

**PROJECT FINAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT FOR  
POVERTY REDUCTION**

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Consultant Team

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## **ABBREVIATION**

CPC	Communal People's Committee
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DPC	District People's Committee
HH	Household
LUC	Land Use Certificate
LUP	Land Use Planning
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
PRA	Participatory Rural Assessment
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
TOR	Term of Reference
VND	Vietnamdong
WU	Women's Union

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project “Community Forestry Management for Poverty Reduction” is developed in the partnership between Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) and Oxfam Australia. Project communes include 5 communes from Sa Pa district, Lao Cai province and Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan province. Project was implemented from November 2010 to August 2010. The total cost of project is 428,030 pound of which 75% is funded by Oxfam Australia and 25% is funded by OGB. Specific objective of the project is to ensure that over 2,000 poor ethnic minority households from participating communes have equal and secured access to and control over forest and forest-land and production services, which contribute to the achievement of their food and income security.

In order to achieve the above objective, 4 expected results were set for the project. Therefore, activities were designed to be relevant to each expected result. There are 22 activities in total. After nearly 3 years of implementation, all project activities were implemented although the achievement level of each activity in each commune is very different.

The most success of the project is the close cooperation with provincial partners for activities implementation leading to an obvious effectiveness; improving people’s capacity, especially ethnic minority people and women, helping them access and manage community forest resources and land. The achievement includes participatory land use plan for 5 communes up to village level; handover residential and forestry land for 950 households (HHs) and issue over 1,580 certificate of land use right for HHs. Both husband and wife have their name in the certificate that ensure the women’s equality in land use and management. Natural forests are allotted for community to manage and protect through the lump-sum contract with forest owner in the locality. Then, 27 forest protection groups were established in all participating villages with the participation of nearly 400 people to serve the purpose of controlling and managing 2,200ha forest in the project area. Based on the prepared village and commune land use plan, forest protection and development plan were established by community for each of project villages concerning about specific activities, required fund, and implementation arrangement. Project partners have integrated funds from other programs/national projects to provide adequate fund for community to implement the set plan (Sa Pa and Ban Ho commune, Lao Cai province).

Thanks to the ownership and control of land and forest resources through the land use plan and land allotment, local people start selecting seedling variety and breeders with project support. Nearly 30 models of seedling variety and breeder which are relevant for the local conditions are developed. This contributes to economic development, help local people have income and practically reduce poverty. Many models are successful and can be replicated: community-based forest protection and management model; planting cardamom under the shape of planted forest; orchard planting, wood-saving stove; capital rotating fund etc. Reasons for this sustainable development includes: beneficiaries’ need are met, seeding variety and breeders are suitable with local conditions; available markets for products (honey, cardamom, French peach, lemon, pear fruit); suitable with customs and culture of local people. However, there are still some successful demonstrations. The main reasons for this includes: the selection of seedlings and breeders is not suitable with local conditions; planting is not at right season and techniques, local people are not practiced or have limited knowledge on the cropping techniques or unavailability of market.

After having land, seedlings and breeders, people need techniques for the sustainable and effective use of natural resources. To meet this demand, project has organized more than 20 training on agro-forestry cultivation in the collaboration with propaganda about the forest law and land law for village and commune officers, HH head, women and ethnic minority people. Thanks

to these training and activities, participated people raised their knowledge on cultivation techniques and forestry policy. In addition, project also focused on the establishment of local extension network, often provided further extension knowledge and experience for village and commune cadres. This is a successful effort to improve local resources contributing to ensure the sustainability of the project.

Policy advocacy objective received special concern by the project. Therefore, through the agroforestry market survey, conference on sharing the results of policy activities and surveys carried out in the project help the technical institutes and agencies assess the advantages, disadvantages and limitations of the current policies. This has strong affection on provincial leaders and policy makers in the integration strategy for forestry development in the locality focusing on poverty reduction and social equality. Together with other impacts from the project, Lao Cai Provincial People's Committee (PPC) will soon issue Decision on the Regulations on motivation policy for the development of some main non-timber trees in Lao Cai province, period 2010-2015. In Ninh Thuan province, Ninh Thuan Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE) recommended to add into Environmental Law (revised) the regulations on "participation and participating constituents into the policy. Both 2 provinces encourage the application of the participatory land use plan and land allotment at commune level.

Gender equality and social equity is one of the complicated social issues however thanks to the appropriate approach and the project full attention to women, gender equality is improved, women role and position in family and in society improved. The evaluated results show that in Phuoc Tan and Phuoc Tien commune (Ninh Thuan province) women from Raglai ethnic minority were maximum participated (about 30%) into all project activities even the activities which were thought to be for men only such as forest protection and land use planning etc. This completely changed women awareness on gender equality, increasing participating rate in the local political system compared with 5 years ago. In project communes in Lao Cai province, women from H'Mong, Dao, Tay, Day ethnic minority actively participated in model development bringing back very high economic effectiveness. Especially, they participated in various training and meetings. They become more active and confident in raising their idea and in discussion for community decision although they are not quite fluently in using King (the majority) language.

Project achievements include: firstly, project meets the essential needs of the 2 provinces about poverty reduction and forest protection; strategy to support and implement the activities which are suitable with local conditions; meet the needs of ethnic minority who live near forest. Project selected appropriate partners in the province who have professional capacity to implement and develop a good working relationship with Oxfam. The project is flexibly implemented including adjustment to make the activities more suitable with the implementation status of each quarter and each year. Project has good cooperation and support to local extension agencies through the establishment of extension system in project villages and communes; training extension staff, training agroforestry cultivation techniques. By this way, project has improved on-site capacity for local people to be able to better use and manage forest and land resources.

Besides the project achievements and impacts, there are still some limitations: not fully implement the selection criteria for project participating HHs; rate of women participation is not at high rate as expected, only about 30%. There are many models implemented in some villages and communes so that it is hard for in-charge staff to monitor and give instruction. Project monitoring is still weak. Separated data on gender issues is not adequate so that it is hard for evaluation, especially in Ninh Thuan province. A period of 3 years is still too short for a forestry project therefore effectiveness and impacts of many models still can not be evaluated by now.

In other hand, the implementation conditions of an activity were not identified fully in the design phase therefore discussions with concerned partner to adjust the conditions during the operational period also take time and slow down the project progress. Although, Oxfam Great Britain has separate and flexible M&E system for each project, the implementation of this system in the 2 provinces are not identical therefore the it is hard for monitoring and update information.

### **Key conclusion**

Project has clear achievements, meeting originally-set objectives which is to ensure that over 2,000 HHs of poor ethnic minorities (H'mong and Dao men and women in Lao Cai, Raglai men and women in Ninh Thuan Province) have equal and secured access to and control over forest and forest-land and production services, which contribute to the achievement of their food and income security.

Women participated in many project activities. They can raise their voice in discussions to issue community decision. Project contributed to improve gender equality, improve women role and position in family and in society. However, in order to maintain and further develop these impacts, they need to be further encouraged, monitored and supported in other projects or integrated in an implementing project.

From the project results (both successful and unsuccessful), a new orientation in fighting with poverty for mountainous people, especially for the ethnic minority people who are managing and protecting forests of forest owners. The government's forestry policy should be added and improved to ensure that community is fully benefited and equally shares the benefits from the community-based forest protection management.

### **Recommendation**

Project has made effort to cooperate with project partners in the 2 provinces to implement some models which are very successful and potential, creating income and reducing poverty for HHs. Those models include: orchard model, medicine plant model, bee-keeping model, forest protection model etc. Therefore these models need to be maintained, monitored and replicated in project communes as well as in other communes.

Revolving fund model is considered successful and is very potential for replication. Therefore this model need to be maintained and do not use for other purposes. Discussions with commune leaders need to be taken to transfer the fund for a relevant agency to manage. The relevant agencies can be Communal Women's Union (Ninh Thuan province) and Communal Farmer's Association (Lao Cai province); lesson learnt to be withdrawn to complete the fund use and management regime and soon promulgate for other localities to follow.

Continue to implement and strengthen the knowledge management activities to make it an effective way/solution to mobilize the intelligence from beneficiaries for the implemented activities. These include: documentation project reports and outputs, usage of these document and applying for suitable areas and locations; exploiting indigenous knowledge which are feasible and high applicability the successful and potential models; promulgating project results, organizing study tour and sharing experience nationally and internationally.

Most of the forest areas managed and protected by community are poor forest with very low capacity, policy for benefiting forest is not appropriate therefore the people's intake from forest is insignificant in addition to the annual payment for their labor force. Meanwhile, the government do not have policies for community to benefit further from forest, appropriating with their contributed labor force so that they can protect the forest at the level of the big value which created by them such as carbon absorption, climate change and forest environmental services.



Hence, OGB should continue support project “pilot supplementation of forestry policy on sharing benefits between forest owner and people who participate in forest protection in order to create momentous for community forestry management for poverty reduction”

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Project Background

Vietnamese silviculture is in the process of drastic change from state silviculture to social silviculture of which village community is recognize as a subject of forest and forest land allotment for long-term management and use<sup>1</sup>. In reality, community-based forest management now plays more and more important and effective method in forestry development. Moreover, mountainous community especially ethnic minority gradually have better plan for production and forest protection and management, creating income for living improvement.

In the strategy of approaching the livelihood of mountainous community, Oxfam recognized that community-based forestry development is a proper way to fight poverty for ethnic minority people; land and forest resources will be more sustainably controlled and managed if management responsibility is shared with and participated by community. Many activities need to be done such as: building capacity for ethnic minority youth to actively participate in the process of land use planning and allotment so that they have opportunity to approach to land and forest resources; solution for forestry production service which currently do not meet people's demand need to be found (extension, training organization, generating suitable seedlings and breeders).

The above issues need priority support for mountainous provinces where 25 million people are living of whom 7 million people are ethnic minority people. In Lao Cai province, livelihood of poor ethnic minority HHs mainly are picking and selling forest products such as wood, medicine plant and vegetable while in Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan province, forest land and forest production land play a very important role in the livelihood of male and female youth of Raglai ethnic minority.

To implement this idea, "Community Forestry Management for Poverty Reduction" project is developed in the partnership between OGB and Oxfam Australia. Project is piloted in 5 communes including: Sa Pa, Ban Ho and Lao Chai commune, Sa Pa district, Lao Cai province and Phuoc Tan, Phuoc Tien commune, Bai Ai district, Ninh Thuan province. The project was implemented from November 2007 to August 2010. Project has 6 main partners from the 2 provinces. In Lao Cai, there are: DONRE, provincial forestry department and Hoang Lien National Park. In Lao Cai, there are DONRE, provincial forestry department and Bac Ai DPC.

Project total cost is 428,030 British pounds of which 75% is from Oxfam Australia and the remaining 25% is from OGB.

## 1.2. Project Objective and Expected Results

### 1.2.1. Project Objective

The project overall objective is to increase the living standard of poor ethnic men and women in program areas and contribute to the decrease of the poverty rate of the mountainous population. The project specific objective to ensure that 2,500 households of poor ethnic minorities (H'mong and Dao men and women in Lao Cai Province, Raglai men and women in Ninh Thuan) have equal and secured access to and control over forest and forest-land and production services, which contribute to the achievement of their food and income security.

### 1.2.2. Project Expected Result

*Result 1:* Access and control over forest resources of poor ethnic men and women has improved..

*Result 2:* Local ethnic minority farmers' technical and institutional capacities in forestry production and management have improved.

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<sup>1</sup> Law No. 29/2004/QH11, the XI National Assembly, Section 6, Law on Forest Protection and Development, 2004

*Result 3:* Local forestry production services are more responsive to the similar and different needs of ethnic men and women.

*Result 4:* Local forestry development strategies focus on poverty reduction and social equity (ethnicity and gender)

### **1.3. Evaluation Objective and Methodology**

#### **1.3.1. Objective of Project Final Evaluation**

Objective of project evaluation is to assess the achieved results summarizing the whole implementation process, withdraw lesson learnt and provide evident/inputs for the preparation of Project Completion Report. Evaluation is also to compare the achieved results in the reality with set objective and to define if project activities/inputs will lead to any changes.

Hence the specific objective of the final evaluation is to clarify the following points:

- Project impact on economic conditions, policy and gender equality to project beneficiaries (planned and arisen one)
- The project level of improvement to accessibility and control of forest resources for poor and ethnic minority people.
- Changes in technical capacity and organization in forest management and production of ethnic minority farmer.
- Changes in forest production service to meet demand of ethnic minority men and women.
- Project achievement compared with designed objectives.
- Relevance of project strategy compared with local conditions.
- Relevance and sustainability of project activities.
- Cost effectiveness and relevance of project supports
- Typical project activities and lesson learnt
- Recommendation for changes and next activities
- The above objectives are fully described in consultant's TOR. Consultants are requested to actively recommend the methodology and propose appropriate activities to complete these activities<sup>2</sup>.

#### **1.3.2. Evaluation Methodology**

Use participatory methodology during the evaluation through selection of representative men and women, poor HHs benefited from the project, representatives of project concerned parties and partners.

In order to collect multi-dimensioned and accurate information, consultants have group discussion with village and commune leaders and separate discussions with men group and women group.

Interview representatives from project partner in 2 provinces such as: DONRE, Forestry Department, Forest Protection Department, Hoang Lien National Park, Management Board of SaPa Protection Forest, Tan Tien Forestry Company, Sa Pa and Bac Ai district.

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<sup>2</sup> For details please see Annex 4

Consultants use participatory rural assessment methodology (PRA) such as “time process” to collect information about the changes during project implementation compared with the period before project.

Consultant developed semi-structure questionnaires for different types of subjects: i) leaders of participating communes, districts and provinces; (ii) commune leaders and mass organization such as woman union, and farmer association; (iii) men groups and women group, poor beneficiaries who benefit from project models.

Implement some typical studies in order to identify the good byword during project implementation, especially the bywords in forestry development models and gender equality models.

