

SUMMARY

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS TSPH

Location: Nghinh Tuong and Thuong Nung Communes, Vo Nhai District (Buffer Zone for TSPH)

Date: 13-14/5/2021

Participants: total 62 participants, of which 50 of male and 12 female, number of indigenous people / ethnic minority: 55 (Tay: 29; H'Mong: 9; Dao: 15; Cao Lan:2)

Overview

During the data collection stage of SFMP development in Than Sa Phuong Hoang Nature Reserve (TSPH-NR) community consultants were conducted to reconfirm initial findings through the local SFMP consultant team (Silviculture Research Institute -SRI). Due to geographic feature of different communes, no centralized event was organized; but rather commune-specific consultation event. The events were carried out jointly by SRI, and TSPH-NR representatives (Technical & Planning Division) – with SRI taking a lead role adapting the GIZ-proposed consultation approach to local circumstances.

The overall agenda was as follows:

Time	Activity	Notes
08:30 - 08:50	Introduction & Ice Breaker	
8:50 - 10:00	Local knowledge & data	Participatory mapping exercise in groups
10:00 – 10:15	Break	
10:15 - 11:00	Moderated discussion of key issues	Reporting back & discussion on findings from mapping exercise
11:00 - 11:45	SFMP objectives & measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral presentation of overall SFMP objectives• Discussion on options to address key issues/needs of communities through SFMP measures
11:45 – 12:15	Summary, closure & next steps	
12:15 -	Lunch	

In a participatory mapping exercise, participants used the map print-outs to identify the boundary of settlement areas, infrastructure, forest areas (Special-use forest, Production forest, forestland, etc.), which are owned by different entities. Furthermore, potential threat & current NTFP collection areas were identified.

Main issues identified:

- **Lack of cultivation land**
Villages located in remote limestone mountain area. Agricultural land for local households is of course small and fragmentant. Lack of cultivation land is major issue for local ethnic minority in these villages. Besides that, local people cultivated in their farm long time ago, however, these lands now under planning of 03 types of forest. This circumstance led people cannot receive Red book and its consequence is the issue of cultivation land for local people more and more serious. This is also a long term pressure on TSPH' natural resources.
- **Unsecured Livelihood**
As located in remote place, inter-villages road is very bad, lack of cultivation land, not enough water for cultivation crops and family use in dry season, the life of local people is hard. For example, Nghinh Tuong commune has 12 villages but all of these 12 villages are under extremely hard category according to the Government's Criteria for identifying villages, communes with special difficulties in 2020.
- **Forestland encroachment & land allocation**
The population has been growing led to not enough land for agricultural cultivation, particular with young generations. Besides that, local people also need more forestland for their free grazing of cattle and goats.
Besides increasing pressures, Forest Land Allocation (FLA) is slow and often in-appropriate lands get allocated (i.e. difficult to access, far, unfertile land – instead of empty plots nearby the communities). Communities acknowledged that this is not within the ability of TSPH MB itself but the responsibility of the respective provincial & commune authorities. voiced the need to identify use-agreements.
- **Demarcation & Overlap of forestland boundaries**
In many cases (during both discussion & mapping exercise) it was voiced and observed that there is no clear demarcation of land ownership. With the boundaries of TSPH-NR managed lands and community owned forestland being unclear, unintended land use violations hap-pen regularly.
- **Unmanaged NTFP harvesting**
NTFPs were stated as key livelihood (bamboo shoots, honey, etc) and income source for local ethnic people. Only informal agreements between forest protection staff and local communities exist – both sides agree that these generally work well. NTFP collection is mainly unmanaged/unplanned and both local community representatives & forest rangers noted a rapid decline in availability of NTFPs – resulting in either collection in further distances or reduced income. There was a clear need for improvement of the current situation stated from either side (through use-agreements, sustainable harvesting guidelines, alter-native livelihood development).
- **Forest Protection & Illegal logging of high-valued timber**
All the participants have participated in forest protection through forest protection contract between TSPH-NR and individual household or communities. These have been widely appreciated as additional income source, noting that the current financial returns are rather limited, nonetheless.

A mismatch between household/community location and the respected forest protection area has been voiced (protection areas are far away, hence cannot be controlled as effective as neighboring forest areas – and require higher time inputs). However, due to forests located far away from their family/community, illegal cutting of valued timber is still happening regularly, with assumed perpetrators from other locations. In addition, the mismatch of forest protection areas to local communities' locations requires them to use a comparably larger part of the forest protection value for fuel cost.

