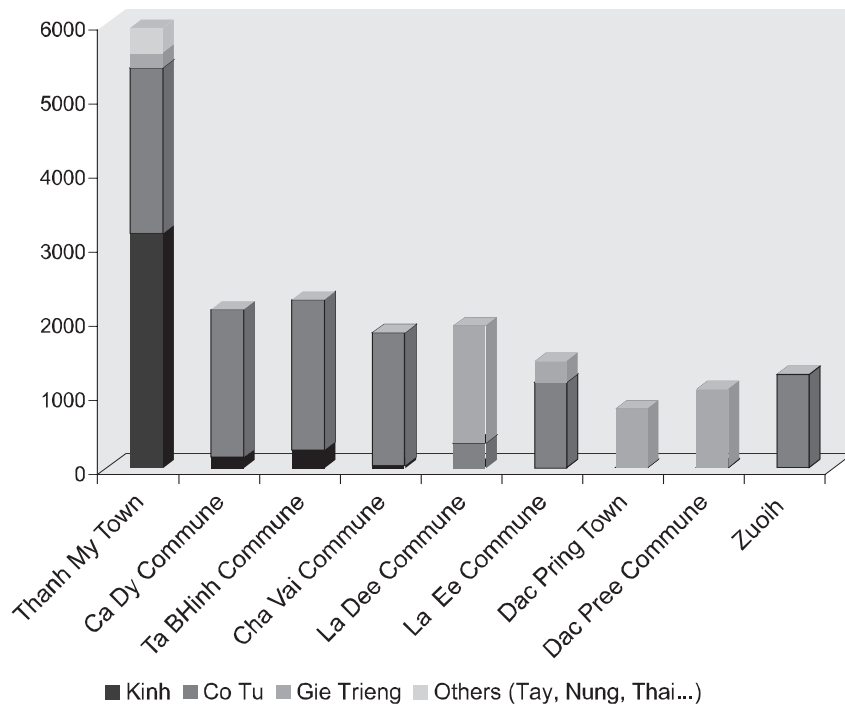


Chart 2: Ethnic Composition in Nam Giang district, Quang Nam province

- There are a number of indigenous ethnic minority groups living in the including the Co Tu and Gie Trieng, Pa Hy and Van Kieu, Ta Oi and Pa Co groups. Kinh people have settled in the surveyed areas for decades within the GOV’s Programme on Sedentarisation and New Economic Zones. Within the same programme, other ethnic groups from the northern mountainous areas, namely Tay, Nung and Thai have also lived in the areas for a long time.
- Poverty is more pronounced within the surveyed indigenous ethnic minority communities due to the lack of agricultural land and low productivity. In Khe Tran village, there is absolutely no land area for wet rice cultivation. Ta Vai villagers suffer from hunger for four to five months a year and 100% of households are classified as poor or hungry households.
- Recently, some industrial and agricultural crops such as rubber, peanuts and beans have become trading products for these communities. However, the business is still new for the local people.
- The migration situation of Hue and Quang Nam is simple. Intra-commune²⁰ migration takes place with initial financial support from Department for Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarisation. Extended families are encouraged to separate and to live in the form of

²⁰ Migration taking place within one commune.

nuclear families. Each nuclear family receives VND 800,000 from the Department for Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarisation. The CPC is responsible for allocating residential land to these nuclear families. There is a small portion of migration due to land erosion. Each family in this area receives VND 2,700,000. Heavy population pressure occurs in a few areas, which does not pose any threats or concerns for the authorities. According to the official plan of the Department for Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarisation, the two provinces will not receive a substantial amount of planned migration in the future. The GOV's programme on fixed cultivation of ethnic groups has not yet achieved the desired results. However, sedentarisation is almost done in a lot of the communes in the surveyed areas.

- Kon Tum province is located within the Central Truong Son Landscape. The migration situation is far more complicated than in the surveyed areas due to the provincial land quality and area available for industrial crops. Land disputes between the indigenous groups and in-migrants in the Central Highlands have created some serious headaches for local authorities.

BOX 5: Changes in land-clearing patterns of indigenous communities

A survey in six migrant-receiving provinces in the Central Highlands and Southeast Vietnam, conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, shows the following statistics:

- Less than 4% of the land of migrant families was allocated to them by the government;
- 47% has been privately purchased;
- 46% was secured by forest clearing.

Since the early 1990s, Kinh people and ethnic minorities have arrived in the Central Highlands as spontaneous and planned migrants, carrying cash. Land has been rented or bought from the indigenous groups. At the same time, the Kinh also secure arable land by hiring the indigenous people or northern upland migrants to clear forests. This cash flow has changed the land-clearing pattern of the indigenous communities. Instead of clearing enough land for cultivation, they clear to make money. Other minority groups, who arrive almost empty-handed, also create heavy pressure on land clearing for cultivation. Under these circumstances, large-scale land trading and clearing have influenced land-use and cultivation patterns of the indigenous people in the following ways:

- Income from land sale or rental has motivated the indigenous people to clear more land and move further inside forests.
- The open market has exposed both the indigenous people and the migrants to perennial and fruit crops in the area. However, success in growing these crops depends a great deal on the familiarity with complicated techniques and market pricing fluctuations. Having better access to information, and being the cash holder, Kinh people tend to be more successful than the indigenous peoples.
- The indigenous groups often find it difficult to adapt to new social and economic changes. As a consequence, land is sold and people continue to move further into the forests.

- There are more adventurous indigenous households that decide to keep up with the change. However, when disasters (e.g. the current drop in pricing of coffee or natural disasters) occur, instead of continuing to grow other crops or find alternatives, they tend to sell land and move away.

However, the lack of arable land and inability to further expand into forest areas has dramatically stopped land trading in many villages. Nowadays, for indigenous peoples land ownership has become, more than ever, crucial for their survival. *"Once you sell land, it means hunger for your family. There is no forest left to clear for land"*.

3.2.2 Gender in production and natural resource management

Table 5 shows the participation of males (+), females (-) and children (o) in production activities and natural resource management in surveyed areas.

Table 5: Gender in production, forest protection and management activities

Activities	Ha Long village	Luu Hien Hoa village	Khe Tran village	Ta Vai village	ARoang commune
Rice cultivation	+++ - - - o	+++ - - - o		+++ - - - o	++ - - - o
Peanuts plantation	++ - - - o	+++ - - - o	+++ - - - o	+ - - - o	
Beans plantation			+++ - - - o	- -	
Cassava and potatoes plantation	++ - - - o		+ - o	+++ - - - o	- - -
Maize plantation				- - - o	+ - -
Pepper plantation			+++ - - - o		
Rubber harvesting		+++ - -	+++ - - - o		
Banana planting				+++ - - - o	- - -
Animal husbandry	++ - - - o	+ - - - o	+++ - - - o	++ - - - o	+++ - - - o
Weaving			- - -		- - -
Forest plantation	++ - -	+++ - -	+++ - - -	+++ - - - o	
Forest protection				+++ -	+++ -
Timber extraction for construction				+++	++ - -
Hunting	+++		+++	+++	++
Fishing	++ - o	+ - - -	+ - o	+++ - - o	++ -
Rattan collection	+++ - -		+++ -	+++	
Non leaves collection	++ -		++ -		
Fuel wood collection	++ - o	+ - - -	++ - - - o	++ - - - o	+ - -
Bambusa balcoa forest management and protection		+ + + - -			+
Trading		+ - - -			

Previously, women's tasks revolved around the household sphere. These tasks were time-consuming and strenuous. Women often spend an increasing amount of time on fuel wood collection, animal husbandry, food production and weaving. Their male partners were responsible for more heavy and dangerous tasks including wood extraction, hunting and fishing,

forest protection and plantation, and land preparation. Women, in the old society, were not allowed to participate in the significant events of the communities such as land selection, house construction, ceremonies and marriages. Ta Oi and Pa Hy women were not able to participate in any praying ceremonies nor to consume the food that had been offered to Gods. They were, however, supposed to follow all the rules set by the village regarding natural resource use.

Nowadays, within the surveyed ethnic communities, women are consulted regarding household chores as well as community affairs. Decisions about forest protection and plantation are made by men in consultation with women. During the process to develop *huong uoc*, women are also involved and invited to contribute ideas.

3.2.3 Cultural and Historical Features

- There are number of ethnic minority groups living in the areas. Kinh groups is not the indigenous group in the areas. There is a fundamental difference in the livelihood of the Kinh and other ethnic groups. The presence of Kinh and of other ethnic groups that migrate from the northern mountainous regions has exposed the indigenous groups to different cultures, influencing their use of natural resources.
- While cultural activities of ethnic groups in the research areas are mainly communal, clans are also very important. People in the same family clan often gather for ceremonies and give support to each other in economic production and livelihood as an united community. Therefore, the head of a family clan plays an important role in the eyes of the clan members. The larger community, as understood by indigenous groups, is the village. In previous years, most of the activities or events of the village were often decided and organised by the most prestigious and knowledgeable man through participatory consultations with villagers. Nowadays, the head of the village (elected by the GOV) is in charge of this task.
- Most of these ethnic groups possess a sizable amount of knowledge and experience in natural resource use and management based on their cultural practices.
- A few traditional practices continue to influence the livelihoods of the indigenous groups in this area, including: traditional festivals, gods' praying ceremonies, new rice ceremonies, folklore songs, poems and sayings.
- Traditional handicrafts, including weaving, are practiced only to serve the communities' needs.

Pa Hy/Van Kieu group

The Ha Long and Khe Tran villagers in Phong My district (T.T. Hue) are Pa Hy ethnic minority people. Before 1981, these people practiced shifting cultivation and lived scattered in the areas around Khe Tran (in the East and South). At that point in time, the Khe Tran village was not yet established. People lived in small tribes in old forests relying on a subsistence economy from hill cultivation, hunting and collecting. The Pa Hy tribes were then resettled by the Sedentarisation Programme of the GOV in Khe Tran village.