Numbers of interviews and discussion are listed below:

**Table 1. Evaluation form in Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai province**

Methodology	Ninh Thuan			Lao Cai			Total
	District and provincial level	Phuoc Tan	Phuoc Tien	District and provincial level	Sa Pa	Ban Ho	
Group discussion	1	2	2	0	2	1	8
Deep interview	4	4	2	4	2	2	18
Total	5	6	4	4	4	3	26

There are 91 people participating in the evaluation of which 60 people are men and 31 people are women (35%)<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.3.3. Difficulties and Limitations of the Evaluation

Out of the basic advantages including OGB staff actively supported in the coordination and connection of secondary information; partners actively participated in evaluation, providing objective and honest opinions, the evaluation team still met difficulties and limitations as follow:

Project was designed for only 3 years which is very short compared with forestry-type project cycle. Therefore, it is not adequate to have full and accurate evaluation to be able to identify the effectiveness, sustainability and the replicability of some models.

In project areas, staff who are project partners is not working full time for the project, in addition, they rotate very often therefore the collection of information was not continuous and not comprehensive.

OGB staff who is in charge of project were also changed many times and there is no one who participates in the project from beginning until present, therefore the updating and summarizing of project activities faces a lot of difficulties.

Language is also a limitation of the consultant team. Many farmers are Raglai, H'Mong, and Tay ethnic minority people who are not frequency in using King language so interviews were made

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<sup>3</sup> For details please see Annex 5: List of meeting people and agencies

through local interpreter. Using interpreter may limit the objectiveness of the information and consume more time.

## 2. PROJECT RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### 2.1. Results of the project activities

The project sets out four expected results (or four specific objectives to be achieved). Accordingly, there are total 22 corresponding activities designed for each objective. The implementation results of these activities after three years of the project's operation are summarized in the table as below.

**Table 2: Summarized implementation results of the project activities**

No	Activities	Implemented
1	Establishment of village forest protection groups	✓
2	Capacity building on land use planning and allocation for local organizations and community	✓
3	Land use mapping, planning and allocation	✓
4	Land allocation	✓
5	Evaluation and documentation of land use planning and allocation	✓
6	Workshops to share experiences on implementation of land use planning and allocation	✓
7	Information disseminating	✓
8	Preparation of development plans for the project communes	✓
9	Training for beneficiaries	✓
10	Training on management and technical skills for ethnic minority groups	✓
11	Implementation of revolving fund	✓
12	Improvement of forestry extension services	✓
13	Determination of market and marketing of agricultural and forest products	✓
14	Community tourism	✓
15	Income-generating activities	✓
16	Environmental protection activities	✓

17	Mainstreaming poverty reduction and social equity in forest development planning	✓
18	Synthesis and sharing of experiences on land use planning and allocation	✓
19	Review of policies on poverty	✓
20	Advocacy at the central level	✓
21	Monitoring	✓
22	Mid-Term Review	✓

Source: Oxfam Great Britain, 7/2010<sup>4</sup>

After three years (11/2007-8/2010), all project activities have been carried out. However, the achieving level is different among various activities and localities.

## 2.2. Achievements

The overall goal of the project is to improve the living standards of poor men and women of ethnic minorities in the project areas specifically and contribute to poverty reduction in mountainous areas generally.

Specific objectives are to ensure that 2,500 poor ethnic minority households (Tay, H'mong and Dao people in Lao Cai province (1,800 households), and Raglai People in Ninh Thuan Province (700 households)) are provided with access and equal management of forest resources and services and benefits generated from forest land and production, contributing to ensure food security and income for these groups.

The analysis, consideration and evaluation of the achieving level by each of the project's expected output are shown as follows:

### 2.2.1. Capacity building on forest resources access and management (Result 1)

The participants in the project in both provinces of Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan are mainly farmers belonging to numerous ethnic minority groups such as H'mong, Dao, Tay (Sa Pa district, Lao Cai) and Raglai (Bac Ai district, Ninh Thuan). The deep origin of the poverty of ethnic minorities in upland areas is the limited access and control of forest resources and forest land where they are living in. Therefore, when designing the project, the Oxfam has reserved up to 9 out of the total 22 activities of the project to solve this problem.

Participation in the land use planning and allocation at the community level is the best opportunity for the ethnic minorities to access and sustainably manage forest resources and land.

In a series of activities, the land use planning and allocation is directly related and dominates the people's access to forest resources and land. DONREs in the two provinces that are the main agencies responsible for implementing these activities have developed a participatory land use planning and allocation approach. This approach not only fully

<sup>4</sup> See details in Appendix 2: Results of the project activities

complies with procedures and guidelines of the MONRE and MARD but also could mobilize the people's participation in this process. Therefore, land use planning and allocation activities have gained an encouraging success.

So far, after three years of the project implementation, all project communes have been established a land-use planning (LUP) or adjusted detailed LUP to their villages (Sa Pa, Lao Chai in Lao Cai and Phuoc Tan, Phuoc Tien in Ninh Thuan). Specifically, in Ban Ho Commune (Lao Cai), LUP has been developed since June/2006 with the help of Oxfam under the diversified cultural identity and sustainable livelihoods improvement project. According to the State's legal provisions, it is only expected to carry out LUP to the communal level; however, under the Project, it has been implemented to the village/hamlet level to ensure that the people could easily control, manage and use their resources. This is a huge effort of the project and all its local stakeholders. The communal LUPs have been approved by DPCs to serve as a basis for investment and implementation.

On the basis of detailed LUP for villages/hamlets, DONRE would conduct land surveying and mapping with a scale of 1/5000 for agricultural land concentrated or alternated with forestland; garden land and residential land to allocate for households in the project communes. For Lao Cai province: in Ban Ho commune, there are 600 Land Use Certificates (LUC or Red book) issued for 138 households in its 4/7 villages; in Lao Chai commune, there are 612 Red Books issued to 230 households in its 4/5 villages. Particularly, in Sa Pa commune there is 301.2 hectares of forest land allocated to households for planting Lambs and Manglietia glauca...(Red books have been issued in previous time).

In Ninh Thuan province, two types of land have been surveyed and mapped for allocation to households. They are agricultural land interspersed with forest land under management of the Tan Tien Forest Company and concentrated agricultural land under communal management. For concentrated agricultural land, in Phuoc Tan, the Red Book has been issued to 22 households with an area of 19.2 ha; in Phuoc Tien, the corresponding figures are 25 households and 23ha. Currently, Bac Ai DPC continues to complete the procedures for issuance of Red Book for 293 remaining households with an area of 227.9 ha. For concentrated agricultural land: In Phuoc Tien commune, the Red Book has been issued to 138 households with an area of 67ha, and is now completing the procedures to grant Red Book for additional 189 households with an area of 77ha. At the same time, relevant procedures would be completed to grant Certificate of Land Use Rights for households in Phuoc Tan commune. In the Certificate, the name of both husband and wife would be recorded to ensure the equality of men and women in management and use of their land resources for production development.

Through the participatory land use planning and allocation approach, the DONRE's officials would be responsible for the technical mapping and calculating, meanwhile the local people would be mobilized to participate in this process. LUP in nature is to arrange suitably and efficiently the land for various use purposes. Thus, only the local people who live in this land for a long time with deep experience and knowledge could understand fully how to use their land, and propose rational use methods basing on their aspirations. Indeed, the local people have engaged suitably in specific activities as follows:



- Provide information on ethnic groups, population and labor in villages; on their living standards, challenges, advantages, needs and aspirations in management of natural resources and allocation of land and forests.
- Field investigate, determine the land use current situation, land-fund and forest resources currently in use; together record the impacts of land use as planned earlier.
- Along with responsible officials to discuss how the land would be used? Which land is for cultivation of food crops, fruit trees, industrial plants; which land is for forest planting, watershed, pasture, graveyards growing etc. and identify suitable crops for cultivation on their land.
- Develop and select LUP.
- Register, declare and prepare application for Certificate of Land Use Rights
- Define the boundaries of their land plots when responsible officials conduct cadastral measurement and mapping.
- Delivery and receipt of parcel of land on maps and field.

The participation of women and men in activities related to planning, surveying and land allocation is more or less experienced differences due to certain effects of the division of labor within the family and society on the basis of gender and nature of activities. For example: Women often participate in LUP meetings and training courses more than men (70%) because these activities are considered light. Meanwhile, men become more involved in hard works in the field such as: forest survey, land survey, identifying of land owners, forest patrol and protection...

It should be noted that in the project areas there are various ethnic groups with different cultural characteristics; then the participation of women of different ethnic groups are also different. Unlike other ethnic minorities in the northern mountainous region (H'mong, Dao, Tay), Raglai people in the South Central and the Central Highlands follow the matriarchy; woman is the family-head and often have a final voice. Thus, Raglai women often participate in activities required to make final decisions related to their household, such as planning approval meeting, allocation of land for each household, delivery and receipt of certificate of land use right...

The participation of local community in the process of land planning and allocation has generated very clear and specific effects. First, it is very important and has significantly contributed to the achievements of local planning and land allocation. The people totally agreed with the planning option and implemented well the option. And at the same time it is minimized in terms of errors and disputes related to the land boundaries when carrying out land measurement and documentation.

*After approval of LUP, in the commune, there is no disputes related to land among local households or land invasion as before. The land's owner, land area and boundaries have been clearly stated in the Certificate of Land Use Rights. Additionally, encroachment into forest land for agricultural cultivation has been also significantly reduced. (According to a resident in Ban Ho commune).*

Thanks to the planning, each village has prepared its own suitable agricultural and forest production development plan; forest protection organizations also have identified clearly

the boundaries of the forest land, and their respective owners that would facilitate the implementation of their works. Through the participation in the process of planning and land allocation, the local people have been provided with convenient opportunities to access and control over forest and land resources within their villages.

*Thanks to directly involved in the process of LUP and granted with the certificate of land use right, I know exactly the area of my land and its boundary. I am no longer confused or worried about disputes with others as before (according to a women in Phuoc Tan Commune).*

In particular, the role of ethnic minority women has been improved. They have equal rights as men in the management and use of their family land. If compared with the previous period, the status and role of Raglai women have experienced a big change. Women today become brave and confident, participate actively in all activities in the family and society. The rate of women participating in communal government has been clearly improved, not only in quantity but also in quality. The participation of women in local government is appreciated and acknowledged in term of their contribution in social and economic development.

*Our communal women now are much different from before. I was here in 2005. At that time, it very difficult to touch with them. They felt timid, inferior, and shamed when talking with me, since I am a strange official. In the previous time, in the People's Committee, there was only one position, leader of Women's Union, held by women. However, now, as you can see, women act as the head of Fatherland Front, vice head of Farmer's Association, secretary of Youth's Union etc. That has not been mentioned about the source of women with high education level (already completion of high school); and the number of village-level women officials also have increased more than that of five years ago. In their families, women bravely make discussion with men in all matters of expenditure, production planning, education of children...These changes are experienced with the contributions of Oxfam who has tried its best efforts to mobilize the participation of women in many different activities of the project, and accordingly help the women to improve their living skills, presentation skills in front of the crowd, to be confident and provided with more knowledge on family economic development and management etc. (Mrs. Pi Nang Thi Mai, Chairman of Phuoc Tan Commune People's Committee).*

The participation of the people in general, especially of women in specific has been strengthened that strongly reflect the democracy. The people's initiative has contributed to develop a transparent process of land allocation, land use, and increase rights for communities, especially ethnic minorities people (men and women) in the two provinces of Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai.

Although it is difficult to accurately measure the quality or level of impact of the involvement of local people, especially women, in all activities related to planning, surveying and land allocation but it is clear that their involvement has created extra weight of decisions on planning and land allocation at the community level. Therefore, this activity is considered very effective to meet the project's leading goal which is to improve accessibility and management of forest resources for poor ethnic minority people through their participation in land planning and allocation. It is reflected clearly in the

project communes in Lao Cai. With the project support, various forest plantation models such as forests of *Manglietia glauca* in Ban Ho, cardamon and *sa môt* in Sa Pa are under a good development, contributing to increase green coverage and promises to help people gain more income, as well as more wood to construct the house, and reduce pressure on forests in the next 7-10 years.

*Training and dissemination of information about policies and legislation related to forest and land is fundamental to ensure sustainable accessibility and management over forests and land resources of the community.*

In Lao Cai, DONRE has organized three workshops on Land Law, LUP method, cadastral surveying, mapping and land allocation with the participation of the local people in Sa Pa, Ban Ho and Lao Chai communes. Target audience includes local land officials, agricultural and forest extension officers, rangers, representatives of Women Union, Farmer Union, village leaders and household heads. Forestry Department also organized a competition to study about Forest Development and Protection Law in four core communes of Hoang Lien National Park. There were 120 people of four ethnic minority groups participated in the contest, including 47 women accounting for 39.2%. This is a much higher rate, compared with the previous period<sup>5</sup>. Additionally, 700 people were attracted to the competition to cheer and encourage contestants; in which, nearly 50% were women at different ages. The contest had a rich content, including questions of law and regulations on forest protection interspersed with traditional games and dances of various ethnic groups.

In Ninh Thuan, many training courses on land use planning and allocation were also held with the participation of numerous women. For example, in the training classes on 16-17/4/2008 in Phuoc Tien Commune and on 21-22/4/2008 in Phuoc Tan Commune, there were 40 participants per class, including communal officials, village leaders and representatives of the local people. The participants were mainly the ethnic minority people, and women constituted over 50% of the total participants. This rate reflects the progress made in mobilizing the participation of women; because if compared with the previous period (2005), the rate was only around 20%<sup>6</sup>. Although the Raglai people follow the matriarchy; women always acts as the family head; however, in the previous time, all outside activities were recorded with the primary involvement of men. To date, the situation has been completely changed and women have been mobilized, and strongly involved in almost activities of the project, and other social activities.

*If you are once involved in the forest protection festival, you will see how women has changed in these days: they sing on stage, they play, they play as men, they participate in drills against forest fire ... they participate in all activities and make performance not inferior to men (according to a men in Da Trang Village in Phuoc Tan Commune).*

The assessment results show that in comparison with the initial design the contents of some training courses would not really go into the technical side of the land use planning and allocation; however, to match the local conditions, the project stakeholders were flexible and put into training content relevant policies and legal documents and regulations of the Government on land management, as well as the rights of the people

<sup>5</sup> According to the gender analysis in forest sector in Lao Cai, the percentage of women participated in training courses is only 12%.

<sup>6</sup> See the gender analysis in Ninh Thuan 2005 (prepared by Le Thi Mong Phuong and Vu Phuong Ly)

generally and of women specifically in land access and management, such as land law, policies of land allocation, of forest allocation for the ethnic minorities, and procedures for land allocation and granting of Certificate of Land Use Right to households, rights and obligations of land users, preparation and management of cadastral documents, and gender equality in land use.

