

SNV Asia
Collaborative Forest Management (CFM)



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SNV is dedicated to a society where all people enjoy the freedom to pursue their own sustainable development.

In Asia, rapid economic growth presents a risk for environmental degradation and sustainable growth. The average species abundance is decreasing in South East Asia 3 times faster than at global level in (60 years it has decreased from 70% to 40%). Furthermore, 80 million poor people in the region are directly or indirectly forest – depended.

SNV Asia's collaborative forest management strategy focuses on poverty reduction by using the forest as a productive resource and environmental sustainability to increase control of natural forests by local communities.

We support our clients in two growing trends: decentralization and devolution of government control and the need for local forest access and land tenure for forest – dependent people. Our advisory teams of international and national forestry experts deliver capacity development services to: national ministries, provincial and district local governments and local NGO's. We also deliver thematic expertise in the following areas: Participatory Forest management, Decentralized Forest Strategy and Planning, Non – Timber Forest Products, Biodiversity and Park Management and Environmental services.

Our capacity development services are mainly focused on the development of appropriate decentralized institutional and management structures within a forestry sector approach.

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Continuous tracts of productive forest are seen as strategically important national resources and are often held under government control. Unfortunately, they are often poorly managed and are overused. Communities who rely on them for grazing, fuel wood, timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) are often excluded from forest management and access. The result is degradation of, and encroachment onto, forested land. To help solve this problem, some countries are delegating power to district and local authorities and allowing participatory forest management, notably Community Forestry (CF) and Collaborative Forest Management (CFM), as well as leasehold and private forestry. Participatory forest management helps ensure the flow of money and other benefits to stakeholders and is important for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger and for environmental sustainability (as outlined in MDG goals 1 and 7, which SNV is determined to support).



Participatory Forest Management

In Nepal, known for its extensive CF programmes, relatively homogenous ethnic communities manage tracts of forest as common property, ensuring more and better hill forest cover and higher local incomes. In lowland areas, hardwood forests are managed mainly by the state due to their high economic value, but a local self-governance regulation has resulted in the development of CFM directives for large blocks in the Terai, where 25% of all benefits remain within local-level collaborative forest management groups. This money will be used to set up a revolving fund to finance income-generating activities and forestry investments. CFM will lead to more transparent and better management of the forest resources, aid poverty reduction, boost employment, and address gender/equity issues. **SNV is active in CFM (mainly in the lowlands), CF (mainly in the hills), leasehold and private forestry (in lowlands and lower hills), and the creation of rules and legislation.**

In Vietnam, forestry plays an important role in poverty alleviation. Particularly in upland areas (where 24 million people, including many ethnic minorities, live), people rely on the forest for subsistence products such as non-timber forest products, which provide food security, medicines, building materials, fodder, fuel wood and other sources of income. Vietnam plans to reform its forestry sector to create linkages between protective and economic functions and restructure ownership to allow greater private ownership. It will also increase forest coverage. **SNV is working with Vietnamese partners to develop the Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUPLA) method of land use planning, forestland allocation and reforestation**, which has successfully created sustainable forest management in north central Vietnam. However, poverty reduction will require increasing focus on smallholder forestry and plantations, community forestry, small-scale wood and NTFP enterprises (including processing), cooperation with larger commercial private-public partnerships, and decentralization. SNV works with Vietnamese partners to build Collaborative Forest Management. Some CF has been documented in minority mountainous areas, and a legal framework to guide it has recently become available.

SNV is also working **in Bhutan** (which still lacks a framework for CF) and in Laos, where NTFPs are key to mainly rural livelihoods. SNV operates at national, provincial, district, buffer zone, and commune/community level.