Villagers of Khe Tran originally lived in the catchment areas of the *O Lau* river. The resettlement history of this group goes back decades. In 1967, to flee from the war, this group of people moved to A Luoi district in T.T. Hue and in 1968 they migrated to Lao P.D.R.. In 1971, they moved back to A Luoi to occupy the catchment of Bo river. In 1978, this Pa Hy tribe settled in Khe Trang village, south of Ra Nah stream. In 1992, the GOV encouraged them

to resettle west of this stream to avoid the difficult access to the south of Ra Nah. Currently, there are 11 households living in the east and the rest of the seven households continue living to the west of the Ra Nah stream.

Regarding the classification of Pa Hy people, there are several conflicting opinions. Officially, the Pa Hy group is considered a sub-group of the Ta Oi ethnic group. However, Nguyen Quoc Loc²¹ compared the two traditions of Pa Hy and Van Kieu, and concluded that the Pa Hy people are the local group of the Van Kieu people. During our field research in two Pa Hy villages, it is apparent that the Pa Hy economic and cultural lives have many similarities to the Van Kieu.

Ta Oi/Pa Co group

Ta Oi people in A Roang commune mostly come from Ka Lum district, Xe Kong province, Lao P.D.R. In 1973, they settled in Hoang Son commune which became A Roang at a later stage. There are 150 Ta Oi residents, a sub-group of Co Tu people.

Ta Vai villagers also originated from Lao P.D.R.. In 1976, they moved to Huong Thuy commune, A Luoi district, T.T. Hue. In 1992, these people resettled in Dong Son commune as part of the GOV Sedentarisation Programme. The major ethnic group here is Pa Co. There are only 4 Kinh people living in the same village.

The Ta Oi ethnic group, a Mon-Khmer language group, is, according to Nguyen Quoc Loc, classified as an indigenous group of Vietnam. Ta Oi and Pa Co are the two popular names used to refer to this same ethnic group. Pa Co (or Pa Coh) are the Ta Oi people who live in higher altitudes. Ta Oi people live in Huong Hoa (Quang Tri province) and A Luoi (T.T. Hue province).

Kinh group

The Kinh²² community in the surveyed areas is comprised of both planned and spontaneous migrants. This group of people tends to live separately from the ethnic minority groups. Due to its long tradition of wet rice cultivation on flat land without being connected to forest and natural resources, the Kinh people's attitude towards this natural asset is purely market-oriented.

Co Tu and Gie Trieng

The Central Truong Son Landscape covers four mountainous districts in Quang Nam including: Hien, Nam Giang (or Giang), Phuoc Son and Tra My. Indigenous groups living in this area are Co Tu, Gie Trieng, Xo Dang and Co. A few ethnic groups, which have migrated from the northern mountainous region, include Tay, Nung, Thai, and Muong.

According to previous studies by anthropologists and the stories told by the oldest man in a surveyed village, the indigenous groups (namely Co Tu and Gie Trieng) were the first settlers in the CTSL. Co Tu people mainly live in the Hien and Nam Giang districts in Quang Nam, and the A Luoi district in T.T. Hue. Co Tu people are referred to as *Kha Tu*, *Ka Tu*, *Phuong* and *Cao* in Vietnamese and foreign documents. However, the name Co Tu is the main name accepted by this group. Co Tu people who live at high altitudes are called *Co Tu Driu*, those in the middle land are *Co Tu Cha Lau*, and those on the lower land are *Co Tu Nal*.

²¹ The author of "Ethnic Minority Groups in Binh Tri Thien", Thuan Hoa-Hue Publishing House, 1984.

²² Ethnic Majority Vietnamese.

Gie Trieng people live to the south of the Co Tu. This group occupies a large area covering the East of the Boloven plateau in Lao P.D.R., the North of Dak Glei district in Kon Tum province and Phuoc Son district of Quang Nam province in Vietnam. Gie Trieng people are also known as *Ca tang*, *Doan*, *Xop*, *Brilla* (in Dak Glei), *Monoong* or *Bonoong* (in Quang Nam).

The Xo Dang group mainly lives in Dak To, Sa Thay, Dak Glei and Kong Plong districts in Kon Tum province, and in Tra My district in Quang Nam province. Xo Dang group has other acceptable names such as: *Xo Teng*, *To Dra*, *Mo Nam*, *Ca Rong* and *Ha Lang*.

There have not been any accurate scientific documentation on the history and the movements of these groups. One unanswered question concerns the time of the settlement of these ethnic groups in the north and the Central Truong Son Landscape²³.

The Central Truong Son Landscape with its large area of forests and available water resources presents some favourable conditions for a subsistence economy mainly based on shifting cultivation. Almost all ethnic groups in surveyed areas share a common tradition of practicing swidden cultivation. A village is created and settled for a period of 10-15 years based on the fallow cycle for cultivation. Despite the different characteristics of ethnic groups and the timings for settlement, the villagers have had one similar principle in mind while moving “*To find forest and forest land to survive*”. This mentality strongly influenced the livelihoods of ethnic groups until the present time.

BOX 6: Pa Cang village

Pa Cang village initially settled in Coong Achoong forest, then moved to *Aghuol* forest, *Coong poo* forest, and *Coong apang* forest. In 1970, the village settled in *Dha Prang* forest within Nam Giang district. In the case of Pa Cang village, most old people still remember moving 19 times, and the names of each of the 19 forests they stepped upon.

3.3 Community-Based Natural Resource Management

3.3.1 Overview

Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) envisions communities working directly to protect natural resources through local strategies, institutions and technologies as part of their daily, subsistence activities. These activities include farming, hunting, fishing, herding, and gathering. Although the definition of CBNRM is still contested, many practitioners agree on the following four elements:

- CBNRM involves reorienting ownership, access and control over natural resources – “tenure” – so that communities have the proper incentive to conserve natural resources. This shift in tenure does not necessarily require private ownership of resources, but does require some legally protected “rights” to natural resources over an extended period of time.
- CBNRM ensures communities tangible local economic benefits from natural resource management and biodiversity conservation. In a perfect world, CBNRM would produce economic benefits on the path to greater biodiversity conservation. In reality, a line must be drawn between these two goals when conflicts occur.

²³ Ethnic Minority in Vietnam (southern province), Sosio-Science Publishing House, 1994

- CBNRM relies on effective community participation. Depending on the context, this participation can range from education efforts, to involvement in government decision-making, to exclusive decision-making power over management of natural resources.
- CBNRM recognises local and indigenous knowledge and natural resource management practices and builds on them. At the same time, CBNRM advocates acknowledge that indigenous knowledge and practices should not be romanticised, particularly as communities are not static entities; their practices have often been modified in the face of development²⁴.
- CBNRM can be carried out at various levels and to various extents, from site-specific projects to nation-wide programs or policies that encourage CBNRM.

CBNRM in Vietnam

In Vietnam, CBNRM efforts primarily focus on community forest management (CFM). On a small scale, CFM has existed in Vietnam for a long time. Communities, particularly ethnic minority villages, have traditionally managed sacred forests, ancestor grave sites and watershed areas. When cooperatives with control over forest land became defunct, communities took over the areas and began managing the resources. Communities in Vietnam have also managed forests under contracts with state forest enterprises.

More recently, there have been a number of trial projects and programmes throughout the country in which forest has been allocated to communities for management. For example, by 2000, over 30,000 ha had been allocated in Son La and Cao Bang provinces, over 20,000 ha in Ha Giang and Dak Lak provinces, over 10,000 ha in Hoa Binh and Lang Son provinces, and over 5,000 ha in Bac Kan and T.T. Hue provinces. However, the questions that remain unanswered are:

- *Who are these communities?*
- *What is the definition of a community (communities), family clans, household clusters, villages or others?*
- *What types of forest currently are being managed by these communities?*
- *What are the local supporting agencies behind CFM?*
- *To what extent does CFM contribute to natural resource conservation?*
- *Is CBNRM the optimal way to manage natural resources?*
- *What are the real needs and aspirations of the local communities in CBNRM and towards a complete and comprehensive legal framework to support the operation and development of CFM?*

The first National Workshop on Experiences and Potentials toward CFM in June 2000 concluded that, compared to the existing system, local communities manage and protect forests more effectively and require less state budgetary investment for forest protection. The workshop also concluded that CFM worked best in communities in remote areas with traditions in forest management, high community participation, a well functioning organisational structure, effective internal regulations and a leader that is respected by community members.

²⁴ Charles Victor Barber, *Communities-Based Biodiversity Conservation: Challenges for Policymakers and Managers in Southeast Asia* 1996

In a paper prepared for the National Workshop on a Policy Framework to Support Community Forest Management in Vietnam (November 2001), eight models of CFM in Vietnam were evaluated. Among the lessons learned, the paper found:

- CFM encourages community cohesion and a sense of shared purpose among community members, and may encourage a feeling of equality.
- CFM encourages transfer of knowledge between members of the community, as one member can seek help from another.
- CFM encourages work specialisation. Within a community, members can focus on what they do best, thus increasing the benefits for everyone.
- CFM lowers the number of forest violations, such as illegal cutting. A larger number of people working in the forest means that members are more likely to catch violators. If the violators are from the surrounding area or even the community itself, the community can exert pressure on the violators to stop.
- CFM fits well with village-level forest protection regulations (see below).
- CFM receives continued support and interest by the community from the use and sale of forest and non-timber products. As benefits flow back to communities, State costs are minimised.

Legal Status of CBNRM in Vietnam

Currently, there is no legal framework supporting CBNRM in Vietnam. Communities are not recognised by the revised version of the Land Law (1999) as entities that can be allocated land for long-term use. The Land Law states that land may only be allocated to organisations, households and individuals. Under the Civil Law (1995), communities are not considered “organisations.” To be an organisation, the entity must fulfil the following conditions:

- Be recognised by a Government organisation as having jurisdiction;
- Have a clear structure and plan;
- Have assets;
- Have an independent role in implementing laws.