Information, education and communication activities on the land and forest laws and policies were undertaken in all the project communes. The content and form of these activities were very rich and varied from forest-fires prevention contest, drawing of posters on forest protection, to communication through local speak-louder. Although it seems to be simple and inexpensive, in fact it has brought high effective achievements. Many people understand more about the forest policies that would contribute in protection of natural resources and better use of forests.

The assessment results also show that the above training courses have been significantly affected the people in the project areas, contributed in improvement of the awareness of ethnic minority communities, including women and the poor, on land laws, so that they could understand their rights and obligations when being allocated with land and forest. The people have been more aware of the importance of forests and forest land, as well as their responsibility for management and protection of forest resources. Accordingly, the local people, especially women and the poor would be provided with a basis for better and more sustainable control and management of their forests and forest lands.

*Thanks to training courses on forest protection and forest fire prevention, I am aware of protecting forests and not destroy forests for farming; I know that forest protection is to minimize flooding and drought, thereby reducing their impacts on crops and livestock. Thus the family economy would be better. In addition, regular and well patrols and protection of forests would be paid with money etc. (according to a woman).*

*Establishment of forest protection and management group/team in villages is a handy way for the people to control and best manage existing forest resources of the community.*

Under the forest allotment policy of the State, during the course of project implementation, natural forests of the Sa Pa district protective forests management unit, Hoang Lien National Park and Tan Tien Forest Company have been contracted with the communities of the project communes for management and protection. The fact is that the people are living scattered in villages/hamlets, the forest management and protection is very difficult, then the establishment of forest protection team/group is indeed a good model. Up to now, such team/group has been formed in all the participating communes under the project support. Each team includes between 15-20 members depending on the size of the community. All members take turns in forest protection, 1-2 times per week. The fund for this work would be based on the previous contract between the community with the forest owners under the 661 Program, and the Government's Resolution 30A; eg: wages for protection of protective forests and specialized forests is VND 200,000/ha/year; when being allocated with land for afforestation, the local people shall be supported VND 2-5 million per ha; and be supported VND 500,000/ha when exploring the fallow for agricultural production. In addition, the project has also supported protection equipments for forest patrolling such as knives, flashlights, water containers, socks and shoes, loudspeakers etc.

The basic for the implementation of community forest management is the local forest protection and development convention. The project has assisted 27 villages in the five project communes to build their own conventions on the basis of discussion and unification of the whole community, of which about 30-40% of women participated in the discussion. The convention includes very specific and clear regulations, such as: (i) the work to be done, (ii) the work was done, (iii) the incentive work to do; (iv) the work banned to do (v) the rights of communities and people; (vi) rights and obligations of the village; (vii) reward and sanction. The convention has been built and approved by the local people through their entire village. After all, this convention would be subject for issuance by DPC.

In Ninh Thuan Province, the project has supported the pilot allotment of natural forest of Tan Tien Company to the community in two villages of Da Ban (Phuoc Tien) and Ma Lam (Phuoc Tan) with an area of 1,000 and 961.7 hectares respectively and simultaneously supported them to establish a forest protection and management team. For example: In Da Ban village, according to the criteria agreed by the local people, the poor households would be engaged in forest protection activities and be received payment from the Program 30A. In the village, there are total 74 out of 119 households identified as poor households who would be contracted for forest protection. A protection team includes 20 people (women accounting for one third) divided into two sub-teams. They would take turns in forest protection patrolling (three times per week). The members of the team have been entitled to receive VND200,000/ha under the Government's Resolution 30A since December/2009. Thanks to the various activities of the team, the forests have been better protected. No forest fires and deforestation has been recorded as before. Moreover, the poor households have gained more income from forest protection activities which would contribute to improving their life. This approach has been replicated widely and more and more shown its effect, and to date in Bac Ai district there are total 27/38 villages undertaken the allotment of forests to the communities.

In Lao Cai, the local forest area has been better protected; there is no longer forest fires, illegal logging, forest burning for agricultural production as before. Many communities (Sau Chua, Sa Seng, Ma Tra villages in Sa Pa commune) discussed the use of forests and sharing of its benefits with State agencies who are now the forest owners (Protective Forests Management Unit, National Park). This activity is considered very stable. Even when completion of the project, this form still could be maintained. However, forest owners and the community should together discuss and agree on sharing the benefits generated from the forests under their management, apart from the available annual protection waves.

Besides the formation of forest protection team, in the participating villages/hamlets, the Project also supported the establishment of farmer groups, including between 35-40 households, and women constituted about 40% of the total members of each group. By each month the group would organize meeting once to discuss about the works to be done; about forest protection and wildfire prevention, and other agricultural activities. The community forest management team, the core team, in coordination with responsible staff of the Center for Natural Resources and Environment Engineering and communal officials have participated in land use planning and allocation activities. The combination of forest protection and participation in planning and land allocation are the hallmarks of the team which have brought out remarkably achievements in accessibility, control and management of forest resources and forest land in the community.

*Today is much different from the past five years. The women are involved in the forest protection team. They also could act as secretary responsible for documentation, calculation of revenue and expenditure. They participate in forest protection, involve in patrolling, and forest-fire prevention rehearsal activities, not inferior to men. As in the previous time, it is said that these works were for men, and women had no chances for involvement (according to a women in Da Trang Village, Phuoc Tan Commune).*

Also, in Lao Cai, Forest Department also encourages the development of agricultural and forestry systems in two communes of Lao Cai and Sa Pa; in Lao Cai and Sa Pa there are 5 and 6 forest extension staffs respectively. The Department in cooperation with the Agricultural Extension Centre of Lao Cai province organized forestry training for 13 responsible staff of the two communes Sa Pa and Lao Cai and the forest team of the Forestry Department. Apart from that, 10 training courses were also held for forest-extension staff at the grassroots level and the core group of farmers with the participation of 300 people. Training content is focused on afforestation techniques, intensive cultivation and pest prevention for high yield types of rice, maize, soybean, disease prevention and treatment for cattle, pigs, chickens, fish...However, in a village, the formation of many small self-governing community teams would make the situation complex and create overlapping; therefore, they should be combined into bigger teams.

The forest protection and management team/group has been established so that forests could be managed more effectively. However, in fact, forests allotted for the community are still owned by the State; and the community only receives annual payment for this assignment. Therefore, in fact, the forest protection and management team has been established to protect forests of the State rather than for their own interests. This is an existing problem; and the State should adopt reasonable policies to satisfactory share the benefits between the State and the community in the forest protection and management.

*Land use planning and allocation Manual at the communal level prepared with the involvement of the local people would be a good tool enabling responsible officials to provide guidance on access to land and forest resources.*

The pilot participatory land use planning and allocation model has brought an encouraging success. The local people, especially ethnic minority people and women have been provided with opportunities of access, control and management of land and forest resources, reorganization of production, improvement of their living standards. Accordingly, the project has compiled a handbook of "Participatory land use planning and allocation at the communal level" to help technical staff to not only grasp the sequence and content of the steps of the investigation, surveying, mapping and land allocation, but also have more necessary knowledge and experience. Therefore, the handbook was compiled based on the summary of the working steps in the technical process of the MONRE combined with practical experience of the project and illustration on the involvement of the local people in land use planning and allocation. These results have contributed significantly to the dissemination of experience and application of this approach to all localities in the province.

To replicate these results, the project has organized two provincial level workshops with the participation of related departments such as DONRE, Forestry Department, Forest Protection Department, Agriculture Extension Center, the project provinces, districts, and communes to exchange and share experiences on land planning and allocation (in Lao Cai, on 7/5/2010, and in Ninh Thuan, on 2/7/2010).

*Land and forest allocation activities have not been done according to the original design. Instead of that, natural forests have been allotted by its owners to the community for management and protection.*

According to the project initial design, the allocation of land and forests to households and communities would be carried out right upon completion of LUP. However, the allocation of forest and land has not been executed; instead of that, the community has been contracted for management of garden land, residential land, concentrated agricultural land, and agricultural land alternated with forest land with their owners. Rationale for this adjustment is as follows:

- In Lao Cai, the Sa Pa Commune's forest land which has been planned by the State is the protective forest areas. It has been allocated to the Sa Pa District Management Unit; thus it could not be reallocated to the local community. These areas could only be contracted for management between the management unit and the community under the community-based forest management form. The Ban Ho and Lao Chai Communes are the same. The communal forests are located in the core areas of Hoang Lien National Park for special purposes, thus, they should also not be allocated to the community as the project design.
- In Ninh Thuan, the forestland of the two communes of Phuoc Tien and Phuoc Tan which has been planned by the State is the productive forest land. It has been assigned to the Tan Tien Company for management and use. Therefore, this land could not be reallocated to the community; and only contractual allotment could be made between the Company and the community.

Thus, it can be seen that at the time of project design, the owners of local forests had not been yet clearly identified. The proposed allocation of forest and land to households and communities became not close to reality.

Based on this fact, the local stakeholders such as DONRE, Department of Forestry have asked Oxfam for adjustment to some specific activities within the framework of Result 1. This request has been approved in writing. The assessment team thought that this resolution is in line with the reality and do not affect the project's goals which are to improve accessibility and management of forest resources for poor ethnic minorities.

Overall, the project activities have been achieved a great success. The accessibility and management of forest resources for ethnic minorities was put into great concern. The local people are entitled to access and propose plans for effective forest protection and use. All the communities are provided with equal access to the resources, irrespective of gender.

In term of forest management: the project has developed and maintained the community-based forest management through the preparation of forest protection convention; and at the same time provided necessary facilities and basic skills for forest management.

The community's accessibility to forest resources has been put in a proper care. However, the local forest resources is very limited with low-quality; and the forests owner is the State; the community only access to this resources through protection assignment, and get benefits from the forests as prescribed by law; and has no autonomy to decide on the use of forest resources.

Summary: All activities to achieve the Result 1 have been done well, and all the main project's objectives have been satisfied. Through specific activities of the project as

mentioned above, the poor ethnic minorities, especially women, have been provided with opportunities to improve access to forest resources and forest land; accordingly, the control and management of these resources become better. Although the results of these activities could not be seen immediately but the awareness of the project participants, especially ethnic minority people have been changed, and they are now aware of the importance of forest and forest land resources, as well as their role in the protection, management and use of these resources and the reorganization of production. All these factors would significantly contribute in improvement of the local living standards.

### **2.2.2. Strengthening management capacity and acquisition of production techniques (Result 2)**

To achieve this Result, the project has set out four activities. After three years of implementation, all these activities have been implemented in the participating localities.

*Participatory forest management planning would be the basis for the forests protection with the involvement of community.*

The forest development and protection planning has been implemented seriously under the instruction of Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan Forestry Departments. All the project villages have been supported in preparation of this plan based on their detailed LUP which had been prepared with the help of DONRE. When carrying out the investigation for preparation of community based management plan, the local people have involved in measurement and mapping of their village forests, and also guided on how to prepare development plan. At the same time, the assessment of the needs of poor farmers, ethnic minority people such as capital and outlet markets, and agricultural and forest production techniques has been also conducted in all the project villages/communes; in which, there was enthusiastic participation of women. When formulating this plan, the forest protection team acted as the core force with the participation of women in making decisions in village meetings. The plan shows specific activities, capital requirements and implementation arrangements for each year. It partly reflects the needs of economic, social and environmental development of ethnic minority and women living in the localities. The community forest development plan has been developed by local residents and then submitted to CPC for consideration and approval.

Local government and community would base on this plan to direct and control the activities of forest protection and development. Thus, it can be said that the plan has facilitated the community based forest management to be more effective. It is also one of important objectives of the project which has already been achieved.

Upon the forest development and protection plan come into effect, relevant agencies, especially Lao Cai Forestry Department has been included in the plan with available funding sources from national programs, current policies and from other organizations to help the community in implementation of the plan, namely:

- Contracts between the Sa Pa District Protective Forests Management Unit with the local community.
- The local people are supported by the State a maximum of VND2 million per ha by provision of seedlings and workforce - for productive forests; the people involved in forestation are provided with funds for tree cultivation and caring – for protective forests.
- Cooperation with other economic organizations in the provinces in the forestation.



- Contribution of the community.

This is a great success of the project in the integration of village/communal forest protection and development plans into national programs/projects in their localities in order to create additional funding sources for the plan implementation.

*Various training workshops were held, contributing in improvement of acquisition of agricultural and forestry production techniques of the local people, especially women and ethnic people.*

To achieve one of the project's objective which is to improve the acquisition of technical production advances for beneficiaries, a series of training workshops on agricultural and forest production techniques was organized with rich and flexible content, and good combination between theories with practice; on-job training was also carried out etc. For Lao Cao Forestry Department specifically, according to an incomplete statistics, over 10 training courses have been held with the participation of nearly 600 people, of which women accounting for 35%. Namely:

- Natural forest restoration technique.
- Plantation thinning technique.
- Afforestation bedding technique and scattered plantation technique.
- Intensive plantation technique.
- Harvesting technique of grain in natural forests.
- Forest garden construction planning technique.
- Caring, harvesting and processing of bamboo shoots, bamboo and apricot.
- Method of forest fire prevention and extinguish.
- Techniques of cultivation on sloping land.
- Cymbidium flowers cultivation technique.
- Techniques for raising and prevention of diseases for bees.
- Bamboo furniture weaving techniques.
- Forest development and investment policies.
- Forest and agricultural production management skills.
- The rights and obligations in managing forest resources of the community.
- Capacity building for project partners in the implementation of forest policies.

Various training activities to improve the ethnic minority people' capacity to acquire agricultural and forest production techniques have been implemented. Especially, the training courses on techniques of agricultural cultivation, breeding and forestation, training on agro-forestry farming on sloping land (Lao Cai), training on preparation of grass cultivation, cow raising and cattle manure composting (Ninh Thuan) has attracted a large number of ethnic minority people in the project areas. The training activities have created distinct and effective results. The local people have been trained to improve their knowledge about production techniques and community based forest management. This approach has been applied on the land of each family and forests of the community.