SNV advisory services consist of:

- Institutional capacity building in local government and intermediary and community-based organizations (focusing on transparency, multi-stakeholder decision making, task descriptions, and financial instruments)
- Developing decentralized financial mechanisms and instruments
- Assisting forest management (plan development, multi-purpose forest management, NTFP and timber production and extraction, and regeneration)
- Market assessment and development for timber and NTFP products
- Biodiversity conservation
- District Forest Sector Plan preparation
- Land Use Planning and Land Allocation support (LUPLA)
- Influencing policies, both national and local
- Farmer to farmer extension geared towards smallholder groups
- Formation of user groups



Our work has had numerous results and impacts.

In Nepal:

- In all eight of the districts in which we work, District Forest Coordination Committees (DFCC) have been established, and most are operational. The DFCCs are the government’s monitoring and controlling body at district level and play an important role in planning and distribution of funds. They are linked to District Development Councils (DDCs).
- Three CFM management plans have been approved by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MFSC) and in fiscal year 2004/2005, implementation begun. It is still too early to assess the impacts, but it appears that the CFM scheme will have to be modified at some point.
- A number of socio-economic studies have been conducted in preparation for the District Forest Sector Plans and CFM schemes
- Strategic District Forest Sector Plans have been developed and approved, or are in the process of being developed, in eight districts.
- Over 1.1 million ha of forest is now managed by 13,000 Community Forest User Groups, resulting in increased hill forest cover.
- Increased supplies of fodder, firewood, timber and NTFP are resulting in higher community earnings.
- The CF approach is being expanded to the Churia range.

In Vietnam:

- CF is still young and the legal framework is not yet fully established. Nonetheless, provincial authorities have piloted some CF schemes, including some supported by SNV.

To achieve our goals, we have created with our partners the following **toolkits**: CFM directives to 2060 (2003), Local Self-Governance Regulation 2056 (1999), District Forest Coordination Committee establishment and operational guidelines, District Forest Sector Plans, Non-Government Service Provider guidelines, LUPLA guidelines (under development), CFUG formation and functioning guidelines, and CF management plan guidelines.

Our **clients in Nepal** include: the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, District Forest Offices, and Village Development Committees, NGOs and community groups, and forest users. **In Vietnam**, our clients are the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, provincial, district, and commune-level People’s Committees, and provincial and district-level forestry organizations.

SNV works with numerous partners to build participatory forest management. These include: international NGOs and donors such as DANIDA, DFID, GTZ, SDC, Helvertas, CARE, WWF, UNDP, Tropenbos and RNE; government ministries and mass organizations; and the Forestry Sector Support Program Partnership and Community Forestry Working Group in Nepal.



SNV supports local organizations and communities to develop NTFP-based systems for food security, income generation, participatory management of and equitable access to forest resources, and conservation. We also deliver advisory services for action research, micro-enterprise development, capacity building, scaling up, and impact monitoring. We work at national, provincial, district and community levels.



Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)

NTFPs are a vital but often overlooked part of the livelihoods of millions of forest-dwelling communities in Asia, Africa and Latin-America. Their economic importance can be substantial (in Laos, they contribute up to 30% of GDP) and they enable people to increase their earnings while also ensuring environmental sustainability in line with MDG 7. NTFPs are a key coping strategy for the rural poor, contributing to food security, and are essential for countries reliant on NTFPs to achieve MDG 1 on poverty alleviation. However, most NTFPs are exported as raw materials and there is much scope for adding value by domestication, processing and quality improvement. NTFPs should be considered as an area where the private sector can develop.

In Nepal, we work in areas such as NTFP market analysis and micro-enterprise development, trade network development, product certification, capacity building, and scaling-up. In Laos, we focus on NTFP action research, network development, capacity building, market analysis and micro-enterprise development, scaling-up, and gender studies. In Bhutan, past activities focused on sustainable NTFP use in protected areas, while in Vietnam, SNV works in RRA/PRA training, inter-province networking, and capacity building.

SNV's NTFP services are often linked to other Collaborative Forest Management services.

