

**COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT
WORKING GROUPS 2000
IN
CAMBODIA, THAILAND & VIETNAM**

**STATUS REPORT
&
WORKPLAN**



REPORT OF THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY FOREST MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP:

VOLUME 1

PREPARED BY THE ASIA FOREST NETWORK

IN COOPERATION WITH SMRP



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Community Forest Management Working Groups 2000 in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam* workshop was held in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam from 27-29 March 2000. The goal of the workshop was to support national working groups (WGs), which help to inform decision-makers concerned with forest policy. In Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam devolution of governance is encompassing forests and natural resources. It is critically important that policy frameworks, as well as implementation guidelines, are well crafted to allow communities to play a meaningful role in management recognizing the great cultural and ecological diversity present within each country and across mainland Southeast Asia. National WGs are facilitating a rigorous analysis of field realities in each of these countries, both stimulating and informing dialogue about community forest management. In the past, this type of initiative has been missing from the range of forest and watershed sector development projects. These WGs are now filling an important gap and playing a vital role in supporting sustainable management of the region's natural forests while responding to the needs of upland peoples and ethnic minority groups.

The workshop provided valuable time for the WGs to interact with their own members in a focused and concentrated manner in order to develop their working plan for the coming year. The outcomes reached during these working group sessions, together with papers and presentations made by WG members at the workshop, have been consolidated in individual reports which complement this main summary report (Volume I):

- Volume 2: Cambodia Working Group Papers and Presentations
- Volume 3: Vietnam Working Group Papers and Presentations
- Volume 4: Thailand Working Group Papers and Presentations
- Volume 5: Papers and Presentations by International Organizations/Projects

In the coming months, the workshop organizers hope to solicit additional interest and identify new member participation for the WGs. If you would like additional information, please contact:

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFN	Asia Forest Network
CF	Community Forestry
CFM	Community Forest Management
CGFP	Cambodia German Forestry Program
CWG	Cambodia Working Group on Community Forestry
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFD	Department of Forest Development, Vietnam
DF&W	Department of Forestry and Wildlife, Cambodia
FIPI	Forest Inventory and Planning Institute, Vietnam
FOMACOP	Forest Management and Conservation Program
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
GO	Government Organization
HH	Household
HRD	Human Resource Development
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IO	International Organization
IUCN	World Conservation Union
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Cambodia
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vietnam
MOE	Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRC	Mekong River Commission
MRDP	Mountain Rural Development Program
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NTFP	Non-timber Forest Products
PARC	Protected Areas Resource Conservation
PROFOR	UNDP Program on Forests
REFAS	Reform of the Forestry Administration System
RFD	Royal Forest Department, Thailand

RECOFTC	Regional Community Forestry Research and Training Center
REPSI	Resources Policy Support Initiative
SFDP	Social Forestry Development Program
SFE	State Forest Enterprise
SMRP	Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project
SUAN	Southeast Asian Universities Agro-Ecosystem Network
TAO	Tambon Administration Organization
TOP	Thailand Community Forestry Outreach Program
VND	Vietnam Dong
VWG	Vietnam Working Group on Community Forestry
WG	Working Group
WFT	Wildlife Fund Thailand
WRI	World Resources Institute

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Part 1: INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1998, a delegation from the Mekong River Commission (MRC) met with officers of the Asia Forest Network at the University of California at Berkeley to discuss a collaborative program to establish national community forest management (CFM) working groups (WGs) in mainland Southeast Asia. The goal at that time was to initiate national dialogues to examine ways to accelerate transitions to sustainable forest management systems based on greater community participation. While many Southeast Asian countries are experimenting with community involvement in forest and watershed management, field trials are largely confined to time-bound projects financed through multilateral and bilateral agencies. Some excellent projects have developed as a result, and while project level learning has been impressive, it has been scattered. There have been limited national mechanisms to synthesis operational experiences, and channel and inform national forestry sector policy discussions in a systematic manner. For that reason, a regional strategy was proposed to be implemented under the umbrella of the MRC, with each country taking responsibility for creating a national process to monitor and assess the evolution of CFM policies and practices, and inform government agencies and development organizations.

The "Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project" (SMRP) proposed that it provide initial financial and technical support to national working groups, with complementary support from the Asia Forest Network and other appropriate organizations working in the region. In the fall of 1998, a series of country workshops were held in Hanoi, Vientiane and Phnom Penh involving government planners, researchers, NGO workers and development project staff. Based on these meetings, national-level WGs were formed in Vietnam and Cambodia. These WGs have been very active, meeting on a bi-monthly basis to design national strategies to track and evaluate the progress of CFM activities and to advise planners and project managers regarding policy and operational needs. WGs in Cambodia and Vietnam have made substantial progress in collecting available information on CFM experiences including project reports, field studies, policy assessments and forestry sector reviews, as well as reviewing scientific literature. In addition, each country has commissioned 5 to 7 case studies reflecting traditional and emerging CFM contexts and issues. These field

studies are being analyzed using frameworks and typologies developed by the WGs to capture the social and environmental diversity present in each country.

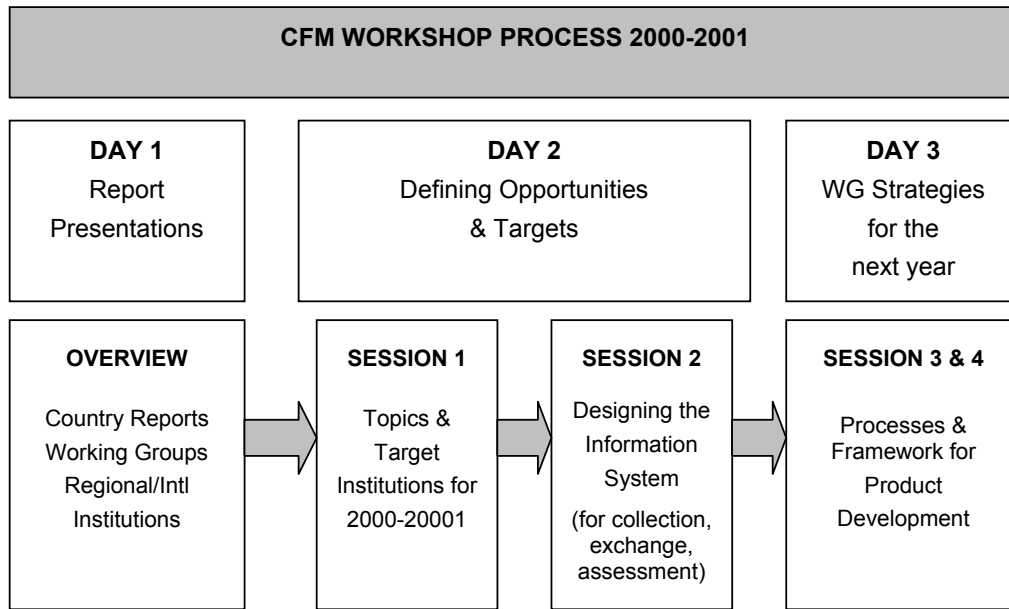
After 18 months, it was decided to organize a regional workshop in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam in order to give WG members an opportunity to assess their progress, evaluate problems or concerns, and develop a plan for the coming year. This three-day workshop, Community Forest Management Working Groups 2000 in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, took place from March 27 to 29, 2000. Members of WGs from Cambodia and Vietnam met together for the first time, along with a Thai delegation from the Watershed Management Division of the Royal Forest Department, RECOFTC and Wildlife Fund Thailand. During the workshop, the Thai participants agreed to form their own national WG, initially to focus on the Upper Ping Watershed in Northern Thailand. This report attempts to capture the discussions emerging during the meeting and some of the learning that has been generated by the WGs since their formation. A list of the participants and their contact information is available in Appendix 1.

