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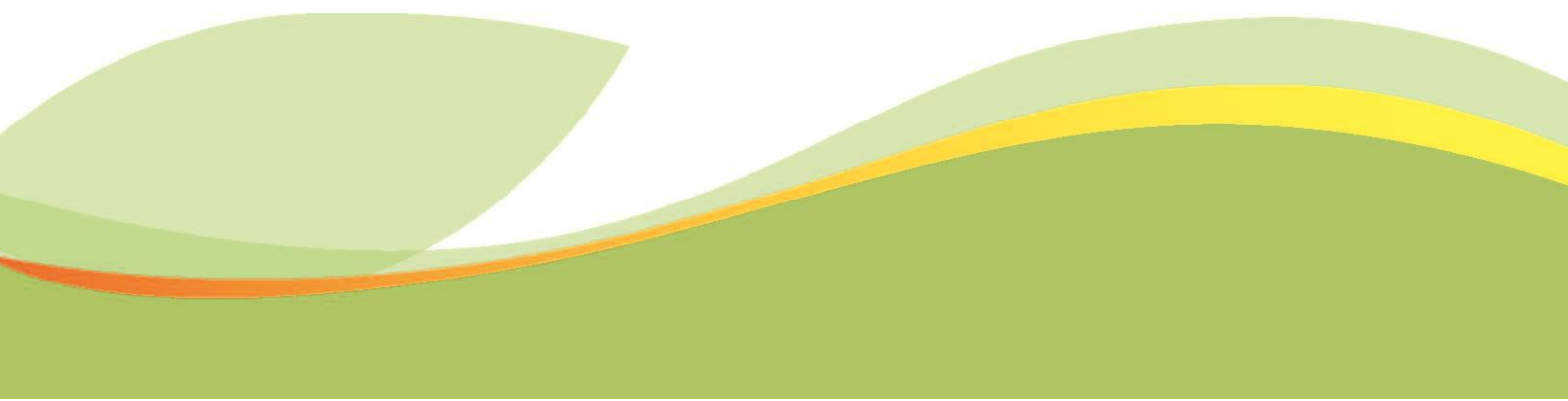


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# Non-timber Forest Product Assessment in the context of Sustainable Forest Management Plan development of Tram Tau Protection Forest Management Board

REPORT TO THE GIZ / MARD PROGRAMME ON CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE USE OF  
FOREST BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES IN VIET NAM



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### **On behalf of the**

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

This study aims to provide insights into the legal basis for NTFP collection in PF in general and assess available NTFPs, their use and value chains in an around Tram Tau PF, based on which recommendations for access and user agreements for the implementation of the SFMP will be developed accordingly. As a result, feasible options for improved resource management will be proposed, thus enhancing benefits for both local communities and Tram Tau PFMB and thus contribute to improved management and conservation of Tram Tau PFMB. Eventually, findings can be integrated by the Tram Tau PFMB into the SFMP and other planning or management documents e.g. on sustainable financing.

The research was organized on two levels: desk study and fieldwork. Fieldwork was conducted through household survey, key informant interviews and focus group discussions using questionnaire and open questions. Participant observation was employed. Important as well is that GIS mapping and spatial analysis was also used

The research findings show that GIS analysis is a useful technique to collect and analyze spatial distribution and information of NTFPs. The combination of on-site measurement and local knowledge is an effective approach to collecting data in the field, especially in remote areas.