- **Action research** helps assess the value of NTFPs in poverty alleviation and income generation, develops sustainable harvesting systems, promotes domestication of NTFPs, uses NTFPs as an entry point for land use planning and forest management, develops biodiversity conservation systems, and safeguards access rights to forest resources for local communities.
- **NTFP enterprise development** helps businesses grow by building marketing systems, assessing commercial resource use and planning growth. It uses enterprise development as an entry point into the forest certification process, boosts product development and market links, and promotes business development services and private sector participation.
- **Capacity building, extension and scaling up** helps communities working with NTFPs to build skills and develop businesses

under different forms of ownership (private, government, etc.). It also aids in the development of training materials and curriculum. SNV's capacity-building activities develop networks and information exchanges, integrate NTFP strategies in land use and policies and regulations at all levels, and advocate policy reforms to support NTFP trade and private sector development.

- **Monitoring and evaluating NTFP use and impacts** assesses the role of NTFPs in food security and in biodiversity conservation, and assesses their contribution to poverty eradication (through the creation of coping strategies, gender and other equity aspects, and valuation studies).





The **toolkits** that help us achieve our goals are developed by our own experts, our partners, or through collaboration. The marketing systems development and micro-enterprise development toolkit is used in Nepal, Laos, and Vietnam, while NTFP handbooks are used in Laos and Nepal. In Laos, a RRA and PRA toolkit for NTFP development has been produced in Lao. SNV contributed to toolkits on upland agriculture and forest management, also in Laos, and is developing participatory NTFP curriculum development toolkits in Vietnam and Laos. Popular booklets explaining NTFP use for eco-tourists are under development in Laos and a Participatory NTFP Resource Assessment and Inventory Techniques toolkit is planned there. In Vietnam, we are planning a Technical Notes on Domestication of Particular NTFP Products toolkit.

These results contribute to a number of impacts:

- Effective and equitable forest management policies are put in place to promote trade and generate wealth.
- Local communities gain secure rights to manage and access forests for NTFP use.
- Forests are maintained in good condition and biodiversity is preserved.
- Demand for popular NTFPs is met successfully by additional plantations.
- Poor rural families can continue to rely on NTFPs for food security.
- Many families are lifted from poverty thanks to income raised from NTFPs.
- NTFP-based enterprises provide employment and contribute to national income by adding value through improved processing and marketing.

As a result of our work, numerous trained facilitators help rural communities use NTFPs in a sustainable way, stakeholders gain access to essential support services (inputs, marketing, technical training, etc) provided by capable and self-supporting local organisations, and the sharing of knowledge between stakeholders creates partnerships and consultative mechanisms for policy building.

To achieve our goals, we work with government organizations (providing policy support services), NGOs (giving knowledge and training to private-sector and extension agencies), universities, forestry colleges and other relevant training institutes, and associations of forest user groups or small business operators. **In Nepal**, our partners are: ANSAB, HJSS, NTFP CC, and NNN. **In Bhutan** we work with IDRC-CBNRM, and **in Laos** with: NAFRI/FRC, National University, FAO and 50 local NTFP organizations. **In Vietnam**, SNV collaborates with Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, NTFP Research Centre, IUCN, and WWF.



SNV is supporting capacity building to ensure that decentralized SWAp forestry management systems are sustainable. With this in mind, we work with national-, provincial-, district- and village-level policy makers and forest managers to plan, coordinate, implement and monitor needs-based, poverty-targeted forestry priorities. Our programmes promote accountability, transparency and stakeholder participation, as well as the development of a supportive legal and policy framework.



Decentralization of Forest Strategy and Planning

In both Nepal and Vietnam, two of the countries in which we operate, the traditional centralised approach to planning and management is changing, as regulations (the 1999 Local Self Governance Act in Nepal) and laws (the 2004 Forest Protection and Development Law in Vietnam) allow greater decentralization. But problems remain. The new rules are not always implemented on the ground and where they are, local stakeholders are often ill equipped to carry out their responsibilities. Changing stakeholder attitudes is difficult, with many people unwilling or unable to adapt from the top-down system to the newer localized participatory system.