1.1 WORKSHOP PROCESS

The workshop brought together 50 individuals involved in community forest management (CFM) programs and projects in three countries of the lower Mekong Basin – Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam. The meeting agenda was designed to review the activities and findings of the CFM-WGs in Cambodia and Vietnam since their establishment in 1998. WGs also met in closed sessions, held in the respective national language, to identify important issues and activities on which to focus in the coming year.

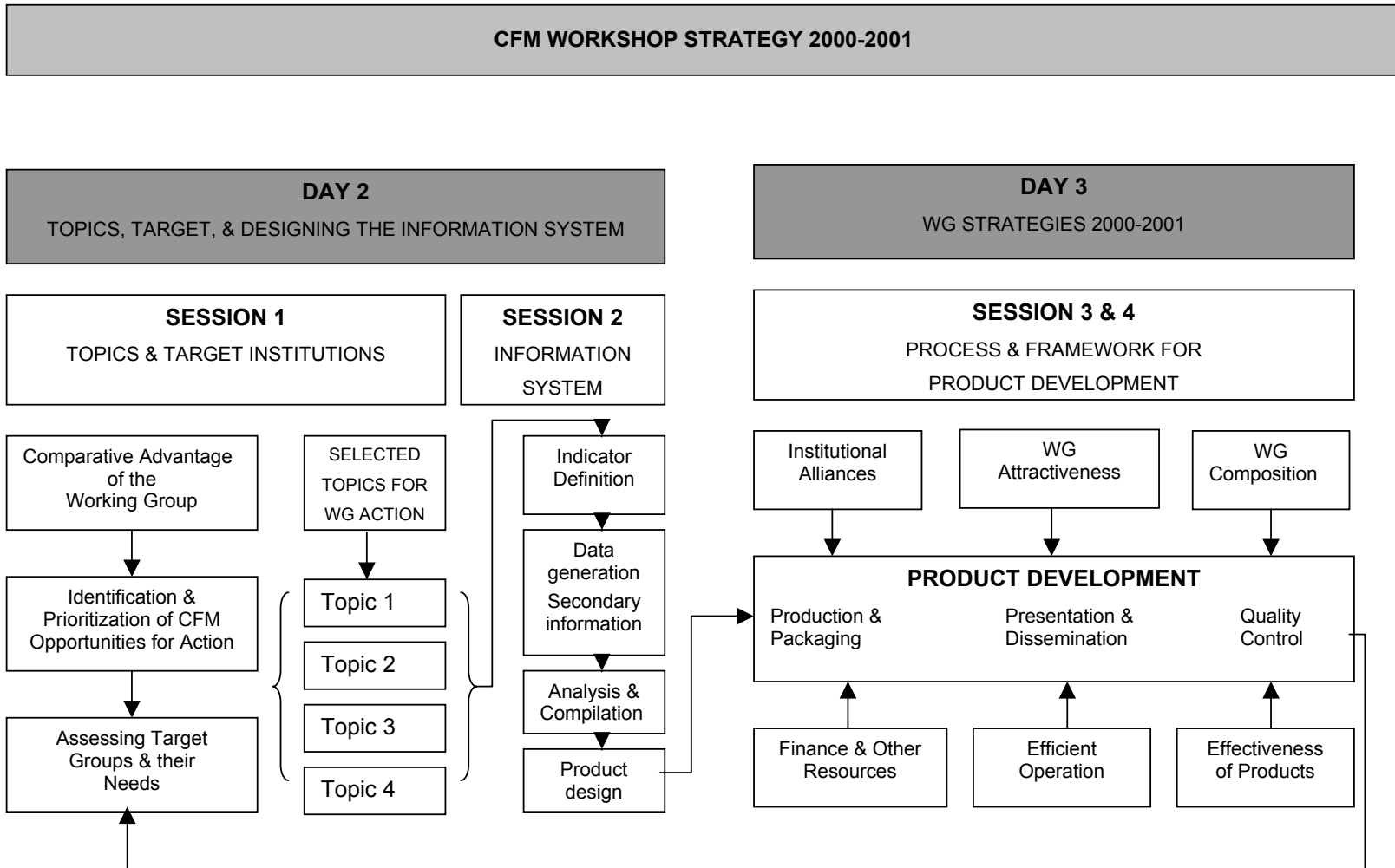
The first day was devoted to the presentation of reports from the national WGs and from representatives of international organizations/projects. In the morning, WG members described the current state of CFM policy and program contexts in their countries. Presentations of WG strategies also covered operational and thematic activities, including case studies and their findings that have emerged over the past year (see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1



The second and third day of the workshop focused on the CFM Policy Development Process. The program was structured to allow each working group to identify policy topics, target institutions and strategies to address them during the coming year (see Figure 2). Each national working group met to review critical policy and program areas that could impact CFM in the future. For each issue, the WGs considered whether they were positioned to address these targets of opportunity, based on their access to the key individuals and institutions involved, prior work and experience, and human and financial resources. On the basis of this review, one or two priority topics were selected for WG attention. During the afternoon, each WG considered their chosen topic in terms of the goals they hoped to achieve. Based on these objectives, the WGs identified: i) key information to be gathered; ii) the target institutions that could be engaged in the dialogue process; and iii) the type of information products and processes that could be used to help inform policy makers.

FIGURE 2



On the third day, WGs met to refine their strategies. The WGs prepared activity timelines and organizational charts to illustrate their strategies, and reviewed their past operational experiences to identify ways to strengthen the effectiveness of their work. Special attention was given to considering ways to improve institutional alliances by creating stronger linkages with each WG member's home institutions. The WG considered new members who could improve their composition, as well as ways to create stronger incentives for member participation. A number of operational concerns were also addressed during this session. Discussions focused on ways to generate additional financial resources for policy studies, field research, cross-visits and other activities. Participants examined ways to make WG operations more efficient in terms of the timing and location of meetings, preparation and follow-up, the role of facilitators and the WG secretariat. Finally, the WGs discussed how to enhance the impact and effectiveness of their work, both through interpersonal communications with senior officials and via their publications. Special attention was given to the preparation, packaging, presentation and dissemination of information products, as well as means to ensure high quality outputs.

Periodically, during the second and third days of the workshop, the WGs met together in plenary sessions to share their ideas. Participants from international organizations and projects (referred to as "support organizations") met in parallel sessions to explore how external assistance to CFM and the working groups could be better coordinated and designed to meet changing country group needs. A number of recommendations for action were formulated.

