

PUBLIC-PRIVATE-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

In Vietnam and worldwide, widespread forest degradation from illicit timber harvesting, forest land conversion and poor forest management practices, is leading to increased carbon emissions, which threatens the environment, communities, and livelihoods. Despite national increases in overall tree coverage, Vietnam’s natural forests are reducing in area and worsening in quality. From 2020-2025, the USAID Sustainable Forest Management Project (the Project) is linking communities, local authorities, the national government, and the private sector to jointly address the drivers of forest conversion and degradation in targeted areas. The Project aims to avoid carbon emissions from natural forest conversion and degradation; increase carbon sequestration through better management of plantation forests; and improve the quality, diversity, and productivity of natural production forests— all to protect Vietnam’s threatened forest resources.

THE CHALLENGE

Throughout Vietnam, there is very limited coordination among the private sector, communities, and the public sector to address the drivers of forest conversion and degradation. This limits the financial and human resources, and legal sanctions available to support and promote sustainable forest management interventions. As result, deforestation and forest degradation persist.

To tackle this problem, the Project is utilizing the public-private-community partnerships (PPCP) approach—a model for achieving sustainable development in which three parties (the private sector, public sector, and communities) jointly develop a business or service of mutual benefit while also providing maximum benefits to the wider community. The private sector gains long-term benefits from the balanced inclusion of producers and consumers, the public sector gains new resources from investments and the assurance of participation and ownership from all parties, and the community gains new skills, knowledge, and technologies. The Project is facilitating stronger PPCPs between government officials, the private sector (through conservation-friendly enterprises [CFEs] in targeted forest value chains), and forest-dependent community members.



The Project is applying the PPCP approach to link government, the private sector, and forest-dependent communities to develop eight high-potential forest value chains, including (bamboo, rattan, and leaves) to ensure the sustainable use of forest products and resources. Photos: Cintapo Tran.

DEVELOPING HIGH POTENTIAL VALUE CHAINS

Specifically, the Project is using a market-based approach (MBA) to develop eight identified high potential value chains: *acacia; rattan, bamboo, and leaves; medicinal plants; cinnamon; betel nut; coffee, tung oil, and fruits.* The Project partnered with 38 potential CFEs (i.e. Biomass Fuel Vietnam; Thien Hoang Group; An Xuan Organic

Herb Co., Ltd; Thai Tuan Cinnamon Company; Hiep Thuan Agriculture Cooperative; and Tien Phuoc Dried Betel nut Cooperative) to promote and develop these identified commodities. The Project connects CFEs with local authorities and forest-dependent communities in seven provinces to contribute to sustainable development of the identified value chains.

To promote sustainable value chain development, the Project works with a range of diverse value chain actors, such as farmers, forest plantation owners, nurseries, local raw material collectors, producers, processors, manufacturers, retailers, and consumers (see Figure 1). Approaches are tailored specifically to each value chain opportunity. For example, to develop acacia, the Project is applying five main interventions: (i) improved seedlings, (ii) conversion from small to large timber plantation, (iii) implementation of approved sustainable forest management plans, (iv) forest replantation, and (v) forest certification to develop the acacia value chain.

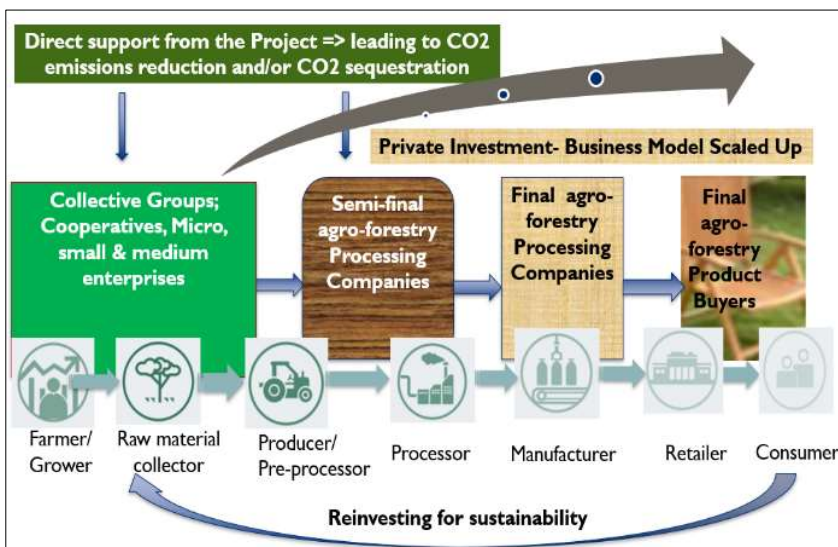


Figure 1. Key value chain actors in the value chain development process

The Project builds local farmers' and producers' capacity on cultivation, harvesting, post-harvesting, pre-processing, and packaging techniques, while also providing technical assistance to CFEs and their workforce to increase production capacity, improve post-harvest processing techniques, and promote market linkages and business capacity. With this new capacity, CFEs not only invest in upgrading environmentally friendly production technology and equipment, but they also sign purchase contracts with local farmers and producers to purchase raw materials and products from them in the future, leading to increased incomes for forest-dependent communities—a true win-win.

CONCLUSIONS

By the end of 2023, the Project signed 41 partnership agreements in seven Project' provinces supporting this targeted value chain development. By 2025, these partners are expected to mobilize more than USD 113 million from the private sector to invest into the development of these agroforestry-based value chains. This will improve 120,000 hectares of forest, certify 24,000 hectares, and benefit 52,000 people in seven provinces. As of December 2023, the Project had already contributed to improving more than 141,401 hectares of forest across the seven provinces.

SO WHAT?

By adopting a collaborative PPCP approach, the Project has already observed initial improvements in partnerships among Government authorities from the national to grassroots levels, CFEs, small forest households and forest dependent communities when it comes to value chain development. These strengthened partnerships have enabled the Project provinces to mobilize additional resources for better management of their limited natural and forest resources, leading them to sequester CO₂, contributing to a transition towards green growth and low emissions.