The Project on “Support for REDD+ Readiness Preparation in Vietnam - Phase 2” (FCPF-2) was granted US$ 5 million by the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) of the World Bank (WB) to continue REDD+ readiness preparation activities in six provinces in the North Central region (NCR), namely Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Thua Thien-Hue from November 2016 to December 2019. The Management Board for Forestry Projects (MBFP) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is the Project Owner.

**PROJECT ACTIVITIES**

**FCPF-2 Project Steering Committee Meeting**

On the 1st August 2019, in Hanoi, the Permanent Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) Ha Cong Tuan chaired the Project Steering Committee meeting. Other participants included the Steering Committee members, leaders of the International Cooperation Department, Department of Finance, Vietnam Administration of Forestry, Management Board for Forestry Projects and FCPF Project Management Units at the central and provincial levels. After the reports, comments and discussions of the Steering Committee members, the Permanent Deputy Minister Ha Cong Tuan concluded:
Results of project activities implementation in the first 6 months of 2019:
The Steering Committee appreciated the results achieved in the first 6 month of 2019 of the FCPF-2 Project. The FCPF-2 Central and Provincial Project Management Units made great efforts in implementing the project activities. All four project components were implemented effectively, and on track to meet its objectives. This contributed significantly to the process of REDD+ readiness preparation in Vietnam, paving the way for the submission of the pilot Emissions Reduction Program (ER-P) in NCR in the period 2018-2025 to the Prime Minister for approval and signing of the Emissions Reduction Payment Agreement (ERPA) with the World Bank.

Work plan for the second half of 2019:
In general, the Steering Committee agreed with the key tasks, workplan and budget for the rest six months of 2019 as proposed by the FCPF-2 Central Project Management Unit (CPMU), with focus on the following tasks:

- Concentrating and ensuring resources for REDD+ Readiness activities, finalizing internal procedures for approval of the ER-P implementation in NCR in the period 2018-2025, negotiating and signing an ERPA with the World Bank.
- VNFOREST shall be responsible for appraising, taking over and finalizing the ER-P Implementation Manual upon the signatures of the ERPA and approval of the Government.
- Supporting MARD Office and relevant agencies to organize a conference to review the implementation of the Resolution 30-NQ/TW dated 12 March 2014 of the Politburo and Decree 118/2014/ND-CP dated 17 December 2014 of the Government on restructuring, development and improvement of agriculture and forest companies.
- Collaborating with VNFOREST to review supporting activities for forest certification to prioritize forest certification activities for plantations categorized as production forests.
- The 6-month no-cost extension of the FCPF-2 Project is accepted in principle (until 30 June 2020). The CPMU shall submit the extension proposal to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for further steps, clearly mentioning the rationale and work and budget plan for the extension to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness.
Emissions Reduction Program in North Central Coast Region in the period 2018-2025 (EP-P)


- The Carbon Fund of the FCPF allows for the accounting of and payment for emission reductions generated under the ER-P from 1st February 2018 (when the ER-PD was accepted). The results of emission reductions from 1st February 2018 to 31st December 2019 can be used to formulate the first Emissions Reduction Report of the ER-P.

- MARD has sent a draft proposal for ERPA negotiation, signing and implementation to fire relevant Ministries for their comments and feedback in order to finalize the submissions to the Prime Minister.

- The ERPA Technical Working Group has drafted the ERPA negotiation plans and is preparing the report to the leaders of MARD.

- The technical substances required as the Conditions of Effectiveness of the ERPA are being updated and finalized. The draft Benefit Sharing Plan has been revised by the project consultant following the World Bank’s comments and will be sent to the VNFOREST/MARD and the Carbon Fund for further comments and endorsement. The draft Due Diligence report is expected in mid-October.
Sustainable forest management and forest certification

The FCPF-2 CPMU continues to support the forest owners to address the non-compliances after the assessments in 2018 and work on the documentation and site preparations for the assessments in October 2019 by GFA Certification GmbH (GFA). Details as follows:

**Lang Chanh PFMB, Thanh Hoa Province:** All of the 22 non-compliances from the preliminary assessment in 2018 were addressed. Moreover, the support team of the CPMU works together with Lang Chanh PFMB to review the documentation and highlight the forest areas at risks of non-compliances (sites of plantations harvest, high conservation value forest areas, corridors along streams, etc.) for checking and addressing (in case of any non-compliances) prior to the final internal assessment. The main assessment for forest certification in Lang Chanh PFMB will be from 14-16 October 2019.

**Huong Son Forest Company, Ha Tinh Province:** In general, the Company has completed the evidence of remedial actions for the identified non-compliances, including all 8 minor non-compliances and 3 observations. In the coming time, the Company shall work on the documentation of evidence following each of the non-compliances and conduct some site checks, especially in the flowering and dying bamboo forest areas; and conduct internal assessment to address any remaining issues to be ready for the periodical assessment from 07 - 09 October 2019.
Tay Kim Cooperative, Huong Son District, Ha Tinh Province:
At present, the Cooperative has addressed all 14 minor non-compliances and 4 observations. The next step for Tay Kim is to complete and finalize documentation and prepare the sites for the periodical assessment from 09 – 11 October 2019.

- **Trainings on using tablet-based tool to monitor changes in forests and forest land**

Based on the Circular 33/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated 16 November 2018 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on forest investigation, inventory and monitoring, the FCPF-2 project continues to provide these trainings for forestry officers in the six NCR provinces in 2019. Up to now, 15 trainings have been conducted for 270 participants, including 34 women (13%) and ethnic minority people (7%, from Thai, Muong and Tho groups).

According to the evaluation of the training officers and the Provincial Project Management Units, in general, the participants satisfactorily acquired the knowledge and were able to use the FRMS Mobile and other related applications on tablet for monitoring changes in forests and forest land. A lot of data on delineation of forest and forest land changes was collected using tablet and processed offline by technical staff of the District Forest Protect Department before reporting.
Support to Provincial REDD+ Action Plans (PRAP).

In 2017 and 2018, the CPMU provided support to the provinces to develop and improve their provincial REDD+ Action Plans following the Decision 419/QD-TTg dated 5 April 2017 of the Prime Minister. After their PRAP approval, Thua Thien-Hue Province communicated and disseminated this Action Plan to all relevant agencies and stakeholders at provincial and local level for its implementation. In addition, NCR provinces have been actively implementing their PRAP interventions through the mainstreaming of ongoing programs and projects in the provinces to achieve the objectives of their PRAPs. In order to monitor the objectives and progress of PRAP implementation in the provinces, the CPMU has collaborated with the provinces to develop a monitoring framework for PRAP and REDD+ implementation. Up to now, the FCPF-2 PMU in Quang Tri Province is conducting data collection using the PRAP monitoring indicators. Based on their results, this activity will be replicated in other remaining provinces in the coming time.

Conducting technical trainings on silviculture measures for development of plantations and natural forests

In order to implement the National REDD+ Action Program, Provincial REDD+ Action Plans and Emission Reduction Program, in 2019 the FCPF-2 Project continues to support with trainings on silvicultural techniques in forest rehabilitation and development, including plantations and natural forests for the 6 provinces in the North Central Region. In the fourth Quarter of 2019, 17 training courses are planned for 700 participants from protection and special-use forest management boards, forest companies and households in the 6 provinces. The trainings will consist of both theoretical and practical parts, with focus on silvicultural techniques such as restoration of natural forests, including rehabilitation for regeneration and forest enrichment, planting long rotation timber forests, converting short rotation to longer rotation, etc.