1.2 APPROACHES TO WG STRATEGY & OPERATIONS

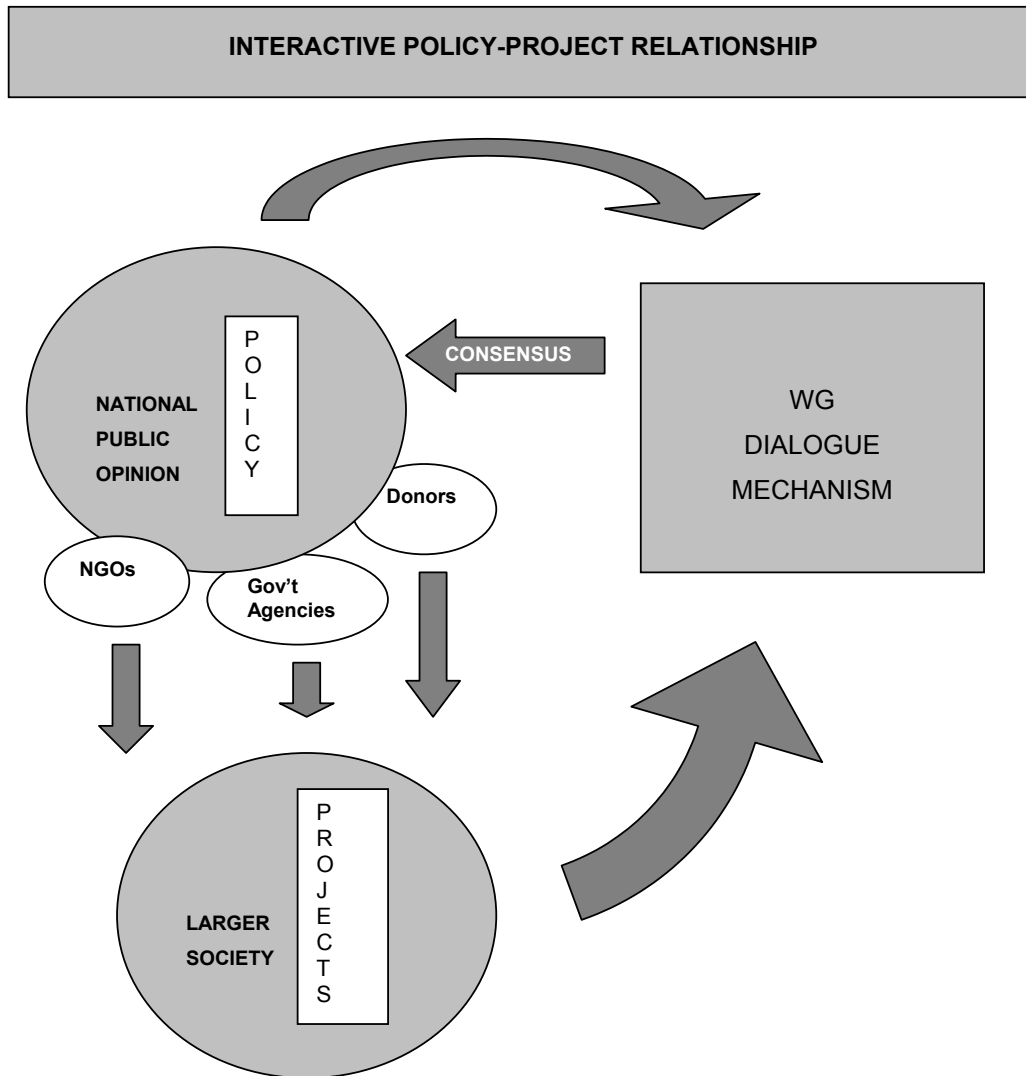
The need for national working groups is apparent as governments and development agencies recognize the limitations of depending solely on time-bound, area specific projects that are unable to directly address policy issues and institutional transitions. This is the case not only in the forestry sector but in virtually all public sectors. In the forestry sector, the need is especially urgent as many countries are re-evaluating the effectiveness of formal forest management systems that have relied exclusively on state agencies. Budgetary constraints, unsustainable management practices, trends towards decentralized governance systems, expanding populations, migration and growing rural dependencies all argue for devolving forest decision making responsibilities to lower levels. A growing number of professionals are beginning to acknowledge that transferring forest management responsibilities and functions to local communities will be an important step in stabilizing natural forest environments. Reframing national forestry sector policies and reorienting management institutions are critical elements. To support this process, public sector strategies are required which have very different characteristics in comparison to conventional development projects.

1.3 GOALS AND ORGANIZATION

Working group strategies oriented towards establishing an effective and enabling policy and program environment are evolving in different ways in many developed and developing countries. In many cases, WGs are envisaged in part as policy dialogue mechanisms, drawing on project-level learning, to analyze and feed relevant information to government planners, donors and NGOs in order to contribute to the creation of national CFM strategies (see Figure 3). There are no rules or recipes for creating a successful process to facilitate policy dialogue. However, some trends may be observed. This report suggest a number of strategies for organizing and operating national working groups on CFM, including leadership and facilitation, group structure and activities. These guidelines were suggested to WGs in Cambodia and Vietnam and have been adapted to those contexts in different ways. The broad agenda of many of these groups is to assess the state of Community Forest Management (CFM) including government activities, indigenous systems and externally sponsored projects, to analyze constraints and opportunities affecting community forest management efforts, and propose policy and program recommendations to government and relevant development agencies. The effectiveness of a working group may be enhanced if it is convened by an appropriate government agency, typically the national forestry department, while drawing its membership from a select group of government (GO) and non-government organizations (NGO), donor agencies and academic institutions directly engaged with CFM related programs. WG members, however, often come together as individual professionals, rather than as representatives of their respective organizations. Whatever the case, the combined knowledge of the group is greater than the sum of the individual members.

The most effective WGs meet regularly to discuss preliminary results and decide what policy and programmatic steps need to be taken to support developing CFM programs. It is often necessary for WGs to sustain their interactions for at least several years to build their capacity to operate as a group, develop a collective understanding and consensus regarding the sector and strategy, and effectively inform participatory forest management transitions. The groups would also act as an informal advisory body to government planners and multilateral and bilateral agencies seeking to invest in the forestry sector. Formalizing the WG is important to give it greater credibility. Minimally, a formal name and logo should be created, with special letterhead stationery produced. WGs should be structured and their functions adjusted to respond to national initiatives, institutions and needs.

FIGURE 3



1.4 DEVELOPING A POLICY CHANGE STRATEGY

Working group facilitators have observed that stimulating effective dialogue on key themes requires strong leadership, active members, a clear agenda and an appropriate structure to achieve their objectives. Many WGs evolve through a series of activities as outlined below. In preparing a strategy to inform policy-makers, a number of steps need to be undertaken. The following list indicates some factors that may create a context where change is possible. WGs should be aware of these factors and consciously track their status.

◆ **CREATE A DIALOGUE AMONG KEY ACTORS**

Stimulating dialogue among the different concerned stakeholders is important to discuss and reach areas of agreement. It is the role of the facilitator to set this process in motion. The facilitator may begin by taking the following steps:

- 1) discuss CFM issues with them individually
- 2) organize an initial meeting to share CFM experiences
- 3) establish a CFM working group

◆ **ASSESS TARGETS OF OPPORTUNITY AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS**

It is important for the WG to identify opportunities to inform relevant decision and policy makers. Such opportunities may exist when there is:

- 1) increased public attention to the limitations of existing policies
- 2) leadership changes
- 3) growing grassroots action
- 4) changes in funding flows
- 5) interest in collaboration by other agencies/staff
- 6) new projects under design

◆ **IDENTIFY POLICY ISSUES**

It is important for the WG to develop a clear understanding of the types of policy issues on which to focus attention. These are likely to vary according to national situations and history. Policies may be formal instruments or less formal operating guidelines used by agencies. Some policies are very influential, while others have little impact. Therefore, it is important to identify areas where increasing dialogue and information exchange could help to inform policy makers. The following activities can help the group to identify policy targets:

- 1) review forest history and macro trends
- 2) understand the legal and policy framework affecting state forest lands (i.e. laws, 5-year plans, goals, etc.)
- 3) analyze forestry sector achievements and failures emerging from government policies and donor supported programs
- 4) explore alternative policy and programmatic strategies for success
- 7) formulate recommendations for action
- 8) draft and promote CFM guidelines

1.5 IMPLEMENTING A POLICY CHANGE STRATEGY

For a WG to effectively inform policy makers, it must maintain the commitment of its members and a clear sense of mission.

The following are important elements in effective operations:

- 1) meet regularly - create a sense of group identity
- 2) develop a consensus-driven action agenda
- 3) assign roles and responsibilities
- 4) record agenda and minutes of meetings and distribute to key actors
- 5) create incentives to participate in WG

◆ ACTIVITIES

The WG needs to have activities that allow members to synthesize a broad range of information.

The following activities may facilitate the learning process:

- 1) identify experiences, projects and areas where relevant information and knowledge exists
- 2) organize diagnostic studies, cross-visits and other activities that bring attention to important learning
- 3) develop clear recommendations for action
- 4) identify indicators and benchmarks of change to reflect the adoption of working group recommendations
- 5) monitor the sector for second generation problems and achievements

◆ COMMUNICATION

Learning among WG members and recommendation formulation is an important step towards informing policy makers, and must be followed by communication of the findings. Multiple channels should be developed to feed ideas to policy makers.

