



## SITUATION ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND FORESTRY IN VIET NAM



**Published by the**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

**On behalf of the**

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

**Registered offices**

Bonn and Eschborn, Germany

**Project**

Support to the Implementation of FLEGT VPA in Viet Nam

The Project is implemented by GIZ and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)

**As of**

December 2023

**Authors**

Edwin Shanks, Hoang Thu Hang

**In cooperation with**

European Forest Institute

**Responsibility**

Anja Barth – Project Chief Technical Advisor, GIZ Viet Nam

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## Acronyms

CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DOF	Department of Forestry under MARD
EFI	European Forest Institute
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign direct investment (enterprise)
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FPD	Forest Protection Department under MARD
GSO	General Statistics Office
ILO	International Labour Office
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LUC	Land Use Certificate
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs
NTFP	Non Timber Forest Products
PFES	Payment for Forest Environmental Services
SFEs	State Owned Forest Enterprise
SMEs	Small and Medium Sized Enterprises
VHLSS	Viet Nam Households Living Standard Survey
VNFOREST	Viet Nam Administration of Forestry
VPA	Voluntary Partnership Agreement
VSIC	Viet Nam Standard Industrial Classification



## Summary

This report provides a situation analysis of gender-related rights and gender dimensions in forestry in Viet Nam in connection to three sub-sectors: forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing. The report synthesises the available statistical information and secondary research on gender and forestry. It examines the legal setting of gender-related rights and critical issues and trends in the application and realisation of these rights. And it identifies future priorities and opportunities, including policy considerations to advance gender equality in forestry, and recommendations for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal #8 on decent work and inclusive economic growth in the forest industries.

### Chapter 1

**Begins by presenting the analytical framework for the study.** It gives background information on key characteristics of Viet Nam's forestry sector and economy that are relevant to the situation analysis, and a timeline of the major political and legislative developments concerning gender equality. This chapter also provides an overview of the statistical survey sources and literature sources that have been used in the study.

### Chapter 2

**Looks at gender in connection to forest resource ownership and utilisation rights (Theme One).** This begins by summarising the available statistics on several indicators including the current forest land tenure situation; the numbers of households using and managing forest land and resources; the valuation of household forest-based livelihoods; forest land use certification; and payments for forest environmental services.

The study has found that women have played a significant role in the widespread adoption of farm forestry systems and the rapid growth in the

forest economy in Viet Nam over recent decades. There is also a strong historical precedence to the high level of participation of women in the forestry labour force that goes back many years. The economic role and contribution of women in forestry production systems are, however, still often overlooked and underestimated. Many reports document common patterns of labour division between men and women in forestry work, and the differentiation of economic roles between men and women in forest-based livelihood systems. Yet there is still limited statistical evidence to characterise the nature and burden of women's work in forestry, and how this might be changing in response to changes in the structure of household economies in recent years.

Rural women are still often disadvantaged by gender disparities in access to the benefits from policies and services. This appears to be the case, for instance, with the policy on Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) which has become a major source of forest sector investment and household revenues in many localities in recent years. The available evidence suggests that there are disparities in the rates of PFES registration, participation, and benefits between men and women, but further research is needed to substantiate these findings.

Forest protection measures which limit access to forests and non-timber forest products can have a major adverse impact on women's livelihoods and household well-being, particularly for women from ethnic minorities, poor households and women-headed households. Promoting security of land and forest use rights for women is a priority. Promoting gender equity in forest use rights means safeguarding the 'tenure niches' that enable rural women to use minor forest products as sources of income as well as for domestic consumption.



## Chapter 3

**Looks at gender in connection to economic opportunities and employment in the forest industries (Theme Two).** The available sex-disaggregated statistics are analysed for several indicators, including the overall numbers of workers in forestry production, forest product processing and furniture manufacturing; the employment structure according to forms of ownership<sup>1</sup>, employment status<sup>2</sup>, and occupational categories<sup>3</sup>; incomes and the gender wage gap<sup>4</sup>; and the degree of formality of labour contracts.

The study has found that the gender wage gap in some parts of the forest industries is substantially wider than in other economic and industrial sectors in Viet Nam. There is, however, wide variation within the sector. The wage disparities are most pronounced in the forest product processing sub-sector, but less so in furniture manufacturing. They are also more pronounced among micro and small-scale enterprises, but less so among larger domestic and foreign investment manufacturing companies. Meanwhile, the gender wage gap is exacerbated for many rural women in forestry production and processing because of the burden of women's unpaid family work and their greater dependence on self-employment.

Gender segmentation between occupational categories and the work carried out by men and women in the processing factories is pronounced. This type of segmentation is linked to underlying social norms and social biases, which can lead to the under-valuation of women's work and discrimination in wage determination. The large wage disparities between men and women in the forest industries are a reflection of this occupational segmentation. There are also comparatively high levels of labour contract informality in the forest industries, with a large proportion of workers without labour contracts

1. Form of ownership (hình thức sở hữu) – individual / individual business establishment (including household business); collective; domestic private enterprise; foreign investment (FDI) enterprise; and state sectors.

2. Employment status (vị thế công việc) – employer; own-account worker; unpaid family worker; cooperative member; salaried worker.

3. Occupation category (phân loại nghề nghiệp) – leaders and managers; professionals; technicians and associate professionals; clerks; service workers and market sales workers; skilled agriculture, forestry and fisheries workers; craft and related workers; plant/machine operators and assemblers; and elementary occupations.

4. The gender wage gap (khoảng cách tiền lương theo giới) measures the gap between the average wage level of all women and all men working in the labour market in a particular sector.

or just with verbal agreements with their employers. This affects both men and women; but there are much larger numbers of men who work under informal arrangements. To some extent, the situation of female employees is less vulnerable, such as in export-oriented furniture manufacturing where a higher proportion of women are in salaried employment with stable contracts.

## Chapter 4

**Looks at gender in connection to social welfare, participation, and human resources development (Theme Three).** The available statistics are summarised for several indicators including the professional and technical qualifications of workers; social insurance participation rates; occupational health and safety; the incidence of child labour in forestry; the gender balance in business management; the gender balance in the state forest sector; and gender participation in forums for forestry stakeholders.

The study has found that social welfare provisions for employees in some parts of the forest industries lag behind other economic and industrial sectors. For instance, there are comparatively very low social insurance participation rates in forest product processing, especially among women in micro and small-scale enterprises. Meanwhile, the fulfilment of social welfare requirements is higher among export-oriented furniture manufacturers.

Women in the forest industries are still generally disadvantaged in terms of access to professional and technical training opportunities. One particular concern is that the rate of women with vocational training qualifications (at pre-intermediate or intermediate levels) is persistently low, and only appears to be improving slowly among the younger age-groups. This is despite the fact that vocational training for rural women has been prioritised in Government policy for many years. There is, at the same time, evidence to show that having better qualifications can result in more equal employment and income outcomes for women. In the furniture manufacturing sector, for instance, the proportion of female employees with college or university education is higher than men, and the gender wage gap for senior professional staff in this sector has been more-or-less eliminated.

## Chapter 5

**Draws-out the overall conclusions from the study and identifies priorities and opportunities for the future.** The main recommendation from the study is that there is a need to broaden the scope of application of gender-related rights in forest policy. Up until now, the promotion of gender equality in both agriculture and forest policies has focused on four main areas: (a) ensuring non-discrimination in the land allocation process; (b) prioritising women's access to vocational training, credit, and other productive assets; (c) promoting equity in the recruitment and deployment of government staff in the sector; and (d) increasing the representation of women in senior management and leadership positions in both government and businesses. These are all important policies which need to be maintained in the future. One main message to emerge from this study, however, is that the scope of important gender issues in forestry is broader, and there are additional issues that need to be addressed in both policy and practice.

It is recommended that there are three highest priority areas of forest policy that warrant greater attention to gender rights in the next few years. These are: (i) fully integrating 'decent work' principles and practices into the policies, strategies and incentives for sustainable and inclusive development of the forest industries; (ii) reinvigorating the existing policy to prioritise vocational training and education for women, and to improve the quality of the workforce in the forest industries taking into consideration the need for gender balance and equal opportunities; and (iii) strengthening the attention given to equity and equality in the regulations, guidelines and actual implementation of the policy on Payment for Forest Environmental Services. Chapter 5 puts forward a number of specific ideas and suggestions for each of these priority areas. Recommendations are also made on the priorities for further research and data collection to fill information gaps and to support these efforts.

# 1

## Introduction





## 1.1 Objectives and analytical framework

This report presents a situation analysis of gender-related rights and gender dimensions in the forestry sector in Viet Nam. It examines gender across three socio-economic and industrial sub-sectors: forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing (referred to collectively as the 'forest industries'). All three sub-sectors are significant in the context of Viet Nam's emerging position as a major hub for timber processing in the global market, as well as being a forest rich country, with a thriving domestic market in the production and trade of many types of forest products and services.

The objectives of the situation analysis are threefold. Firstly, to provide an overview and synthesis of the available information on gender and forestry, including the legal setting of gender-related rights, and the available sources of statistical information and relevant research. Secondly, to identify and examine critical issues and trends in the application and realisation of gender-related rights in forestry. And thirdly, to identify future priorities and opportunities, including policy considerations to advance gender equality in forestry, and the promotion of decent work for the sustainable development of the forest industries.

In this study, gender is seen to encompass the situation of women, men, and youth. The report compiles quantitative and qualitative evidence to understand their respective position in the forest economy and in the forest industries. It also examines the social norms, attitudes and practices that underlie gender roles in the workplace. Particular attention is given to understanding the specific situations of women in the formal and informal forest economy. The gender and youth dimension is also significant in the Viet Nam context, where recent years have seen an increase in the numbers of young people working in the forest industries. Youth employment brings with it, however, several critical gender issues, particularly with respect to creating equal opportunities and the long-term prospects for developing a skilled and equitable workforce for the sustainable development of the sector.

The study uses an analytical framework that has been developed by the European Forest Institute and tested in a number of countries (EU FLEGT

Facility 2022).<sup>5</sup> The framework is described in Figure 1.1 and in Annex 6. The framework uses thematic headings to structure the information and analysis and is designed to be flexibly applied to different country contexts and forest sector contexts. It is generally intended that the situation analysis can be completed on the basis of a desk review of existing secondary information sources and statistics. The situation analysis looks at gender-related rights across three themes:

### ► Theme One: Forest resource ownership and utilisation rights

This theme covers gender dimensions in the ownership of forest land and resources and the utilisation rights for timber and non-timber forest products and ecosystem services. This includes the rights of indigenous forest peoples and other forest user groups; and depending on the country context, it may include farm forestry, community forestry, forest concessions, protected areas, or other forms of forest management. Consideration is given to how the configuration of forest ownership and utilisation rights affects the resource endowments of men and women from the perspective of gender equality and equity.

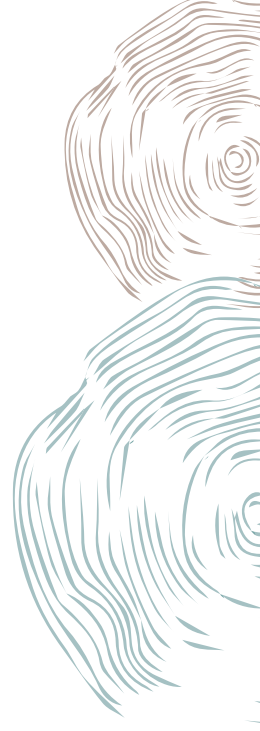


5. <https://efi.int/news/introducing-framework-analyse-gender-equality-forest-sector-2022-09-15>

Figure 1.1 Overview of the Situation Analysis Framework

Thematic Contents	Analytical Contents			Priorities and opportunities
	Legal framework	Indicators and statistical data	Key findings, issues and trends	
Theme One: Forest resource ownership and utilisation rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the legal framework of the country say about gender equality and equity with respect to the thematic area?</li> <li>How are such gender-related rights enshrined in law?</li> <li>What forest sector policies and strategies are in place to realise these intentions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What indicators can be used to analyse gender dimensions in the thematic area?</li> <li>Such indicators may vary from country to country depending on the socio-economic context and characteristics of the forestry sector.</li> <li>What statistical information is available on these indicators?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the key findings and significant issues and trends in the thematic area?</li> <li>These may be specific issues pertaining to the forest sector, broader gender issues in society and the economy that are reflected in forestry, or factors influencing the realisation of laws and policies on gender equality.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the priorities for developing gender sensitive policies and programs in the forestry sector and how can their implementation be improved?</li> <li>What actions can be taken to enhance the compliance with gender equality and labour rights and social safeguards in forest businesses?</li> </ul>

Thematic Contents	Analytical Contents			Priorities and opportunities
	Legal framework	Indicators and statistical data	Key findings, issues and trends	
Theme Two: Economic opportunities and employment in forest industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How and to what extent are the legal and policy provisions reflected and mainstreamed in forest sector regulations and programs for implementation on the ground?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What does the available evidence tell us about the current situation regarding the fulfilment of gender related rights in the forestry sector?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What initiatives are underway to address such issues and how effective are they?</li> <li>What are the main gaps in information and understanding?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the priorities for further research and data collection to provide better understanding of gender issues in the sector?</li> </ul>
Theme Three: Social welfare, participation, and human resources development				



► **Theme Two: Economic opportunities and employment in forest industries**

This theme looks at economic and employment rights and the income earning opportunities for women and men in the forest industries. Topics under this theme may include the employment characteristics of different segments of the forest industries and in the formal and informal economy; gender roles and occupational characteristics in the workplace; wage and income equality and differentials; the fulfilment of employment rights and obligations of employers; and the creation of business opportunities for women.

► **Theme Three: Social welfare, participation, and human resources development**

This theme is cross-cutting. Social welfare includes social insurance, occupational health and safety, and other such legal provisions and benefits for workers in forest industries. Human resources include the professional and technical capacities of the workforce and the extent to which men and women have access to and participate in education and training. This theme also covers the rights to representation in the workplace and participation in forest sector institutions, leadership in business and the state forest sector.

## 1.2 Key characteristics of the forestry sector and economy

A recent flagship report on gender equality in Viet Nam has strongly recommended that gender issues need greater attention in forestry development (UN Women, ADB, Australian Aid and ILO 2021). The report highlights the fact that there are important gender concerns in many aspects of forest conservation and the forest economy, and that better understanding is needed to reinforce the essential role that women play in forestry. The report recommends that a better system is needed to collect and analyse sex-disaggregated forestry sector data and to undertake relevant gender-based research. This would contribute to a better understanding of gender equality issues and the policy changes and programs needed to promote the meaningful participation of women in forestry development.

As of 2022, the area classified as forest land in Viet Nam is 15.4 million hectares, comprising 46.5% of the total land area (GSO 2023). The area with forest cover is 14.7 million hectares, of which around two-thirds is natural

forest (10.1 million ha) and one-third planted forest (4.6 million ha) (Table 1.1). Forest is divided into three categories: special use forest (situated mainly in national parks and other conservation areas), protection forest, and production forest. Production forest occupies around 53% of the total forest area, of which around half is natural forest and half planted forest. Since 2014, the Government has prohibited logging from natural forests and has introduced strict controls over the conversion of natural forest to other land uses. Domestic wood production thus comes predominantly from timber plantations, as well as from home-gardens, scattered trees and rubberwood.

The Law on Forestry (2017) defines ‘forest owners’ as organisations, households, individuals, or communities that are allocated or leased forest and forest land for afforestation, protection and development purposes. Those who are allocated land (‘land owners’) have land usage rights, as well as ownership rights over the products legally produced by them on that land. Land use rights may be transferred or inherited according to regulations of the law.

**Table 1.1 Status of forest according to forest type and forest category, 2022 (hectares)**

Forest Type	Forest Category			Total
	Special Use Forest	Protection Forest	Production Forest	
Natural Forest	2,103,845	4,078,464	3,951,773	10,134,082
Planted Forest	94,241	630,994	3,930,758	4,655,993
Total	2,198,086	4,709,458	7,882,531	14,790,075

Source: Decision No.2357/QD-BNN-KL (14/06/2023) on Announcement of the National Forest Status in 2022.

Viet Nam's forest economy and forest industries have expanded rapidly over recent years. This growth is reflected in an increase in the number of domestic timber growers and the output of domestically produced wood; an increase in the number of forest product processing enterprises and household businesses; an increase in the number of men and women working in the sector; and a rapid growth in imports and exports of timber and timber products over the last decade. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of men, women and households continue to depend on forest-based livelihoods to fulfil subsistence needs as well as for cash income and employment, particularly amongst the poorest income groups and ethnic minorities living in the uplands. The forest economy is exceedingly complex and diverse, with a wide range of stakeholder groups, forest owners, private sector actors, and a diversity of supply-chain linkages and economic relationships between them.

In order to categorise the forest industries, this report follows the Viet Nam Standard Industrial Classification (VSIC) that also forms the basis for the official statistical data collection and reporting system.<sup>6</sup> The economic 'sectors' and industry 'divisions' and 'groups' that comprise the forest industries are described in Figure 1.2:




- At VSIC Level 1, the forest product supply chains span two economic sectors: [A] agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; and [C] processing and manufacturing.
- At VSIC Level 2, the industry is comprised of the three main divisions: Division 02 Forestry production and related services; Division 16 Processing and manufacture of products from wood and bamboo etc.; and Division 31 Manufacture of furniture.
- Below this, at VSIC Level 3, there are seven relevant categories, including VSIC Codes 021, 022, 024, 161, 162, 310 and 310-01.

The statistics used in this report are mainly aggregated at 'division' level (VSIC Level 2).<sup>7</sup>

6. Decision No.27/2018/QĐ-TTg (6 July 2018) promulgating the Viet Nam Standard Industrial Classification.

7. It should be noted that Division 31 includes the manufacture of furniture from other materials, such as metal, in addition to wood. Division 31 is not, therefore, a purely forest-related economic or industry division; at the same time, many furniture items are composite products that are made from a combination of wood, metal and other materials. It should also be noted that this study does not cover the wholesale or retail trade in wood or furniture products, that are covered by other VSIC divisions and codes.

