

Summary of Terminal Evaluation Result

| 1. Outline of the Project | |
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| Country: Socialist Republic of Viet Nam | Project Title: Project for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Watershed Area (SUSFORM-NOW) |
| Issue/Sector : Nature Conservation— Sustainable Use of Natural Resources | Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation |
| Division in Charge: Natural Environment Team 1, Forestry and Nature Conservation Group, Global Environment Department. | Total Cost : 603 million yen |
| Period of Cooperation | 15 August 2010 – 14 August 2015, 5 years |
| | Partner Country’s Implementation Organization: (Dien Bien Provincial) Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) Supporting Organization in Japan: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) |
| <p>1-1 Background of the Project</p> <p>The forested area in Socialist Republic of Viet Nam (Vietnam) was changed from 43% in 1943 to 28% in 1995 due to over-exploitation (deforestation) and unsustainable management. Dien Bien Province, located in the northwest regions in the country, is also experiencing forest area decline due to over-exploitation of fuel wood harvesting, shifting cultivation and conversion to farmland. In order to realize sustainable forest management, it is essential to (1) control deforestation through livelihood improvement, (2) manage the allocated forest by local communities, and (3) develop the capacity of key actor such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Based on the above background, the Vietnam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) requested the Government of Japan a technical cooperation project which aimed at sustainable forest management in the northwest region, and the Project for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Watershed Area (SUSFORM-NOW) was initiated in August 2010 for five years.</p> <p>On the other hand, climate change is an emerging challenge, and the National Action Program on "REDD+¹ (NRAP) was established in Viet Nam, and the Dien Bien Provincial People’s Committee (PPC) developed Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP) through assistance of JICA’s technical cooperation project “Dien Bien REDD+ Pilot Project (REDD+PP)” from 2012 to 2013.</p> <p>The Midterm Review of SUSFORM-NOW was conducted and suggested to integrate the outputs of</p> | |

¹ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in developing countries; and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries

REDD+PP to SUSFORM-NOW in January 2013. The Government of Viet Nam and JICA discussed and the Project Design Matrix (PDM) and Plan of Operation (PO) were modified to assist pilot implementation of PRAP using experience obtained by the first half of SUSFORM-NOW.

1-2 Project Overview

(1) Overall Goal

Participatory forest management and livelihood development are promoted in the areas with similar conditions to the additional project pilot sites in Dien Bien Province through the implementation of the Provincial REDD+ Action Plan (PRAP).

(2) Project Purpose

Participatory forest management and livelihood development are promoted in the project pilot sites through the implementation of the PRAP.

(3) Outputs

1. The effectiveness and feasibility of the C-RAP²s in the additional project pilot sites are verified.
2. Technical and institutional capacities of executing and partner agencies in implementing the PRAP are strengthened.
3. Necessary plans and technical documents are prepared for the implementation of the provincial REDD+ in Dien Bien Province.

(4) Inputs:

<Japanese side>

- Amount of total inputs/ Project activity budget/ Local operational cost: 134 million yen
- Long-term experts: Chief Advisor/Forest Planning, Administrative Coordinator, Participatory Forest Management, Livelihoods Development : 6 persons
- Short-term experts: Livelihoods Development, Facilitation Skills, Qualitative Analysis of Participant Observation Data, Administrative Coordinator 2 : 6 persons
- Consultant team: (1) Livelihoods Development, (2) Provincial Forest Monitoring System
- Machinery and equipment: 8,591,012 yen.
- Counterpart (C/P) training in Japan: 48 persons.

<Vietnamese side>

- C/P staff: 31 persons.
- Facility: Working space for experts

² Commune REDDD+ Action Plan

- Project counterpart budget: 8,958,732 yen.

