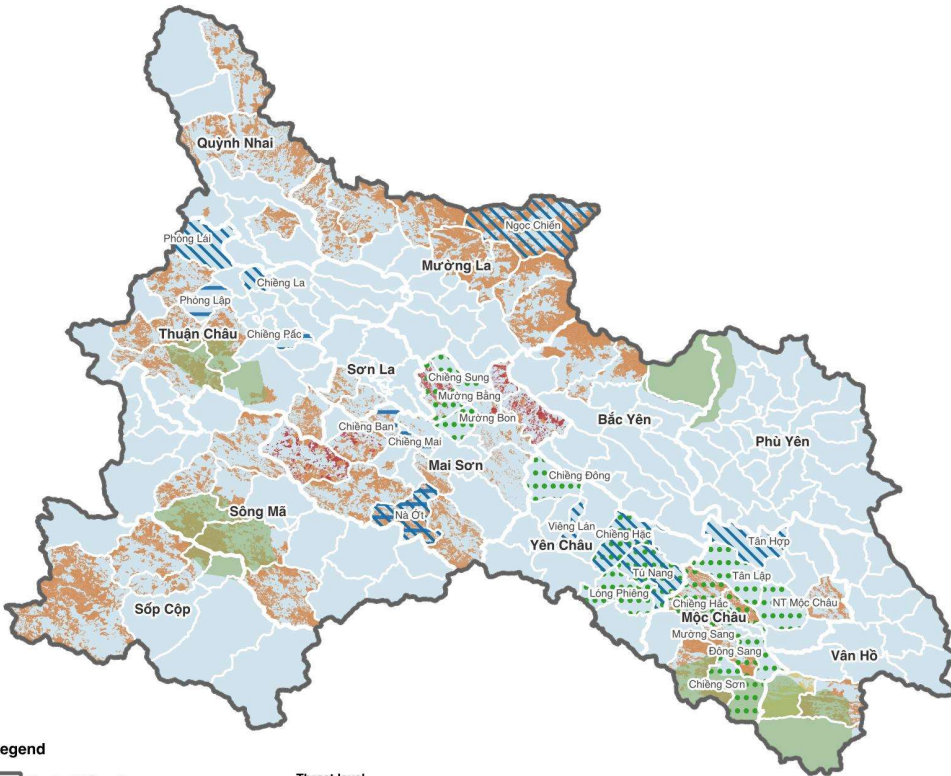
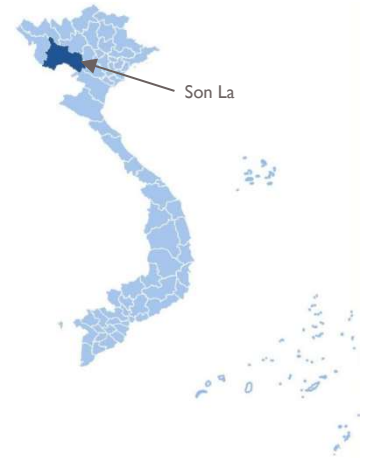


## 2023 PROVINCIAL PROFILE: SON LA



The shaded areas above show where project activities take place and areas that are facing threats of deforestation and degradation based on the project's baseline evaluation.

### Key Provincial Facts

**Total population:** 1,301,862 people, including the following ethnic minority communities: Thai, Muong, Mong, Kho Mu, and Xinh Mun.

**Total forest area:** 666,887.7 ha, of which 594,075.6 ha is natural forest and 72,812.1 ha is plantation forest.

**Forest coverage:** 47.3 percent

**Value chains the Project supports:** Fruit and bamboo.

### Summary of Progress to Date in the Province

The numbers below represent verified accomplishments through FY 23.



