



REPORT ON MANGROVE CO-MANAGEMENT STUDY TOUR FOR TIEN LANG DISTRICT PILOT

TENURE AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CHANGE (TGCC) PROGRAM



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PROGRAM

MAY 2017

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CBMM	Community Based Mangrove Forest Management
CPC	Commune People’s Committee
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCC	District Civil Court
DPC	District People’s Committee
EC	European Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
PPC	Provincial People’s Committee
TGCC	Tenure and Global Climate Change Program
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
VFD	Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program
VND	Vietnamese Dong

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In order to identify an appropriate mangrove co-management approach for the three communes of Tien Lang district under the Vietnam Forests and Deltas (VFD)/Tenure and Global Climate Change Program (TGCC) pilot, the first step involved learning directly from the experiences of two other communes where mangrove co-management approaches have been introduced. Da Loc commune in Thanh Hoa province and Dong Rui commune in Quang Ninh province have significantly different experiences with reducing mangrove loss and increasing mangrove cover. The study tour involved key members of the three communes visiting these two sites to meet with local government officials, community members and other stakeholders. This report sets out the key findings and lessons from the study tour.

Participants: 43 people from VFD/TGCC; the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of Tien Lang district; non-governmental organizations of Tien Lang; and, staff of the three project communes of Dong Hung, Tien Hung, and Vinh Quang and its coastal villages.

Date and Time: February 20 to 24, 2017

Study Area: Da Loc commune, Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa province; and Dong Rui commune, Tien Yen district, Quang Ninh province.

Purpose of Study Tour: To understand the mangrove forest co-management system and the specific steps to develop and maintain the mangrove forest co-management mechanism and how it can inform mangrove co-management approach in Tien Lang district.

Expected Outcomes:

- I.1 Understand the co-management mechanism shared by Da Loc and Dong Rui communes;
- I.2 Understand the specific steps for legal basis and development of co-management mechanism;
- I.3 Understand the content of the rules for co-management such as access, use, management and exclusion; and,
- I.4 Understand how to choose and maintain commune and village level co-management groups.

The study tours were well-organized and led by the TGCC team and leaders of Da Loc and Dong Rui communities. Both sides had time to share and understand the steps involved in establishing and maintaining mangrove co-management systems at the commune levels. Strengths and weaknesses were discussed and recommendations were made to develop more legal policies in order to support implementation of Decree 119/2016/ND-CP. Lessons learned from Da Loc and Dong Rui indicate that it would be better if the existing structure of “village rules”¹ could be used to establish mangrove co-management rules including, specific rules on payment of mangrove environmental services.

¹ Culture Village Rules/Convention in Vietnam are commonly agreed norms of a community living in an area. It was the first legally established form by the village community to help regulate social relationships in the community. Culture Village Rules/Convention are formally approved by the Government of Vietnam under the Directive 24/1998/CT-TTg dated June 19, 1998 of the Prime Minister on the development and approval of Culture Village Rules/Convention and guided by the inter-agency circular 03/2000/TTLT/BTP-BVHTT-MTTQ dated Mar. 31, 2000 by Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Culture and Information and Fatherland Front of Vietnam.

As a result of this study tour, participating members from Tien Lang district and three project communes now have a good understanding of what is required to prepare and establish a mangrove co-management system that will work for the Tien Lang context in 2017.

Da Loc Commune Study Tour

One team of 25 representatives (28% female) spent one day visiting Da Loc commune of Hau Loc district in Thanh Hoa province on February 21, 2017. The team included three TGCC staff; one staff member each from VFD office of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Farmer's Union at the district level, the district Red Cross Society Unit, and the commune-level Youth Union; two district-level DARD staff; four staff from Women's Union at the district and commune levels; five staff of Commune People's Committees (CPCs); and, six heads of coastal villages of communes of Dong Hung, Tien Hung and Vinh Quang. The team was welcomed by representatives of DARD of Thanh Hoa province and representatives of Da Loc



Study tour members shared information about the content of Decree 119 and learned about mangrove co-management system in Da Loc commune. PHOTO: TGCC VIETNAM

commune and its three coastal village heads. The Da Loc team shared their current approach to management of mangroves in their communes and districts and general information about the prevailing social-economic situation. The TGCC team explained the background and objectives of the pilot project in Tien Lang.

Da Loc commune was badly affected by Typhoon Damry in 2005. It caused a sea dyke section to break due to mangrove loss in 2005. Over 20 years, mangroves were planted in front of sea dyke sections by several mangrove plantation projects, including CARE International's support from 2007 to 2014, leading to better protection of Da Loc's sea dykes. The Da Loc co-management system and how it was established from 2009 to 2014 was shared with study tour members who raised many questions to better understand the process. The strengths in Da Loc commune were that several well-trained teams were established for mangrove plantation, mangrove seedling nursery development, and mangrove protection teams. While these were not well-maintained after the project ended in 2014, community members still know how to plant and protect mangroves. One of the weak points of the co-management approach in Da Loc commune was the decision to create a fixed-term decision for co-management governance arrangement made by the District People's Committee (DPC) that only ran until 2014 but was not extended thereafter. In addition, although village regulations were discussed and agreed by community members and the CPC, Da Loc representatives agreed that village co-management regulations would be better off using the official format of village rules so that they would be verified by the legal division of the district government and approved by DPC to get stronger enforcement. Lastly, the annual protection fees paid by the central state budget of Vietnam to a coastal guard station in Da Loc commune has not yet been shared with CPC and village mangrove co-management groups. As a result, there are no ongoing funds to support the mangrove management work.