**Figure 1.2 Structure of the forestry industries according to the Viet Nam Standard Industrial Classification (VSIC)**

Level 1 Sector		Level 2 Division		Level 3 Category (and below)	
A	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	02	 <b>Forestry production and related services</b> This division includes afforestation, and the production and harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products and supporting services. These activities result in raw materials that undergo little processing, such as round wood, peeled wood, branches, and firewood. These products come from planted forests, salvage harvesting or collection from natural forests.	021	Seedling production, afforestation and silviculture activities
				022	Timber harvesting
				023	Harvesting non-wood products
				024	Forestry services (e.g. material supply, machinery and equipment...)
C	Processing and Manufacturing	16	 <b>Processing and manufacture of products from wood, bamboo etc.</b> This division includes the preliminary processing and manufacturing of products from wood and from other raw materials such as bamboo and rattan. This includes products such as sawn and shaped timber, plywood, veneers, boards, basic construction materials, and simple finished products such as containers and pallets (excluding furniture).	161	Saw-milling and preserving of wood
				162	Manufacture of products from wood
		31	 <b>Manufacture of furniture</b> This division includes the manufacture of furniture from wood and other materials including metal (but excluding stone, concrete, and ceramic), including indoor and outdoor furniture products. Multiple combined processes distinguish the furniture manufacturing process, including the design of the products for aesthetic and functional qualities.	310 310-01	Manufacture of furniture  Manufacture of wooden furniture

As of 2021, a total of around 1.9 million people are working in the three sectors (Figure 1.3). This includes people who are working as individuals or in individual business establishments, cooperative members, and people employed by domestic private enterprises, foreign investment enterprises, and the state sector. The three sectors combined employ around 3.5% of Viet Nam's total labour force. The basic data set which is drawn from the Labour Force Survey conducted by the General Statistics Office (GSO) is given in Annex 2.

**Figure 1.3 Number of people working in the forest industries (2022)**

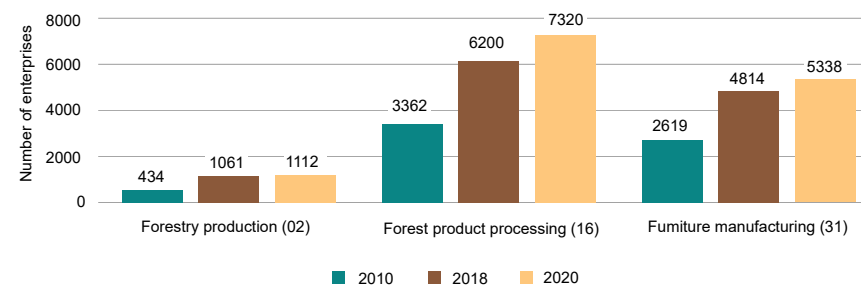


Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

The growth in the forest industries over the last decade is illustrated by the number of acting enterprises in each sub-sector, which have increased by 156% in forestry production, 113% in forest product processing, and 103% in furniture manufacturing since 2010 (Figure 1.3).

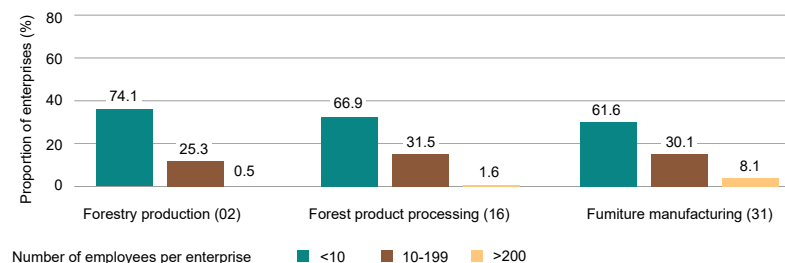
A significant characteristic of the forest industries is that most of the processing and manufacturing enterprises are micro-enterprises with less than 10 employees, or small and medium enterprises with up to 200 employees (Figure 2.4). Only a minor proportion are large-scale enterprises. Furthermore, the statistics in Figure 1.3 and Figure 1.4 only include formally registered enterprises. If we also consider the large numbers of individual business establishments (including household businesses and local artisans), the predominance of micro-businesses in the forest economy becomes fully apparent.

**Figure 1.4 Number of acting enterprises in forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing (2010, 2018 and 2020)**



Source: GSO, Statistical Year Book 2022.

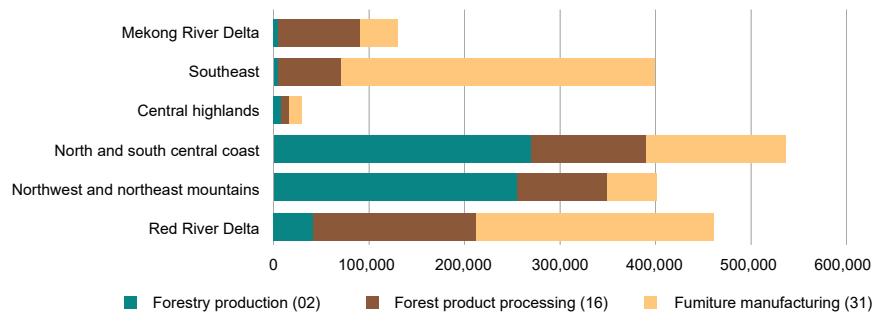
**Figure 1.5 Size of enterprises by the number of employees in forestry production, forest product processing and furniture manufacturing (2021)**



Source: GSO, Statistical Year Book 2022.

The regional distribution of workers in the three sub-sectors is shown in Figure 1.5. The majority of workers in furniture manufacturing are located in the southeast region (39%), the Red River Delta (30%), and the north and south-central coast regions (18%). Most workers in forestry production are in the north and south-central coast (46%) and the northern mountains regions (44%). Meanwhile, workers in forest product processing are more widespread across the country, with the highest proportions being in the Red River Delta (31%), followed by the north and south-central coast regions (22%).

**Figure 1.6 Regional distribution of workers in forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing (2022)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey 2022.

There is a tendency in some studies to regard the ‘private sector’ as a uniform entity or stakeholder group, but this should be avoided. As will be shown throughout this report, the situation of male and female workers varies considerably between the different segments of the forest economy and industries, and the gender implications of this are also diverse.

In this regard, we should also beware of accepting, at face value, several common assumptions about gender which may not be substantiated by evidence. For instance, it is sometimes assumed that, in many lesser developed countries and emerging economies around the world, the ‘informal’ economy is dominated by women. However, a recent survey found that this is not wholly the case in Viet Nam, where a lower overall proportion of women than men work in the informal sector (46% female/54% male), while a much higher proportion of women than men work in export-oriented foreign enterprises (66% female/34% male) (Pasquier-Doumer et al 2017).

Even so, a higher proportion of the women who work in the informal sector still do so without the benefit of regular salaries or benefits. Thus, the authors conclude that although women do not predominate in the informal sector, they are more likely to be in situations associated with greater vulnerability (Pasquier-Doumer et al 2017).

This brief example illustrates the multifaceted nature of gender issues in a diverse and rapidly evolving economy such as Viet Nam. A fully disaggregated and nuanced understanding of the current situation is therefore needed to draw out meaningful conclusions and recommendations. It is hoped this study goes some way towards providing this deeper understanding with respect to gender in forestry.



### 1.3 Timeline of political and legislative developments

The legislation and regulations that are relevant to this situation analysis are described at the beginning of each thematic chapter, and listed in Annex 3. A useful chronology of the key legislation and milestones relating to women and gender equality in Viet Nam is given in a recent publication on national gender statistics by the General Statistics Office (GSO 2022).<sup>8</sup>

Viet Nam has long given commitment to gender equality in all walks of political, economic, and social life. Article 9 of the First Constitution in 1946 stated that “women are equal to men in all respects” and the Viet Nam Women’s Union was established in the same year and held its first national congress in 1950. Viet Nam was also one of the first countries to sign and ratify the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in the early 1980s. In the following years, steps were taken to include gender equality in key areas of law such as the Civil Code, the Labour Code and the Law on Marriage and Family.

At the turn of the century, the first National Strategy for the Advancement of Women was introduced for the 2001-2010 period (Decision No.19/2002/QD-TTg), followed by the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2011-2020 (Decision No.2351/2010/QD-TTg) and for 2021-2030 (Resolution No.28/2021/NQ-CP). This marked a shift to more systematic incorporation of gender into all aspects of government work. All ministries and provincial authorities are now required to integrate gender strategy, planning and monitoring into their 5-year and 10-year socio-economic development cycles. This includes the action plan on gender equality for the agriculture and rural sector for 2021-2025, approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in 2022 (Decision No.42/2022/BNN\_PTNT).

A major landmark was the promulgation of the Law on Gender Equality in 2006 which set out the principles of gender equality in all fields and the responsibilities of state agencies, organisations, families, and individuals in exercising these principles. The principles of gender equality and non-discrimination have since been elaborated in many areas of law, such as in the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control (2007, amended in

2022); the revised Land Law (2013); the Law on Social Insurance (2014); the Law on Vocational Education (2014); the Law on Occupational Health and Safety (2015); and the Law on Forestry (2017). The Law on Promulgation of Legal Documents (2008, amended in 2015 and 2020) requires that gender is addressed in the preparation and appraisal of all state and government legislation. In 2011, a set of national statistical indicators was introduced to monitor the advancement of women and gender equality, and was updated and revised in 2019. And the revised State Budget Law of 2015 stipulated that a principle of state budget management is to prioritise the allocation of resources for achieving gender equality.

Such provisions are reinforced by the amended Criminal Code of 2015 which includes an article on the prohibition of gender discrimination, applying to persons or other legal entities whom “...for reason of gender, obstruct another person from participating in activities in politics, economics, labour, education, culture, information, sports, healthcare...”.

In summary, it can be said that Viet Nam has in place a comprehensive framework of legal and planning provisions to promote, monitor and enforce gender equity and equality. This, in turn, provides benchmarks which can be used to assess progress within specific sectors such as forestry. Even though Viet Nam has a comprehensive legal framework, there are still gaps and challenges in the implementation of these legal provisions, such as socio-cultural norms, lack of awareness, limited capacity, and weak enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, there is a need for more effective policies, strategies, and regulations to realise the gender-related rights enshrined in law, such as gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting, gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation, and gender-responsive training and capacity building.

8. <https://www.gso.gov.vn/en/data-and-statistics/2023/04/gender-statistics-in-vietnam-2021/>

## 1.4 Information sources

### 1.4.1 Statistical data

Hitherto, most existing studies on gender and other social aspects of forestry in Viet Nam have been based on qualitative information sources. Those studies which do use quantitative data are mostly field surveys which have a small sample size and are not statistically representative at national scale. Meanwhile, many existing reports assert that there is a lack of sufficient gender disaggregated information in forestry. Relevant sex disaggregated statistical data are available from various nationwide surveys conducted by the GSO, but hitherto these sources have not been fully utilised. Attention is given in this study to using these statistical survey sources to complement other types of information.

Data have been drawn from several statistical surveys including the GSO Labour Force Survey (LFS), the Viet Nam Households Living Standards Survey (VHLSS), the Rural and Agriculture Survey, the GSO Statistical Yearbooks, as well as administrative statistics published by MARD, the Forest Protection Department (FPD) and the Department of Forestry (DOF)<sup>9</sup>.

The annual Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a comprehensive nationwide survey of the labour force situation in all economic and employment sectors. For each sector, sex disaggregated data are collected on the number and age-range of workers, their professional and technical qualifications, occupation category, social insurance coverage, wage incomes and other indicators, which are also disaggregated by geographic region and urban/rural location. The LFS data are statistically representative at population level nationwide.

The Viet Nam Households Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) is a bi-annual survey amongst a sample of households, villages and communes across the country (providing representative data at national, regional, urban, rural and provincial levels). The survey is designed to gain in-depth understanding of a range of indicators relating to household resource endowments, living conditions and standards, and poverty. Relevant information from the VHLSS for this situation analysis includes sex disaggregated data on incomes from forestry.

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9. Prior to 2023, the Forest Protection Department and the Department of Forestry under MARD were previously under the Viet Nam Administration of Forestry (VNFOREST).

The Rural and Agriculture Survey is compiled every five years and is designed to provide fundamental information about the socio-economic situation in rural areas, including agriculture, forestry and fisheries. Relevant information for this situation analysis includes data on the number of forestry households, cooperatives and enterprises in forestry production and services. Sex disaggregated data are not provided in this survey.

The definitions of the enterprise, labour and employment categories and statistical categories that are used in these various surveys as well as in this report are given in Annex 1.

### 1.4.2 Literature review

Around sixty background documents were located for this situation analysis that either directly or partly deal with gender and other relevant socio-economic aspects in forestry, although this was not an exhaustive search of the literature. For easy reference, these documents can be thematically grouped into several categories (see Annex 4), as follows:

- Country and sector gender assessments (9 documents)
- Forest governance and policy (9 documents)
- Forest industries, labour rights and practices (14 documents)
- Forest based rural livelihoods (12 documents)
- Payments for forest environmental services and REDD+ (10 documents)
- Land use rights and land use titling (6 documents)



# 2

## Forest Resource Ownership and Utilisation Rights (Theme One)



### 2.1 Legal Framework

Several laws in Viet Nam elaborate the principles of gender equality and equity in relation to land use rights, domestic property rights, and forest rights, including the Civil Code, the Law on Marriage and Family, the Law on Land, and the Law on Forestry.

The Civil Code (2015) sets out the principles of property rights that are afforded to Vietnamese citizens, families and communities. In the domestic setting, this includes gender equality in the “multiple ownership of property between husbands and wives” through the principle of “divisible joint ownership” (Article 213). This Article states that a husband and wife shall “...jointly create and develop their marital property and have equal rights to possess, use and dispose of such property”. The Law on Marriage and Family (2014) sets out in more detail the principles that apply in the creation, possession, use and disposal of “common property” in the matrimonial property regime. There are several relevant Articles. Article 33 states that such property includes domestic assets, as well as land use rights, and “... incomes generated from labour, production and business activities, yields and profits...”. Article 34 states that “...for a common property which is required by law to be registered for ownership or use...” (such as land use certificates) “...both spouses shall be named in the ownership or use right certificate, unless otherwise agreed by the couple”.

The Law on Marriage and Family also sets out the conditions for the division of land use rights in case of divorce. In particular, Article 62 specifies that for agricultural land under trees and forestry land, in case of divorce, the property “...shall be divided in kind, and if not possible to be divided in kind, it shall be divided based on its value”. The Law on Land (2013) also stipulates that “...where the land use right is a mutual asset of a wife and husband, the certificate of land use right must state the full names of both wife and husband...”, unless otherwise agreed by them (Article 98). This provision was first introduced in the Law on Land in 2003 and is widely regarded as an essential requirement to help ensure gender equality and equity of outcomes in land use rights (World Bank 2012; Menon et al 2013; UN Women et al 2021).

The Civil Code also allows for the establishment of multiple ownership rights by communities based on customary practice, where such rights are “...created and agreed by the owners in accordance with provisions of the law or in accordance with customary practice” (Article 208). This Article defines multiple ownership by members of a community as “...ownership by a family line, hamlet, village, tribal village, mountainous hamlet, ethnic hamlet, religious community... which is formed in accordance with customary practice” (Article 211). This principle is relevant to the allocation of forest land and resources to ethnic minority communities (World Bank 2023). This principle is referred to in the Law on Forestry (2017), in Article 14, which states that the allocation of forest land shall “...give priority to ethnic minority people, households, individuals and communities having traditional customs, culture or beliefs associated with forests and having local community rules... in compliance with regulations of the law”.



### Box 2.1 Summary of utilisation rights of forest owners for different categories of forest (references from the Law on Forestry, 2017)

1. Special-use forest (Article 52, 53 & 54). Prohibitions are placed on the use of all timber and non-timber products, with only limited specified use by management bodies allowed.
- 2a. Natural protection forest (Article 55 & 56). Logging from all natural forest is currently prohibited. Forest owners that are allocated or contracted to manage natural protection forest are entitled to use dead, broken and diseased timber trees through approved salvage harvesting plans. The utilisation of specified non-timber products is allowed if protection requirements are fulfilled and harvesting does not affect the capability of forest protection.
- 2b. Planted protection forest (Article 55 & 56). Forest owners that are allocated or contracted to manage planted protection forest are permitted to use pruning, thinned trees according to prescribed density, and main harvesting of timber trees when mature according to approved harvesting plans. After harvesting, forest owners shall regenerate or replant forest in the next season and continue to manage and protect them.
- 2c. Agro-forestry production in protection forest (Article 57). It is permitted to use forest land without tree cover, and to interplant with agricultural crops and non-timber forest products under forest canopies, provided that capability of forest protection is not affected.
- 3a. Natural production forest (Article 58). Utilisation is permitted according to approved sustainable forest management and harvesting plans if forest owners are organisations. Utilisation plans are approved by district authorities if forest owners are households, individuals, or communities. However, logging from all natural forest is currently prohibited.
- 3b. Planted production forest (Article 59). Forest owners decide on use of products from planted production forest established by themselves. Forest owners make applications to harvest products from planted production forest established with support from the state.

The Law on Forestry (2017) sets out the general rights of forest owners for the utilisation of timber and non-timber products from different categories of forest and forest land (Box 2.1). However, gender-related rights are not made explicit in these usage rights, but are subsumed within the rights afforded to individuals and households. In Article 14, the Law on Forestry also sets out rules for the allocation, leasing, repurposing and appropriation of forest that “...shall ensure publicity and transparency with participation of local people; with no discrimination against religions, beliefs or genders...”. Gender discrimination in the allocation and leasing of forest is classed as a prohibited act (Article 9). However, limited guidance has been issued to follow-up this legal requirement. For instance, while the regulations on Sustainable Forest Management in Circular No.28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT include the requirement that forest owners “...ensure that the customary or traditional land use rights of local communities and people are respected”, explicit reference is not made in the regulations to gender.

## 2.2 Indicators and statistical evidence

This section includes the following indicators:

2.2.1 Forest land ownership status

2.2.2 Number of households using and managing forest land and resources

2.2.3 Valuation of household forest-based livelihoods

2.2.4 Forest land use certification

2.2.5 Payments for forest environmental services

### 2.2.1 Forest land ownership status

Since the 1990s there has been a major shift in forest tenure in Viet Nam, involving the reallocation of substantial areas of forest land from direct management by the state to other forest owners, including households. Official statistics on the current forest land ownership situation are given in Table 2.1. As of 2022, around one-third of the total forest land area nationwide is under state forest management boards (35.1%), while 28.2% is allocated

to households and village communities, 11.6% to economic organisations, and 23.1% is under the management of the Commune People’s Committees which includes unallocated forest land (land bank). For planted forest, which includes both ‘production’ and ‘protection’ forest functions, over one-third is allocated to households and village communities (42.7%), and 11.6% to economic organisations. For natural forest, the majority is still under the state forest management boards (44.9%) and the commune authorities (21.1%).

The investments in forest land reallocation and farm forestry have contributed to a rapid increase in domestic wood production to supply the emerging wood-chip and timber processing industries. The volume of timber harvested annually from forest plantations has increased from 5.2 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2010 to 21.5 million m<sup>3</sup> in 2021; while the volume harvested from home gardens, scattered trees and rubber wood combined has increased from 2.2 million m<sup>3</sup> to 10.5 million m<sup>3</sup> in the same period (Viet Nam and European Union 2022). Much of this supply comes from small-scale timber growers. The wood chip industry has been an important market and stimulus for rural job creation and income generation, but Viet Nam’s timber processing industry is also increasingly relying on raw material supplies from household plantations. While the unit revenues for household timber growers are low, the industry not only has direct impacts through timber sales and employment, but also indirect multiplier effects in the local economy (World Bank 2019).

