



REDD+ Country Profile

# VIETNAM

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## INTRODUCTION

Forests cover about 39.7 per cent of Vietnam's land area.<sup>1</sup> This represents a nearly 50 per cent increase in forested areas since 1990, the result of forest rehabilitation and plantation programmes. Nearly three-quarters of Vietnam's forests are secondary natural forests, and 22 per cent are plantations. Only 4 per cent are primary forest.<sup>2</sup> Despite the increase in forest cover, deforestation, forest degradation and fragmentation continue at high rates in the Central Highlands, Central Coast and Southeast regions.<sup>3</sup> The key drivers of deforestation include the conversion of forested areas to agriculturally cultivated land and the need to improve infrastructure in a growing economy. Unsustainable logging and illegal logging remain troublesome. Mining and climate change may have larger significance in deforestation and forest degradation in the future.<sup>4</sup> Vietnam is rich in biodiversity; 8.2 per cent of its amphibians, birds, mammals and reptiles are found nowhere else on earth,<sup>5</sup> with the survival of rare animals such as the enigmatic soala (also known as the Vu Quang ox or the Asian unicorn) dependent on the preservation of Vietnam's forests.

Vietnam is a densely populated developing country with a population of nearly 85.8 million (in 2009). Indigenous minorities account for about 10 per cent of Vietnam's population, or approximately eight million people. About 90 per cent of these communities inhabit rural areas, compared to 70 per cent of the overall population.<sup>6</sup> Although the allocation of forestland to local people has increased since the 1980s, much of it is bare or degraded land that has been converted to plantation forests. Natural forests have largely been retained under the tenure and management of local government agencies.<sup>7</sup>

## SNAPSHOT OF REDD+ PROGRESS IN VIETNAM

### Governance

Setting the goals for REDD+, building the legal institutional arrangements to undertake it, and ensuring that all major REDD+ stakeholders can participate in its governance.

Although the Prime Minister of Vietnam approved the National REDD+ Action Programme (NRAP) in June 2012, still in development are the legal institutional arrangements to undertake it and ensure that all major REDD+ stakeholders can participate in the NRAP implementation.

### Goals

Has the country set ambitious and time-bound REDD+ goals and spelled out REDD+ guiding principles?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	The government approved the NRAP <sup>8</sup> in June 2012 to be carried out for the period from 2011 to 2020 and considers it part of the National Strategy on Climate Change and the National Strategy on Green Growth. Vietnam aims to reduce emissions from the agricultural and rural development sector by 20 per cent by 2020 <sup>9</sup> and to increase overall forest cover to 45 per cent by 2020. <sup>10</sup>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<p><b>2011–2020:</b> Protect and sustainably develop 13,388,000ha of existing forests (as of 31 December 2010); 750,000ha of regenerated forests; 1,250,000ha of new plantations (during 2011 through 2014); and increase forest area to around 14,270,000ha and 15,100,000ha by 2015 and 2020, respectively.<sup>11</sup></p> <p><b>2011-2020:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Afforestation: 2,600,000ha, including 250,000ha of new protection and special use forests (25,000ha/year on average); 1,000,000ha of new production forests (100,000ha/year on average); and 1,350,000ha for post-harvest replantation (135,000ha/year on average).</li> <li>■ Zoning for regeneration: 750,000ha (mainly protection and special use forests), including 350,000ha for existing regeneration and 400,000ha for new regeneration.</li> <li>■ Rehabilitation of critically poor natural forests: 350,000ha (35,000ha/year on average); plantations of scattered trees: 500 million trees (50 million trees/year on average).</li> <li>■ Improve the quality of natural forests and productivity of plantation forests by 25 per cent in 2020 compared with 2011 levels.<sup>12</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Planned</b>	(None, or no information at this time)
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	Specific time-bound activities and indicators to reach the overall goals above—especially with regard to conservation and enhancement of carbon stocks—are yet to be defined.