**6,448 ha.** of forest areas under improved management



**229,278 tons** of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduced



**\$188,348** funds committed towards conservation-friendly enterprises



**2** conservation-friendly enterprises supported



**365** people supported to adapt to climate change



**4,157** people who received livelihood benefits



**2,500** people trained



**7** laws, policies, plans, regulations, or standards developed



**8** institutions with improved capacity

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN SON LA

Son La is one of the two first provinces in Vietnam that piloted the financial mechanism of ‘Payment for Forest Environmental Services’ (PFES) starting in 2008. Building off success from the USAID Vietnam Forest and Delta Project, the USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project continued supporting Son La province with two main activities to better protect and manage its community forests. This included: 1) developing the fruit, and rattan-bamboo-leaves (RBL) value chains, and 2) supporting the implementation of PFES and developing and preparing for the future piloting of carbon-PFES. With technical support from the Project, Son La’s Provincial People Committee issued a Decision on piloting sustainable forest management and carbon trading in river-basins of small-hydropower plants in Muong La and Bac Yen districts. Withing the PFES system, this initiative will be an innovation for direct payments from companies to communities protecting forests in watersheds. In 2023, the Project provided technical assistance and advocated a provincial policy on forest and forest land allocation (F/FLA) in three districts of Muong La, Moc Chau, and Van Ho. An estimated 15,342 ha of FA/FLA in 40 communes will be re-allocated for local communities in 2024. In September 2023, the Project supported communities to develop three community forest management plans covering 2,239 ha, which were verified by Commune People Committees. This process directly engaged local communities, especially women and ethnic minority groups in the fruit value chain and helped improve their capacity on tendering, harvesting, and processing products, and on business management. Through a public, private, and community partnership (PPCP) approach, the Project signed partnership agreements with local conservation-friendly enterprises in the RBL value chain and mobilized investments of up to 21 billion VND (USD 866,000) from the public and private sector. Son La is also the first province to install the innovative Project-developed Forest Violations Database Management System (FVDMS) tool from provincial to district level, contributing to better forest management.

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**“We are ethnic minorities, living in a remote mountainous area, which lacks the farmland to earn a daily living. Thanks to USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project’s support, we could establish a new Tre Xanh Cooperative in March 2023 to focus on producing the bamboo shoot value chain to help create jobs and generate additional income for women. Since then, our cooperative received dedicated coaching from the Project to build our capacity and help us mobilize investments from the central Government. To date, the cooperative has developed and produced five kinds of bamboo shoot products to the market. In 2024, we plan to earn a four-star quality rating for a ‘One Commune One Product’ (OCOP) product made from bamboo shoots.”**

– Ms. Quang Thi Phong, director of the Tre Xanh Cooperative”

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### Piloting sustainable forest management and carbon trading in river basins of small hydropower plants: Son La

To mobilize resources for forest protection and development in river basins, the USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project supported Son La province to develop and gain Provincial People Committee’s approval to pilot sustainable forest management approaches in river basins of Muong La and Bac Yen districts. The planned activities will include: (i) improved community forest management of 6,727 ha of community forest; (ii) plantation and restoration of forests for special use and protection forest over 556 ha; (iii) plantation of 20,000 trees in low-crop yield upland fields; (iv) direct PFES payments from small-hydropower plants to communities; and notably, (v) piloting carbon trading on an area of 64,489 ha in Muong La and Bac Yen districts. The Project aims to support Son La to mobilize investments of up to 55.2 billion VND (nearly USD 2.3 million) for forest protection and management tasks, with up to 45.2 billion VND (nearly USD 1.9 million) coming from local government, and 10 billion VND (USD 412,000) from hydroelectric companies; communities will also invest part of their PFES revenue for this intervention. The Project plans to pilot a new PFES payment scheme through which forest service users (i.e., hydroelectric projects, in this case) pay fees directly to communities (i.e., the forest owners). In addition, the Project will help assess forest carbon stocks in the pilot sites, after which Son La can implement carbon trading. Allocating and investing resources in forest protection and development will result in more efficient and sustainable forest management and will also contribute to enhancing forest carbon storage volume and supporting Vietnam to reach its carbon emission reduction targets.



Nam Chien hydropower plant reservoir - Muong La district. Photo credit: Thang Vu – CFMC



Chiang Muon hydropower plant, Muong La district: Photo credit: Trang Chu