**Table 2.1 Area and proportion of forest land allocated to categories of forest owners (2022)**

Forest category		Forest owners					
		State forest management boards [1]	Economic organisations [2]	Households	Village communities	Commune people's committees	Others [3]
Total	Area (ha)	5,190,721	1,710,371	3,183,067	997,696	3,422,190	286,030
	Proportion (%)	35.1	11.6	21.5	6.7	23.1	1.9
Natural forest	Area (ha)	4,552,586	1,088,709	1,298,998	894,999	2,139,948	158,842
	Proportion (%)	44.9	10.7	12.8	8.8	21.1	1.6
Planted forest	Area (ha)	638,135	621,662	1,884,069	102,697	1,282,243	127,188
	Proportion (%)	13.7	13.4	40.5	2.2	27.5	2.7

[1] Including special use forest management boards and protection forest management boards.

[2] Including former state-owned forest enterprises, and other domestic and foreign investment enterprises.

[3] Including the armed forces, and science, technology and education organisations.

Source: Decision No. 2357/QĐ-BNN-TCLN (14/06/2023) Announcement of national forest status in 2022.

## 2.2.2 Number of households using and managing forest land and resources

Several indicators have been used to estimate the overall numbers of households and people that are using, managing and benefiting from forest land and resources. None of these indicators is a perfect measure, but taken together they clearly illustrate the importance of forest resources and forestry activities for many households, and men and women alike.

Data from the Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) indicate that in 2020, out of 27.38 million households nationwide, around 2.95 million households (10.8%) earned some revenue from planting, managing, protecting and tending forests, harvesting and collecting forest products, or from seedling production and other forestry related services (GSO 2021). This includes around 2.49 million male-headed households (84.3%) and 463,000 female-headed households (15.7%). The average annual revenue from these activities was 12.96 million VND, while being higher for male-headed households (13.75 million VND per household) than for female-headed households (8.7 million VND per household).

According to the Mid-Term Rural and Agriculture Survey (2020), there has been an 186% increase in the number of 'forestry households' between 2010 and 2020 (Table 2.2). Forestry households are defined as those households that devote most of their labour resources to forestry production, which is distinct from the larger number of households that benefit from using forest land and resources. It is notable that while the number of forestry households has trebled in the decade from 2010 to 2020, this runs counter to a decreasing trend in the overall number of agriculture-forestry-fisheries households, which have reduced by 12% in the same period (Table 2.2). However, the increase in the number of forestry households does not necessarily mean that new households are entering forestry production and establishing new plantations. The likely reason is that, as plantations mature, an increasing number of households are now devoting more of their labour and deriving a greater share of their incomes from harvesting timber. This represents the fruition of the forest land allocation program and investments in farm forestry.

**Table 2.2 Number of forestry households and cooperatives (2010, 2015 and 2020)**

Economic units	2010	2016	2020	% change 2010-2020
Number of forestry households	56,692	115,403	162,130	186%
Number of forestry cooperatives	33	44	86	161%
Total number of agriculture-forestry-fisheries households	10,368,143	9,281,033	9,108,129	-12.1%

Source: GSO (2016) Results of the Rural, Agricultural and Fisheries Census 2016; GSO (2022) Results of the Mid-Term Rural and Agricultural Survey 2020.

These above findings are reflected in broader trends and changes in the structure of the rural economy. Table 2.3 shows the changes that have occurred over the last decade in the main economic activity of the main job of the working age population in different categories of households. For all categories of households, there has been a progressive shift away from agriculture as the main economic activity, towards non-farm work and income sources. Even so, it is notable that, for all categories of households, that there has still been a moderate increase in the proportion of people for whom forestry is the main economic activity. For instance, amongst ethnic minority households, while there has been a decline in the number of people with agriculture as the main economic activity from 75.6% in 2010 to 59.3% in 2020, the proportion engaged in forestry has increased from 1.6% to 5.3%.

**Table 2.3 Structure of the main economic activity of the main job of persons over 15 years old in the past 12 months, by type of household, in percentage (2010 and 2020)**

Main economic activity and job	Household categories							
	Overall		Female-headed households		Male-headed households		Ethnic minority households	
	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020	2010	2020
Agriculture	41.3	24.9	45.1	28.1	37.5	21.9	75.6	59.3
Forestry	0.6	1.1	0.4	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.6	5.3
Fisheries	2.6	2.7	3.9	1.4	3.7	4.1	1.0	1.1
Non-farm	55.5	71.3	50.6	69.6	57.9	72.7	21.8	34.3

Source: GSO, Viet Nam Households and Living Standards Survey 2020.

### 2.2.3 Valuation of household forest-based livelihoods

The quantification of forest-based livelihoods is methodologically difficult because it needs to take into account the direct economic benefits from the sale of timber and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) and employment; the multiple subsistence benefits from the collection of different types of forest products for domestic use and consumption; indirect benefits such as livestock grazing on forest land; as well as income that may be obtained from Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES). Several variables also need to be built into such an analysis, including household poverty status, ethnicity, and gender.

The patterns of labour division in forest-based livelihoods are usually strongly gendered. This is illustrated in Table 2.4, which synthesises the findings from a number of research studies in Viet Nam on the common patterns of labour division between women and men, and girls and boys, in the collection and harvesting of a range of forest products. It can be noted that the main responsibilities of men (and even boys) are primarily for those forest products that have higher economic value (e.g. hunting, honey, and wood).

**Table 2.4 Common patterns of labour division in the harvesting and collection of wild forest products**

Forest products	Women	Men	Boys	Girls	Others
Harvesting wood and bamboo poles	✓	✓✓	✓		
Harvesting rattan, palms and other craft materials	✓✓	✓✓			
Collecting fuelwood	✓✓			✓	
Collecting forest vegetables, fruits, fungi etc.	✓✓	✓	✓	✓	
Catching small mammals, fish, crabs, amphibians etc.	✓	✓	✓✓		
Hunting larger mammals and birds		✓✓	✓		
Honey hunting		✓✓			
Gathering medicinal items	✓	✓			✓✓
Grazing livestock	✓	✓	✓✓		
Cut-and-carry fodder	✓✓	✓			

✓✓ Main responsibility / ✓ Secondary responsibility

Several recent studies have attempted to quantify forest-based livelihoods using small sample surveys amongst groups of households and villages (GMS Core Environment Program 2008; Nguyen & Tran 2018; Trædal & Vedeld 2018; Ly 2018; Tran et al 2019; Quy et al 2020; Tran et al 2020; McElwee et al 2021). However, while these studies yield a good picture of the diverse characteristics of forest livelihoods and of the differences between poor and non-poor households, none of the studies has attempted to fully sex-disaggregate and assess their results from a gender perspective. This omission is surprising, given the strong gender differentiation that characterises forestry work and livelihood systems.

Several of the studies confirm that non-poor households and male-headed households generally have larger plots of forest land and have higher incomes from forestry (Nguyen & Tran 2018; Tran et al 2019; Quy et al 2020). However, this does not measure the relative importance of forest resources for household incomes and well-being; as it is often the case that the proportion of forest-based revenue and benefits is higher and therefore relatively more important for poorer households and female-headed households, particularly if considered from the perspective of household food security.

Several interesting findings come from the study by McElwee et al (2021), based on a sample of 227 households in 15 villages in 3 provinces. This study recorded changes over time in the utilization of different forest products and the extent to which they contribute to the household economy (Table 2.5). The results show that PFES has become a major source of forest income in recent years in some localities. In this respect, the study indicates that PFES payments are not simply an additional source of income. This is because the introduction and enforcement of the PFES regulations on forest protection may alter or restrict the use of other forest products. For example, this study found that villagers in Lam Dong were using a wide range of NTFPs in 2011, but these were completely replaced by PFES income by 2015 (Table 2.5). Several other studies also indicate that PFES activities can result in restrictions on forest use, particularly fuelwood and NTFP collection, which disproportionately affects women who rely most on these products. These distributional impacts of the enforcement of forest regulations are considered further in Section 2.3.

**Table 2.5 Mean household incomes from forestry-related activities in a sample of villages from three provinces (2011 and 2015)**

Sources	Lam Dong Province		Son La Province		Thua Thien Hue Province
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011
Fuelwood	4.2		56.2	62.0	31.5
Timber / planted forest					66.8
Timber / natural forest			1.3		
Fodder	0.3		8.5		
Honey			2.7	33.0	
Forest foods	7.4		26.3		
Bamboo / rattan					0.9
Medicinal items	2.0				
Forest vegetables	0.3		1.3		0.7
Forest animals	2.2				
PFES	82.8	100	3.7	5.0	0.1
Other	0.8				
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: McElwee et al (2021).

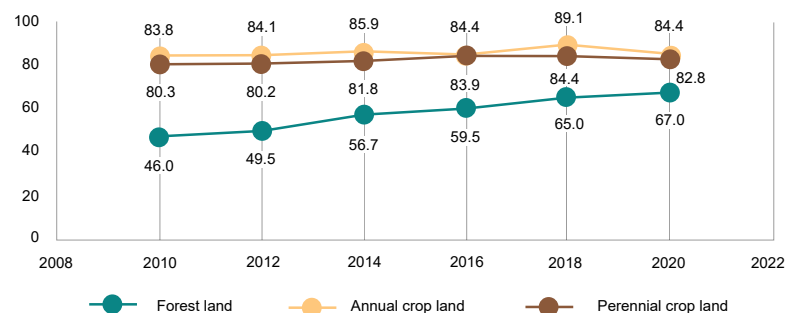
## 2.2.4 Forest land use certification

Comprehensive statistics on land use certification in Viet Nam are generally not publicly available, and those statistics that are published in various reports are often incomplete. Official sex-disaggregated statistics on land use certification to households were last produced as part of the VHLSS in 2014 and are in urgent need of updating (UN Women et al 2021). These data gaps are also evident in forestry, where there is a general lack of precise information on the current situation with respect to forest land allocation and certification.

The background report prepared for the Forest Development Strategy 2021-2030 indicates that, by 2020, around 11.6 million hectares of forest land had been allocated, equal to around 80% of the total forest area, with the remaining 20% (2.9 million ha) being unallocated forest land managed by the Commune People's Committees (VNFOREST 2020; Trieu et al 2020). More than 1.9 million land use certificates (LUCs) have been issued to forest owners across the country; while the report also notes that the targets for completing the process of forest land allocation, leasing and certification have not yet been achieved.

Data from the VHLSS indicate that there has been a steady increase in the proportion of commune forest land with certification, from 46% in 2010 to 67% in 2020 (Figure 2.1). Even so, a situation still exists today whereby a lower proportion of forest land is certified compared to perennial crop land (82.8%), annual crop land (84.4%), and other land categories. The VHLSS data also show wide variation in the rate of forest land certification between regions, ranging from just 45.3% in the Central Highlands and 47% in the Southeast Region, up to 72.2% in the Northern Mountains Regions. The slow progress reflects the many practical difficulties of forest land allocation, especially in the uplands, as well as conflicts over land use that still exist in some localities (Trieu et al 2020).

**Figure 2.1 Percentage of commune's forest land, annual crop land and perennial crop land with user rights certificates (2010 to 2020)**



Source: GSO, Viet Nam Households and Living Standards Survey 2020.

A number of surveys and reports have considered the gender outcomes of land use certification, including the proportion of household LUCs that include the names of both male and female household heads as required by law since 2003 (UNDP 2013; Wells-Dang 2013; ICRW 2015; World Bank 2020; UN Women et al 2021).

The most recent comprehensive data come from the VHLSS 2014, which recorded the holders of LUCs for different categories of land (Table 2.6). The results show that from 2004 to 2010, the rate of jointly titled crop land increased from 11.6% to 38.3%, while the rate of jointly titled 'other agricultural land' – which includes forest land – increased from 13.9% to 41.4%. Even so, men were still more likely to be the sole land holders, and the rate of other crop land that is held solely by men is still three times higher than that of women.

**Table 2.6 Holders of land use certificates by land category (2004 and 2010)**

Land category / Year	Names on land use certificates (%)		
	Only male name	Joint names	Only female name
<b>Crop land</b>			
2004	70.9	11.6	17.5
2010	46.0	38.3	15.7
<b>Other agricultural land – including forest land</b>			
2004	71.2	13.9	14.9
2010	45.2	41.4	13.3
<b>Residential land</b>			
2004	65.7	15.7	19.7
2010	34.5	44.6	20.9

Source: VHLSS 2004 and 2010, quoted in World Bank (2020) and UN Women (2021).

Comparable data come from a survey on women's access to land that was conducted in two cities and eight provinces in 2013 (Hoang et al 2013). This survey found that for non-residential land in rural areas, around 60% of LUCs had the name of the husband only, while 14.4% were jointly named, and 16.9% had the name of the wife only. This survey also recorded somewhat higher rates of joint titling amongst Kinh households (20.6%) compared to ethnic minority households (7.7%); while it was also found that joint titling was generally higher amongst matrilineal ethnic groups (Hoang et al 2013).



**Table 2.7 Holders of forest land use certificates in a sample of households in four provinces (2020)**

Province	Names on forest land use certificates (%)		
	Husband only	Husband and wife	Wife only
Nghe An	86.6	7.3	6.1
Quang Nam	77.2	6.1	16.7
Binh Dinh	61.5	28.7	9.8
Phu Tho	36.4	54.2	9.4

Source: SRD & FERN 2020.

Most surveys do not record disaggregated results for forest LUCs. One small-sample survey, that was conducted by the VNGO-FLEGT Network in four provinces in 2020, found that on average 64% of surveyed households had forest LUCs registered under the husband alone, 25% were jointly named, and 11% were registered under the wife's name only or other family members (Table 2.7). There was, however, wide variation between the four provinces in the proportion of forest LUCs that recorded the wife's name jointly or individually, ranging from 13.4% to 63.9%. This study linked this variation to factors of demography and culture. Similar variability between provinces is recorded in some other studies, which also link it to administrative capacity.

### 2.2.5 Payments for Forest Environmental Services

Starting in 2010, Viet Nam introduced an ambitious policy on Payments for Forest Environmental Services (PFES) that has since been implemented in 45 out of 63 provinces across the country (Decree No.99/2010/ND-CP). PFES is a national system regulated by the Government, whereby revenues from hydropower plants, water supply companies, tourism companies and several other industries are transferred for forest protection. The recipients of PFES include various forest owners including the state forest management boards, forestry companies, households, communities, and the Commune People's Committees.

According to a report by the Viet Nam Forest Protection and Development Fund, the total amount of PFES received between 2011 and 2020 was 16,746 billion VND (equivalent to over 700 million USD), averaging around

1,600 billion VND per year (equivalent to around 65 million USD) (VFPDF 2021). The PFES have accounted for around 20% of the total investment in the forestry sector in this period (VNFOREST 2020). By 2020, PFES have been used to protect over 6 million hectares of forest, as well as supporting over 500,000 households annually (VNFOREST 2021; Winrock International et al 2021).

There is a lack of detailed official information on the PFES recipients, such as on the characteristics of the households that have received the PFES policy payments over time, and how many female-headed households and women are involved. At least part of the difficulty in data compilation on PFES appears to be that in some localities households are individually enrolled, while in others they benefit from community-wide schemes.

Until recently, there were few studies that examined the distributional outcomes and impacts of this important policy. This situation has begun to change with the recent publication of several research papers which assess various impacts of PFES, including from a gender perspective, although these studies are based on limited sample surveys (Tran et al 2020; Tuijnman et al 2020; McElwee et al 2021; Dinh D.T. 2022; Pham H.T. et al 2023). The main findings from three of the studies are summarised in Box 2.2.

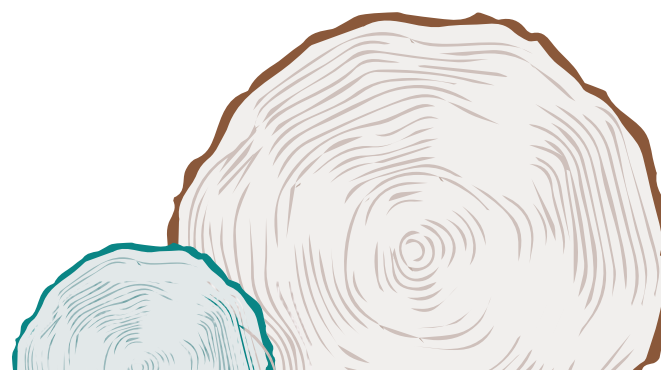
Several of the studies have found that higher rates of men and male-headed households are enrolled with PFES, and men participate more in PFES activities such as meetings and training courses. One survey found that men represented their families in PFES registration in 70% of cases, and 81.3% of PFES contracts were signed by men (Ty et al 2023). Another survey, amongst 227 households in 15 villages, found that 62% of male-headed households, but only 40% of female-headed households were enrolled in PFES (McElwee et al 2021). This latter survey did, however, record an improvement in gender equality over time (Table 2.8). In 2011, the husband and wife participated equally in PFES in only 6% of households, which increased to 27% in 2015. There was also a reported improvement in joint decision-making on the use of PFES payments, which increased from 15% to 81%.

**Table 2.8 Male and female participation in PFES activities and decision-making in the household**

Interview Question	Interview response (%)					
	Lam Dong Province		Son La Province		Average 2 provinces	
	2011	2015	2011	2015	2011	2015
Which household members participate most in PFES?						
Husband	87	71	74	45	81	58
Wife	4	3	6	7	5	5
Both equally	7	17	4	36	6	27
Others	2	9	16	12	9	11
Who decides how PFES money is spent?						
Husband	22	11	85	11	54	11
Wife	48	3	10	3	29	3
Both	28	83	2	78	15	81
Others	2	3	3	8	3	6

Source: McElwee et al (2021).

The linkages between PFES and forest land allocation and certification are examined by several studies. In some locations, it was found that the absence of the wife's name on the forest LUCs belonging to the household can prohibit the opportunity for women to have their name on the PFES contracts and to receive PFES payments (McElwee et al 2021; Ty et al 2023). In some other locations, it was found that since the PFES policy has been introduced, the process of forest land allocation to households and communities has slowed down (Tran et al 2020). In these situations, it appears that the commune authorities, forest enterprises, or management boards want to retain forests to maintain the PFES benefits for themselves, and only partially sub-contracting the protection functions to local people. Meanwhile, the main objective of the PFES is to involve local communities living in watershed areas to protect forests, and in turn, the cost of services will contribute to improving their livelihoods.



