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VIETNAM FORESTS AND DELTAS PROGRAM

2012 - 2021 | IMPLEMENTER: WINROCK INTERNATIONAL | PLANNED BUDGET: \$31 MILLION

The USAID Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program supports Vietnam's transition to resilient, sustainable development. The first phase of the program (2012-2018) helped put national policies and strategies into practice to respond to environmental change, with a focus on the forestry and agriculture sectors, disaster risk reduction, and strengthening livelihoods. Beginning in 2018, the program's second phase focuses on supporting the Government of Vietnam (GVN) to ensure that the payment for forest environmental services (PFES) system—a critical component of forest programs in Vietnam—is an effective tool in accomplishing the country's environmental and socio-economic goals.

RESULTS ACHIEVED

To date, the program has successfully developed policies and implemented actions to achieve green growth, sustainable forest management, and equitable payment for forest environmental services (PFES) in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa provinces. As a result of project support, approximately 25,000 households are receiving PFES payments and are now more actively engaged in local forest protection. In Nam Dinh and Long An, the program engaged communities to take action in disaster preparedness, with more than 200,000 people in 60 communes implementing risk-reducing practices. Project experts worked with local agriculture extension centers to promote sustainable agriculture models with more than 30,000 farmers in both forested and delta areas. At the national level, the program worked with policy makers to develop important policies such as the national Coastal Forest Decree 119, which for the first time in Vietnam provides specific guidance on management and protection of coastal forests. This Decree was critical in providing the foundation to leverage more \$150 million in investment from the World Bank for coastal forest management.

FOCUS ON PFES

The VFD PFES Activity (2018-2021) strives to develop a base of evidence through the application of pilots, policies, and tools that will assist the Government of Vietnam to improve its PFES system through three innovations:

- **Application of electronic payment mechanisms to distribute PFES benefits:** Current PFES cash payments are inefficient and create security risks as large amounts of cash are transported to rural areas. VFD and local partners are developing more efficient, transparent electronic payment mechanisms that reduce transaction costs and streamline payment processes.
- **Strengthening PFES monitoring and evaluation systems:** In order to determine whether PFES is meeting its goals, VFD and the Vietnam Forest Protection and Development Fund (VNFF) are developing a system to monitor PFES implementation, and improve data management, analysis, and reporting.
- **Expanding payment for new forest services such as carbon sequestration:** VFD, VNFF, and provincial partners are developing innovative carbon PFES pilots with local companies paying forest owners for the carbon sequestration and storage services that forests provide. The mechanism will be applied nationwide to increase overall PFES revenues, protect forests, and help Vietnam achieve its international climate change commitments.