Decree 17/HDBT (1992), the decree implementing the Forestry Protection and Development Law, allows villages to be legal owners of “currently used forest and bare land” if they had village forest before the Forestry Law came into effect. But the Forestry Law contemplates ownership only when entities are allocated land by the State, which few villages could claim. Decree 29/CP (1998) on Democracy Regulation at the Village Level states that the “village/hamlet is not a legal unit in the government structure, but it is the living area of local people, and the lowest level to implement rules and regulations.” In Circular Letter 56/TT (1999), MARD provides guidelines for villages to establish regulations on forest protection and development.

The trend thus seems to be increasing acknowledgement of the role of communities – at least as villages – in forest ownership and management, but without recognition of communities as legal entities that can own land. Perhaps this simply reflects the reality on the ground. In practice, many provinces and communes have allocated land to communities under Decree 163/CP (1999), the decree implementing the Land Law, even though the decree does not expand the authorised recipients to include communities. According to a survey by MARD in June 2001, communities manage 2.3 million ha in 24 provinces, or 15.5% of total forest land in Vietnam.

But the informal status of CFM means that communities often do not receive support from government incentive programs on forest management, even if in reality the communities own and manage forest land. For example, communities are not recognised as legal entities under Decision 661/TTg (1998) on implementation of the 5 Million Hectare Afforestation Program. Thus, communities cannot legally sign protection contracts or receive protection fees; under Decision 8/TTg (2001) on management of forest types, they cannot share in the benefits of forest use by collecting firewood or non-timber forest products; and they cannot freely circulate any forest products on the market.

Similarly, communities are not recognised as legal entities under State investment policies. Thus, under the revised Law on Domestic Investment Encouragement (1998) and sub-decrees, a community cannot take advantage of investment incentives for such activities as forest plantation and forest enrichment with natural regeneration; under Decree 43/ND-CP (1999) on State Development Investment Credit, a community cannot take out a low-interest investment loan for forest management activities; and under Decision 67/TTg (1999) on Credit and Banking Policy for Agriculture and Rural Development and its revision under Decision 148/TTg (1999), a community cannot borrow at the common rate of interest for commercial forestry production activities.

In contrast, communities still must pay tax on their activities even if they are not considered legal entities. Under the revised version of the Natural Resources Tax Decree (1998), every organisation and individual with natural resource exploitation activities must pay the tax. Products collected from natural regenerated production forests and plantation forests, as well as non-timber products from natural forests, are exempted. In practice, communities pay the tax when exploiting products from community forests. Communities also pay an agricultural land-use tax on bare land allocated by districts for reforestation and growing fruit trees.

Participants at the Community Forestry Workshop in 2000 identified the lack of legal status of communities as the greatest obstacle to development of CFM. As seen above, lack of recognition may not hinder communities from managing forest land in practice, but it deprives communities of many benefits from government incentive programs. Unfortunately, adding “community” to a set of laws is more difficult than it appears. The definition of community is open to debate, particularly in Vietnam, where communities do not fit within the concept of an economic, political or social organisation. Recognising the community as a legal entity will likely consume a great deal of time and may ultimately backfire, if a rigid definition excludes too many groups of people.

3.3.2 Traditional natural resource management

- Several types of traditional community management systems were discovered. Few of them currently exist. Because most of the forest and natural resources in surveyed areas are exposed to open access, indigenous people are not involved in protection or management.
- There is the potential for CBNRM due to the long traditions of sustainable use and management of natural resources through participatory consultations that previously existed within the ethnic groups in the surveyed areas. The enforcement and operation of GOV official management systems have put restrictions on the access and rights to natural resources. This reality has caused some negative reactions from the local people such as resilience in following GOV regulations and ongoing illegal extraction of resources.

- FPCs in some areas have made visibly positive impacts on the forests' conditions and on the local economy. However, a major problem that remains is the lack of funds to ensure the equal engagement of all ethnic minority households, which causes some dissatisfaction among these communities.
- Due to the Sedentarisation Programme of the GOV, there is a risk that traditional knowledge, skills, wisdom and experience related to modes of production and natural resource management will become redundant and irrelevant.

Traditional Land Ownership

The village, as perceived by indigenous groups, exists as the most basic and direct sphere of their influence and survival. In general, the word **village** does not only mean a community and its activities, it also indicates residential land, forest land for cultivation, forest resources to supplement their diets, and water resources for fishing and consumption. Each village has its own boundaries that are clearly demarcated by streams, mountains, hills or simply a tree. According to the old traditions, villagers are allowed to use the village resources, including forest resources, water resources, grazing areas, etc. But once an individual leaves the village, this right is no longer valid. A field that is cleared and cultivated by one individual or family, belongs to this person/family even long after it is left for forest regeneration. While the Hmong people's sense of ownership is strongly influenced by family clans, the ownership of land by each family or community remains powerful within the indigenous communities living in the CTSL. This kind of ownership is confirmed and reinforced by a village committee comprised of the oldest and most prestigious people and the heads of family clans in village meetings that take place four times every year. In contrast, the Kinh's perception is that ownership is clearly divided between households, individuals and state agencies.

The supreme rule that influences the behaviors of the communities living in this area is the synchronism of **natural resources** and **village** as one concept. Hence, to the awareness of the ethnic groups, forest and forest land are the assets granted to them as a community or a village by the Gods.

Despite a number of laws and regulations issued and enforced by the GOV, this strong traditional concept of land and resources continues to exist and to influence the indigenous peoples' lives in the surveyed areas. An interesting factor revealed from talking to the authorities at the CPC is their informal recognition and acknowledgement of this kind of traditional land ownership.

Timber in house construction

As part of a long tradition, houses of the ethnic groups in the research areas are made from wood and other flora species. Ta Oi and Pa Co people of the same family used to live in a long house (*Dung*). The longest house could be a hundred meters in length. The population of an extended family could be up to 30-40 people, comprised of 10 households. A long house is continuously enlarged over time to accommodate newly married people. Apart from this permanent residence, Ta Oi people also have a temporary hut used as a crop watch-tower (*Xu*) during rice harvesting or plantation. The communal house (*Nha Rong*) is the common property of the whole village.

Palm and other leaves are used for making roofs or to separate rooms in a house of Pa Hy people. The most distinguished feature of Pa Hy houses is the round shape of the common room. In the old times, hard wood species including *Sindora tonkiensis*, *Pterocarpus macrocarpus*, *Dalbergia spp.*, and *Hopea pierrei* were selected carefully for house construction. These timber species were found around the village.

Before extracting wood, the owner of the house had to pray to the forest spirit (Zeng) and promise not to touch the sacred forests. If the owner wanted to harvest wood from the forest belonging to the neighbouring village, he had to ask that village for permission. This manner of timber usage did not severely impact the forest resources due to the minimal volume extracted annually for local consumption. The local people were allowed to selectively log for the purposes stated during the ceremony to pray to Zeng. Timber selection, extraction and transportation as well as house construction were done with support from other villagers or the members of the same family clan. The sense of community was reflected strongly through this collaboration in natural resource extraction and use.

In recent times, the housing designs of most traditional villages have changed. As a part of the Sedentarisation Programme, households are encouraged to stop living in stilt houses and move down to live on flat land. There are only 5 stilt houses in Khe Tran village. Houses are now built from mud with wooden pillars and partition panels made from bamboo or palm leaves. Some houses are made from bricks and concrete. Timber species used nowadays are not the same due to the depletion of the hard wood species commonly used in the past. Small *Machelia spp.* and *Cinnamomum spp.* trees are now used for construction. A few families even use *Acasia mangium* and *Melia azedrach* from plantation forests. Despite this change in designs and materials used for houses, the community maintains its strong tradition of giving support during the construction of houses.

BOX 7: Timber extraction in Pa Lanh village

According to the oldest man in Pa Lanh village, Quang Nam province, there are 13 households (out of the total 57 households of the village) engaging in timber extraction and trading with Kinh middlemen.

Alike the Van Kieu, due to their communal living style, the Ta Oi also have a strong sense of community in almost all activities related to timber extraction and house construction. The long houses of the Ta Oi require big and good timber for construction. Timber species used include *Mechelia spp.*, *Pometia pinata*, and *Parashorea stellata*. Tree felling must occur far away from sacred forests. Selected trees for construction are often marked to announce the ownership and then left in the forest for sometime before harvesting. This procedure is completed in order to learn the reaction from the forest spirit (*Yang Xu*). If someone in the owner's family is sick during this waiting period, it means *Yang Xu* does not agree with this decision of timber extraction. The same praying procedures as mentioned above were conducted before harvesting timber.

Presently, Ta Oi people live in houses built from mud and soil. The elaborate procedures no longer exist. When a family needs to build a new house, it can decide where to extract timber without paying much attention to the traditional system of timber usage.

Cultivation

It is estimated that at present, about three million people earn their living mainly from shifting cultivation in mountainous regions of Vietnam²⁵. In the middle and high altitude land, shifting cultivation on slopes is a long tradition transferred from one generation to the next among the indigenous groups living in the surveyed areas. Hill rice and other staple crops were grown with a fallow cycle between 15-20 years. Land clearance was done after long and elaborate ceremonies to pay respects to the spirits of land and forests. The ideal topography for shifting cultivation (*Ta sa rai*) of Pa Hy people was the slopes with angles between 25° to 30°.

After selecting a piece of land, Pa Hy people often marked the area to declare ownership (*chom xay*) of the land. Before land clearing took place, the oldest man of the village would need to examine the legitimacy of the clearing based on the village rules on sacred forests. A few other ceremonies, including the good harvest ceremony (*Pu bo*) and the new rice ceremony (*Po xu*), were followed after praying to the forest spirit.

As part of a long tradition, Ta Oi and Pa Co ethnic people avoided clearing land for their shifting fields in catchment areas or on tops of hills. This has resulted in the existence of some good primary forest areas in A Roang commune and Ta Vai village in T.T. Hue.

BOX 8: Shifting cultivation endures

According to the official statistics of Nam Giang district in Quang Nam, 46% of the district population, comprised of mostly ethnic minorities, is living under the poverty level. Despite the GOV's investment in the Sedentarisation Programme, shifting cultivation is still practiced. According to recent statistics²⁶, after three decades of carrying out the policies of sedentarisation, the number of shifting cultivators does not seem to have reduced considerably, but may even have increased.