## Institutional arrangements

Are institutions in place to manage and coordinate REDD+ (e.g. inter-ministerial coordination, participation of all stakeholders secured)?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<p>Vietnam has seven main ministries related to REDD+: the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Finance, the State Committee for Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Area Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Transport.</p> <p>Vietnam has created a cross-ministerial REDD+ Steering Committee. MARD is in charge of REDD+ efforts and has established the National REDD+ Network and REDD+ Working Group.</p> <p>The Provincial People's Committees and provincial departments play an important role in preparation and implementation of Provincial REDD+ Action Plans.</p>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<p>REDD+ working groups, including members of NGOs, INGOs and government agencies, are operating actively to share results and lessons learnt on REDD+. Subtechnical working groups have been established to address a range of issues, including MRV, governance, safeguards, benefit sharing and local implementation.</p>
<b>Planned</b>	<p>(None, or no information at this time)</p>
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	<p>Although knowledge of REDD+ issues at the national level is very strong, the level of understanding of technical REDD+ issues varies among provinces. Capacities of the Vietnam REDD+ Office (VRO) and coordination and collaboration among line ministries and development partners should be strengthened. Local-level capacity building will be important to support REDD+ implementation.</p>

## Legal

Does the country have a legal framework that supports the implementation of REDD+ (e.g. special focus on land rights/tenure rights, carbon rights assigned)?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<p>Vietnam has several laws that support REDD+ activities: Land Law, the Law on Environmental Protection, the Law on Biodiversity, and the Law on Forest Protection and Development. The latter legalizes the participation of local stakeholders in forest monitoring and reporting.<sup>13</sup></p>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<p>(None, or no information at this time)</p>
<b>Planned</b>	<p>Vietnam plans to undertake a broad revision and amendments of its laws to address the rights to forests and carbon and the recognition of legitimate beneficiaries. Under its Civil Code, communities are not recognized as entities and cannot enter into contracts.</p>
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	<p>Vietnam needs to strengthen the enforcement of its forest protection and development laws. Forest carbon and land rights, as well as the allocation of benefits arising from the participation in REDD+, need to be clarified.</p>

## Tracking REDD+ Progress

Successful REDD+ implementation will depend on the country's ability to track and report on the state of the forests and REDD+ progress against a reference level.

### MMRV

Advances in putting in place a measuring, monitoring, reporting and verification system for REDD+.

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<p>The VRO has endorsed an MRV framework document.<sup>14</sup> The proposed system follows the guidelines defined by UNFCCC.<sup>15</sup> Households, communes and community forestry management groups are intended to collect field data using the Internet and the mobile phone network. This data will be supplemented with satellite-based monitoring.</p> <p>As mandated by the law, the National Forest Inventory, Monitoring and Assessment Program (NFIMAP) has been implemented every five years since early 1990s, and its design is now under a process of improvement to meet requirement for REDD+ implementation. Allometric equations for key forest types have been developed for six ecological regions in Vietnam.</p>
<b>Ongoing</b>	With assistance from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Vietnam is now updating the design of NFIMAP to meet requirements for REDD+ implementation, will form the basis of the REDD+ MRV system. <sup>16</sup> The National Forest Monitoring and Information System (FOMIS) is under development with support from the Government of Finland.
<b>Planned</b>	Implementation and training for an MRV system for six provinces <sup>17</sup> for Phase II of the UN-REDD Vietnam Programme and all rich-forested provinces under the FORMIS Project.
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	While Vietnam is conducting a national forest inventory and monitoring assessment every five years by using a combination of remotely sensed imagery and field surveys, the current assessment process only focuses on collecting information on timber and non-timber forest products. The assessment mechanism's design should be updated to include parameters for forest carbon stocks.

### Reference levels

Has the country developed on national or subnational reference levels? What approach was adopted (e.g. historical, historical adjusted)?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	Vietnam intends to use a historical reference level for deforestation rates dating back to (at least) 1990, using data from satellite imagery (Landsat TM, ETM, SPOT) and historical forest inventory data.
<b>Ongoing</b>	Vietnam has been developing a national interim reference level since late 2009. It is developing subnational reference levels based on ecoregions.
<b>Planned</b>	The national interim forest reference level will be refined with improved methodologies and data. Vietnam plans on addressing domestic leakage via a national approach. It plans on developing reference levels for all carbon-related activities within the scope of the REDD+ mechanism.
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	(None, or no information at this time)

## Getting REDD+ Done

Achieving REDD+ that is (a) undertaking intervention strategies that address the country drivers of deforestation and (b) mobilizing the financial resources to pay for it.