2. Evaluation Team

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| Members of Evaluation Team (Japanese Side) | Team Leader, Mr. Hiroki Miyazono, Senior Advisor on Forest Management, JICA Poverty Alleviation/ Safe Guard, Ms. Suzuka Sugawara, Senior Advisor on Poverty Reduction, JICA Forest Administration Policy, Mr. Shingo Kamiyama, Forestry Agency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Cooperation Planning, Ms. Estuko Masuko, Deputy Director, Forestry and Nature Conservation Division 1, Forestry and Nature Conservation Group, Global Environment Department, JICA Evaluation Analysis, Mr. Shigeo Sakai, Consultant, Japan Development Service Co., Ltd. | |
| Period of Evaluation | 29 May –18 June, 2015 | Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation |

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Progress of the Project

(1) Achievement of Outputs

Achievement of the Output 1:

Output 1 is expected to be achieved.

- 1) Village forest management plans (FMPs) and livelihoods development plans (LDPs) were elaborated and officially approved for all seven(7) initial pilot project sites (fifteen (15) villages).
- 2) As an achievement of the Commune-level REDD+ Action Plans (C-RAPs) in two (2) additional pilot project sites - Muong Phang and Muong Muon are;
 - Muong Phan C-RAP was approved by the local authorities on 10 and 15 June, 2014.
 - Muong Muon C-RAP was approved by the local authorities on 18 November, 2014.
 - Thirty-five (35) village-based forest patrolling teams were trained by forest rangers, and started patrolling activities.
 - Sixteen (16) out of thirty-five (35) villages have established forest regeneration areas.
 - Thirty (30) out of thirty-five (35) villages have participated in reforestation in 2015.
 - Twenty-seven (27) out of fifty (50) villages started providing loans to villagers by the Village Fund (VF).

Achievement of the Output 2:

Output 2 is expected to be achieved.

- 1) The project team conducted various different types of training courses for Project Management Unit (PMU) member/ government staff and villagers.
- 2) The training course evaluation indicated that the more than 60% of the government officers who

took the training course understood training contents.

- 3) An improved the Provincial Forest Monitoring System (PFMS) methodology with tablet-based data collection system and QGIS-based database system have been designed and tested. The improved system is piloted and evaluated towards the end of the project. Comparison of indicative costs of different PFMS implementation will also be done as a part of the above evaluation by the end of the Project.
- 4) A set of recommendations on institutional and capacity gaps will be identified and compiled based on the result of the pilot implementation, towards the end of the project.

Achievement of the Output 3:

Output 3 is expected to be achieved.

- 1) The revision of PRAP will not be necessary since the PRAP is officially approved in 2014, and it is too early to revise.
- 2) Instead of revising PRAP, a set of recommendations for PRAP revision will be compiled and submitted to DARD and PPC by the end of the project.
- 3) Compilation/revision of the technical guidelines and manuals for PRAP implementation will be accomplished on (1) PFMS, (2) village-based forest patrolling, (3) livelihoods development, and (4) VF management by the end of the project.
- 4) In major seminars/workshops, at least eight (8) presentations had been made to disseminate the project experience.

(2) Prospect for achieving Project Purpose

The project purpose is expected to be accomplished by the end of the project.

- Livelihood development activities are conducted at all the initial project pilot sites.
- According to the household interview in May 2015, 42% of households indicate that livelihood improvement support is main reason to undertake forest management activities in Initial Pilot Site (IPS).
- The Project accessed the result of the activities, based on the satellite image interpretation between early 2013 and early 2015 in Muong Phang (Dien Bien District) and Muong Muon (Muong Cha District), and found that the results met the Indicators.
- Findings are summarized as; (1) about 98% and 95% of natural forest is protected in Muong Phang and Muong Muon, and (2) total area that was reforested and regenerated is 436.4 ha and 402.0 ha in Muong Phang and Muong Muon and thus the area regenerated and reforested has exceeded the area deforested during the set period.
- According to the rural household interview in May 2015, the average changes of household cash income at the additional sites, between 2012 to 2014 are; 45.1 percent increase (nominal), and 31%

increase (real after the inflation adjustment).

3-2 Summary of Evaluation Results with five (5) criteria.