*The revolving capital fund has created important contribution in reaching the goal of poverty reduction of the project, especially for poor ethnic households.*

The revolving capital fund (hereafter referred as the Fund) has just been applied in six villages of Sa Pa Commune (Lao Cai) and 30 households in two villages of Phuoc Tan and Phuoc Tien Communes (Ninh Thuan). The Fund would put the poor households participated the core agricultural groups of the project into a top priority. The capital is used to purchase breeding animals such as goats, pigs, buffalos, and cows. The local people are also trained on preparation of necessary technical conditions for the effective use of capital. Initial results show that this activity has provided the local people, especially poor ethnic minority households with initial capital for production to gradually overcome difficulties and escape poverty. The Fund has indirectly reduced the pressure on forests; thus, they would be protected and rehabilitated better. Until now, most households have already paid the interest; and the origin loan could be paid back by the end of 2010 since it is a two year term loan.

According to opinions of the local people – the project's beneficiaries, the application of the revolving fund model is appropriate and has contributed to create favorable conditions for poor farmers to access the funding sources immediately in their villages/hamlets; the subjects entitled to be lent capital are decided by the community, and the community is responsible for monitoring the use of capital, and maintaining the fund. All the local people hoped that the revolving fund would be maintained and developed.

As discussed with local authorities, it is shown that they are willing to support the development of the revolving fund model and be responsible for handling likely problems during the use of capital. If the borrowers do not follow their obligations in accordance with the Fund's regulations, the local government would find suitable solutions for these people to fully comply with the prescribed obligations.

The lessons drawn from the implementation of revolving capital fund model:

- Maintain small and medium capital loans meet the urgent needs of capital for agricultural and forest production, and livestock, and the maturity term should be as short as possible, so that the Fund may satisfy the demands of more people for economic development, and creation of equality in communities.
- The project Steering Committee, and local authorities and officials of relevant teams/groups need to actively monitor the use of loans in compliance with the set-out principle: Households would be provided with loans in kind; money borrowing would be avoided since this amount of money is likely used in other purposes.
- The borrower must satisfy certain conditions for effective use of capital. For example, with loans for livestock, they should be equipped with breeding techniques or knowledge prior to borrowing; they also should put effort to make pens and fully vaccinate their breeding animals in order to minimize possible risks.
- When conducting the revolving loan model, it must include the participation of local authorities so that they could be act as witnesses and responsible for problems if any during the use of loans.

- Borrowing groups should be more empowered by the project implementation agencies so that they may actively withdraw their capital and continue to return the capital and avoid capital accumulation meanwhile other households still lack the capital.
- Build a community monitoring mechanism and enhance the monitoring of use of loans, and provide necessary support for better and more efficient use of capital.

*The Revolving Fund model (called the Fund) has been implemented by the Forestry Department since 2008 for 11 groups/teams in six villages in Sa Pa commune - Sa Pa district. 99 households have borrowed loans in a minimum of VND100,000 to buy rice seeds, and in a maximum of VND8,000,000 buy breeding buffalo. The total capital for loan is VND139 million. The number of cattle purchased from the Fund: 5 buffalos, 32 baby goats; 52 baby pigs; 100 baby chickens. In addition, some households have borrowed money to buy rice seeds, breeding fish and fruit tree varieties.*

*After two years of implementation of the model, it is recorded that the households are managing and using capital efficiently and appropriately. The use of capital has been achieved efficient and high success; especially the households who borrowed money to buy buffalos and breeding animals currently experienced very good development. The number of livestock has increased considerably in comparison with before (according to incomplete statistics, the current number of goats is over 70, that of pigs (included sold number) is over 400, chickens - over 300; the capital is preserved and profitable for farmers, many households have gained more than 10 million over 3-4 furrows, significantly contributing to improved the family economic condition; the capacity of capital returning is feasible. It is expected that by the end of the loan term, 90% of households could afford to repay both principal and interest. There are only 10 households met with risks during the use of capital or the capital use has not been created effective and good achievement. The Project Steering Committee has applied the solution for extension of the loan term.*

*According to Report on evaluation of the implementation of the revolving fund prepared by Lao Cai Forestry Department (materials for conference on evaluation of the implementation of the revolving fund).*

So far, in Lao Cai, the Forestry Department has held a conference on evaluation of the revolving capital fund after two years of implementation. The conference attracted 25 delegates of the local government, and other functional divisions/units of relevant districts and departments of the province. The conference gained many contribution ideas for a long-term development of the revolving capital funds. In the conference, a number of measures were also discussed and agreed to help maintaining and developing the fund upon completion of the project; the lessons were also drawn for better replicating of the model.

Upon completion of the project, there is a question that how the revolving capital would be transferred. In Lao Cai, it is agreed by all stakeholders to hand over the Fund to Farmers Union of Sa Pa district for management. The handover process is being done. Meanwhile, in Ninh Thuan, there are many ideas that the Fund should be transfer to communal Women's Union for management under a condition that poor households would be continuously entitled for loans following the project's statutes and not use capital for other purposes.

Although, the current activities of the Fund have not entirely met the original target set as the "the project would support of capital in the implementation of community forest development plan, and the communities would create varieties of plants to save costs". However, the review team thought that they are consistent with the local current situation and highly appreciated that the local partners have carried out discussion with Oxfam for timely adjustment in support of the community to develop agricultural and forest production, contributing to poverty reduction, thereby reducing pressure on forests and illegal exploitation of forest products. At the time of evaluation, the fund is still in active period, has not yet come to the maturity date, thus it is unable to evaluate the ability to collect debts to ensure its sustainability. But in fact, it is shown that the loan has supported the local people in production development and it is revolving in the community. Therefore, the fund is preserved and may help many people. Especially, the poor people are put into great concern to gradually overcome difficulties to escape poverty.

Summary: Although the financial support to communities has not yet fully met the original target set by the project but all the remaining activities has been performed well and achieved high results. Agricultural production techniques and community forest management methods have been adopted by the local people. In fact, they have applied the knowledge gained in the implementation of production activities of the project quite easily and successfully. Therefore, it can be said that all activities under this Result have met with the objectives of the project which is to strengthen the ethnic minorities' capacity of management and acquisition of agricultural and forest production techniques.

### **2.2.3. Agricultural and forest services to meet the needs of households (Result 3)**

To achieve this Result, the project has been selected and proposed appropriate and practical activities. First, the activities of seeding selection, and plantation of native trees to increase income have attracted enthusiastic participation of the local people and have brought out bigger results than expected. The local people participated in not only selection of local varieties, but also in preparation of models for cultivation of these kinds of trees. Thanks to this activity, in the project communes, there have been formed a local plantation group for economic development, and contribution in poverty reduction. The project has not only supported the local people in selection of plant varieties but also directed them in preparation of model for cultivation of these kinds of trees on their land which had been previously planned. The agricultural models selected in the project areas include:

- Model of cultivation of short-term crops: taro, cassava, peanuts, ginger
- Model of cultivation of fruit and ornamental trees: French peach, green pears, lemons, plums, apples, cashew, cocoa, green-skin grape, yellow jack, and cymbidium flowers.
- Model of breeding of rabbits, honeybees, and freshwater fish
- Model of plantation: Clethra tree, acacia, Manglietia glauca, Lamb tree, bamboo, Canarium album
- Model of non-timber products and medical trees: Cardamon, Arctium lappa Linn, Aquilaria
- Community forest protection model

- Pasture and grass growing model
- Model of firewood-saving stove
- Model of community tourism

The project models are very rich and diverse, reflecting the needs of exploitation and discovery of the people and the project's partners.

When carrying out the models, the partners have enthusiastically supported the local people in well implementation of survey, and selection of plant and animal varieties. The training work has been put into great concern; many training classes or on-job technical guidance have been held with the participation of a lot of people, and brought out significant effect.

*For example, the training on the model of enriching from natural forest has been organized in Sa Seng Village in Sa Pa Commune. The on-job training has also been carried out for 26 participants, including six women, accounting for 23%. After completion of the training, the project has supported the local people with 2000 seedlings (1000 Cunninghamia lanceolata and 1000 rattan) to plant in local forests with an aim of improving forest enrichment. The result of this training is that the local people have been aware of techniques for improvement of forests with little economic values to become ones with better economic and environmental benefits.*

(Report of the Forestry Department and the Consultant Team on 05/07/2010).

In Lao Cai, Hoang Lien National Park in collaboration with relevant partners in the province has conducted evaluation and documentation of the demonstrations (assessment time from 9/8 to 21/08/2010). The results have showed that in total 21 models made in Lao Cai, there are 18 successful demonstrations and 3 unsuccessful pilot ones. Details are shown in the Report on documentation of the demonstrations in Lao Cai.

Through self-assessment of the demonstrations, the capacity of responsible staff in Lao Cai province in observation, data collection and analysis has been enhanced. They could analyze and evaluate technical aspects, and monitor the involvement of stakeholders as well as model implementing agencies. They also could draw out lessons from the implementation of the models and the conditions for successful replicating of the models in the future.

The time for demonstration implementation is too short compared with the growth and development needs of forest plants (Canarium album, Cunninghamia lanceolata...) or fruit trees (peach, pear, lemon...). However, according to the actual survey results, the monitoring team could provide some initial comments, especially for the high potential models. The model of growing cardamom under the Clethra tree forest canopy at Sa Pa has been achieved the most success and could be replicated the best.

*Normally, the cardamom is only cultivated under the canopy of natural forests with deep, wet and cool soil layers. However, now the government does not allow to grow the cardamom under the canopy of natural forests for special uses, since the plantation of this kind of trees would require to cut down other trees to expand the forest canopy; particularly, when harvesting, its fruits would be dried in the forests which is likely to result in forest-fire. Therefore the project has encouraged growing the cardamom under the artificial forests' canopy. The project has succeeded in increasing the number of*

*people participated in growing this kind of trees with very high medicinal value. It is the first time that the cardamom is grown under the Clethra tree forests' canopy. To date, after two years of plantation, the trees have been grown well, are beginning to create fruits; and by the fifth years the highest yield would be achieved. This model has actually brought high economic efficiency, many families in the commune although not being the project's beneficiaries has invested their own capital, and effort to grow the cardamom under the artificial forests' canopy, and they see it as the local anti-poverty tree. The Forestry Department has organized a conference on evaluation of the implementation results of the model of cardamom growing under the forests' canopy with the participation of 42 people (10 at provincial level, 6 at district level and 26 at communal level); in which, there were 8 women, accounting for 19% of the total participants. Results of the Conference are as follows: the participants appreciated the potential for success of this model and suggested to disseminate it widespread on the mass media, contributing to wide application in other places. Lao Cai Province Forestry Department has planned to direct responsible units in the province to apply this approach in appropriate areas.*

The demonstration of growing fruit trees in the family gardens (such as French peach, green pear, lemon, plum in Lao Cai; cocoa, green-skin grape, yellow jack in Ninh Thuan) is considered very successful. It could be maintained in a long time upon completion of the project. On the other hand, this model has offered a high income for the local people to contribute to poverty alleviation of the ethnic minority people, and to meet the objectives of the project.

Besides the plantation models, various breeding models have been also invested by the project such as raising model of bees (Sa Pa, Ban Ho); rabbits (Sa Pa); goats (Phuoc Tan, Phuoc Tien); freshwater fish (Phuoc Tan); model of grass planting, cattle feeding, and manure composting (Phuoc Tan) etc. In which, there are many successful models, namely honey-bee feeding (Sa Pa) and grass planting, and cattle raising and manure composting (Phuoc Tan). These models have contributed to increase of local income and reduction of poverty in a practical way. However, a limit of the project is that it only provided support in the initial time, and there is no fund for further maintenance and caring even for a short time. Thus some models such as raising of rabbits, bees (in a village) could not be developed because the people have not captured fully and thoroughly the knowledge of farming, meanwhile there was no maintaining of initial support.

The model of wood-saving stove has been piloted in the two communes of Sa Pa (H'mong peoples), and Ban Ho (Dao peoples). This model has been implemented more successful in Sa Pa compared to Ban Ho. There have been 78 stoves (4 out of 2008 pilot stoves tested, then additional 56 stoves replicated) in 6 villages of Sa Pa commune. The project has supported and provided the local people with technical training on how to build the stove and which construction materials to be required. The people participated in the model must commit to long-term use of wood stove. The wood stove has good quality and could be used conveniently that would help the people to save firewood, cooking time and effort to collect firewood. However, this model has also revealed a certain number of defects, namely: when using, it is required to divide the wood into small splits so that they could be easily put into the combustion chamber; while the people have a habit of using large-sized firewood. The stove is mainly used by the people in summer, and little in winter because this kind of stove is very limited in thermal spreading-out in winter meanwhile the people need the fire for heating. H'mong people in

Sa Pa are customary to use small pan for cooking which is fully matched with the size of this new type of stove. In Lao Cai, it have been conducted an evaluation of this model and necessary modification to the stove design before replication. Many households in Ban Ho have seen clearly the positive effects of this improved kind of stove, thus, invested their own money to build the stove without the support of the project.

Besides the successful models or the ones with good prospects listed above, there are some unsuccessful models, namely: raising of rabbits; plantation of Thach That sapodila; plantation of rattan (Lao Cai); plantation of Azadirachta indica; and construction of toilets models (Ninh Thuan). The main reasons are: the selection of seedlings and breeding animal has not fit the local conditions; the plantation has not been implemented in the right time; the local people have no or little knowledge and practices about planting techniques; or no markets for products.

*The primary reason is that the plant varieties have not been provided timely by suppliers. As the theory, the plantation should be carried out in May so that the trees could develop well during the rainy season. However, in fact, the plant varieties have been provided to the local people at the end of the rainy season. Due to water shortage, many trees have been died. If the Azadirachta indica is planted in the proper time, it could be developed very strong (according to a male in Phuoc Tan Commune).*

The activity of supporting the people to access to markets for agricultural and forest products was just implemented in Lao Cai in April 2009. With the help of the Forestry Department of Lao Cai, a survey team with the involvement of 44 people of all the project villages (30% female) investigated and visited various markets for commodities and agricultural and forestry materials in Sa pa town, and Sa pa communes. Upon completion of this activity, everyone has come to an agreement on the type of goods, prices, suppliers, ability to provide agricultural and forestry products to market as well as market demand for these types of items. This assessment report reflects the real situation of agricultural markets of the hind-land provinces and gives out recommendations for the local people on the production and consumption of agricultural and forest products. This is a very good reference for local stakeholders.

