

Tropenbos International Viet Nam

Making Knowledge Work for Forests and People



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Dutch Deputy-Ambassador's visit to TBI Viet Nam office

On the occasion of a three-day business trip to Hue city, Mr. Cas Van der Horst, Deputy Head of Mission of the Netherlands Embassy in Viet Nam, paid a visit to TBI Viet Nam's office on 24 September 2014.

At the meeting, Mr. Tran Huu Nghi presented an overview of TBI, including its research outcomes, future orientation, as well as advantages and disadvantages faced by TBI during its implementation process in Viet Nam.

The Deputy Head of the Mission updated Mr. Nghi on the Dutch government's orientations regarding bilateral cooperation in the future, noting that there would be less future grant money available for work in forestry and the environment, with a focus on bilateral trade development instead.

Mr. Nghi highly appreciated Cas's updated information as it will help TBI Viet Nam to better prepare itself when developing its future plans.



The Forest and Farm Facility Multi-stakeholder Launching Workshop in Viet Nam

A launching workshop was held in Ha Noi on 22 August 2014 to introduce the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) to Viet Nam. This global partnership was established to ensure that smallholders, communities, and women's organizations have improved livelihoods and increased decision-making over forest and farm landscapes.

Launched in collaboration with the Viet Nam Farmer's Union, the one-day workshop brought together a wide range of stakeholders, including national agencies, forest and farm producers, NGOs, civil society, research institutes, business sector entities, and international organizations.



The Forest and Farm Facility is a multi-donor programme, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO), overseen by a Steering Committee, and has a management team including staff from FAO, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

At the workshop, Mr. Tran Huu Nghi, Programme Director of TBI Viet Nam, presented the "In-Country Scoping Study Report for the Implementation of FFF," which was made based on a scoping research results that he himself conducted and the request from an FAO-representative of FFF. The report provided an overview of Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPO) in Viet Nam as well as opportunities and challenges they have been facing. It also suggested key local issues that FFF can gear their efforts towards in the future.

The workshop helped to set out the vision, mandate, and modalities of the Forest and Farm Facility while sharing the perspectives of the Vietnamese government and stakeholders. The workshop's inputs would lay the groundwork towards developing a full framework to guide efforts in the coming three years.

Provincial Government Agencies to Boost Cooperation with INGOs

A meeting was organized at TBI Viet Nam's office in late September 2014 between an interdisciplinary mission of provincial authorities to assess implementation and legal compliance of INGOs in the province and to boost the cooperation between governmental agencies and INGOs.

This is the first visit of the mission, with the involvement of representatives from: the provincial Department of Foreign Affairs; Department of Planning and Investment; Department of Labor, War Invalids, & Social Welfare; Department of Public Security; and Department of Finance.

Mr. Tran Huu Nghi introduced TBI's operations since it came to Viet Nam in 2001. He emphasized that TBI is a small-scale research organization, conducting research through partnership with national and international universities and research institutes in agro-forestry. TBI has geared its efforts towards forest conservation and management for livelihood-improvement options. In addition, Nghi updated the mission about the research outcomes of current projects, for instance the social-economic and environment impacts of forestland conversion to rubber plantations, as well as potential impacts of logging forest for hydro-power plant establishment in Viet Nam recently.

Apart from timely support given by local authority to TBI during its implementation such as requesting for its work permit in Viet Nam, as well as necessary information provision, there are certain constraints faced by TBI Viet Nam regarding visa application for its foreign experts and volunteers, thus affecting the programme operation.



Representatives of relevant parties explained the obstacles facing TBI Viet Nam. They suggested that TBI Viet Nam regularly update them so that advice and support might be timely given. The Vice Director of the Department of Foreign Affairs highly valued the research results and other contributions of TBI Viet Nam while also requesting that TBI Viet Nam get involved in a network of local NGOs, boosting the capacity of local NGOs in Thua Thien Hue province.



TBI Viet Nam's PhD Research Progress

Tremendous efforts have been made by TBI Viet Nam's PhD researchers to finalize their research based on the support of their professors and daily supervisors.

Both Tiep (whose research is about "Forest Fragmentation in Viet Nam") and Nam (whose research focuses on "The Effects of Logging on Carbon and Population Dynamics in Evergreen Broad-Leaved Forest in the Central Highland, Viet Nam") finished their data analysis and thesis manuscript development. Tiep has now finished adapting his thesis based on comments from his supervisors.

Meanwhile, Nhan, who conducts research on "Tree Composition and Diversity in Viet Nam Forest" has developed two chapters: the first one regards biomass equations for Vietnamese forest and the other discusses biomass distribution and drivers of two main forest types in Vietnam. Nhan has been trying his best to find the most appropriate methodology to run the correlation model for drivers of biomass by consulting scholarly literature.