To ease the transition from centralized to decentralized forest management systems, **SNV helps our partners develop supportive decentralization processes and guidelines and advises them as they create forestry sector decentralization strategies**, such as the Provincial Forestry Strategies in Vietnam and the Provincial and/or District Forest Sector Plans in both Vietnam and Nepal. We also help countries set up and run provincial and district-level forestry sector coordinating bodies, like the Regional and District Forestry Coordination Committees in Nepal. SNV is involved in the creation of legislation needed to support existing decentralization regulations.

In Nepal, District Forest Coordination Committees (DFCC) were established to increase local stakeholder participation in forest sector management, planning and financing. DFCCs are specialized sub-committees of the District Development Committees established under the Local Self Governance Act. The introduction and piloting of Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) in the Terai and Inner Terai regions ensures greater beneficiary and district-level stakeholder participation in the management of productive government forest land, while non-government service provider guidelines encourage the involvement of local NGOs, thus contributing to a SWAp. However, the unstable political situation and lack of democratic representation at district and village level hampers these decentralisation processes.

Working with our **Nepalese partners** – the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, Women Development Offices, District and Village Development Committees, NGOs and community-based organizations like





the forest user groups and buffer zone user groups – we have created a number of extremely useful **toolkits**. These include: district forest coordination committee guidelines; private and public land forestry guidelines; CFM directives; a gender and equity strategy and; district forest sector plans.

In addition to these toolkits, **SNV has helped** its partners establish and run one RFCC and eight DFCCs. Two district forest sector plans have been finalized and two more are being developed, five CFM committees have been established, of which three have approved schemes in place and the other two are developing such schemes.

In Vietnam, various provinces and districts are developing forestry strategies and plans. The National Forestry Strategy is being revised to integrate SWAp, poverty reduction, and greater stakeholder participation. Although some plans have already been made, implementation is difficult because of weak local-level capacities and scarce resources.

SNV, along with our partners and clients, has created the following **toolkits**: provincial forestry strategy guidelines, provincial forestry strategies, draft district forestry plan guidelines, provincial and district forest sector plans, IDOS guidelines from MDF in Vietnam, and draft collaborative forestry legislation. We have also helped our partners set up and run three provincial forestry coordination committees, draft three provincial forestry strategies, and develop provincial and district-level forest sector plans.

In Vietnam, we work with the Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development, provincial, district and commune People’s Committees, and provincial and district-level forestry organizations.

In Bhutan, the Nature Conservation Act of 1995 provides a legal basis for social forestry. SNV’s scheme has been implemented at village level on a cautious pilot basis. In Laos, some forestry related decisions - especially these related to the protection of forests outside protected areas - are being decentralized to provinces and villages. The election of village chiefs may help strengthen decentralization.

SNV works with various national and international organizations to encourage the decentralization of sustainable SWAp forestry management. **Our partners** include: CARE, DFID, DANIDA, GTZ, IUCN and national service providers in Nepal, and; WWF, RNE, Helvetas, Tropenbos, Queensland University, Forestry Sector Support Program Partnership, and Community Forestry Working Group in Vietnam.



SNV operates in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In Collaborative Forest Management (CFM), this means our focus is on MDG7, indicator 26 (the amount of land that must be protected as a percentage of the total in order to maintain biological diversity). We work at the national, provincial, and community levels with forest protection departments, mass organisations and protected area managers to achieve these goals.



Biodiversity & Protected Area Management

In Nepal, Protected Areas (PA's) include eight national parks, four wildlife reserves, one hunting reserve, three conservation areas and five buffer zones. Of 118 ecosystems, 80 are represented in the protected areas, which are run by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (WC). Nepal has successfully conserved biodiversity mainly due to strong local-level ownership and participation. It is home to some important big animals such as the Royal Bengal Tiger and Greater One Horned Rhinoceros and claims heritage sites like Royal Chitwan National Park, and Ramsar sites like Bishazari Tal and Ghodaghodi Tal. However, with the recent increase in conflict, there has been growing pressure on nature reserves and WC, although thanks to greater public participation, the majority of conservation work is intact.