### Addressing drivers of deforestation

What are the main strategies and programmes to reduce deforestation (e.g. increase protected areas, support shift to sustainable agricultural practices, increase law enforcement)?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<p>The National Action Plan on Forest Protection and Development was approved in 2012, in which measures and resources for addressing key driving forces behind forest changes were identified. These are now being implemented.</p> <p>Vietnam and Norway have signed a joint declaration to develop policies and measures to address the drivers of deforestation by protecting natural forests and unique biodiversity, curbing illegal logging, improving monitoring, reporting and verification, and involving local people. Furthermore, Vietnam has received valuable support from the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Germany's International Climate Initiative and the USAID Vietnam Forests and Deltas Program for REDD+ readiness preparation.</p>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<p>Vietnam has signed MoUs on preventing cross-border illegal timber trading with Laos and Cambodia in 2012 and is negotiating to join the EU FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements.</p> <p>Vietnam's transboundary Carbon and Biodiversity project (CarBi), implemented in cooperation with the Laos and WWF, aims to improve protected areas management and address the transboundary timber trade, reforestation and REDD+.</p>
<b>Planned</b>	<p>National capacities will continue to be significantly strengthened, and numerous demonstrations in at least eight provinces will be conducted during the period 2013-2015 with support of Phase II of the UN-REDD Vietnam Programme, FCPF and other development partners.</p>
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	<p>Existing work can be expanded in order to address the underlying drivers of deforestation, including work with the global community to address international drivers.</p>

### Finance

What resources is the country counting on to pay for REDD+ implementation (e.g. multilateral, bilateral, own country resources, voluntary and offset carbon markets)? How much has been committed, transferred and disbursed?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	<p>Vietnam completed Phase I of the UN-REDD Programme in October 2012, and a funding agreement for a Phase II was signed with Norway in December 2012 for the period 2012-2015. Vietnam will receive an additional US\$30 million for this phase.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Beyond the US\$30 million above, according to the Voluntary REDD+ Database, Vietnam has secured US\$60-76 million in funding for REDD+ and other forest-related activities for the period 2006–2012.<sup>19</sup> The major bilateral donors include the governments of Japan, Germany, the US and Norway through UN-REDD. The main sources of multilateral finance are the FCPF and UN-REDD.</p>
<b>Ongoing</b>	<p>(None, or no information at this time)</p>
<b>Planned</b>	<p>(None, or no information at this time)</p>
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	<p>The financial support for REDD+ readiness for addressing driving forces of forest changes and for result-based payments is not secured and predictable as no internationally sustainable REDD+ financing mechanism is established. Vietnam is in discussions with international development partners, including the FCPF Carbon Fund and German REDD+ Early Movers programmes for additional support for the REDD+ readiness and for provision of positive incentives for REDD+ performance.</p>

## REDD+ for People and Nature

Ensuring that the country REDD+ strategy (a) has in place adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable social groups and preserve tropical forest environments and that (b) beyond doing no harm, they also offer new income and livelihood opportunities to indigenous peoples, local communities and the rural poor.

### Social and environmental safeguard

What safeguards is the country applying to/implementing (FCPF, UN-REDD, REDD, SES)? Are there safeguard information systems in place?