On the way to Thanh Hoa city, the visitors also observed an event showing conflicts over benefits from coastal land use for lime production and clean development planning. It was clear that agreements on land use planning should be discussed, agreed to, and respected by all parties who have rights and benefits.

There were clear justifications seen here for the use of geospatial mapping and participatory planning in Vietnam. The content of the Decree 119/2016/ND-CP focuses on the importance of different contract modalities to support mangrove conservation as well as master planning for coastal forests. The “Our Coast – Our Future” pilot project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and is developing a participatory mapping approach as part of its five-step participatory coastal spatial planning and mangrove governance pilot work. The participatory mapping guidelines were shared with members of Da Loc commune.

Dong Rui Commune Study Tour

One team of 22 members (23% female) spent the day visiting Dong Rui commune of Tien Yen district in Quang Ninh province on February 23, 2017. The team included three TGCC staff; two Red Cross staff at the commune level; one staff member from Fatherland Front; two staff from Youth Union; one staff person from Women’s Union; five staff of CPCs of communes of Dong Hung, Tien Hung, and Vinh Quang; and, eight coastal village heads. Visitors were welcomed by leaders of Dong Rui commune and one village head. The hosts made a clear presentation about how mangroves had been cut down and then have been restored with support of various external donors. The co-management system was established in 2005 with support of the European Commission (EC)/United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project.

Co-management teams in four villages have been functioning on a voluntary basis provided by team members; only monitoring travel costs have been covered by the co-management revolving funds which are well maintained and have increased 20%, from 83 million Vietnamese Dong (VND) at the start of the co-management system to more than 100 million VND today. Strengths of the co-management system include: an open term length for the DPC decision on co-management; good co-management teams in villages; commune leaders who are brave and skillful in getting back abandoned shrimp ponds from companies; the commitment of individuals in restoring mangroves in shrimp ponds; and, revolving funds to generate income for co-management system costs. One weakness in Dong Rui commune is that the CPC and village co-management teams have not received any annual protection fee from the state budget to date since the DPC and Forest Ranger units do not understand their key and important management roles in the co-management system. The community shares its role to manage and protect mangroves with CPC and DPC, but does not take over their primary roles of mangrove management. Information about the decree 119/2016/ND-CP as well as details of the TGCC pilot project on participatory coastal spatial planning and mangrove co-management funded by USAID were shared with representatives of Dong Rui commune.

Sharing and Learning From Study Tour

Forty-three members of the two study tours met together on February 24, 2017 in the Tien Lang DPC office to debrief and share what they had learnt and what the strengths and weaknesses of co-management models in Da Loc and Dong Rui communes were. They were divided into four groups to share their learning. The tour participants discussed and agreed on the next steps in order to identify how to establish the mangrove co-management system in three communes of Tien Lang from now to December 2017. Three of the four group work presenters were women: two were deputy chairwomen of CPCs, and one was a staff



Workshop for sharing and learning about mangrove co-management in Dong Rui and Da Loc.
PHOTO: TGCC VIETNAM

member of Commune Women's Union. Female members are very actively participating in the TGCC project in Tien Lang district.

As output of the two learning study tours and subsequent discussions, the participants suggested five key steps for a mangrove co-management system for Tien Lang district:

- establishment of a legal framework which would be a DPC decision on mangrove co-management;
- development and approval of regulations on co-management at the village level;
- establishment of commune and village co-management teams;
- communication and dissemination of co-management regulations;
- monitoring and evaluation.

In the report below, information on the general coastal context of the commune is followed by an examination of the mangrove co-management approach. The report concludes with a discussion about how the findings relate to the mangrove co-management needs in Tien Lang.

I.0 GENERAL INFORMATION ON STUDY TOUR COMMUNES

I.1 DA LOC COMMUNE

Da Loc Commune is a coastal commune of Hau Loc district, Thanh Hoa province, located at 19.957665N and 105.989178E. It is exposed to the East Sea and annually affected by tropical storms, storm surges and sea water invasion (Figure 1). Therefore, Da Loc would be badly impacted by climate change.

FIGURE 1: DA LOC COMMUNE OF HAU LOC DISTRICT IN THANH HOA PROVINCE



Its administrative area is approximately 1,350 hectares with a population of 8,371 people (49% female). Inland use allocation, 379 hectares is for agriculture, 210 hectares for aquaculture and the remaining 760 hectares is for settlement, infrastructure, and services. The commune's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) reached 251 billion VND and the average income per head rose to 30 million VND in 2016. In the commune GDP contribution, agriculture represented 15%, livestock farming 13%, aquaculture 32%, construction 5.5%, and artisan works and services 34.5%. Shrimp farming inside dyke walls is almost all intensive and semi-extensive, only clam farming outside the dyke is extensive.