- 1) select a strategic audience
- 2) identify and develop communication and information channels and flows
- 3) develop information products based on users' needs, the profile of target groups and their access to communication channels
- 4) disseminate findings to planners and policy makers and enlist their support
- 5) publish periodic reports to assess where progress is occurring and to identify constraints

◆ FIELD MONITORING

It is important that the WG monitor important field-level issues that affect CFM systems through in-depth discussions with rural people, field staff, forest administrators and planners. Based on monitoring information, WGs may develop special study programs. Monitoring should be coordinated with forest department staff and villagers using a variety of assessment techniques:

- ◆ group interviews

- ◆ key informant interviews
- ◆ meeting documentation
- ◆ triangulation
- ◆ village records
- ◆ visual observation
- ◆ map-based discussions

During the course of information collection, researchers should allow time to assess research progress, and redesign study and research issues while in the field. Each day the team will need to discuss their findings. Data should be written-up as soon as possible after debriefing, describing the primary objectives of the study, listing key issues and findings and discussing recommended follow-up actions. Research reports should be distributed to all WG members.

The Cambodian and Vietnamese WGs have incorporated many of the strategies discussed above into their own organizational and research operations. While they share many similarities, the WGs are also distinctive in terms of the nature of their membership, leadership style, relationship to external projects and approach to their designated tasks. Both groups have taken steps to formalize their organizations by seeking government recognition. One indicator of their acceptance and effectiveness is that the Government of Vietnam has requested that the Vietnamese WG provide policy suggestions regarding community forestry. While the national WGs have also encountered growing pains as they seek to increase their effectiveness and respond to the needs of their members, their overall experience has been very positive and productive. This report describes what the WGs have accomplished over the past eighteen months, how they have functioned as new institutions, and how they plan to further strengthen themselves and their strategies in the years ahead. Detailed information on the evolution of the WGs in Vietnam and Cambodia is available on MEKONGINFO at www.mekonginfo.org



Part II: CAMBODIA

While Cambodia has yet to formally approve a new national forest policy that empowers community groups to manage state forestlands, field-level experimentation has spread rapidly over the past few years and draft versions of community forestry policies and guidelines are currently under review. The formation of the Cambodian Working Group on Community Forestry (CWG) now provides a national body to review local experience and formulate policy recommendations. Over the past eighteen months, the CWG has conducted a comprehensive review of documents, field studies and forestry sector assessments. The CWG has five broad goals:

- Contribute to the development of community forestry policies
- Identify stakeholder needs
- Promote understanding of community forestry
- Link relevant organizations
- Promote coordination and information sharing

The Cambodia section of this report provides a summary of the activities of the CWG and its operating strategies, and draws together a range of information products generated by the group since its formation. The CWG has collected over two hundred documents related to communities and the forestry sector in Cambodia providing a database for research and policy analysis. Based on these documents, a synthesis paper has been drafted, and a summary of land tenure, ecological and ethnic contexts has been produced to provide inputs for the CWG to develop a CF typology. Extracts from these reports are included in this section.

2.1 FOREST CONTEXT AND MANAGEMENT HISTORY

It is currently estimated that forests account for approximately ten million hectares of Cambodia's total land area of 17.7 million hectares. Approximately 60 percent of the forest ecosystems are wet tropical evergreen and mixed rainforests, with the remainder drier monsoon, deciduous forest (see Table 1).

TABLE 1

FOREST RESOURCES IN CAMBODIA	
Forest classification	Total no. of hectares
Evergreen	3,986,719
Mixed	1,505,326
Deciduous	4,281,397
Forest Re-growth	374,197
Flooded	335,307
Mangrove	72,835
Bamboo	33,370
Plantation	82,425
Total Forest Cover	10, 671, 576

In the late 1960s, approximately 73 percent of Cambodia was forested. Rapid deforestation has occurred since then, especially in the past decade. Current forest cover figures vary from 40 to 58 percent of total land area. Thirty-nine percent of the land area has been allocated to larger timber concessions. Thousands of communities are located within the concession areas. They hold usufruct rights to that land under customary law and are heavily dependent on it for their cash income, agricultural land and subsistence needs. Forty percent of Cambodians live in absolute poverty and much of their income is derived from common property resources like forests and fisheries. Government policies that allocate large parts of the resource base to external commercial interests directly cut into the income available for a large segment of the population.

The rapid exploitation of Cambodia's forests has received growing attention by the outside world over the past decade. In the late 1980s, logging bans in Thailand put increasing pressure on Cambodian forests as Thai generals made alliances with Khmer Rouge leaders. Since the mid-1990s, the current government has begun leasing large tracts of forest to private concessionaires in exchange for much-needed foreign revenue. In addition, unregulated and illegal timber smuggling has resulted in high volumes of logs being transported across the Thai and Vietnamese borders. During the 1997-98 dry season, it is estimated that between 200,000 to 400,000 cubic meters of logs were exported from Ratanakiri Province to Vietnam. On the other

side of the country, in Battambang Province, 125,000 cubic meters went across the border to Thailand.

Nationwide, it is estimated that some 4 million cubic meters of timber is being exported from the country, reflecting at least four times the level of sustainable harvest. A recent World Bank report concludes that 94 percent of timber exports are illegal because of illicit felling and transport practices, failure to pay government fees and other causes. In response to the problems faced by the government in monitoring illegal logging and increasing pressure from the international community, the Prime Minister banned logging altogether in early 1999 and, in the second half of the year, formally requested the international organization Global Witness to track illicit timber extraction. While a hierarchy of regulatory instruments exists within Cambodia, the development and integration of regulatory frameworks is poor. Varied interpretations of legal instruments arise as they generally lack guiding commentaries. Many laws leave the substantial issues to subordinate sub-decrees to be developed later, thereby prolonging the lengthy process of effective legislation.

In Cambodia, virtually all natural forests fall under the legal authority of the government according to Forest Law No. 35. Yet, management claims are often held by more than one party and, as a consequence, much of the forest lands are contested domain. Management authority and claims on forest land are broadly divided into the following categories (see Box 1). After the 1993 election, the King requested that the government revise the forest management systems in the country and establish a protected area system. As part of the World Bank/FAO/UNDP strategy in Cambodia, a review of forest policy was completed in 1999 resulting in a draft national forest policy being considered by the government. In 1996, a sub-decree was drafted concerning community forestry (CF). The original CF sub-decree was limited to extending community forest management rights to villages with degraded forest or plantation land. Primary and secondary forests were not mentioned. The sub-decree was withdrawn from the Council of Ministers along with a broader draft of the new Forestry Law currently under discussion.

Forests are important economic resources for most rural communities. They provide forest products and, indirectly, sustain farming and fishery systems. Given the immense problems the government faces in establishing sustainable management systems and regulations for industrial forest utilization, it is important that resident communities be given greater rights and responsibilities to manage public forest lands. Considering that the population of Cambodia will double in the coming 25 years, conserving the forest resource base through community forest management will be a necessary and complementary national strategy requiring both enabling policies and effective field support programs. Effective CF policies and programs will contribute to clarifying tenure rights and management responsibilities over the public forest domain.