**Box 2.2 Synthesis of findings from 3 research studies on gender outcomes of PFES**

Research Findings	Recorded by the study		
	Ty et al (2023)	McElwee et al (2021)	Tuijnman et al (2020)
Number of communes / villages in survey	2	15	1
Number of household interview respondents	66	227	25
Less participation of women than men in PFES activities, such as meetings and training courses, which means that women often only learn about PFES indirectly, and have incomplete information and understanding.	✓	✓	✓
Higher rates of enrolment of husbands in PFES, and of male-headed households than female-headed households, which means that men are in a majority of cases the signatories of the PFES contracts.	✓	✓	✓
Belief that forest protection is a man's job because it is physically demanding, potentially dangerous, and requires time away from home, which reinforces higher levels of participation of men in PFES.	✓	✓	✓

Belief that women are too busy with domestic responsibilities to participate in PFES, or feeling that their attendance and participation is unnecessary or unwanted, thus reinforcing gender stereotypes in forestry.	✓	✓	✓
The enforcement of PFES regulations on forest protection can limit the ability of women to collect and utilise non-timber forest products, which can have adverse impacts on their livelihoods and incomes.		✓	✓
The payments for PFES usually go through the husband as the PFES signatory, either by direct cash payments or the bank account holder.	✓	✓	✓
The absence of the wife's name on forest land use certificate belonging to the household can prohibit the opportunity for women to have their name on the PFES contracts and to receive PFES payments themselves.	✓	✓	
There is considerable variation between households in decision-making about how to spend the PFES payments, reflecting cultural differences, and patriarchal and matriarchal norms amongst different ethnic groups.		✓	✓

## 2.3 Significant issues and trends

**Women, as well as men, have played a significant role in the widespread adoption of farm forestry systems and growth in the forest economy in recent years.** The numbers presented in the previous section tell an interesting story about the evolution of farm forestry in Viet Nam. Beginning in the 1990s, large areas of forest land have been transferred to household ownership, such that 21.6% of the total forest land area and 40.5% of the planted forest is now managed by households (Table 2.1). There are currently around 162,000 households that devote most of their labour and derive a major share of their incomes from forestry (Table 2.2); and many more households rely on forest-based revenues and employment to some extent. Women comprise around 37% of the labour force in forestry production. In addition to contributing to the development of farm forestry for commercial wood production, rural women rely on and benefit from forests in multiple ways. This is particularly so amongst ethnic minority women, as well as those in poor households, and female-headed households that may have limited crop land or alternative revenues.

**There is a strong historical precedence to the high level of participation of women in the forestry labour force and in all types of forestry work.** It is possible to trace a longer historical narrative which emphasises the remarkable extent to which women have played a pivotal role in the creation of forest economic organisations in Viet Nam. In the 1970s and 1980s, the establishment of the State-Owned Forest Enterprises (SFEs) over large parts of the uplands in northern Viet Nam was enabled, to a considerable extent, by the availability of excess female labour from the lowlands and the Red River Delta. While young men were diverted more to the front-line war efforts, it was often female migrants that formed a high proportion of the 'forestry brigade workers' in the SFEs in the upland provinces. These women were frequently involved in heavy-duty forestry labour extracting timber and bamboo from natural forests. Indeed, one first study on gender and forestry in Viet Nam looked at the working conditions and living conditions of female workers in several SFEs that were supplying raw material to the Bai Bang pulp and paper mill that was receiving Swedish aid support during the 1970s and 1980s (Liljestrom et al 1987).

**The division of labour and economic roles between men and women in forestry is well documented, but the implications are not fully understood.** Many studies highlight the common patterns of labour division in forestry work (MARD 2006; UN REDD 2013; FAO & RECOFTC 2015). For example, in forest plantations, while women are often mainly responsible for looking after tree nurseries, men are responsible for site clearance and harvesting, and other tasks such as tree planting, tending and pruning are undertaken by both. The economic role of women is often linked to fulfilling household consumption needs and selling minor forest products in local markets, while the role of men is linked more to the exploitation of timber and more valuable non-timber products for commercial purposes (Table 2.4). These types of labour division and economic differentiation are often equated to cultural norms that reinforce the belief that forestry is primarily a male domain and that women's work is of secondary importance. It is well-known that gender divisions of labour in agriculture and forestry create a higher time burden for women. But there is limited statistical evidence to characterise the nature of women's work in forestry, and how this is changing over time in response to changes in the structure of the rural economy and household economy (UN Women 2016; UN Women et al 2021). One priority for further research is to conduct work-time allocation studies to get a better understanding of the potential burden of these changes on women's time and well-being.

**Rural women are still disadvantaged by gender disparities in access to the benefits from policies and services, such as PFES.** A study on the topic of female farmers and inclusive growth in Viet Nam was carried out by the Institute for Family and Gender Studies and UN Women in 2016. This study found that despite the existence of a conducive legal and policy framework, programs and services to promote rural economic development still primarily target the heads of households, who are mostly men. As a consequence, men have benefitted more directly and fully than women from the empowerment gains in the economic reform process. This appears to be the case with PFES, which has become a major source of forest sector investment and household revenues in many localities in recent years. The

available evidence suggests that there are widespread disparities in the rates of PFES registration, participation, and benefits between men and women, and between male and female-headed households (Section 2.2.5 and Box 2.1). It should be noted, however, that this evidence comes from a limited number of small sample surveys. Gender equality should be a major concern and objective for the future of this important PFES policy; and to support this, there is an urgent need for more in-depth research on the distributional outcomes and impacts of PFES with a larger, representative sample of locations and households.

**Forest protection measures which limit access to forest resources can have a major adverse impact on women's livelihoods and household well-being. And promoting gender equity in forest use rights means safeguarding the 'tenure niches' which enable poor rural women to continue to use NTFPs.**

The efforts to strengthen the protection and conservation of natural forest resources can impact on local people and communities in positive or negative ways (UN REDD 2013; World Bank 2019b). One particular issue of concern is that stronger forest protection measures often prohibit or reduce access to NTFPs in ways that are detrimental for women's livelihoods and household food security (Section 2.2.3 and Box 2.1). Amongst ethnic minority communities in the Central Highlands, for instance, forests have always been a major source of peoples' food supply, and in some ethnic groups there is a limited historical tradition of growing vegetables and fruits in home gardens (UNICEF 2015). Even today, there is still a strong cultural preference for the collection and consumption of wild leafy vegetables and other forest foods, which contribute significantly to household nutrition. However, because of deforestation and reduced access to forest, the availability of these food sources is now limited in many places, resulting in a reduction in the diversity and quality of household diets (UNICEF 2015). These types of impacts can disproportionately affect poor households and women-headed households that are more reliant on the wild food sources.

**Promoting security of forest land use rights for women is a priority, but further work is needed to fully understand the current situation.**

Since 2003 it has been a legal requirement that household Land Use Certificates should include the names of both the husband and wife. This requirement was introduced into the Land Law in order to promote and

safeguard the domestic and economic rights of women in particular. Several reports document the benefits this can bring, such as better opportunities for women's self-employment, improved credit guarantee, increased household expenditures, and increased status and bargaining power of women in the home (World Bank 2012; Menon et al 2013; World Bank 2020; UN Women et al 2021). As indicated in Section 2.2.4, the available evidence suggests that there is still some way to go before this legal requirement is universally followed across the country, particularly in forest land used certification. There are several factors which determine such outcomes. While the law emphasises the primacy of gender equality rights, these may conflict with traditional inheritance rights and social norms on land and asset ownership, which can also vary between Viet Nam's fifty-four ethnic groups. There are also practical administrative and economic factors involved. For example, many household LUCs were granted before the revised Land Law, and it can be both time consuming and costly for households to re-register the names on the certificates.

The situation with respect to forest land use rights is further complicated by several factors. Firstly, the forest land allocation process is inherently more complicated and has progressed at a slower rate than for other land categories. The demarcation of forest land is logistically difficult, and in some places, there are unresolved land conflicts. In some localities, household forestry plots have not yet been issued with formal land use certificates, but are still under older regulations and papers. There is, however, limited documented understanding of the de facto rights of households, including those of men and women respectively, under these various scenarios of forest land ownership and use.

# 3

## Economic Opportunities and Employment in Forest Industries (Theme Two)



### 3.1 Legal Framework

Gender-related rights under this theme are elaborated in several laws including the Law on Gender Equality, the Labour Code, and the Law on Assistance to Small and Medium Sized Enterprises amongst others. The Law on Gender Equality (2006) sets out the principles and provisions to promote gender equality in the fields of business and employment. Article 12 states that men and women “...are equal in setting up a business, ...managing a business and ...accessing information, capital, markets and labour sources”. Provisions on gender equality in the economy include preferential tax and financial incentives for enterprises employing many female workers and preferential credit for rural women for production purposes. Article 13 of the Law on Gender Equality states that the sexes are treated equally in the workplace regarding “...work, wages, pay and bonus, social insurance, labour conditions and other working conditions”. Other measures in the field of labour include ensuring equality in recruitment and training, and the requirement for employers to create “...safe and hygienic working condition for female workers in hard and dangerous professions and occupations...”.

The Labour Code (2019) enshrines the principle of wage equality, whereby “employers must ensure equal pay for work of equal value without discrimination based on sex” (Article 90); discrimination at work is a prohibited act (Article 8); and Article 136 sets out the responsibilities of employers to ensure “gender equality in recruitment, work arrangements, training, working hours, rest periods, wages and other work policies”.

These principles are incorporated into the National Action Plan to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Decision No.622/2017/QD-TTg) in two targets: Target 8.5 – To achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all men and women, including for young people and persons with disabilities, ensuring equal pay for work of equal value; and Target 8.8 – To protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, female migrant workers and workers in the informal sector.

The Law on Provision of Assistance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (2017) sets out contents of support for SMEs in seven areas, including: access to credit; tax and accounting; land for production; technologies; market expansion; information, counselling and legal support; and support to household businesses to transform into registered enterprises. This Law prioritises such support for women-owned SMEs and those using more female employees (Article 5). Women-owned SMEs are defined as those having one or more women holding over half the charter capital, at least one being the manager (Article 3).

The Action Plan of Gender Equality for the period 2021-2025 of MARD (Decision No.42/2022/QĐ-BNN-TCCB) has the overall objective to continue to narrow the gender gap and create conditions and opportunities for women and men to participate and obtain benefits equally in the field of agriculture and rural development. The Action Plan also includes the specific target to reduce the proportion of women working in the agricultural sector to less than 30% of the total number of employed female workers by 2025 (Target 2/2).

## 3.2 Indicators and statistical evidence

This section includes six indicators relating to employment in the three socio-economic sectors: forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing:

**3.2.1** Number and age range of workers

**3.2.2** Employment structure by form of ownership

**3.2.3** Employment structure by employment status

**3.2.4** Employment structure by occupational categories

**3.2.5** Incomes from forestry and the gender wage gap

**3.2.6** Type of labour contracts of salaried workers

The definition of the statistical categories is given in Annex 1.

### 3.2.1 Number and age range of workers

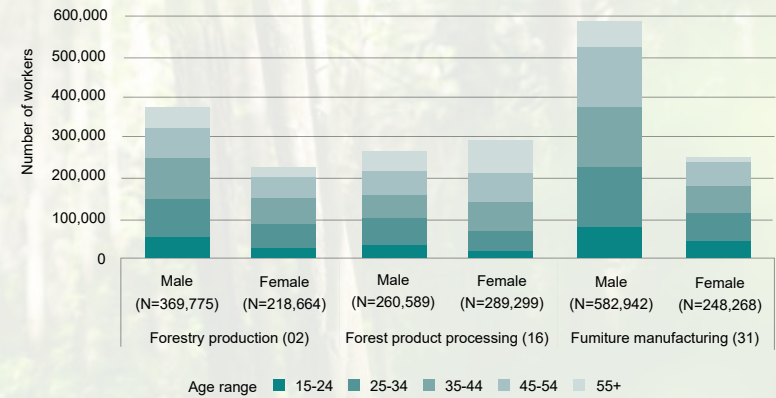
Data from the Labour Force Survey 2022 indicate that, in total, there are around 590,000 workers in forestry production, 550,000 workers in forest product processing, and 830,000 workers in furniture manufacturing (Annex 2). The age distribution of male and female workers in each sector is shown in Figure 3.1. Several overall characteristics and important differences between the three sectors can be initially highlighted from these numbers. These differences are also reflected in several of the other indicators in this chapter.

While women comprise under one-third of the labour force in furniture manufacturing (29.9%), and a little over one-third in forestry production (37.2%), a larger number and proportion of women than men work in forest product processing (52.6% female/47.4% male). With respect to forest product processing, it is also notable that women comprise the majority of workers in the older age groups above 35 years (57.7% female/42.3% male).

It is likely that there are several reasons for the higher proportion of women than men in forest product processing. There are strong traditional roles of women in household-based processing of a wide range of forest products and handicrafts for sale in local markets. And the location of forest product processing factories in the rural areas can provide off-farm employment that is close to home for women. The further evidence suggests that it is this cohort of women, who are working in rural forest product processing units, that face the greatest economic vulnerability and disparities in the workplace.



**Figure 3.1 Number and proportion of workers in forestry production, forest product processing, and furniture manufacturing, by sex and age range (2022)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

There are substantial numbers of workers in the younger age groups in all three sectors. In furniture manufacturing, around 40% of workers are under the age of 35, while around one-third of workers are under 35 in the other two sectors. This reflects the continuing employment opportunities created by the growth of the forest industries in recent years. Males predominate in the younger age groups in all three sectors, comprising 63.1% of workers under the age of 35 in forestry production, 59% in forest product processing, and 67.6% in furniture manufacturing respectively.



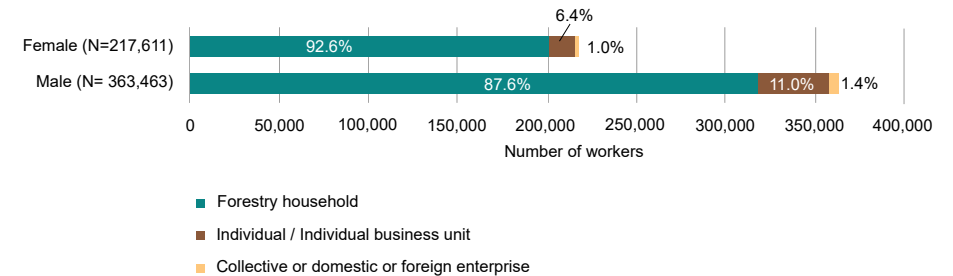
### 3.2.2 Structure of employment by form of ownership

The number and proportion of workers in the different ownership sectors, including individuals/individual business units, domestic private enterprises and cooperatives, and foreign investment enterprises, is shown in Figure 3.2a-c.

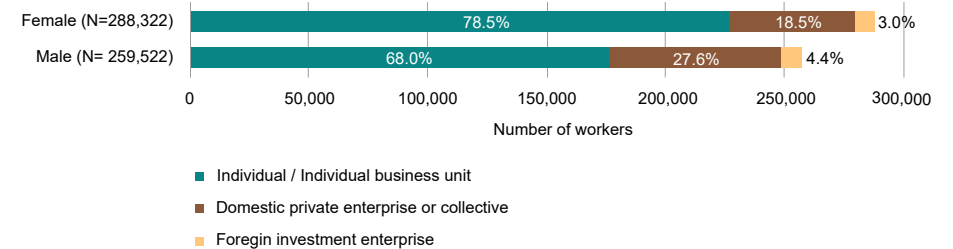
In forestry production (Figure 3.2a), the majority of workers are in 'forestry households', defined as farming households that devote the majority of their labour resources to tree growing or other forestry activities. A smaller proportion work as individuals/individual business units (male 11%/female 6.4%), including household businesses that are engaged in forestry services such as tree nurseries and timber harvesting etc. The data in Figure 3.2a suggest that only a small proportion of forestry production workers are employed by domestic or foreign enterprises or cooperatives that own forest plantations (male 1.4%/female 1%). It is likely that this underestimates the real number of workers who are hired by plantation enterprises on a short-term basis or seasonal basis for tree planting, tending and harvesting operations; this is because such short-term work is not recorded by the survey as the major source of income of the employees.

**Figure 3.2 Number and proportion of workers by employment ownership sector and sex (2022)**

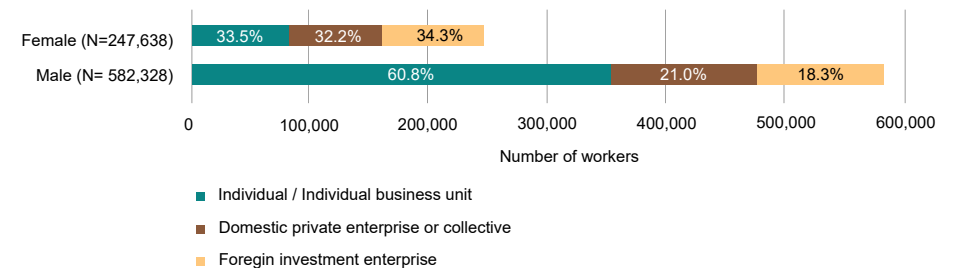
#### a. Forestry Production



#### b. Forest Product Processing



#### c. Furniture Manufacturing



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).



In forest product processing (Figure 3.2b), most female workers (78.5%) and male workers (68%) are employed as individuals/individual business units, amounting to around 400,000 workers in total. This category includes the large number of small-scale household businesses across the country that are engaged in sawmilling and the manufacture of basic wood products; and the processing of various products from bamboo, rattan and other fibrous raw materials as well as handicrafts. In addition, 27.6% of male workers, and 18.5% of female workers, are employed in larger-scale processing factories owned by domestic private enterprises or cooperatives, amounting to around 125,000 workers in total. Only a small proportion of forest product processing facilities are owned by foreign investment enterprises, employing around 20,000 workers in total.

In furniture manufacturing (Figure 3.2c), a different picture emerges, as there is greater differentiation between male and female workers. Overall, around half of all workers in this sector are employed as individuals/individual business units, while half are employed in domestic or foreign investment enterprises. Amongst men, 60.8% work as individuals/individual business units. Amongst women, a higher proportion are employed in either domestic or foreign investment enterprises (66.5%); although the number of men working in these furniture manufacturing enterprises is higher.

### 3.2.3 Structure of employment by employment status

The number and proportion of male and female workers that are unpaid family workers, own-account workers, or salaried workers is shown in Figure 3.3a-c. These figures show strong gender differentials in the proportions of women and men in formal and informal work.

Women are proportionally more reliant on unpaid work in the household production units in all three sectors. In forestry production, for instance, the proportion of women in unpaid household work is triple that of men (female 28.6%/male 9.3%), and the proportion is more than twice as high in forest product processing (female 9.6%/male 3.7%).

Significant numbers of both women and men are own-account workers, that is, they are self-employed or working in household businesses or cooperating with relatives or partners to operate a production unit. These numbers again reveal the magnitude and importance of this small-scale business ownership sector in the forest industries. In particular, it is notable that 38.6% of women

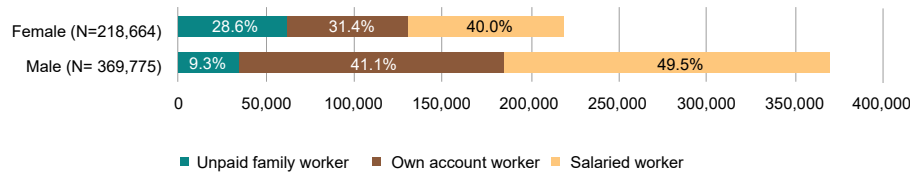
in forest product processing are self-employed, which further substantiates the observations made above about the economic reliance of many rural women on small-scale forest product processing activities.