The Da Loc commune coastline is about five kilometers long and is protected by a coastal forest of 415 hectares including 33 hectares of casuarina species and 382 hectares of mangroves. A total of 746 hectares of mangrove plantations were supported and funded over time by the Vietnamese government program no. 661² in 1987 (mainly focusing on a plantation of 20 hectares which was linked to the dyke construction and maintenance project). Other plantations established include: 100 hectares of mangroves supported by Save the Children of Britain in 1995; 200 hectares of mangroves supported by the Vietnam Red Cross and Japan Red Cross from 1998 to 2005; 200 hectares of mangroves supported by CARE International between 2007 and 2009; 50 hectares supported by a Dyke Management Department project in 2009; and, 126 hectares supported by the Fund for Calamities in Vietnam Center in 2011 to 2015. CARE International continued to support the establishment of a mangrove co-management governance system in Da Loc from 2009 to 2014.



Study Tour members visited mangroves planted in Da Loc commune.
PHOTO: TGCC VIETNAM

The surviving mangroves are now strong enough to protect the whole length of sea dykes of Da Loc of five kilometers long and one agriculture area of 173 hectares (45.6% of commune agriculture area) and aquaculture area of 210 hectares. Mangroves also contribute to ecosystem health by supporting a range of aquatic and terrestrial species including fishes, shrimps, crabs, honey bees, and migrant birds.

1.2 DONG RUI COMMUNE

Dong Rui Commune is an estuarine island commune of Tien Yen district, Quang Ninh province at 21.230093N and 107.389726E, exposed to Ha Long Bay and protected by Van Don Island (Figure 2). Its coastline is around 39 kilometers long.

² A National Reforestation Program of the Government of Vietnam started officially from 1993 to 2015 in order to plant five million hectares of trees to increase the national forest coverage of Vietnam to 43% in several phases. Since 1996, its focus was to plant and protect protective and special use forests following an official decision 661/1998/QĐ-TTg, then named program 661 in short.

FIGURE 2: DONG RUI OF TIEN YEN DISTRICT IN QUANG NINH PROVINCE



Dong Rui commune's administrative area is approximately 4,910 hectares with a population of 2,702 people (49% female). The commune GDP was 97 billion VND and the average income per head was 36 million VND in 2016. By area of land use, agriculture represented 5%, aquaculture pond areas 13%, and mud soil and open access harvesting/gleaning area 44%. Forty percent of the commune's households are working in agriculture, 4% in aquaculture ponds, 3% have boats for fishing, 9% are catching fish by hand, 13% providing services, 1% providing services for aquaculture, and 31% working for coal mines in Cam Pha district of Quang Ninh province. All remaining shrimp ponds in Dong Rui are semi-intensive and contracted by CPC under an annual contract.

Dong Rui currently has 2,750 hectares of mangroves. In 1980, Dong Rui had 3,000 hectares of mangroves of which 1,500 hectares had been cut down for aqua-farming by 1990. A few years after this deforestation, both shrimp farming productivity and the volume of fisheries reduced dramatically. Several shrimp ponds were abandoned or shrimp farming was altogether halted. CPC of Dong Rui started its process to resume control over shrimp ponds in order to convert them through mangrove

replantation. The CPC worked with two shrimp companies from Hai Phong, who had contracted mud flat areas with the DPC for five-year contracts in order to document juridical evidence such as abandoned fish farming, re-contracting to other households, and no annual payment of production taxes in order to request the return of shrimp ponds. In the process, two companies submitted complaints to the District Civil Court (DCC) and the CPC had to attend three DCC levels: Court of First Instance, Court of Appeal, and Court of Last Instance. Finally, the CPC successfully obtained the return of all abandoned shrimp ponds in order to replant mangroves. Thereafter, mangroves were restored in 895 hectares of converted shrimp ponds with support from MARD, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), Action for Mangrove Restoration, EC/UNDP/GEF, and other projects from 1996 to 2015. Each reforestation project supported the planting of hundreds of hectares of mangroves over this 20-year period. Mangrove plantation and protection has contributed to restoring aquaculture activities and the ecosystem in Dong Rui commune. These activities resulted in the shrimp pond area being reduced from 1,500 hectares to 620 hectares in 2016. Currently, most of the work focuses on communication and awareness raising, mainly focusing on the Dao ethnic communities who have recently resettled in Dong Rui commune in order to share knowledge about the importance of not deforesting mangrove areas and learning gleaning techniques that do not harm mangroves.

2.0 CO-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS LEARNED FROM DA LOC AND DONG RUI COMMUNES

2.1 CO-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN DA LOC COMMUNE, HAU LOC DISTRICT

After Typhoon Damry in 2005, CARE International started a typhoon recovery project in Da Loc commune to restore the basic public infrastructure of irrigation systems, rural roads, and livelihoods restoration and then started a mangrove plantation project of two hundred hectares from 2006 to 2009. The project supported the commune by training selected community members on establishing a mangrove nursery (a study tour to Vinh Quang commune involved learning how to create a mangrove nursery in 2007), creating a mangrove plantation, and care of young mangroves. The commune also identified regulations about mangrove plantation, as well as care and protection regulations that were shared among villagers to ensure a high mangrove survival rate. Commune and coastal villages established mangrove protection teams whose members were selected by village heads based on criteria such as living or working near mangroves, as well as having time to patrol and protect mangroves. Selected people were trained in creating a nursery in coastal villages and the project mobilized communities to become involved in the plantation. The planting event involved a hundred people who received a symbolic payment of one dollar per planting labor time unit provided by the project. The commune and village created a well-trained planting team who received a payment of 20 dollars per plantation time by the project in order to ensure a high survival rate. In addition, commune and village mangrove protection team members also received a payment of 20 dollars per month by the project for performing mangrove protection activities.