Presently, the traditions related to shifting cultivation have disappeared along with social and environmental changes. Scattered shifting fields are found in surrounding regenerated forests.

The fallow cycle has been shortened to 4-5 years depending on the soil fertility. As a result, thick forests have been replaced by regenerated forests. In some areas, forests cannot naturally regenerate and have become bush land. In the case of Ha Long village, most agricultural land areas have been turned into wet rice fields. Other crops, including peanuts and beans, are grown on middle-altitude land.

Because of determined efforts by the GOV to stop swidden cultivation and promote sedentary cultivation and settlement, some shifting fields have been turned into fixed fields. Due to the lack of knowledge and investment in land of the ethnic minorities, productivity is low. Poverty is one of the factors pushing local people to further clear forests.

Hunting

Hunting was one of the main activities that was widely practiced by Pa Hy men after rice planting seasons. In the old times, when wildlife was found in abundance, a group of five to six men with bows, arrows and traps was organised to go hunting. During the war, guns started

²⁵ Do Dinh Sam, *Shifting Cultivation in Vietnam*, 1994

²⁶ ADB report on Poverty alleviation in credit, forestry and sedentarisation programs, May 2001.

to be introduced to this community. Despite the availability of forest animals, Pa Hy people only hunted for domestic consumption. Traps (*Ta men tin*) were used after offering Zeng a chicken or some betel nuts and leaves. Traps were allowed to be set within the village territory only. Permission had to be obtained if this activity was carried out in another village. After coming back home from hunting missions, another ceremony was held to show the gratefulness to Zeng. The trophy (the head of the biggest animal hunted) belonged to the hunter, while the rest of the animals were shared among all villagers. Smaller animals such as porcupines, pangolins, or wild chicken could be used by the hunter's family without sharing.

Traditional rules were set and strictly followed by the village regarding hunting. Compensation for violation of these rules could be buffaloes, pigs or chicken. Once again, this picture of traditional hunting and sharing products depicts the strong community orientation of the Pa Hy people in their livelihoods. This picture also reflects the consciousness for sustainable use and protection of natural resources existing within this community.

Pa Hy villagers in Ha Long and Khe Trang confessed that a lot of wild animals that were hunted frequently in the past cannot be found in the surrounding forests. Tigers and deer have totally disappeared. Nowadays, traps are set around rice fields mainly to protect crops from wildlife encroachment. In 2001, Khe Trang villagers hunted six wild pigs, 1 deer, 5 porcupines, and 30 wild chickens. In Ha Long, the villagers got 1 deer, 2 wild goats, and 30 wild pigs. The hunted animals are no longer shared within the village due to the growing demand for wild animal meat in Kinh markets. The local people reckoned that it is impossible to keep track of the real amount of animals hunted simply because most people secretly sell these products to Kinh people immediately after hunting.

From the perspective of the Ta Oi and Pa Co, wild animals were God's presents which should not be taken for granted. Sacred forests were clearly identified and marked by old people and well respected by hunters from one generation to another. The current hunting situation in Ta Vai and A Roang is similar to the Ha Long and Khe Tran villages. Most wild animals hunted are not shared but sold instantly to Kinh people in towns. In 2001, Ta Vai villagers hunted 2 mountain deer, 5 monkeys, 10 wild pigs, 20 tortoises, and over 100 wild chickens.

The oldest man of a surveyed village and staff of the DFPD in Quang Nam told us that before the 1990s, big animals such as tigers, bears, wild pigs and many species of birds and insects were found in forests in Nam Giang.

Hue and Quang Nam have some critical areas for natural resource management in general and wildlife management in particular. The situation in both provinces revealed the fact that, due to the exposure to the market economy and the more accessible roads, commercial hunting has replaced subsistence hunting. As explained above, traditional hunting regulations were effective in the old societies with strong spiritual belief. While the authorities are making efforts in increasing the capacity of forest protection staff in monitoring, these traditional regulations are being ignored.

However, according to the relevant authorities, hunting is not yet wide-spread or posing serious threats to biodiversity.

Sacred forest management

Traditionally, Pa Hy people have a fear of the dead spirits lingering in cemetery areas (Am but). Immediately after burying the dead, villagers often run away to stop these dead spirits from

following them home. As a result of this fear, cemetery forests are often deserted and become sacred. In Khe Tran, cemetery forests are currently exploited by outsiders, not by the villagers.

Pa Hy people believe that *Zeng* lives in an old and big forest that is respected and worshiped. This is where all ceremonies to pray to *Zeng* take place. Due to this respect and the fear of punishment (sickness) from *Zeng*, the villagers do not hunt, extract timber or collect NTFPs in this area. This tradition is still practiced in Khe Tran. But both cemetery and sacred forests are encroached on and used by outsiders. The local people do not have the mechanism to deal with this unprecedented misuse of natural resources and resolve possible disputes.

Unlike the Van Kieu, the Ta Oi and Pa Co have the tradition of respecting the dead spirits. Therefore, their tombs are constructed as houses with intricate and nice designs, and located inside thick forests. This forest area used to be well protected by villagers. Nowadays, cemetery forests around this area are cleared for agricultural land and encroached for timber extraction. The only well-protected piece of cemetery forest, with a total area of 0.5 ha, is found in A Min village, A Roang commune.

Khe Tran villagers used to keep their precious and antique items in a nice cave locating in the middle of a forest. This cave was well protected as well as the surrounding forest. The protection rules clearly stated the punishment for violation (felling one tree cost a chicken, felling a few trees cost a pig). Nowadays, people do not practice this tradition anymore as property is kept at home. As a result, the forests where those caves were found are being destroyed.

3.3.3 Village institutions in natural resource management

As mentioned above, in traditional society, the village was the single most important social unit for the indigenous peoples living in the surveyed areas. A village assembly, consisting of the oldest, most prestigious and knowledgeable people, discussed and made decisions on village affairs after thorough consultations with other villagers. This assembly also formulated a set of traditional rules with severe punishments and clear benefits associated with natural resources, specifically on issues related to shifting cultivation, hunting and NTFPs collection. These rules were discussed and passed by all villagers in village meetings. Although these rules were not recorded in any written forms, they were followed strictly by the villagers. For examples, in Quang Nam, the good management of old and thick forests (A Dhay) meant they were well protected from clearing for shifting fields. Catchment forests (Tam Dhien), forests on the highest mountains (Pa Dhi), spiritual forests (often identified by the existence of Zri trees), or forests with abundance of A Bhui fruits were also kept in visibly good conditions.

Nowadays, although the indigenous groups in the Central Truong Son Landscape continue practicing some of their traditional lifestyles along with new life patterns adopted from the Kinh, the role and significance of the traditional village assemblies is fading away due to the lack of legal status in dealing with village affairs and the existence of state-sponsored authorities at all levels.

The results of our ranking exercises provide additional support for these changes in the institutional organisation. Village heads and the secretaries of communist party units are the people with decision-making power. The village traditional assembly is only consulted when these authorities feel the need. In Nam Giang district, these assemblies are only found in 50% of the villages.

BOX 9: A case study in Luu Hien Hoa village, T.T. Hue province

Luu Hien Hoa village is the only Kinh village in the surveyed areas. This village came into being in the 18th century with residents from Quang Binh province. In 1964, the villagers evacuated due to the war, and resettled in the same area in 1975. The indigenous groups living in the surrounding areas have been, to a certain extent, influenced by the Kinh cultivation and trading patterns due to their long history of inhabiting the area.

The history of land and natural resource use in Luu Hien Hoa is closely connected to the changes of social regimes. Before 1975, agricultural land was owned and used by household and family clans. The land owners were granted a land-use certificate called “Trích lục địa bộ”. Since 1900, *Bambusa balcoa* has been grown by a number of households and family clans to protect rice fields and villages from wind. After 1976, the ownership of this area of *Bambusa balcoa* was shifted to agricultural cooperatives. At the end of 1980, agricultural land was allocated to families and in 2000, Red Books were granted.

The importance of *Bambusa balcoa* is recognised by the current GOV, which decided to further improve the growth of *Bambusa balcoa* forest. At present, the total area of *Bambusa balcoa* in Luu Hien Hoa village is 80 ha. In actual fact, *Bambusa balcoa* forest has been managed by the village community since the 1980's. After being allocated agricultural land, the village committee organised a village meeting and decided to reserve this *Bambusa balcoa* forest as common property of the village. In the same village meeting, the local people requested the commune agricultural cooperative to temporarily manage the forest through a protection unit selected by the villagers themselves.

The village set out specific protection and management rules. One of the rules stipulated the compensation for the staff of the *Bambusa balcoa* protection unit as 1 mil VND²⁷/year. The rule violator is punished 10,000 VND for illegal extraction of one shoot and three working days for felling one *Bambusa balcoa* tree.

Bambusa balcoa is harvested once a year. Before harvesting, the commune cooperative organises a village meeting to prepare for a village bidding to determine the harvester. In 2001, the price for a *Bambusa balcoa* tree ranges from 1,500 to 2,000 VND depending on its diameter. *Bambusa balcoa* forest management by Luu Hien Hoa village has given positive economic results, contributing to improved infrastructure of the village. Money generated from selling *Bambusa balcoa* is reinvested in schools, electricity networks, and a health station. In 2001 alone, 206 mil VND was made from selling *Bambusa balcoa*.

This is one of the effective models for community forest management. Although the model is not acknowledged by any policy makers and exists without clear land allocation, it has created more income and positive results for local people than any legalised management systems. The group interviews in Luu Hien Hoa village reveal a strong level of willingness and enthusiasm regarding further involvement in *Bambusa balcoa* forest protection and management.

²⁷ Equivalent to 70 USD

3.3.4 Current situation of CBNRM

The so-called community forest exists as a vague concept. The definition for the word “*community*” is confusing at all levels, contributing to the fear of authorities in dealing with this category.