In general, higher proportions and numbers of men than women are in salaried employment, including forestry production (male 49.5%/female 40%) and in forest product processing (male 71.9%/female 51.8%). This appears to indicate a greater degree of integration with wage labour markets amongst men in rural areas. The exception is in furniture manufacturing, where a higher proportion of women are in salaried employment in the domestic and foreign investment enterprises (female 84.6%/male 75.9%).

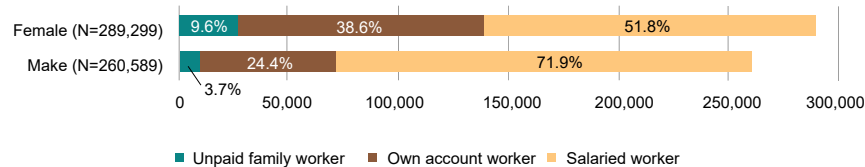


**Figure 3.3 Number and proportion of workers by employment status and sex (2022)**

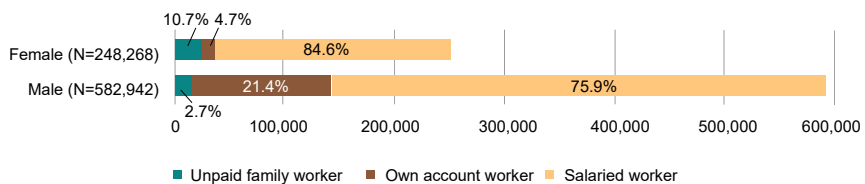
**a. Forestry Production**



**b. Forest Product Processing**



**c. Furniture Manufacturing**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

**3.2.4 Structure of employment by occupation category**

The proportion of female and male workers by type of occupation in forest product processing and furniture manufacturing is shown in Table 3.4a-b. These figures reveal a clear pattern of gender segmentation for some occupation types, but less so for others. Several other studies have also documented a high degree of occupational segmentation in the timber industry and wood industry villages (NepCon & Forest Trends 2018; Forest Trends 2019).

The majority of workers in the ‘elementary occupations’ category in both sectors are women (60.3% and 67.5% respectively). This category includes activities that are often referred to as ‘unskilled work’, but despite the name, this includes many tasks that require skilled applications. Male workers are mainly responsible for heavy and hazardous work and operating machinery such as forklifts, saw-milling, running dry kilns and spray-painting etc.; while women are often in charge of less heavy work requiring dextrous skills such as sanding, decoration and finishing, and product assembly and packaging.

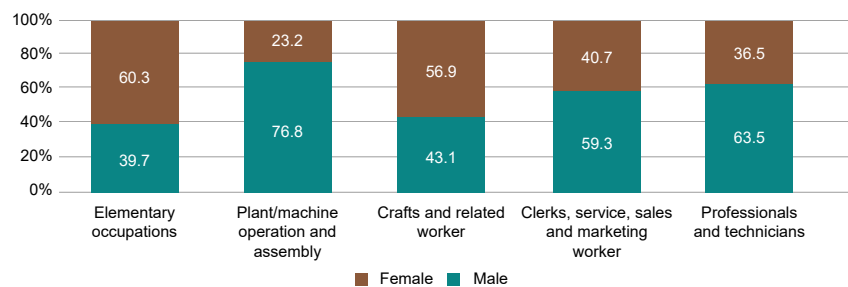
Men greatly predominate in the ‘machine operations and assembly’ category (76.8% and 69% respectively); with around 12.4% of the total work force in forest product processing, and 15.3% of the work force in furniture manufacturing, falling into this category.

The ‘crafts and related workers’ category is differentiated, with women forming the majority in forest product processing (56.9%), and men in furniture manufacturing (76.3%). This category contains the largest numbers of workers, making up 59.7% of the total work force in forest product processing, and 69.6% in furniture manufacturing.

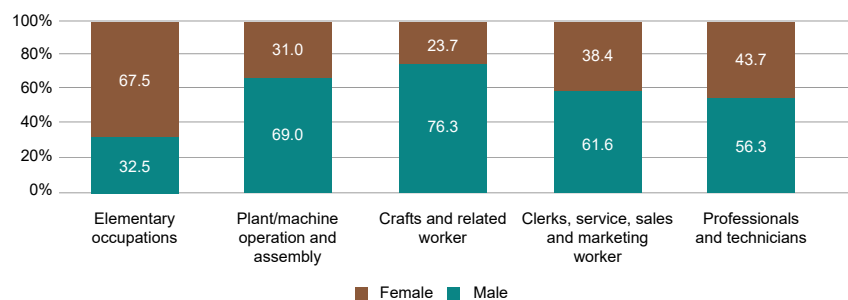
In each of the remaining occupation categories – ‘clerks, service, sales and marketing workers’ and ‘professionals and technicians’ – men make up around two-thirds of the total number of workers, and women one-third. There is, however, considerable gender segmentation within these occupational categories, for instance, with women making up most of the finance and accounting staff in many businesses in Viet Nam.

**Figure 3.4 Proportion of workers by type of occupation and sex, in percentage (2022)**

**a. Forest Production Processing**



**b. Furniture Manufacturing**



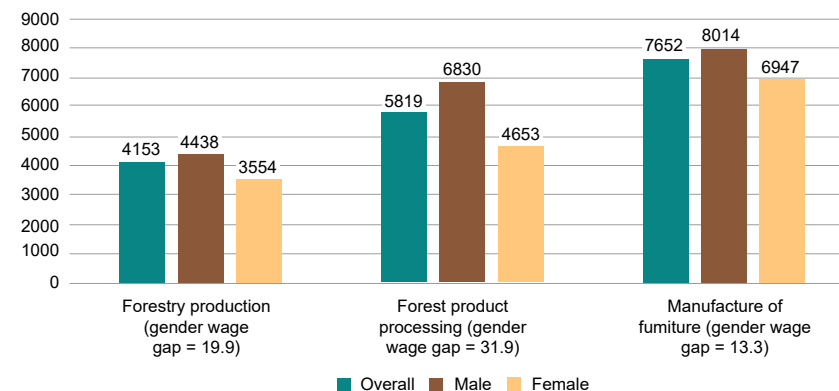
Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

**3.2.5 Incomes from forestry and the gender wage gap**

The overall average monthly earnings of wage workers in the forest industries in 2022 are shown in Figure 3.5. In the Labour Force Survey, the average monthly earning is calculated for the main work of the wage worker, not including side-line income. The average monthly earning in forestry production is 4.1 million VND, with a gender wage gap of 19.9. The average monthly earning in forest product processing is 5.8 million VND, with the highest gender wage gap of the three sectors at 31.9. Meanwhile, the average monthly earning in furniture manufacturing is 7.6 million VND, with the lowest gender wage gap at 13.3.<sup>10</sup>

10. The gender wage gap measures the gap between the average wage level of all women and all men working in the labour market in a particular sector. The gender wage gap is calculated by subtracting the average wage level for women from that of men, and then dividing the remainder by the average wage level of men.

**Figure 3.5 Average monthly earnings of wage workers in forest industries in 2022 (thousand VND)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

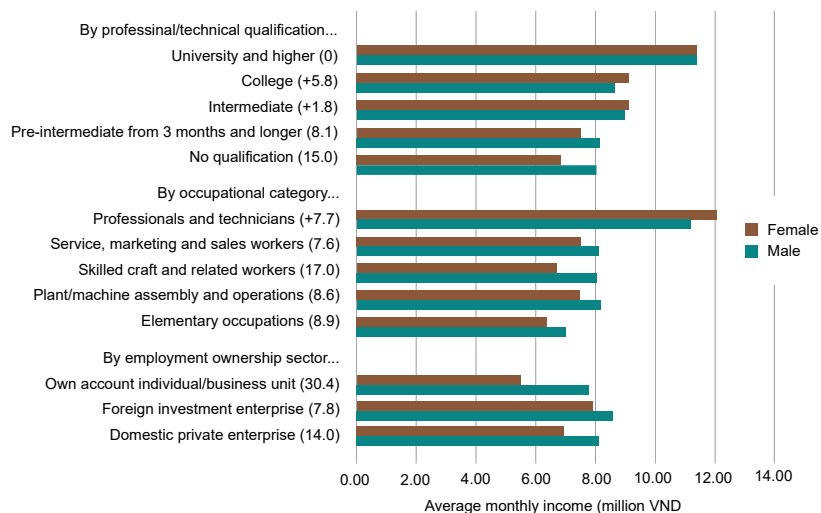
Figure 3.6a shows the wage differentials between female and male workers in forest product processing according to employment sector, occupation type, and the technical and professional level of the workers. These numbers reveal a striking pattern of embedded wage disparity and inequality in this sub-sector. The average wage of men exceeds that of women in all categories. The disparities are pronounced at the lower levels between men and women with no qualifications (with a gender wage gap = 31.9) and those engaged in elementary occupations (gender wage gap = 26.7). The disparity is also strikingly high amongst skilled craft workers (gender wage gap = 38.5). However, the disparities are most pronounced amongst those working as individuals/individual business units (gender wage gap = 42.0), as compared to domestic and foreign investment enterprises. These numbers clearly indicate that women working in household businesses and micro and small-scale forest product processing facilities are facing the greatest wage disparities.

**Figure 3.6a Forest product processing: average monthly wage income of male and female workers by employment ownership sector, technical/professional level and occupation type (2022, million VND)**

(Gender wage gap shown in brackets)



**Figure 3.6b Furniture manufacturing: average monthly wage income of male and female workers by employment ownership sector, technical/professional level and occupation type (2022, million VND)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

These findings are supported by a study that looked at comparative wages between men and women in different types of wood processing units (NepCon and Forest Trends 2018). This study found that for similar work, with the same level of skills, women are nearly always paid less than men on a daily rate basis (Table 3.1). This study also found that even when paid according to a piece-work arrangement, which is common in this sub-sector, women usually receive from 10% to 30% less than men for the same work output.

Figure 3.6b shows the wage ratios in furniture manufacturing. In general, there is a greater degree of wage parity in this sector. This is particularly so at the higher levels, where the average earnings of women marginally exceed those of men amongst professionals and technicians (gender wage gap = +7.7); and amongst those with intermediate qualifications and above. A high wage disparity is still evident, however, between men and women working as individuals/individual business units (gender wage gap = 30.4).

**Table 3.1 Daily wage rates for male and female workers in timber processing units**

Processing units	Daily wage rate (VND)	
	Male workers	Female workers
Acacia wood supply chain processing sites (daily rate for work of similar skill level)	220,000 - 250,000	180,000 - 200,000
Rubber wood supply chain processing sites (daily rate for work of similar skill level)	200,000 - 250,000	180,000
Small and medium sized timber processing enterprises (average daily rate)	280,000 - 300,000	170,000 - 190,000
Wood processing villages (daily rate for sanding work)	170,000 - 200,000	120,000 - 150,000

Source: NepCon and Forest Trends (2018).

### 3.2.6 Type of contract arrangement of salaried workers

The results of the LFS indicate that there are comparatively high levels of labour contract informality in some parts of the forest industries. Figure 3.7 shows the proportion of salaried workers in each sector that are with or without labour contract or with verbal agreement only. Overall, just 9.6% of salaried workers in forestry production have labour contracts, increasing to 40.4% in forest product processing, and to 60.7% in furniture manufacturing. Furniture manufacturing compares well with the national rate of salaried workers with a labour contract of around 62%. These figures for labour contracts include definite-term, indefinite-term or work-specific contracts.

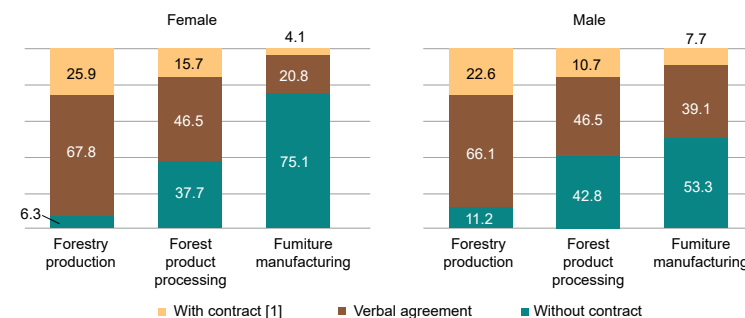
In forestry production, the majority of both male and female workers are without labour contract or just have a verbal agreement. If we cross-reference these numbers with those in Figure 3.3a, this includes around 162,000 male workers and 82,000 female workers. This reflects the informality and vulnerability of employment in this rural sector.

In forest product processing, more-or-less equal proportions and numbers of male and female workers are with or without labour contract or just with verbal agreement. Around 18,000 male and 23,000 female workers in this sector are without labour contracts.

In furniture manufacturing, more workers have labour contracts, while it is notable that the proportion is higher amongst women (75.1%) than men (53.3%). This reflects the fact that a higher proportion of women in this sector are in salaried employment in domestic or foreign investment enterprises (Figure 3.3c). Meanwhile, 46.8% of men are without labour contract or just have verbal agreement, which reflects the fact that more men work as individuals/individual business units. In total, around 190,000 men and 52,000 women in this sector are without labour contract or just have verbal agreement.

In summary, the high degree of informality of labour contract arrangements in some parts of the forest industries affects both men and women. There are, however, much larger numbers of men who work under informal arrangements. To some extent, the situation of female employees is less vulnerable, such as in furniture manufacturing where more women have contracts. This situation in furniture manufacturing reflects the overall national situation, whereby a generally higher proportion of women are under formal contracts.

Figure 3.7 Proportion of salaried workers with and without contract, in percentage (2022)



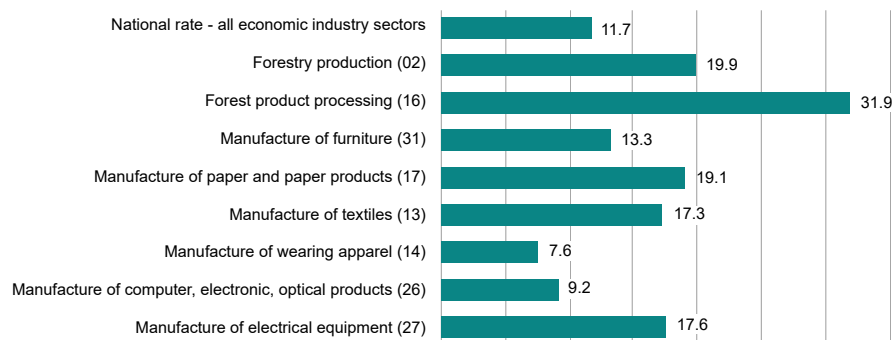
[1] With contract, including definite-term, indefinite-term or work-specific labour contract.

Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022)

### 3.3 Significant issues and trends

**The gender wage gap in forest product processing is substantially wider than in many other economic industrial sectors in Viet Nam, and there is some way to go before the objective of equal pay for equal work is achieved.** The wage differentials between men and women in Viet Nam have been steadily reducing in recent years. The Labour Force Survey indicates that in 2022 the overall national non-adjusted gender wage gap was 11.7 (Figure 3.8). The wage gap in forest product processing is substantially higher, although it has reduced from 37.4 in 2018 to the current rate of 31.9 in 2022. There is, however, variation within the sector, with the wage disparities being greatest amongst household businesses and micro-enterprises (gender wage gap = 42), but less pronounced in the domestic and foreign investment enterprises. Meanwhile, the gender wage gap in furniture manufacturing compares favourably with some other sectors such the manufacture of paper and paper products, textiles, and electrical equipment; but less favourably with some high-end sectors such as the manufacture of computing and optical products (Figure 3.8).

**Figure 3.8 Gender wage gap in the forest industries compared to other economic sectors (2022)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey (2022).

**The gender wage gap in household businesses is likely to be more pronounced because of the greater dependence of women on unpaid family work and self-employment.** While the gender wage gap records the difference in income from salaried employment, workers in household business units are usually remunerated through their market sales and profits. Around 60% of women in forestry production and 48% of women in forest product processing are either unpaid family workers or self-employed in household businesses (Figure 3.3). This includes a considerable number of women who predominate in the older age groups in the forest product processing sector (Figure 3.1). The household processing of forest products and handicrafts is often time consuming and arduous work. Income returns in this household sector also tend to be low and are risky sources of income because they are vulnerable to shocks and sensitive to small changes in price and consumer demand (World Bank 2018). The evidence discussed in this chapter clearly indicates that it is this cohort of women, who are working in small-scale forest product processing and handicraft businesses and factories in the rural areas, that are in the most vulnerable situation.

**Gender segmentation is pronounced in the timber processing industries, with social norms and biases leading to under-valuation of women’s work.** As indicated in Section 3.2.4 and Figure 3.4, there are pronounced patterns of work segmentation in forest product processing and furniture manufacturing, both horizontally (within and between occupational

categories) and vertically (across occupational hierarchies). Observations on the factory floor show a clear distinction is made between ‘male jobs’ (usually associated with requirements of technical knowledge, physical strength and machine operations) and ‘female jobs’ (usually regarded as lighter work, even if the tasks are highly skilled and require dexterity, physical stamina and good posture etc.). This type of segmentation is linked to underlying social norms and social biases, which can lead to gender discrimination in wage determination. The wage disparities reflect this occupational segmentation (Figure 3.6); and the under-valuation of women’s work is evident in differential daily wage rates for similar work, and differential payments for piecework (Table 3.2). Vertical and horizontal occupational segregation by gender is still common in many economic and industrial sectors in Viet Nam. Van Anh (2009) emphasizes how this contributes to employment vulnerability for women, and that female workers will increasingly face greater challenges if there are no timely strategies to create equal access to labour markets and to improve the professional skills of female workers.

**The division of managerial roles and responsibilities between men and women in household businesses and micro-enterprises can provide good opportunities for engagement.** Box 3.1 documents some common patterns of division of day-to-day management tasks in household businesses in two wood industry villages on the outskirts of Ha Noi. Women are often primarily responsible for tasks such as financial accounting, tax calculation and bookkeeping; managing bank accounts and cash books; co-managing workers and making payments to workers; purchasing material supplies and payments to suppliers; marketing and selling products. Meanwhile, men are more responsible for sourcing timber supplies; product design; managing the factory floor and production process; interactions with the local government authorities; as well as marketing products. It is notable that many of the tasks taken by women relate to regulatory requirements. There is, therefore, both a need and an opportunity for increased engagement with women on these regulatory aspects. However, the greater involvement of men in association membership, and participating in training courses, study trips and meetings, indicates that new ways need to be found engage with women and to encourage their greater participation in these types of activities.