From 2009 to 2014, CARE International and Da Loc commune started a project to establish a co-management system as part of the project exit strategy. The co-management system was established gradually in three coastal villages that are located near mangrove forests and have livelihoods activities depending on mangroves and mud flats. First, the project management board, with the support of CARE International, requested that the DPC make a decision on the establishment of a commune co-management system. Several meetings/workshops were organized with the DPC and relevant departments to share information on what co-management involves and how community members can play a protection and management role.

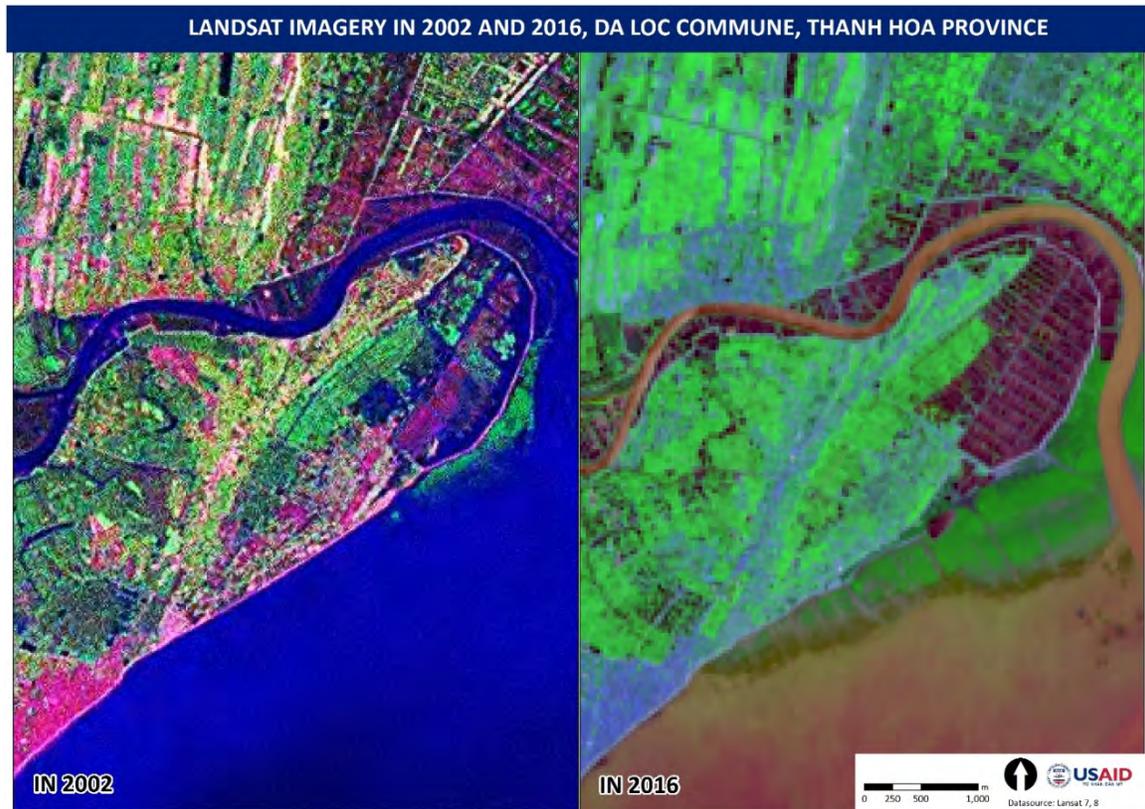
Finally the DPC of Hau Loc issued a decision agreeing to the establishment of a commune co-management system in Da Loc for a period of five years covering the project cycle from 2009 to 2014. Subsequently, Da Loc commune also established a mangrove co-management board at the commune level funded by the project. The established co-management system included a commune management

board of eight members, including a chairman; an accountant; two representatives of the CPC; one representative of the Commune Farmer's Union, Women's Union, or Youth Union; and, three village heads. These members were assigned by their respective agency to be involved in the Da Loc project from 2009 to 2014. The mangrove co-management board directed the establishment of village co-management groups in three coastal villages and led meetings at the village level to develop co-management regulations. Each village group comprises five members as the group leader is normally the village head; the other four elected members being a deputy leader, accountant, cashier, and a mangrove guard.

These groups' members, with the support of project staff and consultants, held a series of meetings and workshops to develop mangrove co-management regulations and submit to the CPC chairman for approval. The village co-management regulation convention comprised articles about the location and purpose of community-based mangrove forest management (CBMM); the rights and obligations of village people; structure, functions, responsibilities, and rights of the CBMM Board; duties and rights of the community-based mangrove forest protection group; the exploitation of products; land use in mangrove forests; and, prohibited activities such as blocking ducks and cattle from grazing in young mangrove forests, digging mollusks, hunting birds, catching crabs, walking within mangrove forests; and, anchoring boats that illegally damage the forest. The mangrove co-management regulation also includes provisions on dealing with illegal activities on forest development and protection, mobilization of communities to maintain and develop mangrove forests, the role of community funds contributions for protecting and developing community mangrove forest (payment of daily and monthly fees), and the management and usage mechanism. See Annex I for an example of mangrove CBMM conventions from Dong Tan village of Da Loc commune.