**The key findings are as follows:**

1. Bamboo shoots make an important contribution to household income. Bamboo shoots have become a commodity in the value chain, and the harvested quantity has been boosted in the past 10 years. According to the regulations that have been agreed between Tram Tau PFMB and the People's Committees of local communes and communities, the bamboo shoot harvesting period starts from the beginning of September and ends at the end of November every year. The product distribution is carried out through two main channels, from buying directly from processing units or being sold at farmers markets, with the intermediary transportation channel being wholesalers.
2. With an area of about over 1,000 natural hectares and the new planting area of about 2,400 hectares, of which the new planting in the 2016-2020 period is 2,221.63 hectares, the harvested quantity of *Docynia indica* has increased in the recent years. The harvesting season for *Docynia indica* is from the end of July to the end of September or the beginning of October every year. There are two channels of product distribution: *Docynia indica* are directly sold to the market by collectors through middle men in the commune, or transported to wholesalers or markets in Tram Tau town.
3. The harvesting of bamboo shoots and *Docynia indica* as well as other NTFPs will increase greatly in the near future. Therefore, it is of great importance to develop processing enterprises in Tram Tau. Otherwise, this would lead to an excess of raw materials or being sold with low price. The capacity of processing enterprises of bamboo shoots and *Docynia indica* in Tram Tau district and neighboring districts should be improved in the coming time due to the lack of competitiveness in the market.
4. Studies on gender elsewhere in the world have shown that the benefits that women get from participating in all stages of the NTFP value chain are very large. These include enhancing language skills, trading skills and income independence. Participation in the value chain also helps women to expand their social relationships, give them confidence in communication and diversify sources of income. However, the research findings at Tram Tau show that the role of women in Tram Tau district has not been paid due attention. Specifically, local women are only engaged in the stage of harvesting bamboo shoots and *Docynia indica*, but have not been involved in the rest of the value chain. Our findings also demonstrate that due to language barriers, many ethnic women, especially the Mong women do not speak Kinh well. Therefore, they somewhat lag behind in education and participation in social activities as well as in family economic development. And this situation does not contribute to sustainable forest management at the local level.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research in Ban Cong, Ban Mu, and Xa Ho communes, Tram Tau shows that GIS analysis is a useful technique to collect and analyze spatial distribution and information of non-timber products. Combining field research and indigenous knowledge is an effective approach to collecting primary data, especially in remote areas.

**Key findings are as follows:**

1. Bamboo shoots make an important contribution to the household's income. Bamboo shoots have become a commodity in the value chain, and the exploitation output has been boosted in the past 10 years. According to the regulations that have been agreed between the PFMB and the People's Committees of communes and local communities, the bamboo shoot harvesting period starts from the beginning of September to the end of November every year. Product consumption is carried out through two main channels, from buying directly from the processing facility or being sold at farmers' markets, with the intermediary transportation channel being the wholesaler.
2. With a natural area of over 1,000 hectares and a new planting area of about 2,400 hectares, of which the new planting in the 2016-2020 period was 2,221.63 hectares, so the harvested output of forest apple has increased over the years. Apple harvesting season is determined from the end of July to the end of September or the beginning of October every year. There are two channels of product consumption: apples are sold to the market by collectors, through traders in the commune, or transported to wholesalers or markets in Tram Tau town.
3. The harvested output of bamboo shoots, apples and other NTFPs will increase greatly in the near future, so if processing enterprises are not developed, it will lead to a surplus of raw materials or will be sold at high prices. low price. The capacity of processing units of bamboo shoots and apples in Tram Tau and neighboring districts should be improved in the coming time due to the lack of competitiveness in the market.
4. Other gender studies around the world have shown that the benefits that women get from participating in all stages of the NTFP value chain are very large, from enhanced language skills and trading skills to income independence. Participating in the chain also helps women expand their social relationships, giving them confidence in communication and diversifying sources of livelihood. However, the research results at Tram Tau show that the role of women in Tram Tau district has not been given due attention. Specifically, local women were only engaged in the stage of collecting bamboo shoots, chili peppers and apples, but have not been involved in the rest of the value chain. Research results also show that this has also contributed to unsustainable forest management in the area.

**Enhancing the Value chain**

There are three groups of solutions to upgrade the NTFP value chain:

Solution 1.1: Support capacity building and establish a Community Management Board in each village to perform the following tasks:

- i. organize the forest protection patrol under the contract of the Tram Tau PFMB;
- ii. monitoring of harvesting techniques and statistics of community NTFP collection;
- iii. representatives of the village community to sign NTFP purchase and sale contracts with cooperatives and enterprises in the value chain;
- iv. receive financial resources from outside to expand the scale of NTFP planting in accordance with the approved NTFP development master plan.