### Box 3.1 Management roles and responsibilities of male and female household heads in two wood industry villages – Lien Ha (LH) and Dong Ky (DK)

(Source: Pham Duc Thieng & Dao Ngoc Nga)

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#### Purchase of timber supplies, including interaction and negotiation with timber suppliers

**LH & DK:** The husband is responsible for purchase of timber supplies, including interaction and negotiation with timber suppliers because he can classify different types of timber in term of quality.

**LH:** The wife is responsible for making payment to suppliers because she is the one who keeps the cash.

**DK:** Normally, the husband is responsible for inputs and processing, while the wife is responsible for outputs.

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#### Purchase of accessory supplies

**LH:** Both the husband and the wife can be responsible for purchase of supplies because the list of accessories they are using are available and similar in quality. Sometimes the husband decides to change to new types of accessories because they are cheaper or better. The wife makes payments to suppliers.

**DK:** The wife is responsible for purchase of accessory supplies. There are only a few types of accessories for fine-art furniture (i.e. oil, sanding paper...).

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#### Decisions on type and style of products, design work etc.

**LH:** Before the husband was the one who made decisions on type and style of products, design work. Recently the wife also is involved in the decision. Because she is in charge of marketing products, she knows which type and style are preferred by customers.

**DK:** The husband is the one who make decisions on type, style, design of products.

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#### Interaction with local authorities (business registration, tax etc.)

**LH & DK:** The husband takes the main responsibility.

---

#### Financial accounting and book-keeping

**LH & DK:** The wife takes the main responsibility.

#### Handling cash and bank account holder

**LH:** In most households, wives are the ones who handle cash. In some households, husbands are bank account holders, but in some other households, wives are.

**DK:** Both the husband and the wife have bank accounts, so they can be flexible to make payments. The wife is the one who handles cash.

---

#### Management of workers (contract, payment, supervision etc.)

**LH:** Both the husband and wife are involved in managing workers, but the husbands have a stronger role.

**DK:** The husband is responsible for supervising workers. The wife is responsible for calculating workload/work days and making payment to workers.

---

#### Workshop factory floor and site management, and production process management

**LH & DK:** The husband takes the main role at workshop site management and production process management.

**LH:** Normally workshop and showroom are not at the same place, so the husband is takes care of the workshop while the wife takes care of the showroom.

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#### Marketing and selling products, including interaction with buyers

**LH & DK:** The wife takes the main role of marketing and selling products, including interaction with buyers.

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#### Membership of associations

**LH & DK:** The husband has association membership in general. The wife is member of the Women's Union.

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#### Participation in training courses and local meetings

**LH & DK:** In most cases, the husband will participate in training courses and local meetings. Generally, women only participate in specific courses such as training on basic accounting .



# 4

## Social Welfare, Participation, and Human Resources Development (Theme Three)



### 4.1 Legal framework

Laws relating to this theme include the Labour Code (2019), which encompasses separate chapters on the employment of women and the employment of minors; the Law on Social Insurance (2014), which includes several specific provisions for female employees; the Law on Occupational Safety and Hygiene (2015), which includes a number of relevant safeguards on the health and safety of female employees; and the Law on Vocational Education (2014), which aims to assure gender equality in the support for vocational training and education and to create equal opportunities for women to access better work.

Chapter X of the Labour Code (2019) sets out specific provisions for female workers and to ensure gender equality. This includes provisions on creating flexible conditions to provide female and male workers with regular employment; the prevention of sexual harassment; the organisation of daycare facilities; developing various forms of training to enable female workers to acquire occupational knowledge and skills and to improve their economic opportunities; as well as on parental leave and other parental rights. Article 136 covers the obligations of employers, including the obligation to consult with female workers or their representatives when making decisions that affect their rights and interests.

Chapter XI of the Labour Code (2019) sets out separate provisions concerning the definition, principles and conditions for the employment of minors, and the associated obligations of employers. This includes the specific provisions that apply to the employment of minors in different age groups. Circular No.11/2013/TT-BLDTBXH, issued by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, regulates the list of types of light work that are allowed for minors under the age of 13, and from 13 to 15 years old. And Circular No. 10/2013/TT-BLDTBXH, lists the jobs and workplaces that are prohibited to minors. This list includes several jobs in forestry production and processing:

- 26. Manual sawing of wood by two people
- 28. Logging, transporting, loading and unloading large diameter timber
- 29. Trawling or recovering sunken wood
- 33. Operating machine saws
- 34. Operating planting and sanding machines
- 36. Processing of bamboo and rattan etc

The Law on Occupational Safety and Hygiene (2015) prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex in the assurance of occupational safety and hygiene (Article 12). Article 75 states that “...the composition of the internal occupational safety and hygiene council [of the organisation or enterprise] must ensure the female rate that conforms to gender equality rules and actual conditions of the business entity”. Article 21 of the Law also specifies that “...the employer shall organise obstetric checks for female employees, and occupational disease checks for employees who work in hazardous occupations and conditions”.

With regard to vocational education, the National Strategy for Gender Equality for 2021 to 2030 (Resolution No.28/2021/NQ-CP) includes a target that the percentage of newly recruited female students in the vocational education system will reach over 30% by 2025 and 40% by 2030 (Target 54/3). The Action Plan of Gender Equality of MARD (Decision No.42/2022/QD-BNN-TCCB) includes a target that the percentage of rural female workers under 45 years old receiving vocational training will reach 50% by 2030 (Target 5/4).



## 4.2 Indicators and statistical evidence

This section includes seven indicators on:

- 4.2.1 Professional/technical qualifications of workers
- 4.2.2 Social insurance participation rates
- 4.2.3 Occupational health and safety
- 4.2.4 Incidence of child labour in forestry
- 4.2.5 Gender balance in business management
- 4.2.6 Gender balance in the state forest sector
- 4.2.7 Gender participation in forestry stakeholder forums

### 4.2.1 Professional and technical qualifications of workers

The Labour Force Survey records the professional/technical qualifications of workers according to five levels: no qualifications; pre-intermediate training (from 3 months and longer); intermediate training; college education; and university or higher education. Vocational training and education relate to the pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.

Table 4.1 shows the proportion of total workers and male and female workers in the forest industries according to their professional/technical level. The overall proportion of workers in the three sectors without qualifications ranges from 96.5% in forestry production, to 88.3% in forest product processing, and 85.8% in furniture manufacturing.

It can be seen from Table 4.1 that the qualification rates among women are generally lower than those among men at nearly all levels. These differences are also reflected in the wage differentials between men and women, as indicated in Section 3.2.5 and Figure 3.6. The exception is in furniture manufacturing, where a higher proportion of women than men have college or university education and the gender wage gap is reversed.

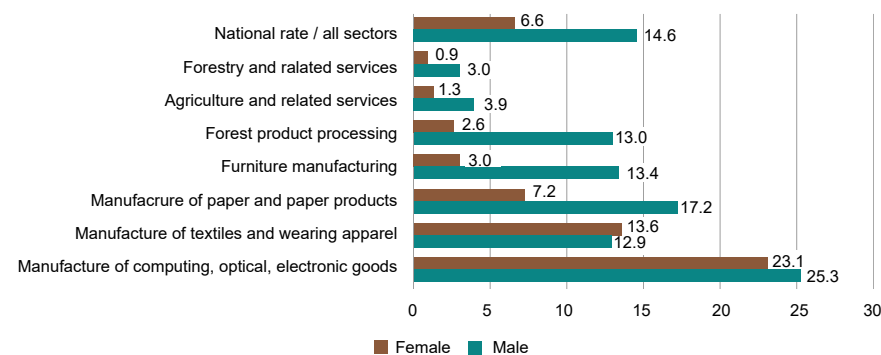
Table 4.1 Proportion of workers in the forest industries by professional/technical level (2022) (%)

Professional/technical level	Forestry production			Forest product processing			Furniture manufacturing			
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	
All age groups										
No qualification	96.5	95.4	98.2	88.3	81.8	94.3	85.8	83.1	92.0	
Pre-intermediate (≥ 3 months)	1.1	1.6	0.2	5.1	9.8	0.8	8.8	11.7	1.9	
Intermediate	1.1	1.4	0.6	2.4	3.2	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.1	
College	0.5	0.5	0.5	2.0	2.8	1.4	1.6	1.5	1.9	
University or higher	0.8	1.1	0.4	2.1	2.4	1.8	2.3	2.0	3.0	
Under 35 years old – Combined categories										
Pre-intermediate and intermediate combined	2.4	3.0	1.3	7.5	10.8	2.7	7.6	10.0	2.7	
College, university and higher education combined	1.8	1.9	1.6	7.9	7.1	9.1	6.4	5.4	8.6	

Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey 2022

The differentials are most pronounced in the levels of vocational training and education. In forest product processing, around 13% of men but only 2.6% of women have pre-intermediate or intermediate qualifications; similarly, in furniture manufacturing, 13.4% of men but only 3% of women have pre-intermediate or intermediate qualifications. A potentially worrying sign is that the proportion of younger workers, under 35 years old, that have vocational qualifications is not higher than for all age groups combined. This appears to indicate limited recruitment of younger workers into vocational training in the forest industries; but further research is needed to fully examine these trends and issues.

Figure 4.1 Proportion of male and female workers with pre-intermediate or intermediate qualifications in the forest industries compared to other sectors (2022)



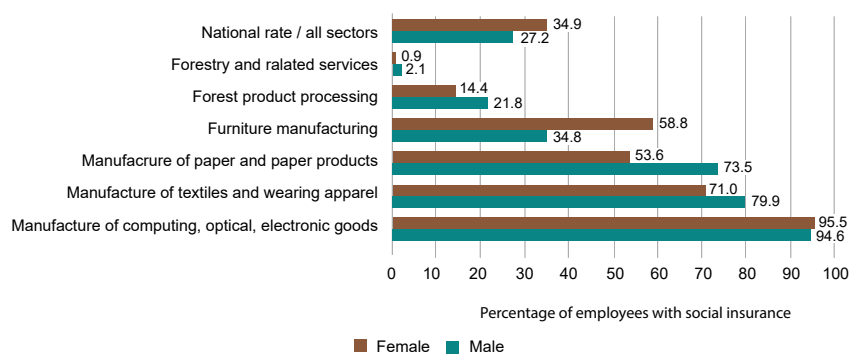
Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey 2022

Figure 4.1 shows that similar differentials in the proportion of men and women with vocational training and education qualifications are found in some other economic sectors, such as the manufacture of paper and paper products, and in agriculture and related services. These differences reflect structural and systemic inequalities in access to technical and professional education and training that are still found in many of the rural economic sectors in particular (UN Women et al 2021). Meanwhile, the differences are much less pronounced in some other industrial sectors, such as the textile and garment industry, and the manufacture of computing, electronic, and optical products.

#### 4.2.2 Social insurance participation rates

The results from the Labour Force Survey indicate that in 2022 the overall social insurance participation rate in forestry production was just 1.7%, increasing to 17.9% in forest product processing, and 42% in furniture manufacturing. Social insurance in this survey includes compulsory social insurance or voluntary social insurance.

**Figure 4.2 Social insurance participation rates amongst male and female workers in the forest industries compared to other sectors (2022)**



Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey 2022

Figure 4.2 shows the proportion of male and female workers with social insurance in the forest industries compared to the national rate and some other industrial sectors. In general, the participation rates in the forest industries are lower than in the other sectors, such as the textile and garment industry which has an overall participation rate of around 73%, and the manufacture of computing, electronic, and optical products which has a rate over 95%.

The low rates in forestry production are understandable given they relate mainly to farm households for which social insurance is not a mandatory requirement. The comparatively very low rates in forest product processing again highlight the vulnerability of employment in this sector, especially amongst women who comprise the majority of workers. Just 14% of women in forest product processing have social insurance. Meanwhile, in furniture manufacturing, the higher rate of women than men with social insurance (58.8%/34.8%) reflects the larger proportion of women that work in domestic or foreign enterprises.

There are significant differences in the participation rates according to the form of ownership, as shown in Table 4.2. As can be expected, the rates amongst individuals/individual business units are very low. Amongst domestic private enterprises, there are higher rates in furniture manufacturing (total 81.5%) as compared to forest product processing (total 61.5%). Meanwhile, the participation rates in foreign investment enterprises are close to or above 90 per cent for both men and women in both sectors.

**Table 4.2 Proportion of workers with social insurance in forest product processing and furniture manufacturing by employment ownership sector (2022)**

Form of ownership	Proportion of workers with social insurance (%)		
	Total	Male	Female
<b>Individual/individual business unit</b>			
Forest product processing	0.6	0.5	0.6
Furniture manufacturing	1.2	1.0	2.0
<b>Domestic private enterprise</b>			
Forest product processing	61.5	63.9	58.2
Furniture manufacturing	81.5	81.2	82.0
<b>Foreign investment enterprise</b>			
Forest product processing	89.9	83.3	98.7
Furniture manufacturing	93.0	93.6	92.3

Source: GSO, Labour Force Survey 2022

Broadly similar findings have come from several field surveys. One survey, amongst 93 micro and small-scale timber processing enterprises in two provinces, found that only 65% complied with the regulations on health and social insurance, due mainly to the fact that they mostly employ seasonal workers which makes it difficult to fully comply with the requirements (CRD/ CED/COPE 2019a). Another survey, with 67 timber processing household businesses in one province, found that only 15% have labour contracts for employees, only 7.5% have social insurance and health insurance for workers, and only 3% have unemployment insurance for their workers (CRD/ CED/COPE 2019b).

#### 4.2.3 Occupational health and safety

Several reports indicate that occupational health and safety is a concern in the forest industries, with the biggest risks being fire and occupational accidents (ILO NIRF 2019; Do 2022). One study quotes statistics from the labour inspectorate in Dong Nai Province which indicate that occupational health and safety is the most frequent area of non-compliance among furniture manufacturers in the province; with the common areas of non-compliance including incomplete rules and procedures, a shortage of health checks for workers, lack of training, and insufficient provision of protective equipment (Table 4.3). However, these reports also emphasise that there is considerable variation between enterprises in this regard, with many enterprises having good practices for improving work safety, conducting training, and providing incentives to workers to encourage compliance etc. (Do 2022).

**Table 4.3 Rate of non-compliance with health and safety regulations by furniture manufacturing enterprises in Dong Nai Province (2016 & 2018)**

Violations	Rate of non-compliance (%)	
	2016	2018
Incomplete rules and procedures	87.5	38.1
Shortage of regular health check-ups for workers	87.5	NA
Lack of classification of heavy, dangerous, toxic jobs	75.0	42.9
Lack of sufficient training	75.0	52.4
Insufficient provision of protective equipment	75.0	52.4

Source: NIRF & ILO 2019, reported in Do 2022.

An older study was carried out in 2009 on the occupational health and working conditions of children in carpentry workshops in Dong Ky wood industry village (VAOH & ILO 2009). This study found that child workers included family members that began working in the household workshops from an early age, as well as children seeking work from outside the village. While the children were generally not directly involved in heavy or hazardous work, they were frequently exposed to excessive dust, noise, heat and chemical fumes. The study also highlighted an inconsistency in the regulations: while many common tasks and conditions in the workshops are on the list of hazardous working conditions and prohibited tasks for children and adolescents, carpentry itself is not a prohibited occupation (VAOH & ILO 2009).



#### 4.2.4 Child labour in forestry

The National Child Labour Survey conducted in 2018 provides an overview of the incidence and characteristics of child labour in Viet Nam (ILO & MOLISA 2020). The survey records the numbers of children and adolescents from different age groups that are engaged in economic production, trading and services, for consumption or sale, including paid or unpaid, and part-time or full-time work, but excluding household chores.

The survey distinguishes between “working children” (i.e. those engaged only in light work for an accepted duration, and not on the list of prohibited occupations), and “child labour” (i.e. those working in excess of the regulated working hours for each age group and/or working in prohibited occupations). Not all working children are in child labour. The survey also records the numbers of children in hazardous types of work and conditions.

Table 4.4 gives the results of this survey for the numbers of working children and child labour in the forest industries in 2018.

In forestry production, the survey records 42,094 working children, of which around 60% are child labour. Of the latter, around 60% are boys and 40% are girls. They are distributed across all the age groups, with around 40% being below 15 years old and the official minimum age of employment. The children working in forestry production represent around 2.4% of the total number of working children recorded by the survey.

Children’s work in forestry production can be hard to assess because it is often difficult to distinguish between work tasks and their day-to-day activities. For example, children will frequently cut-and-carry fuelwood or collect other forest products at the same time as looking-after grazing livestock or playing in the forest. In addition to the collection of forest products, elder children may work on household forest plots, or seek off-farm employment whereby they travel away from home to obtain casual or seasonal work on plantations.

**Table 4.4 Incidence of working children and child labour in the forest industries (2018)**

Sector	Number of children	Proportion of child labour incidence in survey (%)	Sex (%)		Age Group (%)		
			Male	Female	5 to 12	13 to 14	15 to 17
<b>Working Children</b>							
Total - all sectors	1,754,066	100	54.5	45.5	21.2	22.4	56.4
Forestry production	42,094	2.4	61.3	38.7	13.4	25.6	60.9
Forest product processing	12,640	0.7	58.8	41.2	13.3	15.4	71.3
Manufacture of furniture	17,412	1.0	84.2	15.8	0.0	28.2	71.8
<b>Children in Child Labour</b>							
Total - all sectors	1,031,944	100	59.0	41.0	30.8	18.0	51.3
Forestry production	25,147	2.4	61.0	39.0	22.5	22.8	54.7
Forest product processing	12,640	1.2	58.8	41.2	13.3	15.4	71.3
Manufacture of furniture	15,822	1.5	86.9	13.1	0.0	25.4	74.6

**Working children:** Children aged 5-17 years old who participate in production, business or service activities for at least one hour in the reference week. Children who perform only domestic chores are excluded.

**Child labour:** Children from 5-13 years old who engage in economic activities for a full one hour or more on any day of the reference week or for a full five hours or more during the reference week for any work and economic activity not listed in the regulation on light work allowed for children under 13. Children from 13-15 years old who engage in economic activities for a full four hours or more on any day of the reference week or for a full 20 hours or more during the reference week. Children from 15-17 years old who engage in economic activities for a full eight hours or more on any day of the reference week or for a full 40 hours or more during the reference week.

Source: GSO/MOLISA/ILO, National Child Labour Survey (2018).

In both forest product processing and furniture manufacturing, almost all the working children (over 95%) are considered to be in child labour. The children in these industries combined represent around 2.7% of the total number of children in child labour recorded by the survey. A majority are boys, particularly in furniture manufacturing (boys 84.2%/girls 15.8%). Just over 70% are in the 15-17 age group, with the other 30% being below 15 years old and the official minimum age of employment. It is notable that the survey records that a majority of these children in forest product processing and furniture manufacturing are working in hazardous types of work or conditions.