Takeaways for integration in the management plan

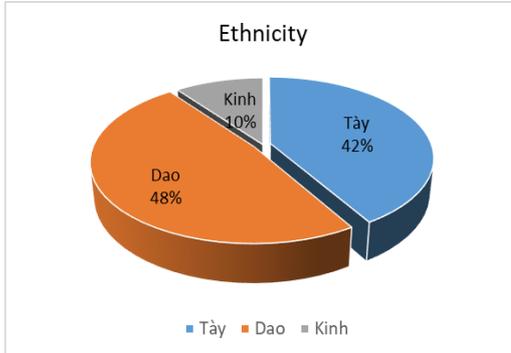
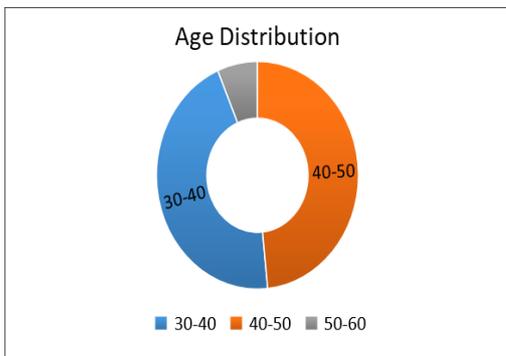
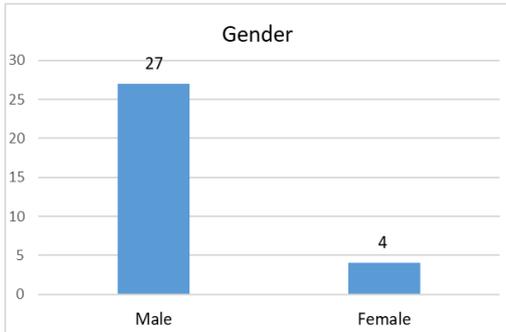
In relation to the above four key issues, the following options were jointly discussed and identified for potential integration in the management plan:

- Sustainable NTFP development was identified as one of the main cooperation options and an area with high needs & potential for improvement. This includes, but should not be limited to:
 - Formalization of use agreements
 - Capacity building and sustainable harvesting techniques
 - Identification of alternative NTFP options
 - Support on sales/marketing of collected NTFPs¹
- Both sides understand the need for participatory forest boundary demarcation to reduce potential future conflicts
- Both sides understand the need for FLA and/or use agreements instead of informal arrangements (cattle grazing, NTFP/firewood collection) and intend to formalize this in the scope of SFMP implementation.
- There is a need to re-arrange protection areas. While this is understood as a very complicated and complex issue (partly outside of TSPHs responsibility), alternatively the cost norms of forest protection contracts should be increased from VND 600,000 to VND 800,000 per ha/year
- Development of alternative livelihood models (unspecified) to reduce the pressures on forest areas through grazing, NTFP collection and logging.

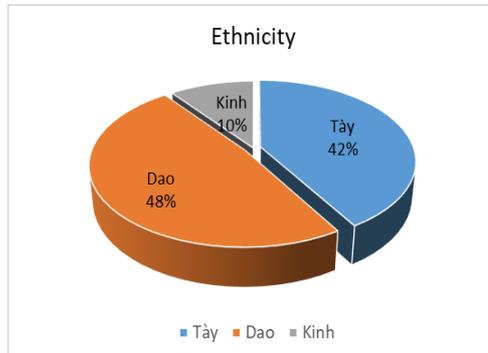
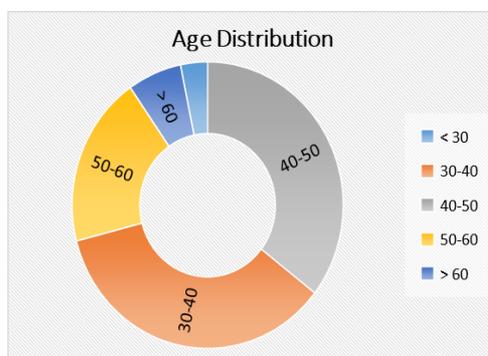
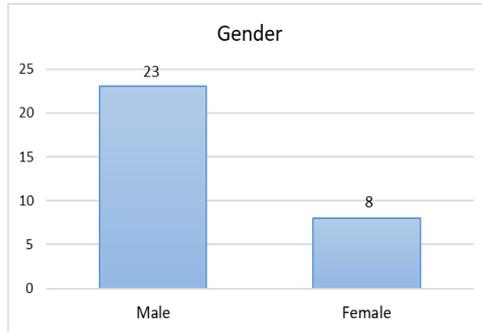
¹Note: on side of the TSPH-NR the consultants identified a need for a technical guideline/plan for sustainable use & development of NTFPs as well as a value chain assessment of existing and potential other NTFPs

Participants overview

Nghinh Tuong Commune



Thuong Nung Commune



Impressions