<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p>	<p>Vietnam is the first country to pilot free, prior and informed consent (FPIC).</p> <p>With support from the German Federal Ministry for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) and through the Netherlands Development Organization SNV, Vietnam has introduced biodiversity and ecosystem services standards and indicators and is exploring how to integrate the monitoring of these into the MRV system.</p> <p>Under the national REDD+ network, the VRO has established the Sub-technical Working Group on Environmental and Social Safeguards (STWG-SG), co-chaired by SNV. Through the STWG-SG the various options for a national government to operationalize the Cancun safeguards have been reviewed and policy approaches selected through multi-stakeholder consultation. Through STWG-SG consultations, the VRO focuses on an assessment of existing policies, plans, programmes, processes and practices (5Ps) that could demonstrate Cancun and other safeguard compliance.<sup>20</sup></p>
<p><b>Ongoing</b></p>	<p>A roadmap for development of a national information system on safeguards is being developed after reviewing all relevant national legislations and policies on safeguards and internationally agreed-upon requirements, particularly the Cancun Agreement, with the support of a German BMU-funded project and SNV. The Government of Vietnam is also exploring mainstreaming of REDD+ into national biodiversity policy. Inter-ministerial collaboration between the VRO and the national Biodiversity Conservation Agency has resulted in a draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. This identifies and proposes policy measures to address potential benefits and risks to biodiversity from REDD+ implementation and how the National REDD+ Action Programme could contribute to delivery of national and international biodiversity targets.</p>
<p><b>Planned</b></p>	<p>Vietnam plans to finalize the roadmap on development of a national information system on safeguards and to identify prioritized activities, which will take the UNFCCC COPs' decisions and the FCPF/UN-REDD Common approach on safeguards into account. The national guidelines on FPIC and Strategic Environmental and Social Assessment will be undertaken with support of the UN-REDD Vietnam Phase II and the FCPF grant.</p>
<p><b>Gaps/Next steps</b></p>	<p>Social and environmental safeguards should be institutionalized, and reporting requirements should be integrated into the being-developed forest monitoring information system (FOMIS). Communities need to be supported to take part in the development and application of REDD+ safeguards, and strong biodiversity safeguards need to be in place to ensure conservation of Vietnam's remaining primary forests and natural forests.</p>

## Benefit sharing

Is there a finance mechanism in place that secures fair distribution of benefits to indigenous peoples, local communities and the rural poor?

<b>Accomplishments</b>	Vietnam has conducted consultations on the creation of a benefit distribution system with local communities and provincial stakeholders in Lam Dong and Bac Kan provinces in conjunction with other payment policies. It developed the Forest Protection and Development Fund in 2008.
<b>Ongoing</b>	The national distribution system for REDD+ has been studied in integration with payments for environmental services schemes and other national incentive policies on forest protection and development.
<b>Planned</b>	As approved by the Prime Minister of Vietnam in the NRAP, the national REDD+ fund will be established by 2015. <sup>21</sup> The national REDD+ fund will be a sub-fund of the Vietnam Fund for Forest Protection and Development (VNFF) and has its own operational regulations that will meet national legislation and international requirements.
<b>Gaps/Next steps</b>	As Vietnam is still in the REDD+ readiness preparation, and no actual GHG emission reduction is produced by any REDD+ project, Vietnam has not decided which subnational levels (provinces, district) will be involved in the disbursement of REDD+ revenues. It has not identified the most appropriate types of forest owners eligible for REDD+ benefits. Vietnam is still in discussion with financial contributors for providing support to pilot payments from REDD+ activities in the next few years.

## WWF (PLANNED) ACTIVITIES UNTIL 2015 & PARTNERS

WWF is an active member of the sub-technical working group on local implementation. It is implementing the transboundary Carbon Sinks and Biodiversity (CarBi) project (funded by KfW Bankengruppe) in southern Laos and central Vietnam to address the timber trade and reforestation and to improve the management of protected areas. This project also examined the feasibility of developing a transboundary REDD+ project for the voluntary carbon market and is focusing on building the capacity of provincial and district authorities on REDD+. The transboundary nature of this project is starting to address some of the challenges associated with regional leakage. Local-level enforcement of forestry law in Hue and Quang Nam is also being strengthened through the training of professional teams of local forest guards.

WWF is also likely to be an implementation partner for the Asian Development Bank's Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative in Hue, Quang Nam and Quang Tri provinces. Its main activities include participatory forest monitoring, the identification of REDD+ interventions, defining pro-poor benefit-sharing systems, REDD+ awareness and technical training.

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**OUR VISION**

WWF's global Forest and Climate Initiative is working to ensure that REDD+ significantly contributes to the conservation of tropical forest and thereby to the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation for the benefit of people and nature.  
[panda.org/forestclimate](http://panda.org/forestclimate)

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To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.  
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**END NOTES**

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