#### 4.2.5 Gender balance in business management

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2011-2020) included a target for the rate of female entrepreneurs and business managers to reach 30% by 2015 and 35% by 2020 (Objective 2/Target 2). The reported achievement by 2018 was 26.95% (Government of Viet Nam 2019). The report on the national gender statistics gives the proportion of enterprises with female directors/managers at 28.2% in 2021 (GSO 2022). Elsewhere, the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs in 2019 gives a rate of women business owners in Viet Nam at 27%, ranking 20 out of 57 countries (Mastercard 2020). Another report by Grant Thornton has ranked Viet Nam as second highest amongst ASEAN countries for the proportion of women in senior leadership positions in business (Grant Thornton 2020).

A brief survey of among 50 timber processing and furniture manufacturing enterprises under the Binh Dinh Forest Producers Association shows that women occupy 27.4% of leadership positions, such as enterprise owners, directors or vice-directors (Table 4.5). This figure broadly correlates with the national figures given above. However, the proportion of women in enterprise ownership and director positions is likely to be lower among the substantial number of micro and small-scale processing enterprises.

**Table 4.5 Women in leadership positions in a sample timber processing enterprises**

<b>Number of enterprises surveyed</b>	50
<b>Total number of enterprise leaders</b>	113
<b>Number female enterprise leaders</b>	31
<b>Proportion female leaders</b>	27.4%

Source: Binh Dinh Forest Producers Association (2019).

#### 4.2.6 Gender balance in the state forest sector

The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2011-2020) set out a target that 100% of Party, State management and socio-political organisations, which have more than 30% women employees, should have women holding key leadership positions by 2020 (Objective 1/Target 3). The report on national gender statistics gives the proportion of ministries and ministerial-level agencies with key leadership positions held by women at 44.8% in 2021, and around 32% at province and district levels, and 22% at commune level (GSO 2022).

In Viet Nam, as in many other countries around the world, the forest service is still a strongly male dominated profession and organisation. Women currently occupy the senior leadership position in the Forest Protection Departments in three provinces. And women comprise around 12.9% of the workforce at central, province and local levels (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6 Gender balance of the Forest Protection Department and forest rangers**

<b>Total number of forest protection staff nationwide</b>	11,800
<b>Number of female staff</b>	1,523
<b>Proportion female staff</b>	12.9%

Source: Forest Protection Department (2023).

#### 4.2.7 Gender participation in forums for forestry stakeholders

In 2017, a Multi Stakeholder Core Group was established as a focal point and forum for stakeholder engagement in implementation of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement between Viet Nam and the European Union on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (VPA/FLEGT). The members of the VPA/FLEGT Core Group include representatives from forestry owners' and timber industry associations, professional associations, non-governmental organisations, research and academic organisations, and international development partners. Membership is on a voluntary basis. As of the end of 2021, there were 32 non-state Vietnamese organisations on the Core Group, including 48 representatives of which around 23% were female. Since 2017, there have been eleven official meetings and events of the Core Group, with 31.5% of the participants being female.

Table 4.7 shows the level of women's participation in eight VPA/FLEGT projects that were managed by Vietnamese stakeholder organisations in the period up to 2019. In 30 events (meetings, workshops, training courses) organised by these projects, involving nearly two thousand participants, women made up around 30% of the participants. The proportion of female participants varied widely between projects, however, from under 10% to nearly 40%, reflecting different levels of attention given to gender balance.

**Table 4.7 Female participation in FLEGT project events funded by the EU FAO FLEGT Program**

<b>Number of projects surveyed</b>	8
<b>Number of events</b>	30
<b>Total number of participants</b>	1,897
<b>Number of female participants</b>	565
<b>Proportion female participants – over 8 projects</b>	29.8%
<b>Proportion female participants – project range</b>	9.6% to 37.3%

Source: EU FAO FLEGT Program (2019).

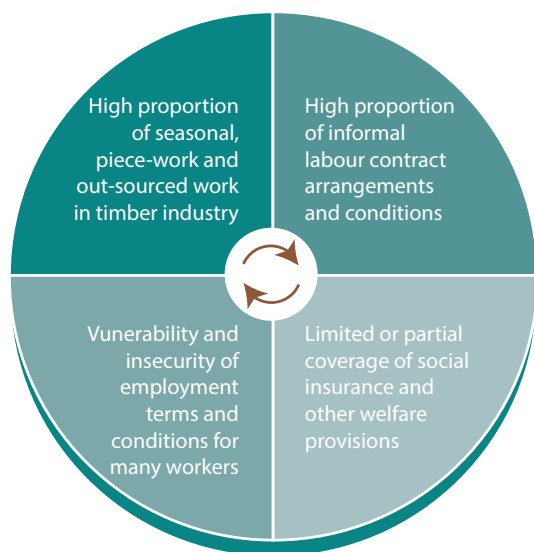




### 4.3 Significant issues and trends

**Social welfare provisions for employees in some parts of the forest industries lag behind other industry sectors, especially for female workers and in micro and small-scale enterprises.** A clear indicator of this is the low social insurance participation rates in the forest product processing sector, which fall well below the national rate and other industrial sectors (Figure 4.2). While the larger foreign investment companies and many domestic enterprises perform comparatively well in ensuring social insurance coverage for their employees, the rates are extremely low amongst micro- and small-scale enterprises (Table 4.2). Women predominate in this segment of industry which provides the least protection in occupational and social welfare aspects, and hence greater levels of vulnerability. Social insurance is, however, only one of several issues that need to be considered. Several studies highlight a nexus of issues linking common employment characteristics in the forest industries (e.g. the high proportion of piece-work and seasonal work), to informal contract arrangements and limited social welfare provisions (NepCon & Forest Trends 2018; CRD/CED/COPE 2019a).

**Figure 4.3 Issues relating to vulnerability of employment in forest product processing**



**Corporate social responsibility (CSR) compliance is higher among export-oriented furniture manufacturers than among domestic processing enterprises.** A recent study on the furniture industry found that the awareness of labour standards is highest among exporting firms that must comply with the CSR standards of their buyers in Europe, the United States and elsewhere (Do 2022). Even so, this study also found that many of these exporting companies regard CSR as a burden imposed by international buyers, rather than a beneficial investment. Meanwhile, many domestic SMEs lack the resources and support to fully comply with labour and social welfare standards. This study concluded that the CSR standards and procurement policies of the international buyers have created conflicting pressures on local manufacturers: on one hand, buyers put downward pressure on prices; while on the other hand, the CSR requirements have pushed up costs (Do 2022).

**Gender issues in youth employment in the forest industries are primarily, although not exclusively, in connection to the situation of young males.** With the expansion of forest plantation production and processing industries in recent years, there have been more jobs and income earning opportunities for young people. The Labour Force Survey results indicate that around two-thirds of young workers in the 15 to 24 age group are male (Figure 3.1), and these figures are substantiated by the Child Labour Survey (Table 4.4). This includes adolescents and young adults who travel from home to obtain seasonal work on plantations, or in processing workshops and factories. There is some evidence to suggest that this may be linked to higher rates of discontinued schooling amongst boys in rural areas, especially at the point of transition from lower to upper secondary school, which may in turn be due to the economic and social peer-pressures on rural boys to leave school to find work (UNICEF 2014).

**Women in the forest industries continue to be disadvantaged in access to professional and technical training opportunities.** The National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011-2020) and MARD's Action Plan for Gender Equality (2016-2020) include the target that by 2020 the rate of rural female labourers aged under 45 who have vocational training will reach 50%. Overall, this ambitious target has not yet been achieved, with official figures indicating that by 2018 only around 15% of rural female labourers had vocational training (Government of Viet Nam 2019). Meanwhile, there

continue to be low levels of vocational training qualifications among women in the forest industries (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1).

There is, at the same time, some evidence to suggest that having better qualifications can result in more equal employment and income opportunities and outcomes for women. In the furniture manufacturing industry, for instance, the proportion of women with college or university education is higher than men (Table 4.1), and the gender wage gap for senior professional staff in this sector has been more-or-less eliminated (Figure 3.6b).

**Effective policies for developing the human resource base will be essential for continued growth and competitiveness of the timber industry.** Presently, the relative low cost of the labour force, together with the favourable environment for foreign investment, are some of the main competitive advantages of Vietnamese industry, including timber processing and export (World Bank 2019a). But the low cost and generally low skills base of the forestry labour force comes with disadvantages. As Vietnamese manufacturers seek to increase the quality and added value of their timber product exports, critical shortages of skilled and qualified workers have emerged in key areas such as timber processing engineers (University of Forestry 2019). At the same time, manufacturers and exporters will in future have to fully comply with the government regulations and international CSR standards. If the timber processing industry fails to address these issues, it is likely that manufacturers will experience continued shortages of skilled workers, as they may select alternative industries and sectors which offer better conditions.

# 5

## Priorities and Opportunities



## 5.1 Policy considerations

**There is a need to broaden the scope of application of gender-related rights in forest policy.** In recent years – alongside other social and economic sectors – gender equality has begun to be more systematically incorporated into forest policy and legislation in Viet Nam. In this regard, the rights of rural women are often grouped together with those of ethnic minorities and poor households – that is, as potentially vulnerable groups that require special attention in the formulation and implementation of all rural development policies. Hitherto, the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in both agriculture and forest policy has focused on four main areas:

- a** ensuring non-discrimination in the allocation of agricultural and forest land;
- b** prioritising women's access to vocational training, credit, and other productive assets;
- c** promoting equality in the recruitment and deployment of government staff in the sector;
- d** increasing the representation of women in senior management and leadership positions in both government and businesses.

These are all important policies which need to be maintained in the future. One main message to emerge from this study, however, is that the scope of important gender issues in forestry is broader, and there are additional issues that need to be addressed in both policy and practice.

**Most policies in forestry remain gender neutral.** For example, the official regulations on Payments for Forest Environmental Services (Decree No.99/2010/ND-CP) do not provide guidance on how to promote and ensure gender equity in the implementation of this important policy. This is despite the fact that there is recent evidence to suggest that there are significant distributional outcomes of the PFES which can have a detrimental impact on women's livelihoods (Section 2.2.5). Other significant policy documents that are gender neutral include the Forest Development Strategy for 2021-2030 (Decision No.523/2021/QĐ-TTg), and the scheme on sustainable development of the timber processing and export industry (Decision No.327/QĐ-TTg). This latter decision prioritises human resources, to improve the quality of training

programs to attract high-quality employees for modernisation of the industry, and to help ensure the timber industry is competitive. Yet gender equality, and labour and social welfare considerations are still absent from this policy.

**It is recommended that there are three priority areas of forest policy that warrant greater attention to gender equality in the immediate future.**

These are:

- i** fully integrating 'decent work' principles and practices into the policies, strategies and incentives for sustainable and inclusive development of the forest industries;
- ii** reinvigorating the existing policies to promote vocational training and education for women, and to improve the quality of the workforce in the forest industries taking into consideration the need for gender balance and equal opportunities;
- iii** strengthening the attention given to equity and equality in the regulations, guidelines and actual implementation of the policy on Payments for Forest Environmental Services.

This latter priority should include measures to safeguard the forest use rights that enable rural women to use forest products as sources of income as well as for domestic use and consumption.

## 5.2 Gender and inclusive development of the forest industries

**Strengthening decent work principles and practices in the strategies for sustainable and inclusive development of the forest industries.** In 2017 the Government of Viet Nam adopted a National Action Plan to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Decision No.622/2017/QĐ-TTg) which includes the SDG#8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth. The Action Plan sets targets for achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all men and women and young people, ensuring equal pay for work of equal value, protecting labour rights, and promoting safe and secure working environments.

**This study has found that there is still some way to go before the forest industries can achieve the SDG#8 targets.** In particular, the forest product processing sector (VSIC Code 16) lags behind other industrial sectors in

several key indicators, including social insurance coverage (Section 4.2.2), labour contract arrangements (Section 3.2.6) and achieving gender wage equality (Section 3.2.5). There is, however, considerable heterogeneity within the forest industries. Many larger export-oriented furniture manufacturers perform comparatively well in this regard; while the main weaknesses lie in the other half of the private sector, among the many thousands of micro and small-scale processing enterprises.

**Alongside the drive to modernise the timber industry, the adherence to ‘decent work’ practices could become a core element in the strategy to enhance the reputation of Viet Nam as a supplier of legal timber products on the competitive global market.** In order to achieve the objectives of the SDG#8 in the forest industries, particular attention will need to be given to three issues:

- i reducing the gender wage gap and achieving a greater degree of wage parity between women and men;
- ii ensuring that occupational health and safety and environmental standards are adhered to across all segments of the industry;
- iii improving employment security, as well as social welfare provisions, especially for women in the micro and small-scale enterprise sector.

The adoption of decent work practices and superior employment conditions will also be critical to enable manufacturers to continue to attract sufficient young skilled workers in the future.

#### **Strengthening compliance with labour and social welfare regulations.**

In parallel with promoting decent work practices, monitoring and regulatory enforcement should also be strengthened. Complying with the various labour, social welfare and occupational health and safety regulations is currently one of the greatest difficulties faced by enterprises and employers. Or to put this another way, one common problem in demonstrating to international markets that forest products are ‘legally produced’ lies in fulfilling these regulatory requirements. The main responsibility for monitoring and enforcement of the labour regulations lies outside the forest sector. Nonetheless, more awareness raising with forestry businesses in rural areas can be done through the forestry extension system.

#### **Provide tangible incentives combined with behaviour change communication programs to promote gender equal business practices.**

To affect positive changes in this diverse industrial sector will require more than awareness raising and strengthening regulatory enforcement. It will also depend on changes taking place in social norms and attitudes – amongst enterprise owners and managers and employees – which underlie issues such as gender bias in the valuation of work and gender discrimination in wage determination. In this situation, tangible economic and financial incentives will be needed, combined with sensitive approaches to behaviour change communication, to encourage changes in conventional employment and business practices.

This integrated approach could include several elements:

- Making use of the existing government policies, support programs and incentive mechanisms to drive compliance with labour regulations and the adoption of gender equal business practices. This includes the package of support set out in the Law on Provision of Assistance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (2017) which is prioritised for those enterprises with a large number of female employees (Section 3.1). These incentive and support mechanisms could be usefully adapted to the particular needs and conditions of small enterprises in the forest product processing sector.
- As far as possible, making use of the existing incentive mechanisms to encourage household businesses, including those in the wood industry villages, to transition to formal enterprise status. An increase in formally registered enterprises would improve compliance with labour regulations. It would also improve social welfare because the number of employees with formal employment contracts would increase.
- Decent work practices could also be promoted through manufacturer-to-supplier linkages: whereby smaller enterprises feeding into the supply chains of larger export manufacturers are more likely to improve compliance with such regulations if it is a contractual demand, and if training is provided to them in collaboration with exporters.
- The promotion of decent work practices in the timber industry could be led by the timber industry associations (i.e. the Viet Nam Timber and

Forest Products Association together with the provincial associations) through advocacy with their members, and through actions on CRS in the manufacturing sector. Institutional capacity building is also needed to expand the provision of advisory and training services for small-enterprises, household business and their employees. The lack of such 'intermediary organisations' is currently a major weakness in the system. Advisory services need to be developed on practical matters such as supply chain management, in addition to labour standards. Support is also needed to strengthen the out-reach capacity of the industry associations, business groups, as well as local NGOs and other intermediaries.

- In the short term, awareness raising and the dissemination of information on gender-related laws and regulatory requirements for enterprise owners, managers and employees should be strengthened as a first step in addressing gender equality issues. In the longer-term, efforts could also be made to establish a platform to enable more effective stakeholder participation in negotiation and monitoring labour rights.

**Finding new ways to engage directly with women in forest industries.** As described in Section 3.3 and Box 3.1, managerial roles and responsibilities are divided between the male and female heads of the household in many micro-enterprises and household businesses. Women often take the lead on matters such as financial accounting, managing cash and bank accounts, managing workers, product marketing and such like. These are all tasks that closely relate to different aspects of regulatory compliance. This provides a valuable opportunity to strengthen engagement with women, and to empower women. There are difficulties in achieving this, however, because the conventional means of communication and participation (such as community meetings, extension visits, training courses and workshops etc.) are all generally less effective in reaching women. Many projects set out with the ambition of strengthening their participation in such activities, but the outcomes often fall short of expectations. Even so, this is an important priority and opportunity.

### 5.3 Information gaps and priorities for action-oriented research

**The lack of evidence-based gender research prevents decision-makers and planners from understanding the heterogeneity of the forest industries and the contributions made by men and women alike to the forest economy.** A number of overall observations can be made about the availability, quality and use of information on gender. Contrary to the common belief that there is a lack of basic information, a lot of useful sex-disaggregated data already does exist in the LFS and other surveys. Even so, information on gender is not routinely used in the analysis of policies. Another challenge is the limited technical expertise in gender analysis in the key forestry institutions, thereby hindering the effective design of gender-responsive strategies and plans. Continuing to enhance the scope and quality of gender-related research and policy analysis is therefore still important.

On the basis of the analysis in the previous chapters, several priorities can be identified for data collection systems and further action-oriented research. Under Theme One – Forest Resource Ownership and Utilisation Rights, there are two main priorities (see Section 2.3):

- **Firstly, there is an urgent need for an in-depth survey and analysis of the distributional outcomes and impacts of the implementation of PFES in order to inform future policy and regulations.** The PFES policy has been in operation for over 10 years and in many localities it has become the major source of forest sector investment and household revenues from forestry. However, understanding of the positive or negative impacts of PFES implementation is still very limited. This research should be undertaken with a sufficient representative sample of locations, villages and households across the country in order to better understand the diversity of impacts in different settings. In particular, it should further examine the potential adverse impacts on women's livelihoods through restrictions on the use of NTFPs. The research should inform future regulations and guidelines on how to ensure equity in PFES implementation.

- **Secondly, up-to-date information and better understanding is needed of the extent to which gender equality and non-discrimination is being achieved in forest land allocation and certification.** Monitoring the outcomes and impacts of the forest land allocation process on different groups should include the collection of more comprehensive evidence on the proportion of household Land Use Certificates that are jointly or individually titled by men and women. It is already well known that the rate of joint titling of LUCs varies considerably between different provinces and localities; therefore, careful sampling would be needed to gain an accurate picture of the current situation. This would be combined with analysis of the issues that affect the de facto rights to harvest and sell forest produce and the impacts on women's incomes and livelihoods.

Under Theme Two – Economic Opportunities and Employment in the Forest Industries, there are three priorities (see Section 3.3):

- **Firstly, the various factors that underlie the large gender wage gaps in the forest industries need to be more fully understood.** This research should look into issues such as social norms and social bias in task assignment, labour segmentation and the valuation of work, and the mechanisms of wage determination and negotiation etc. The purpose of the research would be to gather more comprehensive information evidence on these issues and to develop recommendations for how to address them through advocacy, awareness raising, and industry-wide efforts to overcome the disparities.
- **Secondly, the issues affecting employment security and vulnerability in the forest industries also need exploring more fully.** Due to the high proportion of seasonal work and piece-work arrangements, and the common patterns of labour segmentation, many workers in forest industries are not in stable salaried employment. Further investigation is needed to fully understand the nature and extent of these vulnerabilities, including the perceptions of enterprise owners and employees themselves.