However the DPC decision on commune mangrove co-management was not renewed after the project's end in 2014. Currently, VFD is supporting the commune to request the DPC to issue a new decision on a community based forest management system (similar to a co-management system). The CBMM boards at both the commune and village level stopped existing after the project's end because of inadequate funds. The collection of funds from villagers whose incomes were generated from mangrove forest is not feasible. Former members of the village CBMM board also cannot find any copy of the signed CBMM convention to share except the draft translated version shared by VFD staff based in Thanh Hoa. Community-based mangrove forest protection groups at the commune and village level also stopped working after the project ended because of a lack of funds.

FIGURE 3: COMPARING MANGROVE AREA IN DA LOC COMMUNE IN 2002 AND 2016



Currently, the co-management groups at the village level are working on a voluntary basis because in 2015 when the project ended, the DPC signed a contract for mangrove protection with a unit of the coastal border guards based in the commune. This unit receives all protection fees paid annually by the state budget. People in Da Loc commune said that it was not feasible to collect environmental or ecosystem service fees from villagers or from households who are doing livelihood activities in the coastal area and in the mangrove forests as mentioned in the CBMM village convention because there was no mechanism for its collection. Importantly, Decree 119/2016/ND-CP also does not provide any guidance on mangrove co-management let alone on how to establish such a local fund without receiving annual protection fees from the state budget. It has been suggested that the co-management regulations should be in the form of official village rules which can then enable the collection of fees from shrimp, clam farming and honeybee raising households as well as companies in the commune area.

2.2 CO-MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN DONG RUI COMMUNE, TIEN YEN DISTRICT

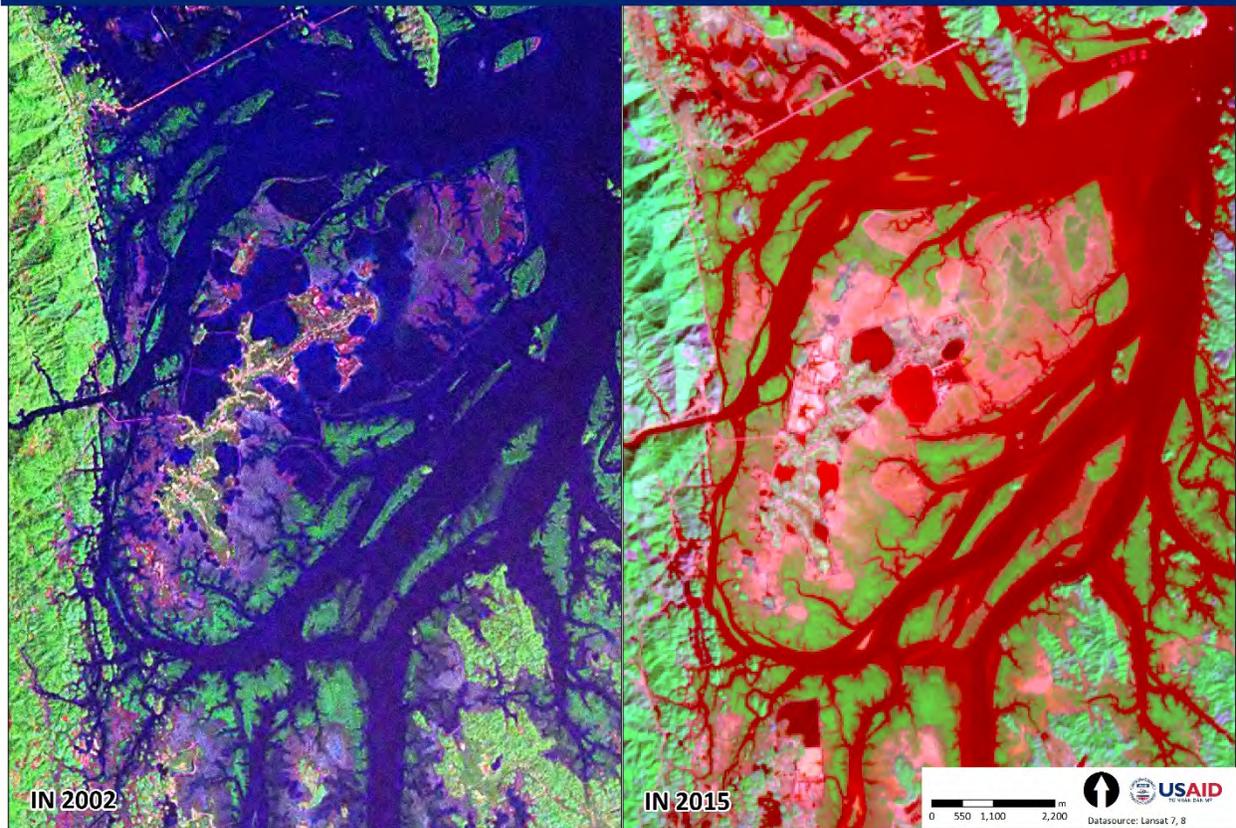
The co-management system was established with support of the EC/UNDP/GEF funded project (2005 to 2007) in Dong Rui commune in all four coastal villages. The project aimed to establish a sustainable tropical forest management approach in coastal areas of Vietnam. The co-management system that was established included one commune management board of five members assigned by the CPC and four village groups of five members who were elected by villagers. These included one group head (normally the village head), one deputy head, one accountant, one cashier, and one mangrove guard. These members were paid with project funds. The CPC also requested the district local authorities to make a decision on allocation of land and forest for village communities. According to the CPC of Dong Rui this