Currently in Hue, there are several systems for land and forest resource management existing at the same time. Management of land and resources is done at the government level through SFEs and other authorities and through contracts with individuals and households. DARD expressed the willingness to support any management scheme that proves to be effective.

Hue PPC and DARD are progressive in initiating and facilitating community forest management in three pilot locations. In Quang Nam, a pilot case in Hien district received the approval from the PPC late last year. However, the PPC decision clearly states that the GOV owns the forest and forest land and does not mention the participation of communities. A pilot on land allocation of critical protection forest (belonging to An Dien watershed) is taking place in Tra Bui commune, Tra My district and in Ba commune, Hien district. These two communes, upon the approval of the Quang Nam PPC, will receive 3,000 ha of forest. A system of benefit sharing based on the Decision 178, which allows villagers to harvest forest products will be set up. Currently, the pilot site has gained the approval from the DPCs and the proposal is being reviewed by the PPC.

It is widely understood by local authorities that, since most natural forest areas are located in remote areas with high populations of ethnic minorities, natural resource management is difficult without support from the indigenous or local communities living in those areas.

The process to embark on community forest management in Hue started with stakeholder consultations at all levels. In the case of Thuy Yen Thuong village²⁸, representatives from communities, CPC, DPC, and PPC were all invited to contribute to a number of workshops. Loc Tiet and Loc Binh villages have just started to replicate Thuy Yen Thuong’s model. These two villages inherited the management traditions from the older generations and will develop their management plan based on these traditions.

The Thuy Yen Thuong case study represents a progressive start in supporting CBNRM by T.T. Hue authorities. The difference between the pilot schemes in Son La and Dak Lak and Thuy Yen Thuong is the unclear ownership stipulated in the Decision of the Hue PPC to approve the pilot scheme. In the case of Son La and Dak Lak, for the first time, the real ownership of land for 15 years is transferred to communities, whereas in T.T. Hue, it is still not clear who the real owner of the forest is, while benefits are shared between the GOV and the community. It is also worth distinguishing between the scope for community management in Son La and Dak Lak as compared to T.T. Hue. In the case of Son La and Dak Lak, the central GOV approved the pilot studies and evidenced a real attempt to learn from communities. In the case of T.T. Hue, as mentioned above, the scheme was initiated by DARD and approved by the PPC.

It is interesting to note that community forest management in Luu Hien Hoa and Thuy Yen Thuong in T.T. Hue is implemented by Kinh people who do not possess any traditional forest management systems due to their long history of wet rice cultivation on plains. It is probably safer for the GOV to deal with a community which is in a more advantaged position in terms of access to information, desire to learn, and longer exposure to an open-market economy. However, it is encouraging that the Thai, Hmong and Ede ethnic groups all participate in the pilot schemes in Son La and Dak Lak.

²⁸ See case study page

BOX 10: A case study of Thuy Yen Thuong village, T.T. Hue province

Thuy Yen Thuong (TYT) village, Loc Thuy commune is located 50 km south-east of Hue. The village population stands at 1,860 and is comprised of the Kinh ethnic group. The main economic sources of income of the villagers mostly come from agricultural and forestry activities. Loc Thuy commune has a total area of 1,966 ha of natural forest, which has been degraded due to the free access of both villagers and outsiders. The relevant authorities in the local area failed to effectively manage this area. Some FPCs have been signed without any practical results.

Unhappy with the degraded forest situation that resulted in the historical flood²⁹ of 1999, the villagers of Thuy Yen Thuong approached the authorities to seek support in forest protection and management. The responsible agencies, including the DPCs and the PFDP in collaboration with PROFOR³⁰ Vietnam, embarked on finding appropriate interventions. After a long process of consultations at all levels, especially at the village level, it was decided that Thuy Yen Thuong would be a pilot scheme for Community Forest Management with a total area of 404.5 ha of natural forest.

A few community management options were offered and finally the villagers chose to manage the forest as a common property.

Three types of documents, including an official decision signed by the PPC, a management plan developed by the villagers, and a signed *huong uoc*, were required to legalise this management system at the provincial level. Village rules³¹ for forest protection and management, which define the villagers' rights and profits, were developed by the villagers with support from relevant forestry agencies. The first review of the village development plan together with the forest management rules will be conducted in early 2002. It was agreed that another forest inventory will be conducted to examine the impacts and results of the pilot scheme in 5 years. If there is no wood volume increase, the forest will be returned to the State.

According to our key informants, since the village forest management board was established, there have not been any illegal forest resource exploitation activities. The research team experienced forest planting and patrolling activities conducted by the villagers. Interviews with villagers showed a strong level of enthusiasm and confidence in participating in this type of management.

Responsibilities and Benefits stated in Huong Uoc

- A forestry committee, comprised of local villagers (including some former illegal loggers and traders), is formed to conduct monitoring with guidance from a professional forestry agency. This forestry committee is in charge of organising patrolling activities for the villagers.
- Forest management, including thinning and trimming, should be done by TYT villagers.

²⁹ Villagers' perception

³⁰ MARD, UNDP Forest Programme.

³¹ Refer to Annex III for a sample of these rules.

- In some critical forest areas, charcoal production, timber extraction and fuel wood collection is totally banned.
- If after the first 5 years, there is an increase in wood volume of over 2% annually, which is equivalent to more than 1.5 m³/ha, the villagers are entitled to receive 50% of this amount.
- During the first few years, every year a maximum of 50 m³ of wood can be selectively logged for urgent timber needs of local people, including making production tools, coffins, house repairs or communal construction. This amount of timber should be returned after the village's first timber harvest.
- The villagers are allowed to hunt or collect other NTFPs following the guidelines developed by the Forest Inspectorate and the villagers.

In general, DARD and other key authorities expressed that they support CBNRM even if no legal status attached is to this form of management. Several pilot studies in Son La and Dak Lak have shown some positive results. The authorities, however, understand the challenges posed in piloting and managing this new system. The two major prerequisite conditions for successful CBNRM, viewed by DARD, are as follows:

- The desire and willingness of local people to set up and to practice this system;
- A good leader that is elected by the communities themselves.

Presently, *huong uoc* presents a trend for a number of GOV agencies including DARD, DOSTE³², and the Department for Information and Culture. *Huong uoc*, in general, stipulates the rights, responsibilities, and benefits related to the cultural and socio-economic aspects of villagers' lives. *Huong uoc* between DARD and the above-mentioned pilot villages is directly associated with the management of natural forest resources. *Huong uoc* is a compulsory document developed by communities as a guide for management. However, in some areas, villagers simply view the number of *huong uoc* signed with the GOV as milestones to mark their achievements. The competition to become a Cultural Village (Lang Van Hoa), recognised by the GOV, is gaining popularity in T.T. Hue. According to the deputy director of DARD, *huong uoc* can be effective only when it offers real and practical benefits, which help to create incentives among local people. However, the increase in *huong uoc* faces some opposition from the provincial Department of Justice, as they authorise punishments that are outside of the law.

Hue DARD explicitly raised its concerns about the spreading "fashion" of establishing nature reserves using the CBNRM approach, which although appealing, may be done without paying any real attention to local socio-economic development needs or to the existing capacity of the people to manage resources, using both traditional and modern methods. Some sites³³ that may be more suitable for the development of infrastructure aimed at both poverty alleviation and environmental protection, are designated as future protected areas instead, simply due to the high level support and lobbying as well as investment by external donors. Much attention is paid to conserving the forested areas in protected areas. Yet the management of a considerable amount of forest area outside of these boundaries have received neither support nor investment. The PFPD added that the relevant authorities' lack of capacity to deal with the expansion of nature reserves also is an outstanding issue.

³² Refer to Annex III for a sample of *huong uoc* developed by DOSTE and Van Cu villagers

³³ The irrigation scheme in Ta Trach lake.

Apparently, information generated from research and studies conducted in the field of natural resource management is available in Hue. However, there remains a lack of knowledge about traditional resource use patterns and village institutions that can be used in a positive manner for CBNRM. Since 1990, T.T. Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry has trained 50-60 forestry engineers every year. In 1997, as a component of the Social Forestry Support Programme funded by the Swiss GOV, the University introduced a new field of study called *Social Forestry*. Courses are conducted in a participatory manner according to a curriculum and programme that have been officially approved by the Ministry of Education and Training. The curriculum will be used in all forestry colleges in Vietnam. Every year, 50% of forestry engineers graduate from the Social Forestry Department of T.T. Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry. Apart from conducting training courses, the University has been carrying out research on CBNRM systems that previously existed or are currently existing within ethnic minority communities. Although the research has yet to be completed, it is hoped that its results will further facilitate and enhance CBNRM in Hue.

Agriculture and forestry extensions (AFE) play an important role in facilitating CBNRM. Local people seek support from the staff of AFE units regarding production and forest management activities. At the district level, agriculture and forestry extension units have recently been merged into one agency under the agricultural unit. This AFE mostly deals with agricultural activities due to the low capacity and insufficient numbers of staff in the forestry units. In some areas, the number of staff working for the forestry extension units accounts for only 10% of the total AFE staff.

Credit programmes also influence the process towards an effective CBNRM. Currently, communities are denied access to bank credits due to their lack of legal status. In addition, banking procedures are complicated in that they involve numerous written documents and applications in Vietnamese. Although the literacy level of Vietnamese people generally is high, the Vietnamese language is spoken and written by only young students in ethnic minority communities. Many older people are unable to read and write, and therefore are unable to comprehend complicated legal documents. This is why local people feel intimidated by the increasing amount of paper work that is required to secure a bank loan. Furthermore, having a mortgage and understanding how interest works are required for borrowing money.

There has been inadequate attention paid to the creation of markets for timber and non-timber products, which is another factor in determining the success of CBNRM. While local people may feel enthusiastic about participating in CBNRM, their practical knowledge of how to approach markets and to ensure the consumption of their products is questionable. Moreover, the majority of timber derived from planted forests in T.T. Hue is sold to the VIJACHIP Company, which is based in Da Nang city. The local demand for wood from planted forests is low. Therefore, only people living in coastal areas and relatively near to main roads are able to do business with the company.