(1) Relevance: High

There were no significant changes, since mid-term review, in the policies of both Japanese and Vietnamese governments in the sector of Forestry, REDD+, and rural development. Relevance is high in terms of Vietnamese national forest management and development policy, needs from both national and local level in the Vietnam, Japanese official development assistance (ODA) policy for the Vietnam, and the Project design.

(2) Effectiveness: Relatively High

The effectiveness of the project is relatively high, because (1) the project purpose is expected to be achieved to a high degree by the end of the project, and (2) the project purpose will be logically achieved by accomplishing and integrating three (3) outputs of the project.

(3) Efficiency: Relatively High

The efficiency of the project to date is relatively high. In general, inputs to produce project output is reasonable, timing of providing inputs are adequate, even though some of the inputs were delayed from originally scheduled. The project activities were undertaken as per the schedule, and the inputs were utilized and maintained appropriately.

(4) Impact: Relatively High

The impact of the Project is relatively high, since various positive impacts were observed on (1) improvement of forest management system, (2) awareness raising and capacity building of relevant stakeholders at various levels on forest management.

(5) Sustainability: Medium

A prospect for sustainability of the Project depends on various factors including institutional, financial and technical capacities of government of Vietnam and local authorities. In particular, the capacity of DARD, which is key implementing agency of PRAP, need to be enhanced. REDD+ or PRAP implementation fully depends on the commitment of PPC of Dien Bien Province after the end of the Project.

3-3 Factors that promoted the realization of effects

(1) Land and Forest allocation (LFA) survey

- Vietnamese government program on “Land and Forest allocation (LFA) survey” enable villagers to

clarify the land and forest tenure, land use type land users” right, and benefit from the forest conservation. This practice could define forest protection area, and raised awareness and motivation of forest protection.

(2) Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES)

- Vietnamese government policy and programs on Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) provided the incentives for better forest management by villagers, as well as provided funding to support forest conservation activities, such as village patrolling team activities. Villages in Muong Muon commune, now enjoy PFES.

3-4 Factors that impeded the realization of effects

(1) Project implementation

- The Project selected fifty-one (51) pilot villages and the number of pilot sites is too many to conduct livelihood development activities and to monitor with limited budget and staff.
- Due to the large number of the pilot sites, PMU also became large and the PMU finally reached thirty-one (31) persons. Some PMU members were inactive in project implementation and did not present monthly meetings, despite the fact that their salary top-up of 20-30%.

(2) Vietnamese government and local government issues

- Approval of the “land and forest allocation (LFA)” result is taking significantly longer time than originally expected in Muong Phang Commune, which resulted in delaying the PFES fund distribution to MPSUFMB³/villages.
- Villagers living near Special-Use Forest (SUF) are not fully motivated for forest protection and afforestation. It is because benefit distribution mechanism is not yet fully established or functions.
- Some poverty alleviation programs provided FREE support to villagers, and these experiences made villagers to think revolving system of initial investment is difficult to practice. The Project experiences misconception and misunderstanding of the initial input support for livelihoods development activities, because villagers believed all these support should be free of charge or grant, even though villagers signed the repayment agreement. The result is significantly low figure in repayment rates to the village funds.
- There are some issues on the implementation of existing policy, such as low cost norm to undertake reforestation activities.

(3) Issues related Local conditions

- There is a limited capacity on “seedling supply”, in terms of seedling variety, quantity and quality for reforestation activities.

³ MPSUFMB: Muong Phang Special-Use Forest Management Board

(4) Situation in villages

- During the livelihood development activities, animal diseases (e.g., PRRS⁴, AI⁵), natural calamities (e.g., flooding, hail, cold weather, lack of rain, pests), and market price fluctuation occurred and negatively affected the results in both reforestation and livelihoods development activities.
- Limited commodity markets and poor road conditions in some villages, made it difficult to conduct agricultural production and income generation activities.
- Six (6) villages in Muong Muon Commune are located at difficult place to access by vehicles, which made difficult to conduct livelihood activities in the village.