**Summary:** It could be assessed that the agricultural and forestry production services which have been conducted in the locality is generally very practical and offers good results, contributing directly to poverty reduction and satisfying the set-out objectives of the project. In addition, through the production activities mentioned above, agricultural extension officials of the participating communes have been provided with additional knowledge and experience to hold on their assignments. This is one of achievements of the project, contributing to strengthen local resources, and ensure the project's sustainability.

#### **2.2.4. Forestry policies on poverty reduction and gender (Result 4)**

This Result is the most expected with various activities of advocacy at the district, provincial and national levels. At the time of mid-term review (1/2010), these activities has been implementing in an inconsiderable scope and not brought out results as desired. Only a single study on the status of implementation of community-based forest management policies and programs has been conducted in Lao Cai Province. Accordingly, the mid-term review team has recommended "Obviously, the remaining period of the project is very short; thus, in the coming time, the project should pay great

attention in mobilizing effort and financial strength to implement the remaining activities under the Result 4 so that the project's original objectives may be achieved"<sup>7</sup>.

Following the recommendations of the mid-term review team, since 2/2010 the project has carried out a lot of activities in a positive and expeditious manner, namely:

- Study on the implementation status of community forest management policies and programs in Lao Cai, 7/2009.
- Study on the effects of forest policies to reduce poverty in Lao Cai, 7/2010.
- Workshop on review and sharing of experiences on LUP; land allocation and issuance of Certificate of Land Use Rights with the participation of the local people, held in Lao Cai, on 07/05/2010.
- Workshop on review and sharing of practical experiences on LUP and land allocation with the participation of communal farmers; organized in Ninh Thuan, 02/07/2010.
- Sharing experiences and models of forest management and livelihoods improvement in the forestry forums.
- Discussion with Bac Ai DPC on replicating of some successful models of the project in the Program 30A.
- To organize the compilation and printing of documents for dissemination and publication, like: Participatory land use planning and allocation Manual at the communal level.

Along with the study of "participatory assessment of the needs and main market opportunities for agricultural and forest products" made in 11/2008; those above activities, especially the studies on policies has enabled the local responsible agencies to assess the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of current policies, and then to make recommendation to the PPC as well as develop more appropriate action plans in the future.

The results of the above activities have a strong impact on the provincial leaders and policymakers in the integration of the local forest development strategies with a focus on poverty reduction and social equity - ethnic minority and gender issues. In Lao Cai, thanks to this project, especially the activities of the Result 4, the Lao Cai PPC will soon promulgate the decision on the encouragement policies for development of some major species of trees in Lao Cai province, period of 2010-2015<sup>8</sup>.

In Ninh Thuan, it is proposed to continuously expand and apply the approach of participatory land use planning and allocation in other villages. And it is recommended to add the participatory principle in the communal level LUP in the Environment Law (amendment proposed).

Normally, advocacy is a very difficult and complex process, and requires the time; while the project is a small one of a non-government and implemented in only three years. Therefore, some changes in forestry policy formulation at the provincial level resulted

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<sup>7</sup> See Mid-term review report, 1/2010, Nguyen Vinh Quang and Vu Van Me

<sup>8</sup> According to the Letter 590/TTR-SNN of DARD dated 21/5/2010



from the project's activities is very appreciated; and have partly met with the set-out objectives of the project.

In general, the assessment has shown out that between Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan provinces there is a significant difference on the efficiency of project implementation compared to its original goals. Overall, the project has been implemented more successful in Lao Cai than Ninh Thuan. In Lao Cai, the project's activities have been carried out quite well; and suitable with the expertise of the provincial stakeholders; meanwhile, in Ninh Thuan some shortcomings have been experienced in the selection of partners for implementation of agricultural and forest models; thus the activities in Ninh Thuan have been done latterly and not linked to the general forestry development.

A general assessment of the outcomes of the activities within the Result 1 has shown that the project activities implemented in the field have achieved good results, although the level of gain and efficiency is different between the two project provinces. But it has created specific outcomes; and resulted in the improvement of the people's accessibility and management of resources in contribution to improve the people's living standard, as well as changes to the ecological environment, and the trust of ethnic minorities in the allocation of forests to communities according to the Forest Development and Protection Law in 2004.

### **3. IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT**

#### **3.1. Improving access and control of forest resources**

The results of the above activities have created a great impact on improving access and control of land and forest resources of the groups of ethnic minorities and the poor; it is reflected in the following aspects:

##### **3.1.1 Capacity building to access and management of land and forest management**

According to almost participants involved in the assessment, the activity of land use planning and allocation has contributed to improve accessibility and management of land and forests of ethnic minority families in Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai Provinces. "After the Oxfam provided support in the LUP, and successfully built a parcel map, the local people have been provided with conditions to better access and manage their land. Before implementation of the project, they could not know exactly how much was their land area; particularly, they were very vague about the boundaries of the parcels of land which they had used for many years. During the process of implementing the participatory LUP, the local people have supplied with full understanding on the boundaries of their land which would enable them to have better management" (Mr. Nam, Ninh Thuan provincial official).

##### **3.1.2 Improving the rights of the poor and women in access to land and forests**

The LUP has limited and reduced the use of land for wrong purposes (as in the past, the people used to live in everywhere they want, and do anything they like; however, thanks to a clear planning, the people has no longer constructed houses in locations where landslides and natural disasters normally occur). The issuance of Certificate of Land Use Rights for households have made them to be confident in investing in long-term production development because they have been provided with an additional right to use the land as mortgage for loans. Therefore, the people have gained the opportunity to increase income and reduce poverty. Women have been named in the certificate of land use is a legal base to protect and provide women with equal rights with men. In divorce

cases women are protected by law in property division. Conversely, Raglai ethnic men have more right to inherit and manage property.

### **3.1.3 Improving efficiency of state management of land resources**

The LUP and cadastral mapping has improved the efficiency of land resources management of state agencies and would be the basic to handle land disputes if any. "In the previous time, the agricultural and forest land management in the two provinces was very difficult because there was no basis to determine the area of agricultural land of households. After the Oxfam funded project has provided specific support on measurement and parcel mapping, these provinces' governments have the basis for management of agricultural land interspersed with forest land" (Mr. Nam, Ninh Thuan provincial official).

### **3.1.4 Changing the people's perceptions and habits in forest protection**

The communication activities on forest protection have been conducted in the project communes under various and extensive forms and have attracted many participants. In Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan, the communication on forest protection was implemented under a form of drawing contests. They were also complied by the local people as plays to be performed in stage; or through questions on the Law of Forest Protection etc. Additionally, they were also mainstreamed in training classes on the Forest Development and Protection Law. The various communication activities combined with traditional games have attracted a great number of participants living in not only the project communes but also other communes/villages.

These communication activities have been initially raised the awareness of the people in the project area. Compared with the previous period, the project people have no longer indiscriminately burned forests for farming; and when they wanted to do so, they have already asked for permission of village leaders and forest rangers so that these people could develop suitable plans to deal with fire if the fire was unfortunately widespread.

The analysis results of the tool of "Timeline" show that during three years of the project implementation, the two communes of Phuoc Tien and Phuoc Tan have recorded a lot of changes (see analysis below). The first change is experienced to the communal governments, as previously forests were allotted to households for protection. The households to be allotted are the ones having strong labor force (like healthy men who able to do forest patrolling etc., and normally they are the wealthier households than others. The poor households with poor labor force (having sick men or only women labor) are not eligible for allotment. The women-headed households would not be contracted for forest protection because there is no male labor<sup>9</sup>. To date, the allotment of forests to community for protection has created various opportunities for poor households and women-headed households to be involved in the forest protection and get equal benefits as other households. The forest protection activity is subject to be planed in details every month, quarter and year. The local households are divided into groups of forest protection, including both male and female, are trained on forest protection and equipped with necessary awareness and skills of forest fire prevention and extinguish; thus, their performance become more effective. The people could involve in developing the forest protection convention and in the "swearing night" to commit to protect the forests; therefore, they have been more aware of the forest protection, and have not fired

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<sup>9</sup> See the gender analysis report in forestry, 2005, prepared by Le Thi Mong Phuong and Vu Phuong Ly

indiscriminately the forests for farming as before, and asked for the permission from village leaders to do so.

<b>Before 2007</b>	<b>After 2007 till now</b>
Allotment of forests to households for protection	Allotment of forests to communities for protection
Poor households and women-headed households are not entitled for allotment	Poor households and women-headed households are also entitled for allotment
Households combined together to become team of forest protection	Forest protection team has been strengthened and supported by the project
No specific plans	Specific plans prepared monthly, quarterly and annually
Not been trained	Been trained to improve the knowledge on forest protection
Do not exercise drills of forest-fire prevention and extinguish	Been involved in drills of forest-fire prevention and extinguish and provided with additional knowledge on this
Forest protection convention has not been built	Participatory forest protection convention has been built
Rarely patrolling	More frequent patrolling
Number of people (normally are men) involved in patrolling is very small,	Number of people involved in patrolling is considerable with the participation of women
Little information on forestry destroying cases provided to rangers	More information on forestry destroying cases provided to rangers
Households burned forests arbitrary without information to village leaders, as well as did not choose the suitable burning time	Relevant information is provided to village leaders; and suitable burning time is selected to avoid the fire spreading to nearby areas
Number of beneficiaries from forest allotment activity is small; they are mainly the households with rich labor-force	Number of beneficiaries from forest allotment activity is significantly increasing, including poor and women-headed households

*Source: Results of group discussions in Phuoc Tien, on 01/07/2010*

### **3.1.5 Raising awareness about the value of forests and biodiversity conservation**

Through the training courses of Hoang Lien National Park, the people's awareness has been improved. They are now aware of the value of forests as well as conservation and efficient exploitation of forest resources; and understand about the agricultural and forestry production techniques.

The people has been trained on forest protection and fire prevention and extinguish, participated in fire extinguish demonstration. Thanks to that, their skills and knowledge have been significantly improved; and the effectiveness of forest fire prevention has become much higher.

### **3.1.6 Strategic impacts on access and management of forest resources**

The Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan Provincial Governments have made recommendations to promote application of the participatory land use planning and allocation approach in other communes of the province. The two provinces' forestry departments are increasingly confident that it is an effective form of forest management which has created remarkable and clear results; and at the same time have shown their strong support to the community forest management by integrating this approach in other national programs/projects implemented in the locality. The Government and international donors are also more and more confident in that approach and have providing more resources to support local organizations in effective forest management.

### **3.2. Improving economic conditions and policies for beneficiaries**

The activities on agricultural and forestry production techniques (Result 1) and on agricultural and forestry services (Result 2) have significantly improved the economic conditions of the project's beneficiaries.

Initially, it has contributed to improving incomes for poor households in the participating areas. According to local households, some of the project models have initially created income for them; eg. the models of raising goats, pigs...and their daily life have been improved.

*"I borrowed VND500,000 to buy a goat and later on, more goats have been birthed; now I've got 6 goats; I have just sold 2 of them to earn VND2 million. Therefore, the model of raising goats has created jobs for my family and I get more income. This amount of money has been paid for the loan; currently, I still own 4 goats with worth of VND4 million. In the coming time, I would continuously develop the number of goats and hope to earn more money than the year before" (Thao A Chau, Sa Seng Village, Sa Pa Commune, Sa Pa District, Lao Cai).*

*"I am Theo Thao Do, 29 years old living in Sa Seng Village. The project has provided me with 2 bee's nests. After that, I have been trained on bee caring. And one year later, I have duplicated these 2 nests to become 25 nests. My income from bee raising in 2009 was VND 19.7 million. In the garden, I plant various kinds of gourd, squash and other trees so that bees are provided with flowers to produce honey. In the rainy season I provide more sugar for the bees because it is very difficult to them to access flowers in these days. Additional income from bees has been invested in raising of pigs, cows etc. and purchasing TV etc. My family currently has been out of poverty thanks to the Oxfam project" (Thao Do, in Sa Seng Village, Sa Pa Commune, Sa Pa, Lao Cai).*

Previously, the Raglai people in Phuoc Tien and Phuoc Tan had a habit of using fresh fertilizer in cultivation of crops and rice, resulted in the dead of many plants. The rice field had a lot of grass and low productivity. Thanks to the Oxfam project with the technical training on the model of "manure composting for agricultural production", the rice productivity and income for beneficiary households have been significantly.

*"The project has carried out training courses for the local people. I have also been trained, and the rice productivity of my family has been increased from 2 to 8 packages/360m<sup>2</sup>. Thanks to that, my family is no longer in the hunger situation. Other households in the village who use the composting manure for crops have also achieved a high yield. According to me this is a good model which could help to increase the local income". (a woman's opinion, in Da Trang Village, Phuoc Tan Commune, Bac Ai District, Ninh Thuan Province).*

The demonstration has changed the way of livelihood development towards the production model with a higher economic efficiency in line with the actual local situation. The project has also carried out training on technical transfer of crops and livestock, thus, contributed to building in place human resources for the ethnic minorities. Especially when building the model, the project has closely cooperated with local agricultural extension systems (districts, communes) and would continuously develop this system to support farmers on techniques and information relating to forestry production activities. The agricultural extension staff has been trained to increase the capacity and skills to work independently with the community and provide direction on planning and production development. Thanks to that, the work of forestry extension has been enhanced in villages, and the local people have been timely supported in various production activities and successful development of the model.

In addition, according to the beneficiary households, a number of models in the future will contribute positively to poverty reduction such as model of growing cardamom under the forest canopy, seedless lemon tree model, peach growing model etc. The local people also believe that in the short term of next 3-4 years or 50-10 years, they will have wood for construction of houses from the model of growing Talauma, Lamb tree, Clethra tree, Manglietia glauca, lemon, peach...Also, for the model of growing forest-trees, after 10 years, the logging could be applied, contributing to reduce pressure on forests; the wood could also be sold in markets to increase income.

*The forest-trees such as Manglietia glauca, Canarium album, Clethra have been developed very well. In the next 10 years, we believe that they can be harvested. The people would be provided with the wood for construction of houses, or selling in markets, since this kind of wood has a good quality and easy to sell in markets' (result of group discussion in Ban Ho and Sa Seng Communes, Sa Pa, Lao Cai).*

The project has also strengthened and raised awareness of the community to participate in the implementation of the project as well as participatory land use planning so that they would know how to improve their livelihood, alter the production and livelihood improvement modalities; how to pile manure and apply manure for the crops instead of

unfiled manure as before. Thus, not only the crops are more productive, but also the invasive weeds are significantly reduced.