BOX 1

Claims on Forest Land	
Government	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Forestry & Wildlife	Concession forest State forest enterprises Community forestry
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Nature Conservation & Protected Area	Protected areas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Department of Fisheries	Flooded forest land
Military & Private Sector Businesses	
State Forest Enterprises & Timber Concessions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Concessions	Total land: 4,739,153 ha. Total number of forest concessionaires: 19
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State Forest Enterprises	Colexim enterprise: 131,380 ha. Casotim enterprise: 147,187 ha.
Communities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Private land• Public land• Forest land (concession, non-concession. In forest area, non-forest area)• Home gardens• User groups / forest village	

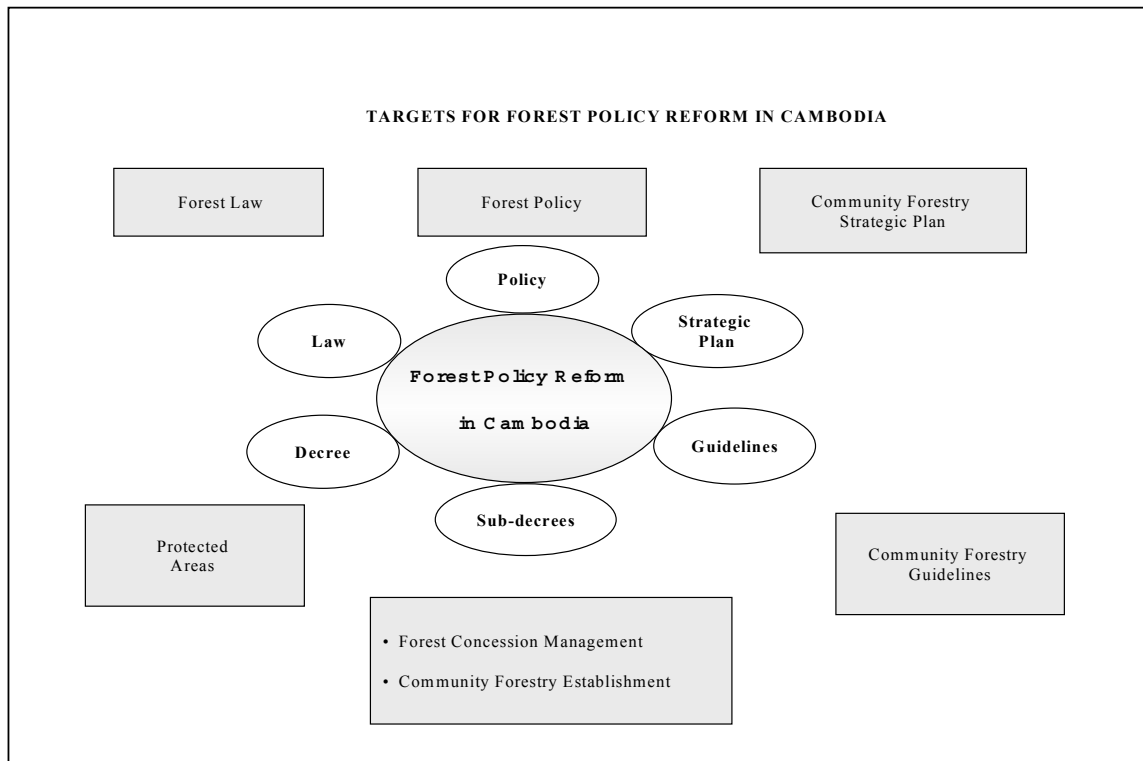
2.2 WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Cambodia Working Group (CWG) began meeting in 1998, drawing individuals from the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, the Department of Nature Conservation and Protection, as well as from educational institutions, NGOs and development assistance agencies. Over the past 18 months, the group has evolved into an institution comprising representatives of Cambodian professional planners, foresters, wildlife managers, researchers, educators and NGO workers, as well as international project staff and consultants. The CWG is excited about the potential for community management in Cambodia, developing both short- term and long-term strategies to facilitate its formalization through national policies and programs.

Many Cambodian ethnic communities have traditions of forest management, while a growing number of international organizations including Concern Worldwide, IDRC, Oxfam, IUCN and Novib are supporting CF pilot projects. While Cambodian communities are demonstrating traditional forest management capacities through projects and indigenous activities, there are currently no national policies or guidelines to formally authorize or legally support community forestry in Cambodia. Multilateral agencies in Cambodia are developing forest sector assistance. The CWG was established to respond to the need for a national mechanism to gather and analyze information on community forestry experiences and to assist in the formulation of national policies and program strategies.

In 1998 the CWG began receiving assistance from the "Sustainable Management of Resources of the Lower Mekong Basin Project" (SMRP). SMRP was instrumental in the establishment of the CWG and, through its financial and technical support, has helped the CWG to implement various activities. In November 1998, a joint meeting was held with the CWG, the Asia Forest Network and SMRP to discuss possible operational strategies. During the following months, the CWG designed an information strategy to better inform Cambodians and foreign experts about existing knowledge related to CF contexts and programs, as well as needs and opportunities to develop participatory forest management systems. The CWG envisioned a number of entry points to contribute to the development of forest policy reform including providing recommendations for CF guidelines, assisting with the design of a strategic plan and contributing ideas to new forest laws and policies (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4



In reviewing the achievements of the CWG at the Ho Chi Minh City meeting, members reported that the group was successful in establishing a clear vision of its role and objectives during its initial meetings. The CWG strategy reflects forest sector issues as well as concerns of members' institutions. Meetings were held frequently and at regular intervals and decisions were made in a transparent manner. Information flows have been satisfactory with clear task assignments and delegation of responsibility.

In July 1999, the CWG decided to begin holding its meetings in Khmer, with translation in English, to facilitate participation from national members. It was reported that the CWG wants to establish clearer short-term goals, revising its strategy as needs arise. New members also need to be brought into the group to respond to programming changes, opportunities and interests. Finally, information products should be developed more quickly to respond to the needs of policy makers, CWG members and other users. At the same time, the group plans to focus on a number of technical issues in the future. In terms of CWG operations, it was suggested that meeting facilitation could be improved. Meetings need to be scheduled with consideration for the time constraints of group members. In future, the CWG seeks to expand and diversify its funding base.

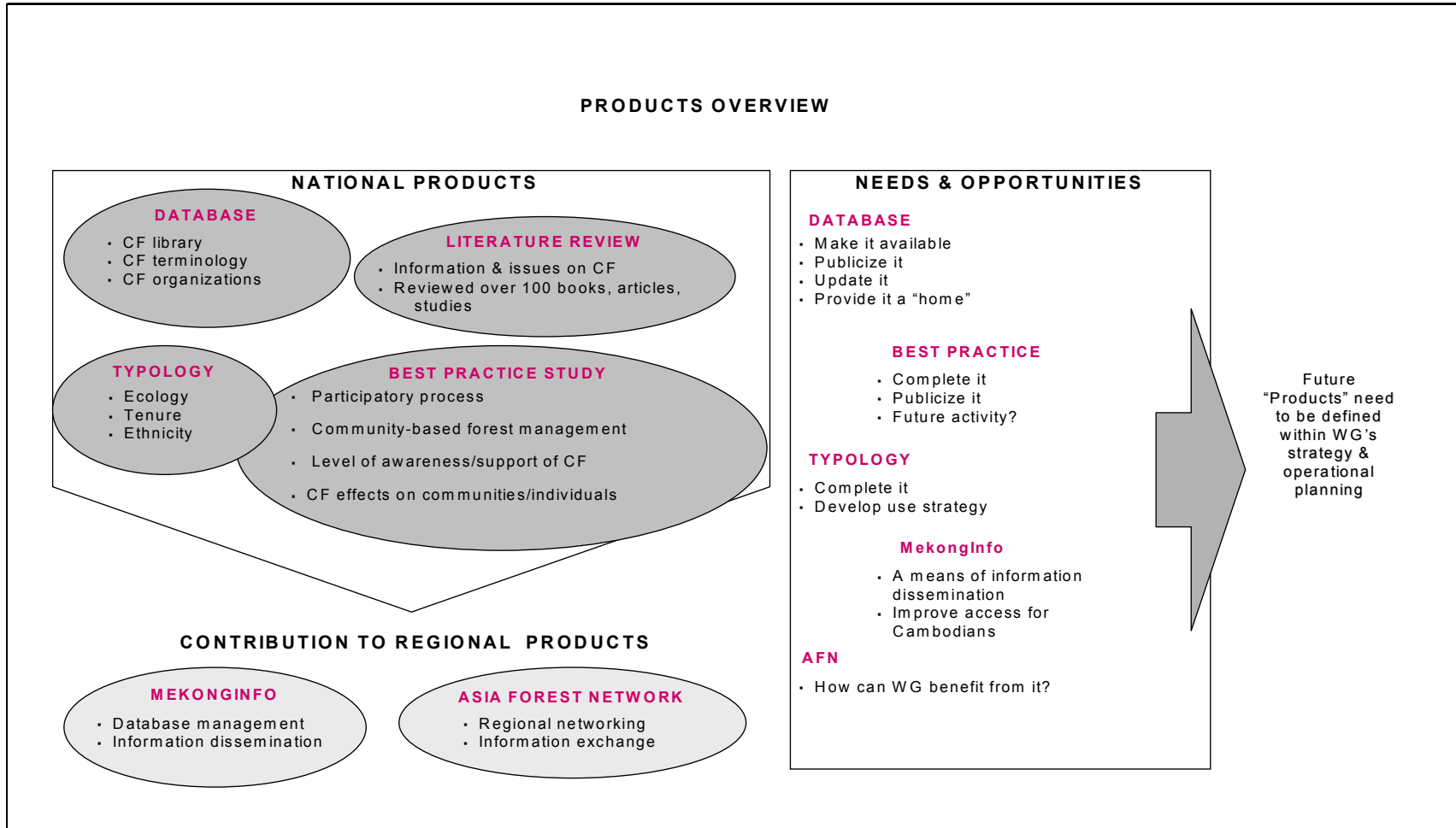
In order to improve the supply of information about community forestry in Cambodia, the CWG agreed to produce a stream of information for both national and international experts. Over a two-year period, the CWG envisaged four information products. These included a national community forestry database including the establishment of a CF library, a CF glossary in English and Khmer, and a directory of organizations working in the CF sector. Second, the CWG proposed to conduct an extensive literature review. A third component was the formulation of a typology of CF contexts in Cambodia based on ecological, tenure and ethnic characteristics. Finally, the CWG proposed to examine "best practices" in diverse locations reflecting contexts identified in the typology in order to document successful CF strategies, as well as problems and needs emerging in different settings (see Figure 5). These information strategies are described below.