3.3.5 Needs and aspirations of local people with respect to CBNRM

Although the research team and the ethnic communities surveyed may not have a clear idea of how CBNRM should be carried out, interviews with villagers revealed a high level of enthusiasm and desire to conserve their valuable natural resources.

The degradation of natural forests and the depletion of resources are clearly noticed by ethnic groups. They participate in GOV management systems, in which cash earnings provide the

incentives. The GOV systems help to improve their livelihoods in some respects, but do not resolve their problems with food security, enhance their sense of ownership or ensure sustainable development. Some Kinh communities have become aware of these limitations and seek support for their own type of management as a result.

The situation of the ethnic communities is different. From living only on hill rice and other forest products within tribal settings, these ethnic groups have been resettled on flatter land that is bounded by state-sponsored administrative systems, and are encouraged to practice fixed cultivation according to new land-use systems. On one hand, they struggle to adjust to their new social environment and to avoid being considered as “backward”; and on the other, to ensure food security under various restrictions concerning access to forest products as supplementary sources of food.

Therefore, it is important to be practical and cautious in interpreting positive responses from communities regarding CBNRM. While the Kinh communities are very quick to adopt new trends of development and to understand the advantages of being engaged in funded projects and programmes, the ethnic minorities may simply want to be accredited as “civilised” communities and as capable of following GOV policies and programmes.

It is necessary to acknowledge the traditional customs of ethnic minority communities in using their natural resources in a sustainable manner. Nonetheless, the current political, social and environmental contexts need to be considered, as well as the ethnic people’s hesitance to move “backwards”.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Presently, the PPC and/or the DPC are the legal agencies that are responsible for issuing Red Books. However, all of the initial and important steps that are required to allocate forest land - such as mapping, land-use planning, transferring of technology, forestry extension and facilitation of credit schemes - are implemented by the PFPD and DARD. While agricultural extension activities are widely practiced, forestry extension services are weak in the villages that were studied. The provincial and district forest protection units in the surveyed areas allocate land within the framework of funded projects or programmes. Agricultural and forest land are allocated and Red Books are granted mostly in cases of projects or special support from the GOV.

The PCD's involvement in issuing Red Books is restricted to the compilation and submission of all of the documents that are required to gain approval from the PPC or the DPC. The PCD is unable to fulfill its duties in forest land allocation due to a low capacity to measure and to map land in difficult terrain; the lack of capacity to deal with high populations of ethnic minority groups; and the lack of funds. The sudden change in the procedures and costs involved in the allocation of land, introduced by the Cadastral Department, is puzzling to communities.

Ethnic minority peoples are unaware of the significance of Red Books in regard to land ownership, whereas many Kinh people consider it as a vehicle to access bank credits. Appropriate land-use mechanisms are not yet in place, hampering the participation of local communities and failing to ensure food security.

It is clear that most authorities, from the provincial to the commune level, are willing to show their support for CBNRM to a certain extent. Quang Nam and T.T. Hue PPCs have signed an agreement to allocate forest land to communities as pilot studies. However, one concern that remains is the definition of "community" and its legal status. It is understood differently by various stakeholders. In surveyed areas, the concept of community extends beyond the traditional social unit, namely family clans or household clusters.

The experience gained from pilot studies, the lessons learned from the study of traditional natural resource management systems and the enthusiasm of the relevant authorities are evidence that CBNRM has the potential to contribute effectively to the conservation of natural resources, as well as to improve the livelihoods of communities. However, a number of factors need to be taken into account before initiating CBNRM, including: whether communities have the legal status necessary to practice CBNRM as well as support from the GOV; the communities' current definition and perception of CBNRM; and the level of willingness to participate after establishing a solid understanding of CBNRM.

Most of the individuals and communities that were interviewed expressed a willingness and a desire to increase their responsibilities in, and benefits from, managing natural resources. However, it is important to differentiate between current forest protection and management systems, which basically are subsidised by the GOV, and **real** community management, which still is a new concept for all stakeholders.

In the surveyed areas, previously-existing CBNRM systems were based on beliefs and customs, and were bound by specific rules and regulations that were strictly followed by community members. In addition to a lack of understanding of and research on traditional CBNRM, these systems are gradually losing their significance and effectiveness in many villages due to socio-economic development, including exposure to external cultural and social factors.

Currently, the GOV's natural resource management systems officially are enforced and practiced by communities. However, participation remains weak due to a lack of understanding and willingness to contribute to the management of resources, which formally belong to the GOV. For instance, there are no community representatives involved in special-use forest management. Their involvement is restricted to signing forest protection and management contracts. In the case of protection forests, the communities are allowed to use some forest resources, which creates an incentive for better management.

The study of the CBNRM pilot sites in the two provinces surveyed show that, in spite of the communities' lack of professional skills in basic planning, monitoring and administration, their capacity to motivate internal resources and their willingness and aspirations to contribute to CBNRM are notable.

In the areas surveyed, it is clear that the overarching goal to meet the GOV's targets influences the research, planning and implementation processes of projects and programmes. As a result, the needs and aspirations of communities are insufficiently accounted for and incorporated in the working agendas of GOV agencies.

4.2 Recommendations

Institutional and legal aspects related to creating an enabling environment for CBNRM

- ***The central GOV is interested in CBNRM to a certain extent.*** Several pilot schemes have been granted approval to be implemented in various locations. Based on the lessons learned from these pilot schemes, a legal framework that recognises the community as a legal entity to practice CBNRM should be considered.
- ***The nature and forms of CBNRM should be studied*** to reflect the needs and desires of local communities.
- ***Institutional support to strengthen the existing pilot schemes should be provided.*** Currently, Hue is piloting community forestry in a few locations in isolation from the rest of the country. The staff, who are supportive of CBNRM and are directly involved in these pilot cases, are not aware of the Son La and Dak Lak pilot sites. Exchanges and study tours between those pilot sites of CBNRM should be initiated and facilitated.
- ***Capacity of GOV staff to facilitate and communication skills need to be strengthened*** in order to avoid a top-down approach and allow them to work more effectively with communities in the new context of CBNRM.
- Currently, *huong uoc* for forest management are prepared in various manners that are each called participatory. This poses a risk of confusion among communities during the trial

period of CBNRM. **We recommend examining all existing huong uoc and their development processes** in order to formulate integrated and uniform guidelines, which allow maximum community participation and contributions of positive traditional customs in natural resource management. Dispute resolution, particularly with outsiders, can be difficult for the ethnic minority communities in remote areas. Therefore, resolution mechanisms should be built into the *huong uoc* process.

- Before expanding or establishing more nature reserves or national parks, **it is recommended to conduct studies on possibilities to initiate or facilitate CBNRM**, where appropriate, to avoid a negative reaction from the communities and to help resolve the issue of balancing conservation and development. This component should be integrated both in feasibility studies and in conservation project documents.
- There have been efforts from NGOs or international organisations to support CBNRM. However, their disconnected support can cause confusion for the communities. **Assistance needs to be focused on lobbying responsible agencies to recognise opportunities and needs in moving towards CBNRM**, where suitable. Support and investment are required to raise awareness and to build effective models for CBNRM with the relevant authorities and communities.
- FPCs will not be sustainable given the amount of cash required from the GOV annually to ensure equality and effectiveness. Program 661 will end in 2010, while the component to support FPCs will, in principle, end in 2003. Therefore, **other schemes, including small-scale pilot schemes for forest allocation, that involve communities or family clans should be studied** to ensure long-term forest management and to enhance the sense of ownership of the communities.
- Most GOV programmes on forestry, including the former Programme 327 and Programme 661, aim at increasing community participation through awareness-raising activities. **It is recommended that initiatives related to CBNRM should cooperate with these GOV programmes** to give further support in enhancing community participation.

Community related issues

- Positive traditions of natural resource use and management are being replaced by new market-oriented patterns introduced from outside. **Timely and appropriate support should be designed to address this issue.** A participatory study to explore and record these positive traditions and experiences should be conducted before they disappear.
- **Initiatives to conduct CBNRM should originate from the communities.** The fact that effective traditional natural resource management systems previously existed within ethnic minority communities does not guarantee the success of CBNRM. Projects and programmes should avoid imposing this trend on communities that are not ready to commit.
- **The first step in CBNRM should be an effort to work with communities in understanding and exploring the possible forms and nature of CBNRM** in relation to both traditional systems and GOV systems. This is a time-consuming exercise, which aims to give communities a chance to explore their own opportunities and limitations, and to make decisions about the need to initiate CBNRM.

- ***Studies on various ways to blend harmoniously existing traditional village institutions (e.g village assemblies) with state-sponsored village institutions.*** These need to be carried out or integrated as a part of the above-mentioned exploration process.
- ***Capacity building is recommended for communities*** with regard to skills in promoting sustainable development, as well as in basic planning, monitoring and administration. The local peoples' understanding of the GOV's policies and programmes should be enhanced to ensure the effectiveness of CBNRM.
- ***Information on timber and non-timber markets,*** and the current flow of these products should be made accessible and available
- ***Appropriate land allocation and land-use patterns should be decided in a more participatory manner*** to accommodate local needs and aspirations, and to resolve the issue of food security.
- The positive changes enabling women to participate and to make decisions in village and family affairs should be taken advantage of to involve this important portion of the population in natural resource management. ***The Women's Union should play a key role in this process.***

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APPENDIX I: FOREIGN SUPPORT TO THUA THIEN HUE³⁴

The major international agencies that are or plan to be active in the region are:

- DGIS (Dutch Government): coastal pilot program, several incidental support projects to DOSTE.
- FAO (together with the Forest Protection Department): land-use planning and land allocation, credit, extension and research in the Bach Ma Buffer Zone (Nam Dong commune).
- GVC (Gruppo Volontario Civile - Italian NGO): health projects.
- HELVETAS (together with Hue University): development of a social forestry curriculum including research and training.
- ICCO (Interchurch Development Cooperation - Netherlands): small-scale projects on the village and commune levels.
- IDRC (Canadian research group): lagoon research and small-scale agricultural research project.
- NAV (Nordic Assistance to Vietnam); small-scale projects on the village and commune levels (including Bach Ma - Hai Van Buffer Zone).
- Nord Pas de Calais (French decentralised government cooperation): several programs, such as a laboratory sampan; support to the coordination of lagoon issues; regular research commissioned to the University of Lille, together with Hue University and others; support to afforestation and training to technicians.
- PAM: contributes to food security through the establishment of plantations.
- SNV: non-agricultural employment programme (planned); lagoon program support (planned); support to the Center for Rural Development at the Hue University for Agriculture and Forestry.
- World Vision: small-scale projects on the village and commune levels (including in the Bach Ma–Hai Van buffer zone).
- WWF (with GEF/World Bank): environmental protection as part of the Bach Ma Buffer Zone Program (planned).