In Vietnam, most nature reserves were established in the last three or four years and the technical and management capacity of the Management Board of Nature Reserves is weak. Reserves are managed by provinces and their budgets for biodiversity & protected areas are limited. The Vietnam Conservation Fund is one international community initiative designed to help nature reserves conserve biodiversity. A prerequisite for access to this fund is a Conservation Needs Assessment and development of an Operational Management Plan in participatory approaches. SNV is providing technical support in this area.

In Laos, 21 National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (NBCA) were created in 1993 covering between 12% and 14% of the country's land mass. The goal was to "provide effective protection to 5-20% of the original area of each habitat type within each biogeographic subunit". The Division of Forest Resources Conservation (DFRC) within the Department of Forestry (DoF) coordinates NBCA management and must fight threats from logging, shifting cultivation, infrastructure development, grazing, and hunting. Management has begun in most NBCAs and is guided by the DoF's progressive policies to involve local stakeholders.





SNV works with Protected Area managers and those living in and around protected areas to build local capacities and develop income-generating activities. We conduct conservation needs assessments (Vietnam), build local capacities (Vietnam and Nepal), develop operational management plans (Vietnam), manage buffer zones and ICDP (Nepal, Vietnam and Bhutan), contribute to gender and social inclusion programmes (Nepal and Laos), encourage eco-tourism (Vietnam, Nepal and Laos), development agroforestry models (Vietnam, Nepal and Laos), build participatory action learning + NTFPs (Laos), help ensure sustainable NTFP use and marketing (Nepal and Laos), develop alternative energy sources (Nepal), strengthen institutions (Nepal and Vietnam), and develop income-generating activities (Vietnam and Nepal).



The toolkits we use to achieve these aims include: tracking tool data sheets for conservation needs assessment; operational management plan (OMP) Guidelines; ID/OS guidelines; private forestry guidelines; HR strategies; joint monitoring guidelines; NGSP guidelines; DFCC guidelines; CFM directives and; buffer zone management guidelines.

Our work has had wide-ranging results. In Vietnam, four Nature Reserves with around 168,00 ha in Core zone and 270,000 ha in buffer zone are under sustainable management and staff capacities within their management boards and the Provincial Forest Protection Department (more than 300 people) have improved. Conservation needs assessments have been conducted and operational management plans have been developed and approved. **In Nepal and India,** two trans-boundary meetings have been conducted and cooperation between the two countries is growing.

SNV can boast many other important developments in Asia: organizational assessments have been carried out for the management boards of three nature reserves, an action plan developed for swamp deer management, three DFCCs established to initiate forestry district planning, three district forest management plans designed and approved for implementation, elephant breeding centres established, waterholes and watch towers rehabilitated, grassland managed, a crocodile breeding and reintroduction programme created, and a black buck management action plan formed.

This is an innovative field of work designed to encourage reforestation and the reduction of greenhouse gases through marketing forest services that will make sustainable forest management or reforestation financially more attractive. Beneficiaries of CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) services include not only local communities but also national governments aiming to conserve biodiversity, tourists paying for scenic beauty, and multinationals trying to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets. Through a variety of co-financing agreements and partnerships between such stakeholders, the quality of forest management, forest area, and development of local communities, can be enhanced.



Payment for environmental services (PES)

Most PES services are derived from the **three Rio Conventions**: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Some are based on other conventions such as the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

In Vietnam, where SNV is piloting CDM services, the Kyoto Protocol was ratified in September 2002. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment is the focal point for UNFCCC's work and has set up a CDM National Authority. The first CDM projects, delivering carbon services, are in the pipeline. The first steps have also been taken in payments for watershed management. **SNV has been active in sustainable energy in both Nepal and Vietnam since 2001.**

In Asia, SNV focuses on raising awareness and increasing knowledge of CDM issues at a local level, although we also work with the national- and provincial-level government bodies charged with implementing CDM services. Our assistance is delivered under a Payment for Environmental Services in Asia package, currently we only provide payment for carbon services but in the future we will consider delivering payment for water services as well. We work in partnership with organizations, networks and experts, including Mitsubishi Securities, EcoSecurities/Ecofys, WWF, JICA, IUCN, Royal Netherlands Embassy and Finland's Biota.