Through the project, people's lives in the community have been improved significantly which reduce the pressure on forests and illegal logging. Forests are better protected. This is the main objective of the project. To date, forest resources are controlled, managed and utilized by the community people.

Finally, the greatest impact from the project's activities is that local officials (at provincial, district, communal levels) trust in the capacity of local people especially ethnic minority women and men in community based forest management scheme and has been actually be performed during the project implementation. Also, the agro-forestry extension systems in the project communes, especially in Sa Pa commune (Lao Cai province) was developed; agriculture extension staff are trained in extension techniques. Through it, people get direct assistance from the extension staff for the production activities at their localities.

### **3.3. Gender Equality in forest resources and community management**

Gender equality and social equity are very complicated social issue requiring the control of both government systems and mass organizations and it is time consuming. Despite of small scale and being a technical assistance, project have some preliminary impacts on gender and social equity issues in project communes and in some specific fields through the proper approach. Evaluation results shows an significant change in women's awareness, especially the women in Phuoc Tan and Phuoc Tien commune, Ninh Thuan province. Women are maximum mobilized into project activities. Women's participation has changes completely. Their participation rate into project activities has increased sharply, even in the fields which used to be considered for men only such as forest protection and land use planning activities. Furthermore, the rate of women participating into grassroot political system has increased much more compared with 5 years ago without project. Some models in Lao Cai province have women's effective participation which includes husbandry model and wood-saving stove model. Women from both province can participate in meetings and trainings. They can raise their voice and discussions for decision making in community. Observation of women participation in the meetings as well as their opinion raised during the group discussions in the 2 provinces shows that Raglai, H'Mong, Dao and Tay women are more confident and active in raising their opinions (although they are not quite fluent in using Kinh language). All the above changes are resulted from a proper approach, the full attention of project to women so gender equality in project communes has changed, especially 2 communes in Ninh Thuan province.

We can see clearly that project has contributed to improve the gender equality, raise woman role and position in family and in society.

*My name is Pinang thi Phuoc, I remembered that in 2005, when I was participated in gender analysis for this project preparation, I was complex because I was divorced and never participated in any meetings, never talked about my status fearing to be sneered and discriminated. Then thanks to OGB allowing me to be project propagandist, I have participated in various activities. I was encouraged to write a play on forest fight prevention. I wrote this plays and played a role in the play. Later I was invited to propagandize about Grassroot Democratic Regulations, participated in painting propaganda pictures on forest protection...*

*Though 3 years of project implementation, compared with the period before 2007, women now stronger, more knowledgeable, especially they know that they have rights to live without violence and they react with violent actions from their husband therefore family violence has decreased significantly in project areas. In addition, the rate of women participating in the village and commune political system also increased significantly compared with before. In 2000, when you came here to make gender analysis, only Ms. Mai holds the role of commune's president. Currently, we have women to be president of fatherland front, vice chairman of farmer's association, village deputy head. The most important thing is that more women participate in village meetings as well as other meetings and they are more confident in raising their opinion. Before 2007, women's opinions were not respected while it is vice versa now and local authorities always encourage the women's participation.*

*The way that project mobilizes the participation of the whole community including women and poor people (forest protection group) makes women participate more and more in the activities which they used to think that it is work of men such as forest protection work.*

*Knowledge on the community rights over women has also changed and women also improved their awareness on their own rights. For example, before when you came here to do gender analysis, you invited me to participate however I was very afraid and complex about my situation fearing to be sneered and discriminated because I was divorced. Now not only me but all other women who has the same situation are ready to exchanges and share their ideas with others and they receive sympathy. There is almost no discriminated attitude to divorced women as before. In my opinion, this is a very positive change and thanks to this women are more respected.*

*(Ms. Pinang Thi Phuoc, OGB Intern in Bac Ai district)*

Social equity in forestry issue has been being adjusted by government through current forestry policy to ensure that mountainous ethnic minority are not be disadvantaged benefited. These policy includes Decision 134/2004/QĐ-TTg issued by Prime Minister about supporting production land, residential land, housing and domestic water for poor ethnic minority HHs; Decision 147/2007/QĐ-TTg issued on 10 September 2007 by Prime Minister on policies to develop production forest in the period of 2007-2015 with special support for ethnic minority people who participate in planting production land.

Through the project implementation, especially the activities in Result 4, awareness on and approach to gender issue and ethnicity factors in the development of forestry strategy or forestry policy of the 2 project provinces has been changes significantly.

## **4. PROJECT RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **4.1. Project sustainability**

#### **4.1.1 Project meets the local strategic needs**

Ninh Thuan is a poor province. Annually, central government has to subsidise 75% provincial budget<sup>10</sup>. Bac Ai is a poor mountainous district where many ethnic minority live. Currently, there is 1500 HHs living in the center of Hoang Lien National Park. Because of the high poverty rate, pressure is put on the forest for wood taking, exploiting non-timber forest products and planting cardamom under the shape of long-lasting forest. This project meets the essential needs of the 2 provinces therefore support and implementation strategy of project activities is completely suitable with local conditions.

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<sup>10</sup> Information from DONRE

Before the project implementation, ethnic minority people in Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai province who live near the forest were not effectively benefited from forest due to lack of community forest development policy. In the 2 provinces, forests were not handed over to community for management and benefit. Therefore project has a very strong impacts on policy and the need for community forest development to reduce poverty for the people live in the buffer zone of Hoang Lien National Park and the protection forest in Sapa province.

#### **4.1.2 Project Investment is suitable with beneficiaries' objectives**

According to original master plan committed by provincial partners and OGB, project is invested in 4 areas of activities: Result 1: 73,775 GBP (18,8%); Result 2: 104,830 GBP (26,6%); Result 3: 94,766 GBP (24,1%); Result 4: 40,509 GBP (10,3%); and management cost: 79,831 (20,2%) in order to achieve the project specific objective which is to ensure that majority of poor ethnic minority people in project communes be able to equally access and manage the benefits coming from forest and forest production services to improve their living. Among this, training and capacity building activities on forestry production techniques and demonstration model establishment should be prioritized. During the implementation, project adjusts its cost investment annually to make more suitable with each partner's implementation organization capability. Thanks to this, project beneficiaries were satisfied with the invested field activities, especially the agroforestry production and husbandry models. Participating people's lives are significantly improved.

#### **4.1.3 Harmonization and Relevance of project design**

Poverty and social equity, especially gender equality in ethnic minority communities in mountainous areas is now a big concerned problem of Vietnamese government. Project "Community Forestry for Poverty Reduction" implemented by Oxfam and partners from Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan provinces is essential and important which together with Vietnamese government solve the above problem.

Project design is clear and logical and its overall objective is to improve the living standard for poor ethnic minority men and women in project areas and to reduce poverty rate for mountainous people. Project objective is to ensure that 2,500 households of poor ethnic minorities (H'mong and Dao men and women in Lao Cai Province, Raglai men and women in Ninh Thuan) have equal and secured access to and control over forest and forest-land and production services, which contribute to the achievement of their food and income security.

To make it compliant with the above-mentioned objective, project has 4 expected results and 22 activities were designed to achieve those expected results. Since the design phase, project expected to have 12 impacts.

Project also provide the implementation methodology for each activity. A list of 24 indicators was issued to assess and check the project achievement level and impacts.

#### **4.1.4 Flexible implementation and Adjustment for more suitable activities**

During the implementation, project timely adjust the activities to make it more suitable with implementation organization capability of provincial partners. This means that during the implementation, local partners propose their activities and make monthly and quarterly plan following these proposals. With this way of planning, local partners are completely active and flexible and the proposed activities are very close to reality.



However, it is also risky because project management agency can not control the activities to drive them to project objective.

#### **4.1.5 Selection of appropriate partners**

DONRE is responsible for land management. Playing the role of project partner, DONRE help project communes develop land use planning. During the planning process, DONRE not only apply the technical regulations required by MONRE but also apply well the participatory methodology to mobilize the community participation. The participation creates opportunities for people to access the forest and forest land resources and avoid conflict and contradiction later after the land allotment. In other hand, discussions about the planning was not only taken at communal level but also taken at village level as detail planning. This is a very important base for the next steps of land allotment.

Provincial Forest Department is the government managing agency for forest at provincial level who participates actively and effectively into forest development activities. Based on village and commune land use planning, the Provincial Forest Department guide participating community in preparing community forest protection and development plan. This plan is very detail and set by community. The plan is about what to do, where to do, when to do, who to do, how to do and where is the financial source for doing the plan, how to help community get the financial sources for project implementation in order to ensure the high feasibility of the plan. The department has integrated the financial sources from other programs/projects in the province into the community forest development plan such as: Project 661, Program 147 on the supporting production forest people. This action is rare in similar community forest development projects.

Hoang Lien National Park is a specific partner. The Park directly manages forest with their Forest Protection Station at the communes. Playing the role of project partner, the Park has implemented activities through its sub-department staff therefore it is more realistic and easy to implement project activities. This is really an important link between local people and project.

Bac Ai DPC is the only governmental agency who is project partner. This is a newly established district and the district is very poor. The conflict in land use between businesses, forestry management agency, forestry companies, rubber companies and local people are very complicated. Therefore that Bac Ai DPC is selected to be project partner is completely suitable.

The selection of project partners is quite appropriate with their role, their duties and their professional therefore their roles are upheld in project implementation.

In order to reduce poverty, firstly favorable conditions and regimes should be created for poor people to be able to access and control land. DONRE is the land management agency therefore in project activities, it is completely appropriate to select DONRE as project partners. In addition, Forestry Department is the advisory agencies on forestry development policy. Furthermore, Hoang Lien National Park is also selected to be an appropriate partners because currently there are tens of villages living in the Park's core area and buffer zone.

The selection of partners who are professional agencies at provincial level instead of district and commune level to implement project field activities is completely suitable in the partnership methodology. Thanks to this, when implementing the field activities, it is not affected by the administration commands from higher level. Partners at provincial

level including: DONRE, Forestry Department, National Park who are professional managing agencies. They are capable in technical issues and also directly provide guidelines and instruction therefore OGB is supported a lot in the project operation and management bringing back very high effectiveness.

The relationship between partners and project executive agency (OGB) is very equal. There is no existence of “ask-give” and all parties agreed on one general objective which set by project: support poor ethnic minority households be able to equally access and manage natural resources and forestry production services, contributing to poverty reduction. Gob’s operation is assessed to be very logical, highly professional, strict, and highly planed. Thanks to these conditions, partners have contributed a lot to achieve the project objective.

#### **4.2. Sustainability and Replicability**

The project sustainability is confirmed by many project activities, especially, the establishment of agroforestry production model which can be highly replicated when project completes and there is no more financial and technical support. These activities not only receive community’s attraction but also district and provincial government agencies in the local development of forestry policies and institutions

a) The methodology of participatory land use planning and allocation at communal level is committed by local government to apply for other communes in the district and in provinces. In order to make it convenient for dissemination and replication, this methodology was compiled to be project manual.

*Now, with the completion of the participatory land use planning and allocation at communal level, it is an useful tool for local governments in the province to study and implement in other communes. Therefore, in spite of the project completion, our province still maintains and replicates this methodology. (officers from Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai DONRE)*

b) In order to organize and implement project, Oxfam selected functional agencies who directly involve in project activities to participate and implement project therefore good models was automatically replicated and put into their own agency’s annual activities. One of the most replicated model in Ninh Thuan is the community-based forest management which is applied in 27 out of 30 villages in 9 communes in Bac Ai district.

*Before, we tried to find a suitable models to implement and to empower more for ethnic minority people but until OBG help us to successful implement this model we applied and replicated this model to other districts because this model is very effective. (Opinion of a man in Bac Ai district)*

c) The model of planting cardamom under the shape of planted forest bring back very high economic effectiveness which is easy to sell and able to sell at high price. In other hand, this model does not adversely affect to National Park but it contributes to the protection of biology diversification therefore it is accepted and automatically replicated by people in Y Ty commune, Bat Xat district and Nang Chin commune, SiMaCai district (Lao Cai province) through their relatives and friends.

*Cardamon model is considered as ‘poverty reduction’ and enriching plant in the locality. It is very effective and easy to follow and sell. It can be planted under the shape of natural forest and is replicated under the planted forests. Local people find*

*the seedling by themselves to plant and take care them carefully.*

(Opinion from a H'Mong ethnic minority man in Lao Cai province)

d) Successful orchard model such as lemon, French peach, green pear, medicine plant in Hoang Lien, planting grass for cow raising and establishment of general grazing-land will be maintained and have high potential for replication because products from these models become goods at high economic value, and easy to consume at local markets. Techniques for planting and caring these trees are not too complicated which is very suitable with local people's cultivation custom. These trees do not require large areas of land so they can grow.

*Techniques for growing such plants like lemon, French peach, green pear and Hoang Lien medicine trees are not very difficult so local people can grow. Growing these plant do not require large areas of land so household with small piece of area also can grow therefore many people do not register firstly but later they asked for seedling to grow at their house. (opinion from a man in Lao Cai province).*

e) The model of wood-saving grove was not designed appropriately; after being improved, the grove become better for use. This model continues to be maintained by local HHs because it is effective in saving wood. For crowded families and the family raising pigs, this model can save time when cooking food for pig or cooking for wedding party, funeral party and cooking for festivals etc..

*Since using wood-saving stove, I go to pick up wood less, it reduces about 40-50% of wood monthly. In addition, when using this stove to cook food for pig, prepare food for wedding party or cooking food during holidays we can save time for other things or resting, watching television. We do not have to spend few hours sitting in the kitchen as before. (opinion from a women in Ban Ho commune, Lao Cai province)*

g) The establishment of forest protection groups with the convention prepared by community will be maintained. Forest Protection Department's officers have replicated this model in many other communes because it is suitable with ethnic minority's custom for forest protection and it associates families with each other for improving strengths for forestry protection and dealing with deforestation guys. In addition, the acknowledgement and knowledge on forest protection created by project will be maintained and improved for their activities in forest protection and management.

*After the guidance for establishment of forest protection groups and preparation of communal convention for forest protection in project communes, we also apply this model for other communes and this has very good results. (Opinion from a forest protection staff in Phuoc Tan commune)*

To sum up, the project sustainability is confirmed by many project activities, especially the establishment of agroforestry production model which have high potential for replicating when project completes. They are models of community-based forest protection and management; planting cardamom under the shape of planted forest; planting orchard trees, wood-saving stove, community tourism etc. The main reasons for this sustainability include plants and domestic animals are appropriate in locality; market for product consuming (honey, cardamom, French peach, lemon, pear); appropriate with local people's cultivation custom and culture; originated from the actual needs of project beneficiaries.