³⁴ Information from the SNV project Strengthening forestry management capacity in T.T. Hue province, January 1999

APPENDIX II: LIST OF POLICIES AND DECREES RELATED TO FORESTLAND ALLOCATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

Forest Land allocation		
1	1993	Land Law
2	No. 10/1998/QH dated December 2nd 1998	Amends some clauses in the Land Law.
3	No. 04/2000/ND-CP dated February 11th 2000	Government Decree on the implementation of the Land Law.
4	No. 85/1999/ND-CP dated August 28th 1999	Decree of the Government Prime Minister on amending and supplementing a number of clauses on agricultural land allocation to households and individuals for long-term use, and on supplementing land allocation to individual households that are making salt for long-term use.
5	No. 163/1999/ND-CP dated March 29th 1999	Government Decree on procedures for transferring, leasing, re-leasing and inheriting land-use rights and mortgages; using land as investment capital.
6	No. 01-CP dated 2nd 1995	Government Decree on the issuing regime of land allocation for agriculture, forestry and aquaculture production of SOEs.
7	1993	Tax Law on agricultural land-use.
8	No. 74/CP dated October 25th 1993	Government Decree specifically regulating the implementation of the Tax Law on agricultural land-use.
9	No. 178/2001/QD-TTg dated November 12th 2001	Decision of the Prime Minister on tenure, rights and responsibilities of households and individuals that are allocated forest and forest land.
Forest management, use and development		
10	1996	Law on forest protection and development.
11	17-HDBT 1992	Enforcement of the Law on forest protection and development.
12	39-CP 1994	Government Decree on the organisation, tasks and authority of the Forest Protection Department (FPD)
13	08/2001/QD-TTg	Decision of the Government Prime Minister on the management mechanisms for the three types of natural forest, including Special-Use Forest, watershed protection forest and production forest.
14	02/1999/QD-BNN-PTNT	Decision of the Minister of MARD on logging and forest product regulations.
11	15/LS/CNR dated July 19 th 1989	Instruction by the Ministry of Forestry on developing plans for regulating forests in SFEs.
15	1990	Tax Law on the natural resources of the State Council.
16	06/HDBT dated January 7th 1991	Decree of the Minister Council specifically regulating the Tax Law on natural resources.
17	232 CT dated July 30th 1991	Decision of Minister Council on transforming the regime for raising money for forest nurseries into natural resource tax.

18	327-CT1992	Decision of the Chairman of the Minister's Council on the policy of using fallow land, barren hills, forests, alluvial plains, ground and surface water areas.
19	661/1998-QD-TTg	Decision of the Government Prime Minister on the objectives, tasks, policies and implementation of the 5 Million Hectare Programme.
20	28/1999/TT-BTC	Circular guiding the management and allocation of the state budget to the 5 Million Hectare Programme under Decision 661/Q§-TTg dated July 29th 1998 of the Government Prime Minister.
21	03-UB/NLN 1993	Enforcement of the Decision 327-CT on the assessment and approval of projects and the documentation of Programme 327.
22	Sè 245/TTg dated December 21th 1998	Implement state management responsibilities at all levels on forest and forest land under the recommendations of the Director of the DFD.
23	18/HDBT 1992	Decree of the Ministers' Council defining a list of rare flora and fauna, with regulations on their management and protection.
24	551 LN/KL 1994	Strengthen the protection of wildlife.
25	135/1998/QD-TTg	Approval of socio-economic development programmes in mountainous and remote communes that experience extreme difficulties.
26	416/1999/TTLT/BKH- UBDTMN-TC-XD	Guidance on management and infrastructure construction in mountainous and remote communes that experience extreme difficulties.
27	67/1999/QD- TTg dated March 30th 1999	Decision of the Prime Minister on some policies of credit for agriculture and rural development.
Organise management mechanism of SFEs		
28	1995	Law of SOEs
29	187/1999/QD-TTg	Joint Circular of MARD and the Ministry of Finance guiding the implementation of Decision 187/1999/Q§-TTg dated September 16th 1999 and issued by the Government Prime Minister
30	1999	Enterprise Law
31	1998	Law Promoting Domestic Investment (amended)
32	51/1999/ND-CP date 8/7/1999	Government Decree regulating the implementation of the Law Promoting Domestic Investment (amended) no. 03/1998
33	1997	VAT Law
34	43 /1999/ND-CP ngày 29/6/1999	Government Decree on investment credit and the development of the State.

APPENDIX III: FORESTLAND AREAS IN QUANG NAM AND THUA THIEN HUE

TT	Land and Forest categories	Total	Area categorised in functions		
			Protection	Special-use	Production
1	2	3	4	5	6
I	Forested land	425.921	290.952	79.668	55.301
A	Natural forest	388.803	268.095	79.298	41.410
1	Timber Forest	378.872	260.450	78.994	39.428
	Volume III (IIIa3)	37.275	19.673	12.706	4.896
	Volume IV (IIIa2, IIIa1)	256.766	180.241	53.815	22.710
	Volume V	35.180	20.462	7.541	7.177
	Young forest with stock	42.654	34.389	4.799	3.466
	Young forest without stock	6.750	5.438	133	1.179
	Conifer forest	247	247		
2	Bamboo forest	9.931	7.645	304	1.982
	Bamboo forest				
	Bamboo forest	9.931	7.645	304	1.982
B	Planted forest	37.118	22.857	370	13.891
	Timber forest with stock	14.915	9.232	23	5.660
	Timber forest without stock	15.076	9.139	142	5.795
	Non-Timber Forest Products	7.127	4.486	205	2.436
II	Fallow land	368.977	273.383	29.579	66.015
	Grassland (Ia)	16.168	12.641	742	2.785
	Grassland Ib	181.866	131.107	8.949	41.810
	Bush, barren land with scattered timber	170.943	129.635	19.888	21.420
III	Others	245.616	78.086	5.739	161.791
	Total natural area	1.040.514	642.421	114.986	283.107

Table 1: Current land and forest resources in Thua Thien Hue

No	Forest type	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)	Volume (thousand m3)	Percentage (%)
I	Forested land	221,517	44	21,408.3	100
1	Natural forest	177,140	80	20,568.0	96
	Rich forest	39,250	22	8,990.0	43
	Medium Forest	14,370	26		
	Poor forest	66,670	38		
	Regenerated forest	25,850	15		
2	Planted forest	44,377	20	840.3	4
II	Barren land	134,387	26		
	Grass land IA	22,286	16		
	Bush land IB	56,307	43		
	Bush barren land with scattered timber IC	47,604	35		
	Sandy land	8,396	6		
III	Agricultural land and others	149,495	30		
	Total area of natural forest	505,399	100		

APPENDIX IV: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA OF SURVEYED VILLAGES IN QUANG NAM

**Table 1: Population, labour, cultivation area and poverty ratio
in five villages of Ca Di commune, Nam Giang district**

No.	Village Name	Households (#)	People (#)	Females (#)	Key laborers (#)	Shifting cultivation (ha)	Field area (ha)	Poor house- (#)	Households experiencing hunger through the year (#)
1	A Lah (Ngoi)	46	256	125	66	26,1	2	16	6
2	Pa Cang	67	385	211	70	21	2	35	0
3	Pa Don	72	379	137	79	16,6	1,7	28	5
4	Pa Pang	53	252	114	45	26	0	27	12
5	Pa Lanh	57	270	50	60	20	0	40	15

Table 2: Number of school children and percentage of illiteracy in five villages of Ca Di commune, Nam Giang district

No.	Village	Kindergarten (persons)	Primary education (persons)	Secondary education (persons)	High Level of education (persons)	Illiteracy rate (%)
1	A Lah (Ngoi)	10	30	8	2	40
2	Pa Cang	20	20	30	0	40
3	Pa Don	17	63	10	6	53
4	Pa Pang	0	30	25	2	30
5	Pa Lanh	0	30	21	3	30

**Table 3: Ethnic and Vietnamese languages in five villages
in Ca Di commune, Nam Giang district**

No.	Villages	People using ethnic languages in the community daily (%)	People speaking fluent Vietnamese (%)
1	A Lah (Ngoi)	100	50
2	Pa Cang	100	45
3	Pa Don	100	70
4	Pa Pang	100	50
5	Pa Lanh	100	90

Table 4: The current status of traditional customs retention in five villages in the Ca Di commune, Nam Giang district

TT	Customs	Villages	A Lah (Ngoi)	Pa Cang	Pa Don	Pa Pang	Pa Lanh
1	Sleep without a mosquito net		0	30	60	20	50
2	Respect sorcerers, invite sorcerers in necessary cases		10	30	50	70	75
3	Perform spiritual ceremony (before beginning shifting cultivation and sowing seeds)		100	100	100	100	100
4	Walk barefoot		10	20	20	20	10
5	Drink unboiled water		50	70	60	15	85
6	Give birth at home		100	100	100	100	95
7	Bear many children (3+)		15	25	70	25	50
8	Marry at an early age (under 18)		0	0	0	7	20
9	Buffalo sacrificing festival		100	100	100	100	100
10	New rice seeds and new rice offering ceremonies		100	100	100	100	100
11	Live in houses on stilts		0	5	10	0	0
12	Public gathering in Nha Rong (a kind of traditional house)		0	0	0	0	0
13	Practice of slaughtering pigs as Tờ Mỡi (thăm sui gia)		100	100	100	100	100
14	Practice of slaughtering pigs to ask for a wife for their son		100	100	100	100	100

APPENDIX V: PRA TOOLS

- **Group discussion** is an exercise useful for discussions and double-checking information.
- **Checklist** is a tool used for listing important animals and plants species, and other issues, which are recorded by villagers.
- **Ranking** is a tool that uses matrix tables for ranking agricultural or forest products according either to their popularity, importance or economic value.
- **Mapping** is an exercise that involves local people to prepare a geographical representation- a sketch map, prepared by the community. These maps include basic topographical data such as mountains, rivers, and constructions such as houses and road. They help to identify areas with resources, to explore resource use patterns and management, types of crops, forest species, and specific problems and potentials.
- **Transect line** is a transverse cut of the community, farm and forest land in which various issues related to production and resource management can be identified, described and analysed. Aspects that can be explored are: ecological features, soil and forest resources management, water management, forest species, type of crops, infrastructure, and other aspects related to natural resource conservation and management.