Our Clean Development Mechanism Forestry services offer the following support:

- **CDM component development in forestry projects in Vietnam:** We offer services to organizations wanting to use the CDM co-financing mechanism to help fund reforestation. Current services focus mainly on pre-project feasibility assessments, idea formulation, and feedback on calculations and justification of project designs. In the future we plan to develop services that will aid UNFCCC CDM project co-proposals, organise stakeholder comments, help institutional set-up and design, look for appropriate validator organisations, and mediate between different sources of funding.
- **Support Local CDM service providers in Vietnam:** We deliver CDM information and advice on CDM projects, small-scale project bundling, and the search for CDM investors.
- **CDM policy support:** This is offered to the governments of Vietnam and Laos. Advice covers areas such as approval procedures for CDM projects, coordination of donor support, and awareness raising.
- **Voluntary Emission Reduction (VER) Assessments and Local Designated Operational Entity Development Support** are services we hope to develop in the future.

As this is a new field of work, results and impact have not been analyzed. However, SNV expects significant results and impacts in the future. These should include:

- 1) Co-financing for reforestation, improved quality of life for forest communities, and more independent community development (often in combination with CF or agro-forestry).
- 2) The creation of high-quality CDM service providers and provision of local CDM knowledge and services to project developers.
- 3) Inclusion of sound sustainable development criteria in host country policies.
- 4) Expansion of the options available for projects to use other sources of financing.
- 5) Economical and independent use of CDM by host countries.

Numerous toolkits have been developed to aid CDM project growth. These include: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), good practice guidance for land use, land-use change and forestry; UNFCCC approved methodologies and additionality tools; and carbon sequestering models (COMAP, CO2FIX, ECO2).

SNV works with a variety of clients in this innovative field. **In Vietnam**, we have signed contracts with the Forest Science Institute of Vietnam, District People's Committee of A Luoi district in Thua Thien Hue province, the National AR-CDM (afforestation/reforestation CDM) Working Group of the Department of Forestry and the Research Centre for Forest Ecology and Environment. **In Laos**, SNV supports the Science & Technology Environmental Agency (STEA) with the establishment of the Lao PDR National CDM Authority.

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CONTACTS IN ASIA

Regional Office
G.P.O. Box 189 Hanoi
105-112, D1 Van Phuc
Diplomatic Compound
298 Kim Ma Street, Ba Dinh Dist.,
Hanoi, Vietnam

T: (84 4) 846 3791
F: (84 4) 846 3794
E: asia@snvworld.org

Contact person:
Harm Duiker
hduiker@snvworld.org

Bhutan
P.O. Box 815 Thimpu
Langjopakha

T: (975) 232 2900
F: (975) 232 2649
E: bhutan@snvworld.org
W: www.snv.org.bt

Contact person:
Robin aus der Beek
rausderbeek@snvworld.org

Nepal
P.O. Box 1966 Kathmandu
Bakhundole Lalitpur

T: (977) 1552 3444
F: (977) 1552 3155
E: nepal@snvworld.org

Contact person:
Arthur Ebregt
aebregt@snvworld.org

Lao PDR
P.O. Box 9781 Vientiane
Nongbone Road

T: (856) 2141 3290
F: (856) 2141 4068
E: laos@snvworld.org

Contact person:
Joost Foppes
jfoppes@snvworld.org

Vietnam
G.P.O. Box 189 Hanoi
105-112, D1 Van Phuc
Diplomatic Compound
298 Kim Ma Street, Ba Dinh Dist.,
Hanoi, Vietnam

T: (84 4) 846 3791
F: (84 4) 846 3794
E: vietnam@snvworld.org
W: www.snv.org.vn

Contact person:
Harm Duiker
hduiker@snvworld.org