decision did not have a time bound limit and copies of the decision were shared with study tour members.

The DPC decision number 368/QD-UB dated May 10, 2006 said that 1,756.82 hectares of land and mangroves were allocated to villages of Dong Rui commune to manage and further develop mangrove forests. Based on this DPC decision, a CBMM convention was developed for each village and approved on May 19, 2006. The CBMM village convention has eight articles. The first article gives a definition of the village management board as an institution whose members have been voluntarily and together selected and agreed by households living in the village according to CBMM convention but also emphasizes the responsibility of all villagers in management, protection, suitable exploitation, and use of mangrove forest. The entire forest in the village, including natural and planted mangrove forest, is under the management of the CBMM board. Article 2 is about the purpose of the CBMM board to “establish a united management system in all villages to strengthen the effective protection of mangroves, to disseminate and increase the spirit for mangrove protection among villagers, to prohibit deforestation, illegal exploitation harming the forest and forest benefit resources and to prevent and deal with violations of forest carried out by people inside or outside village.” Article 3 defines a CBMM board structure, while Article 4 identifies functions and tasks of CBMM boards, including each member. Article 5 is about rules to use mangrove benefits and to deal with violations and notes that “all forest uses should be agreed and monitored by CBMM Board of village and commune.... Violations will be fined according to the level of damage to ten mangrove trees and up.” Article 6 confirms the fund sources and financial management regulations: “CBMM fund will be supported by project funds, support from higher level or loan interests, direct contribution of 10 cents per day by people who collect sea creatures from mangrove areas, violation fines and other voluntary contributions.” Incentives for CBMM board members are also identified. Article 7 is about regular meetings of CBMM boards: monthly, quarterly, and emergency meetings when there are violations of mangrove CBMM convention. Article 8 is related to enforcement and implementation of CBMM convention. In June 2007, the remaining project fund of USD\$16,000 was to be used as a revolving fund for supporting alternative livelihood instead of livelihoods based on mangrove timber and forests. Each village CBMM board has therefore received USD\$4,000 for income generation. The interest income has been used for payment of CBMM board costs. However CBMM board members are working on a voluntary basis and request to cover only travel costs for monitoring purposes. That is why the village revolving fund has increased by a few hundred US dollars.

FIGURE 3: COMPARING MANGROVE AREA IN DONG RUI COMMUNE IN 2002 AND 2015

LANDSAT IMAGERY IN 2002 AND 2015, DONG RUI COMMUNE, QUANG NINH PROVINCE



3.0 SUGGESTED MANGROVE CO-MANAGEMENT ESTABLISHMENT STEPS FOR TIEN LANG DISTRICT AND ITS COASTAL COMMUNES

During the one-day workshop to discuss the above CBMM systems in Da Loc and Dong Rui communes, representatives of Tien Lang DARD and the three communes of Dong Hung, Tien Hung, and Vinh Quang identified five steps to develop a mangrove co-management system suitable for Tien Lang district as outlined below.

3.1 STEP 1: ESTABLISHMENT OF LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR MANGROVE CBMM OR CO-MANAGEMENT

Tien Lang's DPC should issue a decision on mangrove co-management framework based on the overarching principles of the Decree 119/2016/ND-CP to strengthen the mangrove management and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystem because the DPCs of both Hau Loc and Tien Yen districts made a legal decision on allocation of land and mangrove forest to the village level to kick off the co-management establishment process. Experiences in Da Loc indicate that a non-fixed time-bound decision would be better because until the present (more than two years after CARE International's project ended), the DPC decision on CBMM has not yet been renewed by the Hau Loc DPC.

3.2 STEP 2: DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF CO-MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS AT THE VILLAGE LEVEL

A draft set of regulations should be developed by a consultant and commented on by commune staff based on the policies of Vietnam. This draft regulation would then be shared, commented on, and approved by each village member through a series of village meetings. The draft regulations would include both rights and responsibilities, fines for violations, and implementation rules. Mangrove co-management regulations should distinguish the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and of communities in order to strengthen cooperation between them. Based on examples from Da Loc and Dong Rui, the coastal communes and villages of Tien Lang will develop their own mangrove co-management convention.