- **Thirdly, there is a need to quantify the existing and potential future economic contribution of women in the forest economy.** While basic information on the labour force exists, there is insufficient detailed information on essential labour factors which can be used to inform future economic policies and strategies for the industry. This research should look at factors relating to labour participation and productivity, in terms of the potential added value of investing in human resources and female employment.

Under Theme Three – Social Welfare, Participation and Human Resources Development, there are two main priorities (see Section 4.3):

- **Firstly, a study should be undertaken on the future human resource development needs of the forest industries which could be used to improve the quality and provision of vocational training and education.** Such a study would be undertaken with enterprise owners and the technical vocational training schools and colleges. It would assess the employment prospects of young workers, and the strengths and weaknesses of existing training programs. It would also make projections for the future workforce requirements in terms of essential skills and the numbers of workers, taking into consideration the need for gender balance and creating equal opportunities.
- **Secondly, action-oriented research is needed on the best ways of scaling-up engagement with the large numbers of micro and small-scale enterprises on issues such as gender and labour rights.** Various suggestions have been put forward above, such as building on existing incentive mechanisms combined with behaviour change communication and building the capacity of intermediary organisations. But further work is needed to determine the most practical and effective approaches for this.

# Annex 1. Definitions of enterprise, employment and statistical categories

## Enterprise registration codes

Enterprises must register their areas of activity according to the Viet Nam Standard Industrial Classification (VSIC). Enterprises frequently register under several codes, but they must identify a primary code. For example, an enterprise may register under Code 161–Processing of wood as the primary code and main business activity, but also under Code 022–Timber harvesting and Code 466-31–Wholesale trade of processed wood as subsidiary business lines.

The statistical survey information is based on the primary code which is registered by the enterprise on their Business License.

## Economic units

- **Household business** – an economic unit established by an individual or family members that take responsibility for business operations of the household business with their own property.<sup>11</sup> Households engaged in agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and salt production (as well as street vendors, itinerant or seasonal business people, and service providers earning low revenues) are not required to register as household businesses, except for those working in conditional business lines. This means that farm households that are growing timber (i.e. under VSIC Code 02) are not classified as household businesses; whereas households engaged in timber processing and furniture manufacture (i.e. under VSIC Code 16 and VSIC Code 31) are required to register as household businesses or to formally register as enterprises.
- **Forestry households** – households which devote a majority of their labour to forestry activity (or in the case that household labour is equally divided between two or more economic activities, forestry generates the highest income for the household). These are distinct from the larger total number of households utilising forestry land.
- **Medium-sized enterprises** – enterprises that have an annual average of

11. Decree No. 01/2021/ND-CP (04/01/2021) on enterprise registration.

200 employees or less participating in social insurance, and total annual revenue not exceeding 200 billion VND or total capital not exceeding 100 billion VND.<sup>12</sup>

- **Small-sized enterprises** – enterprises that have an annual average of 100 employees or less participating in social insurance, and total annual revenue not exceeding 50 billion VND or total capital not exceeding 20 billion VND.
- **Micro enterprises** – enterprises that have an annual average of 10 employees or less participating in social insurance, and total annual revenue not exceeding 3 billion VND or total capital not exceeding 3 billion VND.

## Labour and employment categories

- **Form of ownership** – state; collective; private; individual and individual business establishment; and foreign direct investment (FDI) sectors.
- **Employment status** – employer; own-account worker; family worker; cooperative member; salaried worker. Family worker means persons working in the family unit without receiving salaries; own account worker means persons working individually or cooperating with partners to operate a unit of production or services (e.g. household business), including those that hire paid labourers; salaried worker means persons working on a permanent or contract basis and receiving scheduled salaries.
- **Occupation category** – leaders and managers; professionals; technicians and associate professionals; clerks; service workers and market sales workers; skilled agriculture, forestry and fisheries workers; craft and related workers; plant/machine operators and assemblers; and elementary occupations.
- **Type of labour contract** = indefinite-term; definite-term; seasonal or piece-work labour contract under 12 months; verbal agreement; without contract.
- **Technical/professional level** – no qualification; pre-intermediate level of qualification from 3 months and longer; intermediate level qualification; college level qualification; university and higher level qualification. Vocational training and educations relate to pre-intermediate and intermediate qualifications.

12. Decree No. 39/2018/ND-CP (dated 11 March 2018) stipulating a number of articles of the Law on Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

## Annex 2. Data set on the number of workers in the forest industries

Source: GSO Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2012, 2018 & 2022

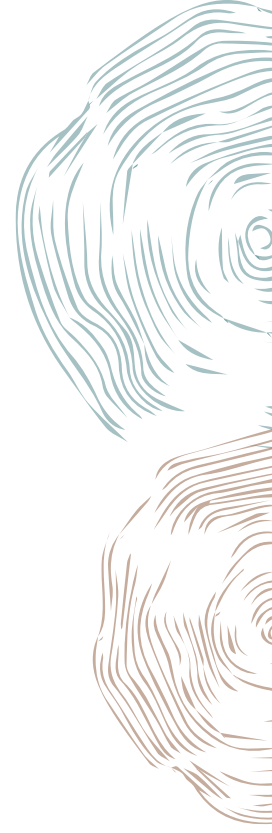
	Year 2012			Year 2018			Year 2022		
	Code 02 Forestry production	Code 16 Forest product processing	Code 31 Manufacture of furniture	Code 02 Forestry production	Code 16 Forest product processing	Code 31 Manufacture of furniture	Code 02 Forestry production	Code 16 Forest product processing	Code 31 Manufacture of furniture
Total	608,090	412,051	656,730	705,945	471,393	687,755	588,439	549,888	831,210
Male	376,851	212,694	507,984	449,050	230,915	534,144	369,775	260,589	582,942
Female	231,239	199,357	148,746	256,893	240,479	153,612	218,664	289,299	248,268

- The LFS in 2012 and 2018 used industry codes according to Decision No.10/2007/QĐ-TTg (dated 23/01/2007); while the 2022 survey uses the industry codes according to Decision No.27/2018/QĐ-TTg (dated 06/07/2018) on the Vietnam Standard Industry Classification. However, the provisions for the Level 2 industry codes in these two documents are not different.
- From 2021 onwards in Viet Nam, the ICLS 13 standard adopted by the International Conferences of Labour Statisticians was replaced by the ICLS 19. Under the new ICLS 19 standard, those who work for the purpose of making subsistence products in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector will not be identified as employed as previously defined by the ICLS 13. The ICLS 19 standard is applied to calculate labour and employment indicators in Viet Nam from 2021. This accounts for the reduction in the number of forestry production workers from 705,945 in 2018 to 588,439 in 2022.

## Annex 2. Data set on the number of workers in the forest industries

Source: GSO Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2012, 2018 & 2022

Age Group	Forestry production			Forest product processing			Manufacture of furniture		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Total	588,439	369,775	218,664	549,888	260,589	289,299	831,210	582,942	248,268
15-24	74,289	50,679	23,610	52,437	33,442	18,995	114,921	74,314	40,608
25-34	148,385	89,847	58,539	115,110	65,475	49,635	214,704	148,553	66,152
35-44	164,580	100,160	64,420	129,919	58,601	71,318	221,110	150,406	70,705
45-54	125,128	76,693	48,435	132,816	59,666	73,149	204,598	147,276	57,322
55-59	40,186	27,952	12,234	50,242	21,867	28,375	44,220	36,680	7,540
60+	35,872	24,445	11,426	69,365	21,538	47,827	31,656	25,714	5,942





### Annex 3. List of legislative documents

2000	Decision No.19/QD-TTg (21/01/2002) Approving the National Strategy for the Advancement of Vietnamese Women to 2010.	2015	Law No.80/QH13 (22/06/2015) Law on the Promulgation of Legislative Documents.
2003	Law No.13/QH11 (26/11/2003) Law on Land.	2015	Law No.100/QH13 (27/11/2015) Criminal Code.
2004	Law No.29/QH11 (03/12/2004) Law on Forest Protection and Development.	2015	Law No.84/QH13 (25/06/2015) Law on Occupational Safety and Hygiene.
2006	Law No.73/QH11 (29/11/2006) Law on Gender Equality.	2016	Decision No.91/QD-BNN-TCCB (13/01/2016) Approving the action plan on gender equality for period 2016-2020 of the MARD.
2007	Law No.02/QH12 (21/11/2007) Law on the Prevention and Control of Domestic Violence.	2017	Decision No.622/QD-TTg (10/05/2017) on the Promulgation of the National Action Plan to Implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2010	Decision No. 2351/QD-TTg (24/12/2010) Approving the National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2011 to 2020.	2017	Law No.16/QH14 (15/11/2017) Law on Forestry.
2010	Decree No.99/ND-CP (24/09/2010) on the policy on payment for forest environment services.	2017	Law No.04/QH14 (12/06/2017) Law on Provision of Assistance for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.
2011	Decision No. 56/QD-TTg (14/10/2011) Promulgation of the Set of National Indicators on Gender-related Development Statistics.	2019	Law No.45/QH14 The Labour Code.
2012	Law No.,10/QH13 (18/06/2012) Labour Code.	2021	Decision No.523/QĐ-TTg (01/04/2021) approving the Viet Nam Forestry Development Strategy for period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050.
2013	Law No.45/QH13 (29/11/2013) Law on Land.	2021	Resolution No.28/NQ-CP (03/03/2021) Issuing the National Strategy for Gender Equality in 2021-2030.
2013	Circular No.11/TT-BLDTBXH regulating the list of light tasks that are permitted for minors under 15 years old.	2022	Decision No.809/QD-TTg (12/07/2022) approving the Sustainable Forestry Development Program for the period 2021-2025.
2013	Circular No.10/TT-BLDTBXH regulating the list of jobs and workplaces that are prohibited to minors.	2022	Decision No.327/QD-TTg (10/03/2022) approving the Scheme for sustainable and efficient development of the timber processing industry in the period 2021-2030.
2014	Law No.74/QH13 (27/11/2014) Law on Vocation Education.	2022	Decision No.42/QD-BNN-TCCB (07/01/2022) Promulgating the action plan on gender equality of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the period 2021-2025.
2014	Law No.58/QH13 (20/11/2014) Law on Social Insurance.		
2014	Law No.52/QH123 (19/06/2014) Law on Marriage and Family.		
2015	Law No.91/QH13 (24/11/2015) Civil Code.		
2015	Law No.83/QH13 (25/05/2015) Law on State Budget.		

## Annex 4. Literature review source documents

Category	References (Annex 4)
Country and sector gender assessments (9 documents)	World Bank, AusAID & UN Women (2011); JICA (2011); ICARD (2012); FAO & UN Women (2014); IFGS, UN Women & AusAID (2016); UN Women (2016); FAO (2019); UN Human Rights Council (2019); UN Women et al (2021).
Forest governance and policy (9 documents)	MARD (2006); FAO & RECOFTC (2015a and 2015b); CRD (2017); FSC (2017); RECOFTC (2018); World Bank (2019a); SRD & FERN (2020); Trieu Van Hung et al (2020).
Forest industries, labour rights and practices (14 documents)	Tran Thi Van Anh (2009); ILO & ILSSA (2009); ILO & UNICEF (2009); VAOH & ILO (2009); GSO & ILO (2016); World Bank (2018); Forest Trends & NEPCon (2018); Pasquier-Doumer et al (2019); CRD, CED & COPE (2019a); CRD, CED & COPE (2019b); SRD (2019); NIRF & ILO (2019); Forest Trends (2019); Do Quynh Chi (2022).
Forest based rural livelihoods (12 documents)	Liljestrom et al (1987); GMS Core Environment Program (2008); Shanks et al (2013); Catacutan & Naz (2015); UNICEF (2015); Cao Thi Ly (2018); Nguyen Thanh Viet et al (2018); Trædal & Vedeld (2018); Tran Van Chu et al (2019); World Bank (2019b); Quy Van Khuc et al (2020); Tran Quoc Hung et al (2020).
Payments for forest environmental services and REDD+ (10 documents)	UN REDD Program (2013); UN REDD Program & LEAF (2015); Pham Thu Thuy et al (2016); Pham Thu Thuy et al (2016); Tuijnman et al (2020); McElwee et al (2021); Winrock International (2021); Nguyen Quang Tan et al (2021); Dinh Duc Truong (2022); Pham Huu Ty et al (2023).
Land use rights and land use titling (6 documents)	World Bank (2012); UNDP (2013); Menon et al (2013); Wells-Dang (2013); ICRW (2015); World Bank (2020).

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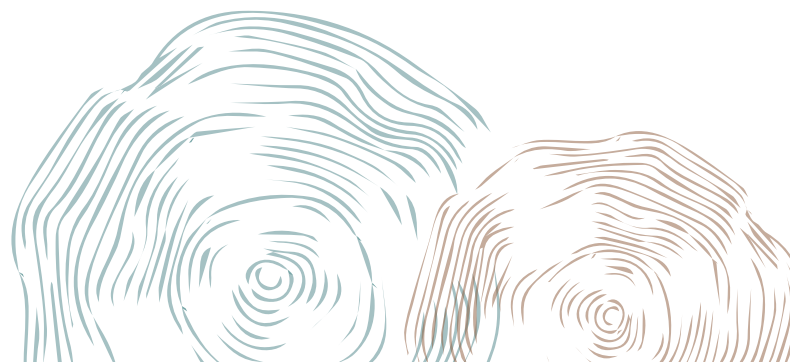
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## Annex 6. Situation Analysis Framework

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Country context and key characteristics of the forestry sector

Use this section to highlight any important background information, such as significant characteristics of the country's economy and forestry sector that are relevant to the situation analysis, explanation of the scope and focus of the analysis, and definitions used etc.

#### 1.2 Timeline of political and legislative developments

Give a timeline of the major political and legislative developments concerning gender in the country over recent years, both generally and in relation to forestry. This may include new political resolutions, laws, international commitments, national strategies and policies and review processes etc. Indicate the year and give a brief summary of the relevant development. Also include any expected major developments in the coming period.

#### 1.3 Statistical data sources

Use this section to give an overview of the available statistical data sources, including those used in the situation analysis. This may include statistical data from population census and national surveys, monitoring systems or research studies. Include any relevant details about the data sources (e.g. on the scope, parameters, sample size and level of representation).

#### 1.4 Literature review sources

Use this section to give an overview of relevant research on gender in forestry and other secondary information sources that have been used in the situation analysis. These may be grouped into different categories, such as gender assessments, field surveys, monitoring studies, stakeholder consultations, academic papers and policy briefings etc.

### 2. Forest Resource Ownership and Utilisation Rights (Theme One)

This theme covers gender dimensions in the ownership of forest land and resources and the utilisation rights for timber and non-timber forest products

and ecosystems services. This includes the rights of indigenous forest peoples and other forest user groups; and depending on the country context, it may include farm forestry, community forestry, forest concessions, protected areas, or other forms of forest management. Consideration can also be given to how the configuration of forest ownership and utilisation rights affects the resource endowments of men and women from the perspective of gender equality and equity.

#### 2.1 Legal framework

What does the legal framework of the country say about gender equality and equity with respect to this thematic area? How are such gender rights enshrined in law? And to what extent are policies, strategies and regulations in place to realise these intentions? Use this section to identify the relevant legislative documents and a summary of the salient contents.

#### 2.2 Indicators and statistical evidence

Identify appropriate indicators that can be used to analyse gender dimensions in this thematic area, and use this section to present the available statistical data on these indicators. Such indicators may vary from country to country depending on the particular socio-economic context and characteristics of the forestry sector. Also, highlight any important gaps or weaknesses in the existing statistical information. The main purpose of this section is to summarise the available quantitative evidence, and what it tells us.

#### 2.3 Significant issues and trends

Use this section to bring in qualitative information and to reflect on the key findings and significant issues and trends in this thematic area. These may be specific issues pertaining to the forest sector, broader gender issues in society and the economy that are reflected in forestry, or factors influencing the application and realisation of laws and policies on gender equality. What is the nature of the debate surrounding such issues? How have the issues evolved over time? And what initiatives are underway to address them?

### 3. Economic Opportunities and Employment in Forest Industries (Theme Two)

This theme looks at economic and employment rights and the income earning opportunities for women and men in the forest industries. Topics under this

theme include the employment characteristics of different segments of the forest industries and in the formal and informal economy; gender roles and occupational characteristics in the workplace; wage and income equality and differentials; and the creation of business opportunities for women.

### **3.1 Legal framework**

### **3.2 Indicators and statistical evidence**

### **3.3 Significant issues and trends**

## **4. Social Welfare, Participation, and Human Resources Development (Theme Three)**

This theme is a cross-cutting. Social welfare includes social insurance, occupational health and safety, and other such legal provisions and benefits for workers in forest industries. Human resources includes the professional and technical capacities of the workforce and the extent to which men and women have access to and participate in education and training. This theme also covers the rights to representation in the workplace and participation in forest sector institutions, and leadership in business and the state forest sector.

### **4.1 Legal framework**

### **4.2 Indicators and statistical evidence**

### **4.3 Significant issues and trends**

## **5. Priorities and Opportunities**

Use this final section to draw-out overall conclusions from the situation analysis and to identify priorities and opportunities for the future. What are the priorities for developing gender sensitive policies and programs in the forestry sector and how can their implementation be improved? What actions can be taken to enhance the compliance with gender equality and labour rights and social safeguards in the forest businesses? And what are the priorities for further research and data collection to provide better understanding of gender issues in the sector?

## **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to extend their thanks to everyone who has supported and contributed information and ideas for the study, including Tim Dawson, Iola Leal, Thomas Colona and Peter Aldinger (EU FLEGT Facility of the European Forest Institute), Dao Ngoc Nga (from Institute of Labour and Social Affairs), Nguyen Tuong Van (from Viet Nam Forestry Association), Pham Duc Thieng (consultant from EU FLEGT Facility of the European Forest Institute), Vu Thi Bich Hop and Nguyen Thanh Hien (from Centre for Sustainable Rural Development), Nguyen Thanh Hien, Tran Le Huy (Binh Dinh Forest Producers Association), and Josil Murray (formerly with the FAO EU FLEGT Programme). The authors would also like to thank To Kim Lien, Truong Quang Hoang and Le Quang Binh for their peer review comments on the draft report.

This report builds on earlier unpublished work funded by the European Union (EU) and EU Member States through the EU FLEGT Facility; and the Regional ASEAN Forest Governance Support Programme (EU FLEGT Asia).





## **PROJECT “SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLEGT VPA IN VIET NAM”**

Unit 021, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Coco Building, 14 Thuy Khue Str., Hanoi, Viet Nam

T +84 24 393 295 72

I <https://snrd-asia.org/support-to-the-implementation-of-the-vpa-flegt-in-viet-nam/>

