

Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program – Sustainable Landscapes



The USAID-funded Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program (2012–2017) is pioneering approaches for developing sustainable landscapes that support low carbon growth, resilient communities and environmental protection at scale.

Goals of the USAID Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program

The five-year USAID Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program (VFD) helps to move Vietnam's progressive and proactive climate change policies into practice. Focusing on sustainable natural resource management, improving land use planning and engaging communities in developing action plans to address climate risks and vulnerabilities, the program supports Vietnam's transition towards a , low emission, climate resilient development pathway. The program is built around three main components:

- **Sustainable Landscapes:** Interventions under this component aim to improve natural resource management and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in larger forested landscapes in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An provinces, north-central Vietnam.
- **Adaptation:** Through this component the program aims to strengthen climate resilience and reduce disaster risks in Vietnam's coastal delta areas, while also supporting climate-smart livelihoods
- **Coordination and National Policy Development:** At the national level, the program aims to support government stakeholders in developing and reviewing climate change policies.



In Thanh Hoa, VFD focuses on stimulating coordinated Green Growth actions an investment in the agriculture, industry, energy, forestry an waste sectors.

Of particular importance is the bamboo industry, which contributes to Thanh Hoa's growing economy and sustains the livelihoods of thousand of smallholders. The growing global demand for bamboo offers a great opportunity for leveraging private investments to increase production and add further value to the bamboo crop.



In Nghe An, program activities are centered around developing and implementing sustainable finance mechanisms for maintaining and restoring the Western Nghe An Man and Biosphere Reserve; the 'Green Battery' of the province. This forested landscape provides water resources, soil erosion prevention, carbon

sequestration and other essential ecosystem services for downstream development.

Supporting Vietnam's transition towards a low emission, climate resilient development pathway

Sustainable Landscapes component: key activities and achievements

VFD works along three lines of action to support sustainable landscape development in the two target provinces: governance and capacity building, sustainable finance and emission reduction actions.

I. Governance and capacity building

Achieving sustainable landscapes depends on sufficient capacity at the local, subnational and national levels as well as an enabling policy environment. VFD provides support for planning processes, policy development, capacity building of public institutions, and developing tools and guidelines. Key highlights include:

- **Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (PRAPs):** VFD leads the development of PRAPs for three provinces; Thanh Hoa, Nghe An and Quang Binh.
- **Payment for Forest Environmental Services (PFES):** VFD supports a revision of the national PFES legislation and contributed to a decree on noncompliance. Communities of Practice were organized to encourage knowledge sharing.
- **Green Growth Action Plan:** In Thanh Hoa, VFD supported the provincial government in developing a Green Growth action plan by providing technical and financial support and facilitating interventions.
- **Bamboo Development Action Plan:** As part of the Thanh Hoa's Green Growth strategy a plan was formulated to boost the bamboo sector.

II. Sustainable Finance

Implementing sustainable landscape plans and strategies requires considerable financial resources. VFD supports Thanh Hoa and Nghe An in accessing sustainable finance through various mechanisms:

- **REDD+ financing:** VFD is collaborating to develop an Emissions Reduction Project Document for submission to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Fund. It could leverage around 50 million USD in results-based payments by 2020.
- **PFES:** VFD helped to accelerate PFES revenue distribution by implementing more efficient and transparent payment mechanisms, and through the development of a decree which strengthens the sanctions for delayed payments.
- **Natural capital accounting:** VFD developed systems and tools for measuring and monitoring natural capital accounts and ecosystem service values, in both quantifiable and economic terms.
- **Leveraging private investment:** VFD facilitated a public-private partnership between Thanh Hoa province and the Lam Son Joint Stock Corporation (LASUCO). The company plans to invest a total of USD 10 million in the bamboo industry.

III. Emission reduction actions

Effectively addressing climate change challenges requires concerted action by a large variety of stakeholders and sectors, across the wider landscape. VFD designs and pilots emission reduction interventions at the local level, and supports upscaling of proven success models to the district, provincial or national level.

- **Climate smart livelihood options:** VFD developed climate smart livelihood models around agroforestry, chicken raising, mushroom cultivation, sloping agriculture land techniques, rice production and improved cook stoves.
- **Improved forest management models:** VFD is developing models for the protection of special use forests, participatory forest land allocation and community based forests management.
- **Low emission production:** VFD supported bamboo companies to adopt waste to energy technologies, to reduce emissions and meet clean production targets.



Gender mainstreaming

Gender is addressed as a crosscutting theme throughout VFD's landscape work. Women are involved both as leaders and beneficiaries of the climate smart livelihood interventions, improved forest management schemes, and training programs.

VFD cooperates with local Women's Unions and other relevant actors such as UNWOMEN, National Women's Union, CARE, Oxfam and Climate Change NGO working group to maximize the effects of the communication and advocacy efforts.

The way forward

Through the Sustainable Landscapes component, VFD works towards addressing climate change challenges, harnessing investment for green growth, promoting resilient livelihoods and preserving ecosystem services at scale. It is expected that the insights gained in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An will guide the development of sustainable landscapes throughout the country, as well as in the wider region.