Solution 1.2: Improve the value of NTFPs in Yen Bai province through the development of enterprises producing and processing NTFPs, especially those in Tram Tau district. Specifically:

- i. support cooperatives and processing companies to access funding sources, develop designs, brands and promote sales of products processed from NTFPs in accordance with the policies of Yen Bai province;
- ii. support enterprises to complete the license to ensure smooth production and business process;
- iii. support in mechanism and access to capital for Hung Thuy Cooperative to develop into a business and handle the processing of bamboo shoots to the final product for sale to consumers;
- iv. supporting product development towards export to foreign markets.

Solution 1.3: Tram Tau district PFMB cooperates with NTFP processing enterprises and Commune People's Committee to:

- i. determine the annual NTFP harvest for each product, in order to ensure production efficiency and conservation;
- ii. develop a sustainable management and harvesting plan for each type of NTFPs;
- iii. price floor and ceiling price for each NTFP based on the principle of benefit and risk sharing, taking into account the factors of differentiation, "cleanliness" and materials collected from community-based sustainable forest management;
- iv. signing contract for consumption of NTFPs between parties including Enterprise - Community - Commune People's Committee – Tram Tau PFMB.

#### **Enhancing Conservation**

- i. Although *Anoectochilus setaceus* is not included in the IUCN Red List due to good populations elsewhere outside of Vietnam, it has been included in the Vietnam Red Book (2007) and classified as Endangered. In addition, Decree 06 and 64 of the Government also prohibit all acts of harvesting this orchid. Although there is little information on the collection status of this orchid obtained from interviews with local people and officials, it is a very rare species. Unlike *Panax stipleanatus*, there are currently no plans to plant this species in Tram Tau PF. Information about the distribution area of this species in the reserve obtained from interviews is shown on the map in the GIS section. These populations need to be closely monitored and conservation measures should be prioritized to avoid further decline in the future.
- ii. It is necessary for Tram Tau PFMB to design and implement practical conservation activities for *Panax stipleanatus* and *Anoectochilus setaceus*, especially to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement and people's awareness of the two rare and endangered species that are prioritized for conservation. In addition, the replanting of *Panax stipleanatus* and *Anoectochilus setaceus* in areas with suitable natural habitats will also help these species recover faster. In particular, the Management Board can consider the areas shown on the map in the report to identify suitable areas for future conservation activities. Important as well is that the Management Board may consider collecting fees from non-timber forest products such as *Docynia indica* and chili bamboo shoots to use this funding for conservation activities, especially with *Panax stipleanatus* and *Anoectochilus setaceus*. However, there is currently no mechanism to allocate funds for conservation activities from regular revenue sources. Therefore, the Tram Tau PFMB can write proposals for grant or coordinate with scientists to propose programs and projects from the national budget or from international funds to develop conservation activities to protect these two rare and endangered species.

#### **Enhancing gender equality**

1. In order to enhance the role of women, the Commune People's Committee needs to act as the focal point between the NTFP purchasing unit and the local people. Activities carried out by women (often at the household level) should be supported to improve the efficiency, quality and standards of products, such as preliminary processing to increase the value of chili bamboo shoots and *Docynia indica*.
2. To map the NTFP value chain through the lens of gender, to divide labor by gender in the chain and the interactions and relationships between men and women in each stage of the value chain.
3. To increase income for people, especially women, the Commune People's Committee needs to support the local people, especially women and young people, to promote traditional occupations (e.g. weaving and dressmaking), or develop the household economy based on natural conditions and resources that are locally available.
4. Gender issues should be prioritized in local annual socio-economic development plans, as well as in Sustainable Forest Management Plan. Raise the awareness of the ethnic minority women of the importance and distribution as well as sustainably harvesting of NTFPs.
5. Train women to participate more actively in each stage of the NTFP value chain if possible, thereby enhancing the status of women, especially Mong women. Conduct more training courses and techniques to help the Mong women improve their Kinh (Vietnamese language), and have the opportunity to communicate and thereby improve their labor efficiency.

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