3-5 Conclusion

- Based on these Project's efforts, the prospect for achieving the project purpose by the end of the Project is high.
- The project was commenced in August 2010, and in a course of its execution, the project purpose changed to "forest management and livelihood development promotion through the implementation of the PRAP" at the time of mid-term review in January 2013. After changing of the Project Design Matrix (PDM), the Project added more emphasis on forest management activities through the implementation of C-RAP in two (2) pilot communes.
- The project worked hard in the field of livelihood development in pilot villages throughout the project period, and succeeded in improving income level of villagers by variety of activities, such as animal husbandry and agricultural production.
- The Project conducted a series of training courses for villagers. The project also formulated village FMPs, LDPs and VF in all pilot villages. The Project also organizes "village forest patrol team" which is expected to be a foundation of community based forest management and bottom-up forest monitoring systems.
- PFMS is one of the most important products of the project. An innovative tablet PC-based data collection and GIS based data management system, together with information from bottom-up village patrol team are introduced by the PFMS. As a result of these efforts, ties between forest rangers, forest management boards and villagers are strengthened.
- The Project also supports the LFA which enables villages to enjoy PFES. These two (2) programs are powerful driver for villagers to understand the importance of forest conservation environmentally and economically.

⁴ PRRS: Porcine Reproductive and Respiratory Syndrome

⁵ AI: Avian Influenza

3-6 Lessons learned.

This project's outcome will be expanded into three (3) other provinces in the Northwest region. The new project is expected to begin in August 2015, and the evaluation team summarized the lessons learned and as follows;

(1) The clear vision of the project and necessity of a strategy.

- It is important to share a mutual understanding among project stakeholders to promote REDD+, forest degradation and appropriate rural development activity at the early stage of a project.

(2) The project design which considered Vietnamese policy and law related to REDD+.

- Vietnamese conservation policies and programs, such as PFES or Forest Protection and Development Plan (FPDP) is effective means for local community to understand and motivate forest management and environmental conservation, so the project design should investigate and consider collaborating such programs.

(3) Policy and implementation related to special use forest.

- Special use forest is now expanded by the government, but this type of forest provides less incentive for local residents to manage forests, since thinning and harvesting is not allowed. It is necessary to improve maintenance guideline so that local residents can participate the forest management activities.

(4) Promotion of plantation and natural regeneration

- Regarding to the REDD+ promotion at the Northwest region, carbon stock can be increased by plantation promotion, so medium and long-term investment plan, marketability, tree species and seedling supply should be studied. In addition, government conservation program, such as PFES, should be utilized.

(5) Utilization of Provincial forest monitoring system (PFMS)

- The SUSFORM-NOW project introduced improvement of the forest monitoring system which uses tablet PC, GIS, and satellite images. The system is effective and has a potential to be a national standard so this monitoring system can be promoted to new projects and other donor activities.

(6) Selection of rural development activities associate with JICA project.

- Local residents will be motivated to manage forest with water resource conservation, use right to the wood and non-timber forest products and land. PFES also provides motivation to local resident's forest administration. It is important to set criteria and select rural development activities within JICA project so that villagers will be encouraged to participate forest conservation by themselves.

(7) Clarification of the function of the village fund.

- In order to distributing the payment/ profit of PFES, it is not necessary to premise on any VF establishment, and therefore, the VF establishment should be considered flexibly according to the circumstances of each village. In case of establishing VF, a possibility of collaboration with a micro finance organization should be considered.

(8) Utilization of a local resource

- A Japanese specialist and a consultant from Hanoi took the leading part to formulate REDD+ because the project introduced a new concept of REDD+. A local resource, such as the human resources trained by SUSFORM-NOW project, should be utilized maximally in a new project.

(9) Cooperation with a private sector

- The cooperation with 3 private enterprises (Sumitomo Forestry, ASUKURU and Yanmar) had an advantage in an acquisition of funds and public relations' promotion. Private-public cooperation will be encouraged in the future, but it's necessary to consider an efficient management system between the entities concerned.