Methods to improve the sustainability of the effective models include:

- Continue to effectively support local people in searching markets, accessing new markets and consuming the products resulted
- Project needs to coordinate with local agricultural/forestry extension officers to continuously follow up and provide technical support for participating households during the plant growing-up in order to help these HHs prevent diseases for their plants.
- Annually, locality needs to pay attention to consolidate and improve the effectiveness of forest protection groups. Preliminary summing up, final summarization and solutions needs to be taken and provided for poor households, women headed households so that they can have equal participation.

## **5. PROJECT DIFFICULTIES AND LIMITATION**

### **5.1. Difficulties and Challenges**

The biggest difficulties which project facing is that community forestry is a very difficult and complicated issue of the forestry sector while poverty reduction is a big problem of the society and project wants to solve this problem in the most difficulty provinces in forestry protection (Lao Cai province) and economic development (Ninh Thuan province).

Land is a very sensitive issue. Other localities are very cautious and in some cases they are reluctant to implement land-related activities such as identification of land owner for land use planning, land allotment for agricultural land which is mixed with forestry land of the forestry management agency.

Oxfam's officer who monitor the project stays in Hanoi, local partner changes many times; project officer at provincial level does not work full time for project therefore it is not continuous in project monitoring, evaluation and collection of project data.

Another challenges which project is facing is that: many complicated and sensitive issues (gender issue and social equity in addition to the land-related issue mentioned above) planned to be solved in a very short period of time (over 2 years)

### **5.2. Some Project Limitations**

Out of project success and impacts, project still have some limitations such as not fully implemented the criteria for selecting HHs to participate in the project; women participated in project is not at expected rate, only 30%; many demonstrations were implemented in one village, one commune so it is hard for partner's officer to monitor and instruct. The project monitoring and evaluation is not very good lacking of data for each gender in partner's reports so it is hard to evaluate gender issue, especially in Ninh Thuan province. 3 year period is too short for a forestry project so currently there are still some models which can not be evaluated.

## **6. LESSON LEARNT**

- Project has a good coordination and support many local extension agencies through the establishment of extension system at village and commune level; training extension workers; training agroforestry cultivation techniques. This is

the successful lesson for on-site capacity building for local people so that they are able to better use and manage forest and land resources.

- Although OGB have M&E system for each project and it is very flexible, the application of this system in the 2 project province is not corresponding so it is hard for evaluating consultant to collect a full set of data.
- Project objective is to help poor people, especially ethnic minority people and women in improving their living standard. Therefore, since beginning, more propaganda should be organized to mobilize more poor people to participate in project activities and criteria to select participating HHs need to be specific, clear and suitable with reality.
- In the design phase before defining project activities, information should be fully acknowledged and this information should be properly analyzed in order to avoid the situation that condition is not adequate for implementation requiring adjustment or unfeasibility. The allotment of agricultural land, residential land instead of forestry land allotment is one example.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **7.1 Conclusion**

Out of some minor shortcomings as mentioned above, in case of a technical assistance at small scale, low investment, difficult operation areas, short time for implementation, project receive very clear and specific achievements, meeting the preliminary set-up objective. Thanks to this, project partners and participants can improve their accessibility and management of forest land and forest resources. Technical advances from project models help beneficiaries improve their knowledge, replicate in their own land contributing to improving their living standard. Moreover, project also has impacts on strategic policy planners at provincial level which contribute significantly to the improvement of local forest policies.

From project results (both successes and nonsuccesses), a new orientation for poverty reduction in mountainous areas, especially, poor ethnic minority people who are now managing and protecting the forests of forest owners is mentioned which is that the government forestry policy need to be supplemented and improved in order to ensure that community is fully enjoyed and equally shared the benefits from community-based forest protection and management.

### **7.2 Recommendation**

Project coordinated with partners in the 2 provinces to implement some successful/potential models, generating income and directly help reduce poverty for poor HHs such as: orchard model, medicine tree model, bee keeping model, forest protection model etc. Therefore these models need to be maintained, monitored and replicated in other project communes as well as in non-project communes.

Capital rotating fund model is very suitable with small support form for poor HHs who lack of capital for production development, improving their living and reducing pressure on forest and this model is considered to be very potential. By now, project has completed and the fund has been implemented for only over 1 year however in Lao Cai province a complete regime and regulations for use and management of this fund has been developed. However the application is very limited. Therefore it is recommended

that the fund need to be maintained and do not use this for other purposes; discuss with commune officers to hand over the fund for an appropriate managing agency who may be communal women union (Ninh Thuan province) and communal Farmer Association (Lao Cai province); withdraw the lesson learnt to complete regime for fund use and management; soon promulgate for other localities to follow. Regime for fund use should focus on the lending criteria/lending priority, on how to encourage local people and other organizations in the locality contribute more capital for the fund. This fund can be transferred into credit model and encourage people contribute more in addition to the project support fund. This is a form of micro credit which has been successful in some areas in Vietnam.

Continue to implement and strengthen knowledge management activities to make it an effective way/method to mobilize knowledge of all beneficiaries for the activities taken by project. This include: documentization of project reports and Results; exploitation of these documents for use and application where appropriate; exploitation of indigenous knowledge which are feasible and highly applicable, successful/potential models; dissemination of project results; studying and sharing experience within project areas and non-project areas.

Most of the forest areas which are managed, protected and used by community are poor forest with very low capacity; policy for benefiting from forest is not appropriate therefore the people's intake from forest is very minor except for the annual working fee for forest protection. Moreover, government has not issued policies for community to be more benefited from forest, making it appropriate to their contribution for forest protection and appropriate to the significant value of the forest which they created such as carbon absorption, climate change, forest environmental services. Therefore, OGB should continue to support project "Pilot supplementation of forestry policy on the sharing benefits between project owners and people who participate in forest protection in order to generate momentous for community-based forest development which contributing to poverty reduction".

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Summarization of project activities (by project document)

Result	Activities	Impacts/Efficiency
1. Improve accessibility and management capacity over forest resources for poor ethnic minority people.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establishment of forest protection group at village level</li> <li>2. Training on land use planning and allocation for ethnic minority people and women.</li> <li>3. Training on land use planning and allocation for DONRE</li> <li>4. Adjustment of procedures and methodology for land use planning and allocation to make it more suitable with locality</li> <li>5. Support DONRE to implement the land use planning and allocation in one communes (in Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan province) and expanded in other 2 communes</li> <li>6. Allotment of land and forest for HHs and community</li> <li>7. Drawing lesson learnt for land use planning and allocation to make supplement documentation for the manual of land use planning and allocation</li> <li>8. Supporting Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan in the application of land use planning and allocation in other districts</li> <li>9. Promulgating, educating and disseminating for natural resource protection and forest protection.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Government and local authorities issued regulations and regimes for the effective improvement for the allotting forest land to community</li> <li>2. Land use planning method is applied by both local authorities and government.</li> <li>3. Local authorities trust and support the community forest management which meets the economic, social and environmental requirements.</li> <li>4. Donors and government provide more resources to support local authorities for the effective forest management.</li> </ol>
2. Improve local ethnic minority farmers' technical and institutional capacities in forestry production and management.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supporting community in preparing long-term forest development plan reflecting the economic, social and environmental needs of ethnic minority people and women.</li> <li>2. Training on project so that local people understand that project supports them in improving their effective forest management plan.</li> <li>3. Training techniques and management for ethnic minority people and organizations on forest management and development, planning, economic and market analysis.</li> <li>4. Providing credit support to develop community forestry, for example, community generate seedlings by themselves to save cost</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local officers trust in women and ethnic minority people's capacity in forest management and reality provide evidence for this.</li> <li>2. Government provides more financial support for ethnic minority to manage and share forest benefits.</li> <li>3. Forest extension techniques were designed to be appropriate with ethnic minority people's capacity and needs.</li> <li>4. Government support community organizing discussions.</li> </ol>
3. Local forestry production services are more responsive to the similar and different needs of ethnic men and	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forest extension on the in-need techniques and technology</li> <li>2. Improving marketing capacity for local authorities and organizations.</li> <li>3. Selecting seedlings and planting indigenous trees</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Forestry extension officers apply relevant participatory methodology in their work (techniques, indigenous plants)</li> <li>2. Forestry extension officers</li> </ol>

women	<p>to increase income.</p> <p>4. Studying local people's access to market.</p>	<p>supplement and train on techniques and forestry extension work.</p>
4. Local forestry development strategies focus on poverty reduction and social equity (ethnicity and gender)	<p>1. Support province, district and government in including poverty reduction and social equity into forestry development plan.</p> <p>2. Lesson learnt about land use planning and allocation that ethnic minority people and poor people can better participate in this process.</p> <p>3. Support NGOs and research institutes to evaluate the impacts of the forestry policy/program/project on poverty and ethnic minority.</p> <p>4. Sharing experience and lesson learnt about poverty reduction in forestry development and the participation of ethnic minority people and poor people in the decision making process about forestry policy.</p>	<p>1. Poverty reduction and social equity is considered as one objective of the revised forestry development period 2006-2020</p> <p>2. Poverty reduction and social equity is put into the provincial forestry development</p>



## Annex 2: Results of Project Activities

Activities designed by project document	Implemented Activities
<b>Result 1: Improve accessibility and management capacity over forest resources for poor ethnic minority people.</b>	
1. Establishment of forest protection group at village level	Establishment of forest protection group in all participating community
	Providing tools for forest protection group (cutting knife, water container, speaker, flashlight, GPS...)
	Assist the regular meeting of core farmer's group to implement project activities
	Establishment of village forestry extension officers, training forestry extension staff; providing technical documents for forestry production.
2. Training on land use planning and allocation for ethnic minority people and women.	Organizing trainings on land use planning and allotment for ethnic minority men and women.
3. Training on land use planning and allocation for DONRE	Organizing trainings on land use planning and allotment for Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan DONRE
4. Adjustment of procedures and methodology for land use planning and allocation to make it more relevant with locality	Participatory land use planning and allocation methodology established by project is relevant with both 2 provinces and is applied in project communes.
5. Support DONRE to implement the land use planning and allocation in one communes (in Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan province) and expanded in other 2 communes	Completing the pilot land use planning and allocation in one commune in Lao Cai province and one commune in Ninh Thuan. This will be the base for land allocation and development of community forest development plan.
	Establishment of land use planning and allocation for 5 project communes (3 communes of Lao Cai and 2 communes of Ninh Thuan)
	Measurement and establishment of land administration map, land allocation, and issuance of certificate for land use right for agricultural land, residential land and garden land for HHs in project communes.
6. Allocation land and forest for HHs and community (*)	Forests in Sa Pa commune, in Ban Ho commune, in Phuoc Tan and Phuoc Tien commune under the management of Management Board of Protection Forest, Sa Pa district, Hoang Lien National Park and Tan Tien Forestry Company respectively.
7. Drawing lesson learnt for land use planning and allocation to make supplement documentation for the manual of land use planning and allocation	Compilation of Land Use Planning and Allocation Manual at commune level with people's participation.

8. Supporting Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan in the application of land use planning and allocation in other districts	Disseminate and application of participatory land use planning and allocation methodology at commune level.
9. Promulgating, educating and disseminating for natural resource protection and forest protection.	Organizing competition, drawing propaganda picture, reportage on the Law on Forest Protection and Development, general forestry policies and community forestry policy in particular.
	Promulgating and disseminating on Law on Forest Protection and forestry policies.
	Competition on the knowledge of forestry and forest development policies;
	Reportage and propaganda pictures on forest fight prevention and forest protection
	Practicing for forest fight prevention
	Studying tour about community forest management, agroforestry production and ecology tourism models.
	Propaganda to improve community awareness.
<b>Result 2: Improve local ethnic minority farmers' technical and institutional capacities in forestry production and management.</b>	
1. Supporting community in preparing long-term forest development plan reflecting the economic, social and environmental needs of ethnic minority people and women.	Establishment of community forest protection and development at project villages and communes
	Completing the establishment of community forest protection and development at all project villages and communes
	Establishing community forest protection and development convention
2. Training on project so that local people understand that project supports them in improving their effective forest management plan.	Training on capacity building and project implementation methodology for project participants, especially ethnic minority men and women in project areas.
3. Training techniques and management for ethnic minority people and organizations on forest management and development, planning, economic and market analysis.	Training for village extension coordinators on forest extension, and techniques for forestry production
	Training about the techniques for growing agricultural plants, husbandry and syliculture.
	Training on agroforestry cultivation on slope land.
	Training on the establishment of elephant grass, raising cow and keeping muck.
	Training on improving forest management capacity building.
	Training on community forest development
	Training on accessibility and management of forest natural resources management for ethnic minority.
	Training on forest planting technology; techniques for improving and enriching natural forests by community;

	techniques for planting and processing non-timber trees.
4. Providing credit support to develop community forestry, for example, community generate seedlings by themselves to save cost	Establishing capital rotating fund to provide lending for poor household to do husbandry and agricultural production.
	Disbursing the fund to poor HHs for doing husbandry and agricultural production.
	Establishing regulation for fund rotating
	Training on the regulation for fund rotating
<b>Result 3: Local forestry production services are more responsive to the similar and different needs of ethnic men and women</b>	
1. Forest extension on the in-need techniques and technology (**)	
2. Improving marketing capacity for local authorities and organizations.	Organizing farmer groups to know about the markets for agroforestry products in the locality.
	Selecting seedling and breeders from locality which are suitable for the establishment of household economic development model. Providing forestry seedlings. Technical training and transferring Construction of different types of models.
	Model of short-term agricultural plants such as: cassava, peanut and ginger
	Orchard models with French peach, green pear, lemon, green peel grapefruit, yellow jack fruit and orchid.
	Forestry model: Afforestation models with such following trees like Clethra tree, Cunninghamia lanceolata Lamb tree, Manglietia glauca tree, Sinocalamus giganteus tree, Acacia mangium tree Community forest management and protection model.
	Model of non-timber trees like : Bamboo, Dien Truc bamboo, cocoa tree, medicine tree (bear gall tree, ocynia indica tree)
	Husbandry model with such breeders as rabbit, honey bees, fresh-water fish, salamander
	Wood-saving grove model
	Tourism model such as: home stay tourism in H'Mong village in Sa Pa and ecology tourism in the waterfall in Phuoc Tan commune.
4. Studying local people's access to market.	Supporting activities for mountainous farmers to know about markets for their forestry products were implemented very well by Lao Cai Forestry Department.
	Study to market the local forestry products.