APPENDIX VI: REPORT SERIES OF THE CENTRAL TRUONG SON INITIATIVE

Towards a Biodiversity Vision for the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex Compiled by: Michael C. Baltzer, Nguyen Thi Dao, and Robert G. Shore

a) Main Report

This report, commonly termed "the biovision", details the biodiversity of the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex (FLMEC). The FLMEC is an amalgamation of four ecoregions - one of which is the Greater Annamites. This report is responsible for the delineation of the Greater Annamites Ecoregion. Within the report is a description of the ecoregion, its biological features of importance, and the threats faced by the ecoregion. The report goes further by identifying and ranking conservation priorities within the Greater Annamites, with the ultimate goal of ensuring the conservation of all biodiversity of the ecoregion for future generations

b) Technical Annex

The Technical Annex is the second document in the "biovision" series. This report expands on the information provided in the main report by providing more detailed information about each area identified as a conservation priority (termed a "priority landscape"). In addition, the Technical Annex contains condensed versions of the scientific desk studies on the birds, mammals, vegetation and fish of the entire FLMEC.

Socio-economic Scoping Report for the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex John Baker, Bruce McKenney and Jack Hurd

To compliment the large scale biological assessment conducted for the FLMEC, a socio-economic scoping study was also conducted.

This "situational analysis" is less detailed than the biological assessment, with the intention of providing only essential background information about the main threats to biodiversity and the underlying and exacerbating socio-economic factors. In conclusion, goals and recommendations for improving biodiversity conservation are outlined.

1. A Biological Assessment of the Central Truong Son Landscape

Andrew W. Tordoff, Robert J. Timmins, Robert J. Smith and Mai Ky Vinh

Biodiversity Advisory Group: Nguyen Xuan Dang (IEBR); Jack Tordoff (Birdlife International); Le Trong Trai (FIPI); Le Xuan Canh (IEBR); Nguyen Cu (IEBR/Birdlife International); Nguyen Tien Hiep (IEBR); Nguyen Kim Son (IEBR); Vu Van Dung (FIPI); Do Tuoc (FIPI); Pham Mong Giao (FPD); Tran Quoc Bao (FPD); Pham Nhat (Xuan Mai Forestry College); Phan Ke Loc (Hanoi University); Nguyen Van Sang (IEBR); Nguyen Huu Duc (Hanoi Pedagogical University); Rob Shore (WWF Indochina); Alexander Monastyrski (VRTC); Andrey N. Kouznetsov (VRTC).

This is the first report produced under the Central Truong Son Initiative. Covering one of the Greater Annamites most critical priority landscapes, A Biological Assessment of the Central Truong Son Landscape follows a similar process to the "biovision" report for the Forests of the Lower Mekong Ecoregion Complex (FLMEC).

This report details the biological importance and status of the Central Truong Son priority landscape, and identifies threats to the region. Furthermore, the report outlines conservation priorities for the region and develops broad targets for each of these priorities. Subsequent Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analyses aid in defining a "conservation landscape" for the Central Truong Son Landscape.

2. Socio-economic Issues in the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Nguyen Lam Thanh

This report provides an extensive overview of the socio-economic situation and issues found within the Vietnamese portion of the Central Truong Son priority landscape.

The report contains a great deal of "benchmark data" that is essential to planning for successful conservation and development efforts. This information highlights clear differences between provinces within the priority landscape, and to a lesser extent within individual provinces. Due to the diverse nature of the region, resulting from vast geographical, climatic and cultural differences, the benchmark data is needed to tailor conservation efforts to each area.

3. An Assessment of Development Initiatives in the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Aylette Villemain, Herbert Christ, Nguyen Thanh Hai, Tran Kim Long, Bach Tan Sinh and Do Duc Tho

The Central Truong Son Initiative aims to combine successful biodiversity conservation with sustainable development. In order to achieve a balanced result, it is essential that existing and planned development initiatives are identified and integrated into conservation strategies.

This report focuses on the provinces located within the Vietnamese portion of the Central Truong Son priority landscape. Planned and existing development initiatives, such as road construction and poverty alleviation projects, are detailed in the report and the potential effects on conservation are commented upon.

4. Existing Land-use Management in the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Tran An Phong

Within Vietnam, extensive work has been carried out in designating land-use management practices. This report attempts to pool the often confusing and scattered information into one cohesive map of existing land-use management practices in the Central Truong Son Landscape.

The main outputs of the study are detailed Geographical Information System (GIS) data and maps; they may be combined with additional data for further analyses. However, a brief accompanying report provides some explanation of land-use management within the Central Truong Son Landscape.

5. People, Land and Resources in the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Huynh Thu Ba

Research Team: Huynh Thu Ba; Le Cong Uan; Vuong Duy Quang; Pham Ngoc Mau; Nguyen Ngoc Lung; Nguyen Quoc Dung

In addition to extensive biological and situational data, an understanding of how local communities utilise and interact with their environment is essential to developing effective and integrated conservation strategies.

This report aims to develop a more detailed understanding of the current issues related to people, land and resources - in particular Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). The study focuses on two pilot sites within the Central Truong Son Landscape, where extensive fieldwork was conducted. Detailed comparisons both within and between the sites are made and key recommendations are listed.

6. Tourism Potential of the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Hoang Phuong Thao

Tourism within the region is a rapidly expanding sector. If developed properly, this could provide significant financial benefits to the inhabitants of the Greater Annamites.

This report investigates existing tourist attractions and facilities with a view towards their potential enhancement. The study also examines the potential of developing additional tourism infrastructure, investigating the full range of possibilities (including ecotourism), as all tourism has the potential to either benefit or harm conservation in a direct or indirect manner.

7. Hunting and Collecting Practices in the Central Truong Son Landscape

Compiled by: Le Trong Trai, Dang Thang Long, Phan Thanh Ha and Le Ngoc Tuan

Phong Dien Nature Reserve (T.T. Hue Province) is a critical part of the Central Truong Son conservation landscape as it protects one of the last remnants of lowland forest and is home to important species such as Saola and Edward's pheasant.

This study builds on existing data collected from Phong Dien, and expands the scope to include seven villages. The study investigated which natural resources are used in the area, where they are collected from and their value in financial and cultural terms. The analysed information points out a local dependence on natural resources.

WWF embarked on **Ecoregion-Based Conservation** in 1998 in response to concerns about the increasing pace of biodiversity loss and the need to increase the scale and integration of global conservation efforts. Thinking and acting across large scales (such as ecosystems, bioregions, or - in WWF's case - ecoregions) can better address both the need to conserve viable species populations and ecosystem processes, and the need to integrate conservation and human development.

Ecoregion conservation begins with the "Global 200" ecoregions - 238 large, biologically-defined regions identified as representing the highest priorities for conservation across all the Earth's major habitat types. The Forests of the Lower Mekong is a complex of four diverse and threatened ecoregions, three of which are listed as Global 200 ecoregions. Established in 1999, the Ecoregion Action Program (EAP) in the Forests of the Lower Mekong is currently working to conserve the beautiful and endangered biodiversity of two of these ecoregions - the Greater Truong Son and the Central Indochina Dry Forests.

The Greater Truong Son ecoregion comprises some of the world's most unique and threatened wildlife - from its charismatic endemic species such as the stunning Douc langur and the remarkable saola, to some of the world's most endangered and evocative species like the Asian elephant, tiger and Javan rhinoceros. The future of these, and many other species is dependant on successful, long-term conservation of the ecoregion as a whole that must be undertaken immediately, before they are lost forever. EAP in the Greater Truong Son aims to conserve this ecoregion through:

- Mobilising conservation throughout the entire Greater Truong Son ecoregion
- Protecting key sites and species through integrated conservation and development activities in priority landscapes
- Promoting a supportive policy environment for conservation and sustainable development
- Laying the foundations for lasting conservation

The Central Truong Son Initiative is a pilot initiative being developed by WWF's Greater Truong Son EAP in cooperation with the Governments of Vietnam and Lao P.D.R.. The aim of this fledgling initiative is to create partnership of a broad range of stakeholders - from local communities to government institutions and international organisations - working together to secure biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the Central Truong Son Landscape.

WWF is one of the world's largest and most experienced conservation organizations, with almost five million supporters and a global network active in more than 90 countries.

WWF's mission is to stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans can live in harmony with nature, by:

- Conserving the world's biological diversity
- Ensuring that the use of renewable natural resources is sustainable
- Promoting the reduction of pollution and wasteful consumption

WWF produced the Central Truong Son Initiative Report Series with the cooperation and support of the FPD and USAID.

Vietnam's Forest Protection Department (FPD) is a government partner in the Central Truong Son Initiative.

The FPD, located under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), is responsible for providing technical advice and guidance in regard to Special Use Forests, and for wildlife management and law enforcement.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), in conjunction with WWF-US, has generously provided funds towards the Central Truong Son Initiative.

USAID, an independent federal government agency, is the principal U.S. agency to extend assistance to countries recovering from disaster, trying to escape poverty, and engaging in democratic reforms.

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