2.3 COMMUNITY FORESTRY DATABASE

The CWG began building a database of relevant documents pertaining to community forest management. The purpose of the database was to improve the supply of information on community forestry to students and teachers, development workers, government staff and policy makers involved in CF activities. Over the past 18 months, work on the database has moved forward rapidly. The CF library already includes 218 references, including reports from the recent World Bank forestry sector review, personal document collections of local and international professionals, reports from the Government of Cambodia, and materials contributed by development agencies and donor organizations. In addition to the collection of existing forestry sector documents, the CWG has also developed a comprehensive list of institutions in Cambodia involved in community forest management. This CF organizations list includes data about the focus of their activities, location, key contact persons, address, telephone, fax, e-mail, etc. Finally, the CWG has begun compiling a list in Khmer of CF terms.

Finding that virtually all the available CF literature is in English, the CWG is developing a program to translate research and training materials into Khmer. It was also apparent that the community forestry literature for Cambodia is limited, with scattered coverage of areas, ethnic communities and issues. At present, the database information products are not widely known beyond the small circle of organizations engaging in community forestry. There is indeed a need to increase public awareness of the availability of existing information on community forestry, while recognizing that existing information is limited and incomplete, and that additional information on is required. The CWG has taken an important, initial step by establishing a systematic process to compile available information to help improve the understanding and delivery of the community forestry program to the rural Cambodian population.

FIGURE 5



Over the coming year, the CWG intends to clarify the ownership and management of the database including: i) where documents should be stored to provide access to the widest possible audience; and ii) how it should be managed. The CWG plans to complete the CF terminology database including definitions and translations of all entries. This may include building on and revising the existing *Dictionary of Environmental Terms* to include terms relevant to CF in Cambodia. Finally, the CWG wants to incorporate the CF database into MEKONGINFO, the Internet-based regional information system on participatory natural resource management, which provides regular CD-ROM releases. The CWG will also continue networking with other countries, organizations and institutions in the region to exchange CF information and experiences.

2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

Using the many CF related documents in the database, the CWG is conducting a series of literature reviews to synthesize existing information. To assist the CWG to examine how recent government forest tenure policies impact community management systems, an experienced biodiversity expert in Phnom Penh was approached to conduct a review of the forestry sector. Some of the major findings of the literature search are briefly summarized in the following pages. The review found that the last five years have radically altered the land allocation and tenure situation in Cambodia. The allocation of more than seven million hectares of forest land timber concessions has profound implications for community use of forest resources. More than two million hectares have been designated as protected areas, however these areas frequently lack clear boundaries and management guidelines, have limited personnel and have placed few constraints upon people's access to resources.

The loss of villager's access to land and resources in timber concession areas is a major concern to the CWG. The following key issues affect communities:

- resource and land concessions frequently give exclusive rights of forest use to companies and the military;
- concessionaires have not managed resources sustainably;
- communities have unclear rights of access to forest products;
- conflicts commonly result from denied access to forest areas, the loss of resources due to logging damage and the threat of intimidation and violence.

The legal aspects of giving common property exclusively to concessionaires from outside the community are unclear to many. Conflicts over the use of forest lands are common and there are few mechanisms in place to deal with the steadily growing number of forest land disputes. Management planning is often top-down and obscure, while management systems are often poorly integrated with local practices, which is confusing for villagers.

The multiple allocation of forest land to concessions and other users is likely to become increasingly problematic. The combination of demographic changes and reduced access to land and resources threatens the future economic well-being of rural Cambodians, especially forest-dependent ethnic minority groups. It also highlights the need for a legitimate and sustainable supply of timber for the local market.

Land disputes within the country's agricultural areas place additional stress upon forests and forest-dependent communities. Claims of land ownership by villagers frequently rest upon customary law rather than government laws, undermining the ability of the community to advocate effectively during land disputes with powerful individuals or groups. These disputes frequently displace medium and long-term residents who migrate to forested areas, thereby increasing pressure on natural resources.

Excessive focus upon local communities as the only valid stakeholders is unlikely to change the perceptions of many decision-makers in a useful way, and emphasizes the need for a thorough stakeholder analysis. For example, studies on the economic value of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) to a community in Ratanakiri Province show their high economic value to the community - as high as US\$ 3,922/ha/year. However, the comparison of this with the low royalty on timber received by the government is not very useful as it does not constitute a valid stakeholder analysis. For many decision-makers this purported economic value pales in attraction when it is considered that the market value of some timbers may be worth more than US\$ 200-300/m³, and when it is argued that the wider community also has a stake in Cambodia's forests. Many of those who do not support the development of community-based natural resource management would say that this study proves beyond any reasonable doubt that NTFPs cannot compete with timber extraction in spite of their demonstrated value.

The intensifying influence of the market economy increases the amount of cash required to satisfy the day to day survival needs of large numbers of people. This results in the intensification of destructive forest exploitation. Marketing arrangements for all forms of production are subject to inequities with middlemen generally gaining a disproportionate share of benefits. Many groups – and perhaps women's groups in particular – could overcome market-related inequities and enhance benefits if they developed cooperative arrangements that sell produce directly to a processor rather than to an intermediary.

Concerns about the identity of stakeholders and the benefits they should receive are compounded by a relatively poor understanding of the nature and condition of the resource and its relevance to the community. While forest growth parameters were well understood for some areas before the war, the current understanding of the true biological productivity and

regenerative capacity of forests by government staff and decision makers is now relatively limited. Furthermore, there is no recent reliable national forest inventory and some inventory results undertaken before the war are not available. The plethora of forest/land cover maps appearing in recent years continue to ignore issues of forest composition and structure, which have profound implications for both timber productivity and the range of NTFPs available to local communities.

Much of the recent forest inventories rely heavily on remote sensing and are not adequately complemented by appropriate ground-truthing. Consequently, most resource statements are unable to reflect both the intrinsic character of forests or the extent of forest degradation. Although the latter is less apparent than deforestation, it affects large areas of forest and has profound implications for the regenerative capacity of forests – particularly through reductions in the availability of seed for regeneration – as well as for the diversity and quantity of forest products. Finally, current forest inventory training largely omits community use and other non-timber values though there has been some attempt to map watershed features.