<b>Result 4: Local forestry development strategies focus on poverty reduction and social equity (ethnicity and gender)</b>	
1. Support province, district and government in including poverty reduction and social equity into forestry development plan.	<p>Training to improve management capacity, implementation of forestry policies, community forestry policies</p> <p>Workshop on poverty reduction, policy development, investment project, long-term plan on forestry development in the district and in provinces.</p> <p>Organize some discussions with Bac Ai DPC about the replication of some successful models in Program 30A.</p>
2. Lesson learnt about land use planning and allocation that ethnic minority people and poor people can better participate in this process.	<p>Workshop on summarization and sharing experience about preparation of participatory land use planning and allocation and issuing certification for land use rights in Lao Cai on 7 May 2010.</p> <p>Workshop on summarization and sharing experience about preparation of participatory land use planning and allocation and issuing certification for land use rights in Ninh Thuan on 2 July 2010.</p>
3. Support NGOs and research institutes to evaluate the impacts of the forestry policy/program/project on poverty and ethnic minority.	<p>Participatory assessing the needs and market opportunities for materials and major agroforestry in November 2008</p> <p>Study the implementation situation of the policies and programs on community forest management in Lao Cai province in July 2009.</p> <p>Study the impacts of forestry policies which affect poverty reduction in Lao Cai in July 2010.</p>
4. Sharing experience and lesson learnt about poverty reduction in forestry development and the participation of ethnic minority people and poor people in the decision making process about forestry policy.	<p>Participating in “Partnership in Forestry sector” program</p> <p>Participate in the group of sustainable management of natural resources and working group on ethnic minority.</p> <p>Organizing studying tours related to community forest management for project partners and people.</p> <p>Compiling and printing documents for dissemination and propaganda such as Participatory Land Use Planning and Allocation Manual at commune level</p> <p>Coordinating with People Newspaper and Youth Newspapers go to field to write about project implementation.</p>

Note :

(\*) Lump sum contract between forest owners who are Management Board of Protection Forest, Forestry Company with Hhs or individuals instead of allocation forest land for HHs and communities.

(\*\*) This activity is integrated when implementing activities of Result 2

### Annex 3. Results from demonstration monitoring in Lao Cai province

No.	Criteria/ Model	Location	Total Points	Evaluation
<b>Q</b>	<b>I. Pilot demonstrations considered to be successful</b>			
1	Planting taro	Lao Chai	156	good
2	Planting transplanted lemon tree	Ban Ho+Lao Chai	137	good
3	Planting French peach and pear	Lao Chai	150	good
4	Planting Clethra tree	Lao Chai	196	good
5	Planting Manglietia glauca tree	Ban Ho	135	good
6	Planting transplanted Canarri	Ban Ho	145	good
7	Community Forestry Protection Model	Ban Ho	186	good
8	Planting terrestrial orchid	Ban Ho+Lao Chai	164	good
9	Planting Hoang Lien tree	Ban Ho	162	good
10	Planting Bat Do bamboo	Ban Ho Lao Chai	140	good
11	Planting Tao Meo tree	Ban Ho	177	good
12	Keeping honey bee	Sa Pa	191	good
13	Pasture model	Ban Ho+Lao Chai	165	good
14	Raising fish	Ban Ho	174	good
15	Wood-saving grove model	Ban Ho+Lao Chai+Sa Pa	164	good
16	Planting elephant grass	Lao Chai	170	good
17	Planting indigo tree to dye cloth	Lao Chai	165	good
18	Community tourism model	Ban Ho	208	good
	<b>II. Pilot demonstrations considered to be not successful</b>			
1	Planting Thach That persimmon tree	Ban Ho	86	Not good
2	Planting rattan trees	Sa Pa	94	Not good
3	Raising rabbit	Ban Ho	76	Not good

### Annex 4. Consultant's Term of Reference

## FINAL EVALUATION OF COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PROJECT

### 1. Background

Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) in partnership with Oxfam Australia is implementing a Community Forest Management project in Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai provinces of Vietnam with part funding from AusAid. This is a 3-year project, started in December 2007 and will be completed by August 2010.

The project aims to increase the living standard of poor ethnic men and women in program areas and contribute to the decrease of the poverty rate of the mountainous population.

Its objectives is to ensure that 2,500 households of poor ethnic minorities (H'mong and Dao men and women in Lao Cai Province, Raglai men and women in Ninh Thuan) have equal and secured access to and control over forest and forest-land and production services, which contribute to the achievement of their food and income security.

It has 4 expected results:

<i>Result 1</i>	Access and control over forest resources of poor ethnic men and women has improved.
<i>Result 2</i>	Local ethnic minority farmers' technical and institutional capacities in forestry production and management have improved.
<i>Result 3</i>	Local forestry production services are more responsive to the similar and different needs of ethnic men and women
<i>Result 4</i>	Local forestry development strategies focus on poverty reduction and social equity (ethnicity and gender)

The project is being operated in 5 communes (2 in Bac Ai district of Ninh Thuan and 3 in Sa Pa district of Lao Cai) and has 6 implementing partners:

*Ninh Thuan province:*

- Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Sub-Department of Forestry
- Bac Ai District People's Committee

*Lao Cai province:*

- Department of Natural Resources and Environment
- Sub-Department of Forestry
- Hoang Lien National Park

### 2. Overall objective of the final evaluation

To conduct the final evaluation for the Community Forest Management project in Ninh Thuan and Lao Cai provinces of Vietnam.

### 3. Specific objectives

- To measure impacts the project has made in term of economic condition, policies and gender equality for intended and unintended beneficiaries;
- To evaluate improvements made by the project in term of access to and control over forest resources for poor and ethnic minority people;
- To measure changes in term of technical and institutional capacities in forestry production and management among local ethnic minority farmers;
- To evaluate changes in forestry production services in response to the needs of ethnic women and men;
- To measure project achievements against originally designed objectives;
- To measure the relevance of project strategies and implementation to local contexts;
- To evaluate relevance and sustainability of project activities;
- To analyse cost effectiveness (value of money against project impacts) and relevance project;
- To document good practices and lessons learnt;
- Propose changes or recommendations for following up.

### 4. Process and methodology

The final evaluation will be a combination between literature review and field work. Literature review will be conducted in Hanoi which includes consultations with Oxfam staff, stakeholders and partners at national levels. Field work will take place in both Lao Cai and Ninh Thuan provinces.

A set of participatory tool will be developed by consultant teams which might include focus group discussion, in-depth interview, and case study collection.

Oxfam programme staff will join as a member of the review team. While consultant team will take a leader role in the review, Oxfam staff will join field work, contribute inputs to development of evaluation plan, methodology, they will also provide support in logistic and organization. In principle, there will be at least one Oxfam staff to join the field work in each province.

### 5. Outputs

Output of the review will be documented in one report which takes into account entire review process and findings. The report should be prepared in both English and Vietnamese following OGB format. For comment convenience, draft report should be written in English first. The final reports should include among the other thing, an executive summary, main body and annexes.

Applying consultants will propose report structure (report layout) in their application, this structure to be agreed by Oxfam prior to organisation of field work.

### 6. Profile of desired consultant team

The consultancy team should have different and complementary profiles:

*Team Leader*

- Master's degree either in forestry, development studies, social sciences or economics;
- In-depth knowledge of community forest management, good understanding of land use planning and allocation situation in Vietnam, especially in mountainous settings;
- At least 10 years of experiences with demonstrated monitoring and evaluation knowledge, skills and experiences of mountainous or rural development programme;
- In-depth knowledge of research methods with particular focus on participatory methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and product or behaviour trials;
- Excellent analytical and writing in English and Vietnamese;
- High competency in using of statistical software e.g. SPSS;
- Good understanding of OGB's works in Vietnam would be a competitive advantage.

*Team member*

- At least a Bachelor's degree in forestry, development studies social sciences or economics;
- At least 5 years of participatory M&E experiences;
- Good knowledge of research methods with particular focus on participatory methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and product or behaviour trials;
- Team work experience;
- Good analytical and writing skills in English and Vietnamese;
- Competent in using statistical software.

## **7. Timing**

The assignment is ideally conducted during June 2010 period, the selected consultant team should submit the final reports to OGB by 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010 at the latest.

## **8. Contact person and deadline for submission**

Applying consultant teams are requested to submit an application package to OGB via email (preferred) or post no later than 31<sup>st</sup> May 2010. The application should include method, process, time-frame, detailed planning of activities, detailed budget projection (including PIT), responsibility and working days of each team member, full CVs of each team member and proposed structure of final report. Consultant team might be invited to discuss their application with OGB staff during the selection process.



## Annex 5. List of contacted and met people

No.	Name	Position	Address
1	Nguyen Bao Chau	Deputy Head of Admin. Depart.	DONRE
2	Ho Xuan Hung	Head of Land Management	DONRE
3	Nguyen Quang Trung	Head of Technical Depart	Forestry Protection Depatment
4	Duong Dinh Son	Deputy Head of Department	Forestry Department
5	Hoang Van Dang	Deputy Director	Bac Ai Project Executive Committee
6	Nguyen Thi Phuong Hoa	Secretary	Project Operating Board
7	Hoang Ngoc Ty	OGB apprentice	
8	Pinang Thi Phuoc	OGB apprentice	
9	Duong Tu Giang	Deputy head of forestry sub- department	
10	Pham Cao Dam	Head of sub-department	
<b>Phuoc Tien commune</b>			
11	Kator Thi Kinh	Chairman of communal WU	
12	Chamale Thi Ai	Beneficiary	
13	Kator Thi Bien	Beneficiary	
14	Kator Thi La	Beneficiary	
15	Chamale Thi Duan	Beneficiary	
16	Chamale Thi Nung	Beneficiary	
17	Pinang Thi Luong	Beneficiary	
18	Chamale Thi Nhim	Beneficiary	
19	Chamale Dung	Beneficiary	
20	Pilao Moc	Beneficiary	
21	Nguyen Thi Quyen Duong	Beneficiary	
22	Kator Quyen	Secretary of Youth Union	
<b>Phuoc Tan commune</b>			
23	Pinang Thi Mai	CPC Chairman	
24	Kator Thi Nguyen	Communal WU Chairman	
25	Pinang Thi Ha	Chairman of Fatherland Font	
26	Kator Thi Lem	Deputy head of Ma Lam village	
27	Kator Sam	Extension officer	
28	Kator Mien	Land administration officer	
29	Kator Bau	Head of communal police – Forest protection officer	
30	Chamale Huu	Head of Da Trang village	
31	Chamale Chien	Head of Farmer's Association	
32	Chamale Toan	CPC Vice-president	
33	Nguyen Thi Thu Huyen	Project secretary	

34	Pinang Thi Lam	Farmer	
35	Pinang Thi Phuoc	OGB apprentice	
36	Pinang Thi Tinh	Beneficiary	
37	Pinang Thi Phem	Beneficiary	
38	Pinang Thi Luy	Beneficiary	
38	Pinang Thi He	Beneficiary	
39	Pinang Thi Gai	Beneficiary	
<b>Tinh Lao Cai</b>			
40	Nguyen Ngoc Anh	Deputy Head of Land Management Depart	
41	Nguyen Thi Vi Hue	Director of Natural Resources and Environment Centre	
42	To Manh Tien	Head of Forestry Department	
43	Nguyen Duy Nam	Forestry Department officer	
<b>Hoang Lien Son National Park</b>			
44	Nguyen Huu Hanh	Head of Project management Board	
45	Nguyen Ba The	Project officer	
46	Mai Van Tuan	Project Accountant	
<b>Sa Pa commune, Sa Pa district</b>			
47	Giang A Chu	Communal Party Secretary	
48	Thao A Lenh	Communal Forestry staff	
49	Giang A Toa	Sa Pa Village Head	
50	Giang A Cho	Sa Seng Village Head	
51	Hang A Chu	Giang Tra Village Head	
52	Ma A Thong	Ma Tra Village Head	
53	Ma A Seng	Communal Extension staff	
<b>Sa Seng village, Sa Pa commune</b>			
54	Thao A Lenh	Head of Group 2	
55	Thao A Su	Beneficiary	
56	Thao A Me	Beneficiary	
57	Thao A Tinh	Beneficiary	
58	Thao A Pao	Beneficiary	
59	Thao A Phong	Beneficiary	
60	Thao A Lu	Beneficiary	
61	Thao A Sinh (Chu)	Beneficiary	
62	Thao A Minh	Beneficiary	
63	Giang Thi Me	Beneficiary	
<b>Giang Da village, Sa Pa commune</b>			
64	Hang A Chu	Head of group	
65	Hang A Dinh	Beneficiary	
66	Giang A Cang	Beneficiary	
67	Giang A Qua	Beneficiary	
68	Giang A Ky	Beneficiary	
69	Giang A Phong	Beneficiary	
70	Giang A Sung	Beneficiary	
71	Giang A Mao	Beneficiary	
72	Giang A Sang	Beneficiary	
73	Vang Thi Me	Beneficiary	
74	Giang A Sang	Beneficiary	

75	Ma Thi Chu	Beneficiary	
76	Giang A Phan	Beneficiary	
77	Giang A Ga	Beneficiary	
78	Giang A Thong	Beneficiary	
79	Giang A Vang	Beneficiary	
	<b>Ban Ho village</b>		
80	Vang Van Vung	CPC chairman	
81	Ly lao Ta	Communal Party Secretary	
82	Dao Van Vinh	CPC ex-chairman	
83	Phan Dao Phung	Head of Ta Trung Ho village	
84	Chao Thung Va	Head of Nam Toong village	
85	Vang Van So	Land Administration staff	
86	Lu Van Thanh	Head of La ve village	
	<b>La Ve village</b>		
87	Hoang Van Pan	Beneficiary	
88	Lu Van Lai	Beneficiary	
89	Vang Van Yem	Beneficiary	
90	Vang Thi Xay	Beneficiary	
91	Vang Thi Xoan	Beneficiary	