Although mangrove areas are state property, access to them as well as use and management should be devolved to local community governance institutions in order for effective sustainable mangrove management to take place. Currently as state property, DPC or Provincial People's Committee (PPC) can easily decide to contract this land to companies and households to convert into shrimp farms without proper negotiations with communities who are using these areas for their daily livelihoods. In any one coastal area there can be different types of contracts: with CPC for short-term, with DPC for

mid-term, and with PPC for long-term lease; each of these have different types of tax systems associated with them. Mangrove areas should be open access areas so that poor people are able to earn a daily living without harming mangroves.

Lessons from both Da Loc and Dong Rui communes recommend that it is not feasible to collect contributions of fees and funds from villagers on a daily or monthly basis and to limit access to mangrove areas for only people in their coastal village. In Da Loc, CBMM funds could not be established since 2015 because DPC of Hau Loc had signed a protection contract with the Coastal Border Guard who received all the annual protection fees from the state budget. CBMM boards in Dong Rui also do not receive any annual protection fees from the state budget because the district protective forest board replied that work under the CBMM convention was not eligible for annual protection fees. This indicates that Decree 119 needs to be disseminated and its significance explained widely since it says that “any organization, households and individual who signs a coast forest protection contract with CPC will receive annual protection fees from the state budget.” It is suggested that the village head as the CBMM board head can sign a protection contract with the CPC to get annual protection fees from the state budget for its annual works. Annual mangrove protection fees approved by Decree 119 can be the main and sustainable source of CBMM board activities.

CBMM regulations would be best developed as an annex to the culture village rules/convention which can be easily verified by the district legal division and approved by the CPC and DPC to obtain its highest power. All villages in Tien Lang district have approved culture village rules/convention. Mangrove co-management governance regulations could therefore be developed as an annex of the culture village rules/convention culture village rules/convention culture village rules/convention culture village rules/convention culture village rules/convention. This will take time but it will create long-term validity and possess a strong power that is respected by villagers.

3.3 STEP 3: ESTABLISHMENT OF VILLAGE CO-MANAGEMENT TEAMS

It may not be necessary to have a CBMM board at the commune level since there will be a CBMM board at the village level which operates well. Representatives from Da Loc and Dong Rui agreed that a CBMM board at the commune level is not needed in reality. CBMM board members at the village level should be elected by village households. The board would have five members including a head, deputy head, accountant, cashier, and mangrove guard. It is recommended to also establish a village mangrove protection team of several people selected by village households with some criteria of willingness, availability of time to monitor mangroves, good health, and acceptance by other villagers. CBMM boards can perform the patrolling and monitoring on a monthly basis because villagers will monitor on a daily basis whenever they are doing their livelihoods or fishing activities nearby or when they pass through mangrove areas and contact the CBMM boards if there is any sign of violations or harmful activity. The CBMM board will hold quarterly meetings at the village level with village households’ representatives to update on progress and status of coastal resources.

3.4 STEP 4: COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION OF MANGROVE CO-MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS/CONVENTION

Copies of mangrove management conventions should be stored at the CPC, the commune library, and with the village head. The study tour team only received copies shared at Dong Rui commune by the CPC chairman. It is difficult to find a copy of these documents in Da Loc commune. Once approved, mangrove co-management conventions need to be disseminated to people in the commune through village meetings, loudspeaker systems, and at schools on a monthly basis. If funding is available, it is useful

to organize workshops on mangrove benefits and how to harvest aquatic resources in sustainable ways and protect mangroves. This will help to ensure that village members understand the do's and don'ts for protecting and conserving mangroves and share this information with other members during their daily livelihood activities.

3.5 STEP 5: IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The CPC manages forest and land on behalf of state owners. The head of the CBMM board signs a contract with the CPC to protect mangroves on the basis of a five-year contract in exchange for the commune providing annual protection fees. These fees will be used to implement the CBMM annual workplan. The CBMM board needs to promote the responsibility of villagers in monitoring mangrove forests so that they can inform the village protection team to deal with violation cases. It is necessary to have a village protection team because it will help deal with mangrove violations by CBMM first before bringing it to the CPC level.

Experiences shared by Da Loc and Dong Rui showed that they mainly dealt with violations by dissemination of information on violations to all villagers in order to reduce numbers of violations rather than inflicting a fine, as well as encouraging villagers to share information to find out who caused mangrove damage and advise them not to commit violations again. Very few serious cases of mangrove damage had to be reported to the CPC in order for them to establish a fine.

Dong Rui leaders have implemented the co-management system very well and reversed nearly 1,000 hectares of shrimp ponds allocated or contracted with businessmen or companies to mangrove restoration sites as described in section 1.2. The CPC of Tien Hung and DPC of Tien Lang are advised to think about this solution if they want to get some part of contracted shrimp ponds back from the Viet-My company, particularly in order to create a contiguous mangrove forest buffer along the district's coastline.

ANNEX I: VILLAGE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT CONVENTION FROM THOUNG VILLAGE, DONG RUI COMMUNE

Article 1: DEFINITION OF VILLAGE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

The village community forest management unit is nominated by households in the village on the basis of a voluntary agreement to establish a convention on mangrove forest protection for plantation and natural forests. The village community forest management unit will be responsible for direct management and protection of the village's entire forest area.

At the same time, the village people are also responsible for managing, protecting, harvesting and using appropriately the village's forests, monitoring the management unit's activities as well as making decisions on expenditures of the forest management unit via periodical meeting with all the people in the village.