Our PhD students plan to dedicate their time to study and finalizing their remaining assignments so that they can defend their PhD theses soon.

Viet Nam, Netherlands forge links

From 22 to 24 September 2014, Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam Hoang Trung Hai paid a visit to the Netherlands to formalize an agreement for closer bilateral cooperation in economic and environmental fields. Cooperation areas under the agreement include climate change, water management, agriculture, energy and marine-based economic activities. An exchange of visits at different levels and scientific-technological cooperation between the two countries is expected in the coming time.



In addition, Deputy Minister Hai and Melanie Schultz, Dutch Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment co-chaired the fourth meeting of the Inter-Government Committee on Climate Change and Water Management. At the meeting, the two parties pledged to accelerate the implementation of priority projects and called for foreign funding for Mekong Delta region. The water resources master plan of the Red River basin was also discussed in details; thereby a memorandum of understanding was signed.

(Vietnam news, volume XXIV, No. 8257)

UN biodiversity meeting warns of unmet targets

A UN conference on preserving natural resources was organized on 6 October 2014, offering warnings that efforts to protect natural habitats and species were falling short of the depletion rate. Absolute wildlife numbers have halved over the past 40 years according to research by the WWF.

Governments met in South Korea to analyse the achieved results of 20 targets (known as the Aichi targets), set at a meeting in Nagoya, Japan in 2010, to stem the tide of biodiversity loss.

(see next page)

UN biodiversity meeting warns of unmet targets

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The Global Biodiversity Outlook report stated that many of the Aichi targets – including halving habitat loss, reducing pollution, slowing overfishing, and putting a brake on species extinction by 2020 – would not be met.



Though the world has agreed to double biodiversity aid to developing countries by 2015, there is not yet agreement on either the base amount or the target itself and the numbers are still far from being resolved.

(Source: Vietnam News)

Preliminary results from three-year implementation of PES policy

On 20 September 2014, the Vietnamese Government Office cooperated with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) to organize a nationwide web conference to assess the implementation of PES over the last three years. The event was chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Hoang Trung Hai with the involvement of leaders from Ministries, provincial People's Committees, relevant provincial departments, and forest protection and development funds of 36 provinces.

Vice-Minister of MARD Mr. Ha Cong Tuan said that from 2011 to 2013 some 36 forest protection and development funds were set up nationwide. As of August 2014, approximately VND 3,329 billion had been collected to pay forest owners for ecosystem maintenance.

PES policy has created numerous jobs for forest-dependent people, especially those in remote areas. On average, each household was paid VND 1.8 million per year from PES funds for their forest protection efforts. In addition, income generated from PES helped to ease financial shortages faced by forest management boards and forest companies.



Still, lack of adequate resources and proper demarcation in the field are two major constraints hindering PES implementation, reducing the effective sharing of funding with forest owners. PES policy is still new in Viet Nam and there are policy gaps which must be addressed in order to better meet local people's needs.

The Deputy Minister Hai requested that MARD: 1) co-operate with relevant ministries to revise and improve PES legal documents; 2) closely work with the Ministry of Finance to better use and manage the PES funds.

(Source: dangcongsan.vn)

New plant species found in Thanh Hoa province

A new plant species that was previously unknown to the world found at Xuan Lien Nature Reserve in Thanh Hoa province, Viet Nam during a fauna and flora field survey. The plant species was named *Aristolochia xuanlienensis*, belonging to the Aristolochiaceae family. The new species was named after the place where tree samples were collected at the Nature Reserve.



The analysis of leaves, flowers, and seed samples showed differences in shapes and sizes compared to those of existing species in the world. Currently, the tree's samples are being stored at the specimen lab of Viet Nam's Institute of Ecology and Biological Resources.

(Source: Dan Tri)

Chance for Two Doctoral Positions

Two doctoral opportunities are to be offered to those interested in studying at the Institute of Geography and Sustainability at the Université de Lausanne in Switzerland in 2015.

One of these scholarships is an open topic in political ecology in a developing world context while the other has a potential focus on the political ecology of fast-expanding Acacia tree plantations in Southeast Asia, especially in Vietnam.

These are fully-funded positions of up to five-year duration, with at least half the time dedicated to PhD studies and up to half as a teaching and/or research assistant.

The application deadline is December 5, 2014.

Further information can be requested from *Prof. Christian Kull* at christian.kull@monash.edu or by visiting: <https://applicationsinter.unil.ch>.



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