The Cambodia Forestry Development Plan for 1997-2000 states that the aim of forest policy is to manage forest resources to maximize economic benefit while ensuring ecological sustainability, community development and habitat protection for native fauna and flora. Policy objectives are to:

- Manage forest resources on a sustainable basis for the continuous production of forest goods and services and their optimum utilization insofar as this is compatible with environmental requirements.
- Increase the sector contribution to national revenue and employment opportunities.
- Increase the supply of forest goods and services through appropriate forestry activities that enhance the quality, productivity and utilization of forest resources.
- Establish forest plantations of both indigenous and exotic species with emphasis upon fast growing species and to promote multiple-use forestry and environmental conservation.
- Develop appropriate environmentally sound technologies for the conservation, management and utilization of forest resources.
- Conserve and protect the biological diversity, water and soil resources, and ensure that they are used sustainably.
- Strengthen human resource development to support the forestry sector.

However, the forestry sector currently:

- Under-performs financially.
- Fails to deliver funds to the state budget.
- Shows little respect for resource management.

- Ignores environmental, social and community concerns at the field-level.
- Favors individual gain.

For a detailed review see “Information and Issues Pertaining to Community-Based Management of Forest Resources in Cambodia: A Discussion Paper” (unpublished manuscript by David Ashwell, 1999) available at www.mekonginfo.org

2.5 CFM TYPOLOGY & THEMATIC REVIEWS

The CWG considered that the typology could serve as a framework for organizing the CF database, as well as an analytic method to assess problems, needs and opportunities related to community forest use and management in Cambodia. A consultant assisting the CWG explained that the project was initiated to illuminate different contexts and conditions under which community forest management systems are evolving. The CWG agreed to examine CF contexts by considering the social, environmental and legal dimensions reflected by ethnicity, ecology and tenure conditions. The typology will be useful for defining context specific objectives, strategies and methodologies to support community forestry development interventions. The goals of this activity include:

- Establishment of a framework for better identification and understanding of existing community forestry activities in Cambodia.
- Identification of appropriate places or regions where community forestry would be relevant and useful for sustainable forest management and for improvement of people's livelihoods.
- Creation of a useful instrument to design programs in a given region with community involvement.

In order to formulate the typology, the CWG has commissioned a series of thematic reviews on ethnicity, ecology and tenure preliminary findings, which are presented below.

2.5.1 Ecological Contexts and Forest Use

In Cambodia there are a number of important ecological contexts where unique human forest interaction patterns are present. The biological nature of these forests shapes the ways in which communities utilize them. The CWG has identified the following environments for the use in developing a CF typology:

- **Upland Forests** are located in hilly and mountainous areas that are not subject to flooding. Many of the people living in these areas use upland forests for swidden farming systems (rotational and pioneering). Upland communities, often ethnic minorities, are heavily dependent on forests for a wide diversity of products including traditional medicines, rattan and vines, mushrooms, vegetables, wild fruit, tubers and meat. Upland forests are also under

pressure from logging concessions, industrial crop development projects, estate plantations and the military.

- **Lowland Forests** that are not subject to seasonal flooding are frequently found in the more densely populated regions of Cambodia. These forests are an important source of fuel wood, including charcoal. They also provide a range of non-timber forest products. Due to their greater proximity to towns and urban areas, they have been heavily exploited for timber and are often in a degraded condition.
- **Flood Forests** are located in flood plains in the lowlands, the largest of which are located around the Tonle Sap Great Lake and along the Mekong River. Flooded forests are an important source of fish and many are held under commercial fishing concessions. Fish spawn in the flood forests during the rainy season. During the dry season, local people fish, collect forest products and work for fishing concessionaires. Flood forests are used for hunting, grazing, fuel wood collection, as well as being sources of raw materials for fishing equipment and house construction. In the wet season, villagers collect large quantities of fuel wood from the flooded forest for sale to urban areas and for fish smoking. Commercial fuel wood extraction and dry season clearing of farmland has degraded large sections of the flood forest.
- **Mangrove Forests** are located in tidal areas. People living within or near mangrove forests use these environments for charcoal production and construction timber, as well as for shrimp farming. Mangrove forest-dependent communities traditionally use these resources for cultivating shellfish, trapping and farming crabs, and collecting other aquatic products. The main threat to mangrove forests is clearing for shrimp farming and industrial charcoal production.
- **Paddy Field Forests** are found in lowland, agricultural areas where trees grow in and around paddy fields, on dikes and field bunds and on neighboring agricultural land. These forests are important sources of fuel wood, timber for buildings and tools, fodder and fruit. Paddy field forests are believed to enhance the fertility of the rice fields.
- **Village Forests** are communally-owned and generally accepted as the reserve of specific settlements by government and neighboring communities. Community members usually have clear use rights and responsibilities for village forest management. In some cases, village forest is allocated for shifting cultivation and may be transferred to the next generation. In the rainy season, village forests are used for grazing and the collection of non-timber forest products for home consumption and income generation.
- **Household Forests** are privately owned by individual families. They are often intensively managed through planting, thinning, fertilizing and felling. Composition can be highly diverse

and a high proportion of species will be productive, often multi-purpose. Household forests often mimic natural forests possessing a multi-storied structure comprised of timber and fruiting species in the canopy with creepers, intermediate height trees, shrubs, food crops and grasses present. Household forests are an important source of fodder, fruit, fiber and herbal medicine, and could be an important source of fuel wood in the future.

2.5.3 Ethnic Groups and Forest Use

The population of Cambodia was estimated to be 11.4 million in 1998. This population consists of different ethnic groups, including Khmer, Cham, Vietnamese, Chinese and hill tribes. With an annual growth rate of 2.49 percent, Cambodia's population is increasing rapidly. A large majority of the population lives in rural areas and depends on natural resources, especially forest resources, for their subsistence needs.

Most of the Khmer ethnic groups living in rural areas depend at least partially on forest resources for livelihood and income generation. Khmer use forest resources for collection of timber and non-timber forest products including fuel wood, building and household materials, food traditional medicine, livestock feed and transportation. Khmer tend to reside in the more densely populated lowland areas and practice sedentary cultivation. Natural forests, due to their closer proximity to urban centers and rural settlements, and because of road access, have been under heavier exploitation pressure than those in the uplands. As a consequence, much of the existing natural forests are in varying stages of degradation.

By contrast, ethnic minority hills tribes in Cambodia frequently use natural forests for swidden agriculture (rotational or pioneer shifting cultivation), which is the most important economic activity and the main guarantor of food security. In swidden agriculture, forest is cleared to establish field crops. The areas are farmed on average for 8 months a year (with a range of 5 to 10 months) and normally stay productive for 3 years (with a range of 2 to 6 years). It is estimated that for every hectare of active swidden land, 4-5 hectares will be fallow. One characteristic of swidden agriculture is that other crops are farmed alongside rice. These other crops can be used to supplement the diet, provide food security in time of rice shortage, or are sold for income generation.

This indicates that the crop diversity of upland communities is extremely high. While it is important to recognize that not all crop varieties are grown in each village, it is not unusual to find 60 to 100 crop varieties (not including rice) in a single village area. Some highland families cultivate areas adjacent to each other. In some cases, each family has their own plot of land, but traditionally families have worked their land together. While this practice is not as popular as in

the past, nevertheless adjacent families, which are often related, still assist their neighbors with various agriculture tasks.

The forest ecosystem is also of major importance for the subsistence economy of highland communities. Detailed surveys in highland areas demonstrate the value of NTFPs as an important source of subsistence. All households rely on NTFPs to supply foods, medicines and materials for building and transportation. Raw materials for handicrafts are also collected from the forests. Rattan, bamboo, fruits, medicines, vegetables and wild animals are hunted and collected. Secure access to these forests and conservation of their resources are essential in land use planning for each village. This requires a perspective on land security that goes beyond the boundaries of the village and agricultural land, but focuses equally on old-growth forests on which villagers depend. In general, common forests lack clearly defined boundaries and are located outside village communal boundaries (they may be 1 or 2 days walk away from the village). Most highlanders believe in mountain and forest spirits and there are many places where people make offerings and hold ceremonies especially when there is any kind of illness or negative occurrence in the village. The spirits of the forest are also said to forbid the cutting of certain trees.