Article 2: PURPOSE OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

The village community forest management unit is established to synchronize the forest protection and management activities across the entire village, to enhance the effectiveness and the strength of forest protection measures, and people's awareness of forest protection; to fight against deforestation, illegal logging, and improper harvesting that directly affect the forest resources; to prevent and participate in dealing with forest resource protection violations of villagers and non-villagers.

The election of a unified forest management unit meets the requirements for the management and protection of the mangrove forest allocated to the village. It aims to: a) maintain and assure sustainable harvesting of forest products including natural and natural zoning products, mature and qualified seafood; b) prevent harvesting, collecting and trading of small sea products that do not meet commodity standards. Through this approach, species diversity, aquaculture resources, biological environment and living environment can be sustained through planned efforts which brings sustainable benefits for the community as well as significant regular income for the people who are benefiting from the forest.

The entire village will elect the village's forest management unit. This unit will represent the village people to take responsibilities in managing, protecting forests and products in the forests.

Article 3: ORGANIZATION OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

Including:

- I. Head (might be village head)

2. Vice-head
3. Accountant
4. Cashier
5. Security

Article 4: FUNCTIONS – DUTIES OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

1. Functions of the Head: responsible for organizing, directing, managing every activity of the Unit, organizing planning meetings, and supporting activities to assure the continuity and regularity of the activities.
2. Functions and duties of Vice-head: responsible for representing the Head to monitor, direct and maintain activities during the Head's absence. At the same time, responsible for working with other members to handle issues within the Unit's management scope.
3. Functions and duties of Accountant: working with other members to conduct activities as well as consolidating and monitoring all the contributions, income-expenditure, supervising the use of the funds in line with the unit's regulations. Responsible for transacting with the Bank and conduct payments for the Unit's activities as regulated.
4. Functions and duties of Cashier: Participating in activities as other members do. Responsible for managing the budget of the community and the Unit.
5. Functions and duties of Security: responsible for working with other members to regularly patrol the forests; arrest and deal with illegal harvesters or deforestation within his/her authority. If the case exceeds his/her authority, it should be reported to commune authority for further action.
6. Members of the forest management unit and all the people in the community are responsible for complying with the regulations and laws on forest protection and the established village regulations on community forest management and protection, fully participating in meetings, and raising voice to improve the forest management and protection.

At the same time, the unit will be generally responsible for managing, protecting, and harvesting sea products in the forests in line with the sustainable planning guidelines in the regulations.

Detecting, informing, preventing, arresting and dealing in a timely way with people who damage the forests or conduct illegal harvest of products in the mangrove forests.

Article 5: REGULATIONS ON HARVESTING MANGROVE FOREST AND HANDLING VIOLATIONS

1. Harvesting timber and deforestation in all forms is strictly banned – sanctions will be placed on all violations.
2. It is only allowed to harvest dead trees, dry sticks, leafy plants for green manure, and fruits to contribute to the forest plantation. Harvesting can only be done under the permission and supervision of the village and commune forest management units.
3. For cutting down live trees for wood, peeling off tree bark (from 10 trees)
 - 1st violation: fine of 10,000 dong/tree and warning in front of the village
 - 2nd violation: fine of 30,000 dong/tree and warning in front of the commune

All the products and tools/equipment shall be seized.

4. Sea products in mangrove forests.

It is only allowed to harvest qualified commodity sea products.

Use of explosives, electric pulse, toxics, etc. for harvesting sea products is strictly banned.

1st violation: fine of 50,000 dong/event and warning in front of the village

2nd violation: fine of 200,000 dong/event, warning in front of the commune and report to commune people's committee for further decision.

All the products and tools/equipment shall be seized.

5. Cattle grazing.

Grazing cattle in newly regenerated forests and young forests is strictly banned. For the 1st time damage by cattle on 20 trees and above, the fine is 10,000 dong/event and warning in front of the village. Fine for 2nd time is 50,000 dong/event.

6. People who contribute to arrest the violators get 50% of the fine for that violation.

Article 6: FUND AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MECHANISM OF THE COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

1. The fund for community forest management unit comes from:

- Support from higher levels, loans, interests from loans
- Charge on people who harvest sea products in mangrove forests: 2,000 dong/person/day
- Fine on violations
- Contribution from individuals, organizations inside and outside the village

2. Financial management:

- Account owner: the unit head
- Accountant: in charge of bookkeeping, monitoring incomes, expenditures
- Cashier: manage the fund

3. Payment to members of village forest management unit:

- Head: 70,000 dong/month
- Vice-head: 50,000 dong/month
- Accountant: 50,000 dong/month
- Cashier: 50,000 dong/month
- Security: 50,000 dong/month

Article 7: MEETING SCHEDULE OF THE FOREST MANAGEMENT UNIT

Depending on the actual situation, the Unit will decide on the meetings:

- Periodical review meeting: once per month

- Periodical village meeting: once per 3 months
- Ad-hoc meeting: upon occurrence of cases that require consultation with the community

Article 8: IMPLEMENTATION PROVISION

1. This regulation was approved in the village meeting dated ...with 100% agreement.
2. This regulation takes effect since signing date
3. Everyone in the village and surrounding villages and communes are responsible for complying with every article in this regulation.

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