CO-MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL USE FORESTS
A review of theoretical, legal and practical issues

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KEY CONTENTS
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2. Understandings about natural resources co-management
3. Legal framework for developing SUF co-management
4. SUF co-management demonstration in Ngoc Son-Ngo Luong Nature Reserve, Hoa Binh province
5. Some lessons learnt

A GLANCE AT SUFs IN VIETNAM
- Total area: nearly 2,2 mil ha; 1.94 mil ha forested
- Categorization: NPs; nature conservation areas (NRs, species and habitat PAs); landscape PAs (historical, cultural, recreation); SUFs for research/scientific experimentation
- Distribution: 164 SUFs (2010); will be increased?
- Scale: 39 SUFs less than 15,000 ha
- Management structure / Institutional responsibilities for SUFs: decentralized and diversified; power of management?
- 88/164 SUFs have their own Forest Protection Division
- Complexity of ecosystems/landscapes: SUFs/wetlands/MPAs
- Threats: illegal logging, hunting, land-use conversion and conflict, fire,... Trade-offs between SUFs and development of hydropower, mining, infrastructure,…
- Challenging in law enforcement

A GLANCE AT SUFs IN VIETNAM

GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM
- MARD
- Provincial Administration of Forestry
- Viet Nam Administration of Forestry
- DNC
- Inter-provincial National Parks: Bach Ma, Ba Vi, Cat Tien, Cuc Phuong, Tam Dao, Yok Don (6)
- District PCs
- Marine Protected Areas: 16 MPAs (including 4 SUFs)
- Nature Reserves, Species & Habitat PAs: 98 SUFs (2)
- Small SUFs (2)
- VCF (75 PAs)
- Directorate of Fisheries
- DOFREP
- Direct administrative authority
- No administrative authority (policy guidance/funding support only)

UNDERSTANDING OF CO-MANAGEMENT

Theoretical approach:
- Co-management is defined as “a situation in which two or more social actors negotiate, define and guarantee amongst themselves a fair sharing of the management functions, entitlements and responsibilities for a given territory, area or asset of natural resources.” (Borrini-Feyerabend et al, 2000)
- Key features of co-management: Power, authority, benefits, and responsibilities towards natural resources management could be shared through a negotiation process in order to reach consensual co-management agreements on multi-stakeholder governance.
- Co-management v.s community-based management?

UNDERSTANDING OF CO-MANAGEMENT

Collaborative management of a Protected Area

Participation in PA management – a continuum (Borrini-Feyerabend, 1996)
LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUF CO-MANAGEMENT

- Decision 18/2007/QD-TTg about VN Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2020 requests piloting CFM models and supporting village/commune forest protection goals;
- Decision 57/QD-TTg requests SUF-MBs to adopt co-management with local communities based on sharing responsibilities of forest management, protection, development and benefits in respective to their contribution;
- Decision 126/QD-TTg piloting benefit-sharing in Xuan Thuy and Bach Ma NPs;
- Decision 07/2012/QD-TTg requests to adopt co-management in SUF protection and establish a Management Council as a legal representative institution to ensure direct and voluntary commitment among SUF-MB and village communities in forest management and protection and legal benefit sharing;
- Village community – cooperative institution.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR SUF CO-MANAGEMENT

- Forest Protection and Development Law 2004: village community is not regarded as an actor whom to be directly assigned by the state as SUF manager;
- Decree 23/2006/ND-CP: village community can be contracted by SUF Management board to do forest protection, plantation, caring and enrichment in place;
- Decision 186/QD-TTg request SUF-MBs facilitating buffer zone communities to take actions toward protecting, conserving, properly using forestry products and other resources, eco-tourism services in order to improve their income and link their livelihoods with SUF protection activities;
- Circular 38/2007/TT-BNN regulating on forest allocation, rent,...for organisations, households, individuals and village community;
- Decision 104/2007/QD-BNN allowing local communities to participate and benefit from eco-tourism activities in Pas to improve income and take responsibility to biodiversity and nature conservation;

DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUF CO-MANAGEMENT

- NS-NL as a pilot site of the project “Participation of grassroots conservation organisations in special use forests protection and management” funded by EU and Ford Foundation, being implemented by FFI and PanNature in Hoa Binh, Yen Bai and Son La (2010-2012);
- Different forms of co-management being tested at district/inter-communal, communal and village-levels at 03 piloted PAs
- In NS-NL, Village Forestry Self-management Committee demonstrated in 55 villages

DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUF CO-MANAGEMENT IN NGOC SON NGO-LUONG NATURE RESERVE

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<th>District or inter-communal</th>
<th>Communal level</th>
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<td>Khau Ca, Ha Giang</td>
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<td>Mu Cang Chai, Yen Bai</td>
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<td>N. Son Ngo Luong, Hoa Binh</td>
<td>Consultation &amp; Monitoring Council</td>
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<td>Hang Kia – Pa Co, Hoa Binh</td>
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Developing Village Forestry Self-management Committees in Ngoc Son-Ngo Luong Nature Reserve

- Motivate FPD, SUF-MBs and CPCs:
  - Baseline assessment
- Model identification & consultation:
  - Model introduction & selection;
  - Preparation of regulations & opr. directions;
  - Community meeting to establish VFSU plan
- Needs assessment:
  - Awareness raising about forest laws
  - Communication
  - Study-tours
- Planning:
  - Planned forest joint-patrolling
  - Community small grants

NOOs as facilitators and technical assistants
SOME INITIAL LESSONS LEARNT

- SUF co-management as a continuous process rather than a fixed model;
- Strongly emphasized on human relationships among actors
- How to address power and resources imbalances among stakeholders;
- Collaboration and management capacity as key;
- Facilitative leadership is significant;
- Co-management models and working mechanisms should be determined by local actors;
- Skills to assist building-up a representative organization for village communities;
- SUF co-management and support to community development;
- Perspectives of legal reform/improvement;
- ...