In traditional systems of forest management in upland areas, forest fallows are used to maintain soil fertility. Boundaries have been developed over generations between communal swidden lands of neighboring villages. The boundaries are negotiated by elders from the neighboring villages and set by animal sacrifices. This system also allows equitable and flexible allocation of resources within the communal boundaries, while speculation is prevented since any one family cannot cultivate land in two villages at the same time. Only members of the village have rights to cultivate within the communal boundaries, though boundaries may be changed if there is disagreement between two villages, by re-negotiation and sacrifice.

The village site may move but only within the communal village boundaries. If the village splits (due to population increase or conflict of elders) the breakaway group will look for new land. This may occur once in two or three generations. Spirit forests are maintained within the communal boundaries and ensure the conservation of forest and wildlife. Village forest conservation areas tend to be old-growth forests that are used for hunting wildlife and collection of forest products. In other forests, resident spirits forbid cutting and other activities. Different forests are ruled by different spirits, each with their own taboos and spiritual regulations.

Where population has increased rapidly (usually due to immigration of outsiders) or the available fallow land has decreased (often due to encroachment by immigrants or commercial interests) the swidden system may transform to grassland. Highlander forest use systems rely on controlled burning. Forest undergrowth is usually burned to fertilize, to clear ground to facilitate hunting and

to create pathways through the forest. It is clear that the occurrence of forest fires in the dry season is the single most important factor contributing to poor forest re-growth in fallow swidden areas and the expansion of grasslands. Some Highlander groups in Kaleum District, Ratanakiri Province strictly control the indiscriminate use of fire and all villagers there appear to be well aware that random burning can significantly affect how quickly forest re-growth takes place in fallow swidden fields. Although highlander communities recognize rights to use and manage forest land for the benefit of the community from generation to generation, as yet there is no land title certificate issued by the government.

The Cham ethnic minority use forest resources to subsidize other source of livelihood staples, such as fishing. Forest resources are used primarily for fuel wood and construction materials. Additional research is required to better understand Cham traditional and current forest resource dependency and management systems. The Chinese ethnic minorities in Cambodia depend primarily on trade for livelihood and income generation. Further study is needed of Chinese traditional and current forest resource dependency and management systems. The Vietnam ethnic minorities depend primarily on fishing and small business for livelihood and income generation.

2.5.3 Forest Tenure

Forest tenure in Cambodia reflects the features, issues and ambiguities that characterize land tenure in general. The potential for obtaining wealth rapidly from selling standing timber – forest 'capital' accumulated over a long period – distinguishes Cambodia's forest resources from land in general. As Cambodia established and developed links to world timber markets in the past half decade, this potential became real as standing timber was sold to international buyers. With it, *de facto* forest tenure shifted radically, as a small elite exercised its power to privatize what was previously 'national' wealth, over-riding both customary tenure of rural people and any legal tenure that might interfere in the capture of forest wealth by the elite. As a result of intense international pressure, the government has sought to constrain mass logging, but tensions about forests – and about forest tenure – remain high and far from resolved.

Under current and proposed forest law, all "forest" in Cambodia is the property of the State. Jurisdiction and authority for forests is generally assigned to the MAFF Department of Forestry and Wildlife. However, designated protected areas are assigned to the Ministry of Environment, and wetland and mangrove forests are assigned to the MAFF Department of Fisheries. Current forest law is recognized as inadequate and unclear, and a new forest law is being formulated. The new law is expected to be more comprehensive than the current law. While it is not intended to fundamentally alter the character of forest tenure, the draft law appears to enable community

forestry and provides a coherent legal framework for forest concessions, both of which have significant implications for forest tenure. The new forest law will also leave a variety of important issues to be resolved, such as clarification of the criteria and process for distinguishing “forest” from “non-forest” areas. For instance:

- Is “forest” all the area currently occupied by trees – thereby not encompassing recently deforested areas?
- Or is “forest” the area that was under forest cover at some time in the past – if so, when and according to what evidence?
- Once “forest” is legally recognized, is there any means for later re-classification?

Under current forest law, usufruct rights to forest resources can be conveyed by the State to designated beneficiaries by means of forest concessions (limited usufruct rights) and community forest designations (limited usufruct rights). The proposed draft forest law will continue and strengthen both provisions. Current forest law and forest management practice by the State does not recognize customary tenure *per se* in relation to forests. However, the proposed draft forest law provides for recognition of customary rights to forest areas (possibly full usufruct right), and draft policies for forest concession management and protected area management recognize customary rights to forest areas. Current forest law does not recognize private ownership of “forest.” The proposed draft law is less clear regarding private ownership (full usufruct right) of “forest”, although there is provision for continuation of private ownership of forest resulting from tree planting.

Land and resource allocations in recent years have transferred extensive areas of forest to non-forest status, such as land grants to the military and agricultural concessions. Rights to these forests have thereby been transferred from under the jurisdiction of forest law. Provisions in the draft land law, including a provision for “free concessions”, could provide a means to continue such allocations, particularly in the absence of any transparent mechanism and process for making allocations. To help operationalize the new forest law, the CWG has contributed to the preparation of community forestry guidelines. Based on the consideration of tenure, ethnic and ecological conditions, the CWG has identified four distinctive contexts for collaborative forest management (see Table 2).

TABLE 2

PEOPLE & FOREST MANAGEMENT			
No	Forest Type	People	CFM Management and Potential
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concession forest • State forest • Enterprise • Protected area • Upland forest 	Around and within the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-wood forest • Production • Paddy field forest • Agro-forestry & swidden agriculture • Religion forest • Management
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-forest • Degraded forest area 	Around and within the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm forest • Village forest • Household forest, crops cultivation • Agro-forestry • Limited CFM
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flooded forest 	Beside the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farm forest • Non-wood forest product • Crops plantation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mangrove forest 	Beside the forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fishing gear • Charcoal • Shrimp or lobster paddy

2.6 "BEST PRACTICE" STUDIES

During 1999, the CWG initiated a series of "best practice" studies. With a number of community forestry projects being implemented throughout the country, the CWG wanted to gain a better understanding of the current situation of community forestry in Cambodia. To gain this understanding, the group decided to contribute to the discussion of projects in five provinces. The goal of the study is to document "best practices" of community forestry in terms of community awareness, broad-based participation in management decision-making, conflict resolution, coordination with government and sustainable productive use.

The CWG established a core research team and two field study teams to carry out the study, with participants from government and academic institutions. The core team provided direction and advice to the field study team and assisted with data analysis and review of field reports. The research team gathered field information, conducted data analysis and prepared reports. The research team visited the project sites and interviewed people connected with the projects

including villagers, village leaders, provincial authorities, NGOs and international organizations/projects.

The research team examined commonalities and differences among five community forestry projects to see what patterns, if any, emerged, as well as their impacts on the community. Impacts of community forestry on the following topics were analyzed including: household economy, access to and user rights for natural resources, biodiversity and productivity, collaborative action with provincial government, stability and effectiveness of local institutions, and community development.

The five projects studied are all supported by international organizations and NGOs including a local Buddhist organization. These organizations work directly with villagers, as well as with the Department of Forestry & Wildlife and the Ministry of Environment at both national and provincial levels. Two of the projects initially had a focus on reforestation of degraded land but eventually evolved to community forestry projects due to concerns with long-term, sustainable forest management. Community forestry programs are well underway in three of the projects, with community-based management committees established to either enforce the approved management rules and regulations of the community forest or to develop the management rules and regulations. One project is planning a transition to community forestry, while another emphasizes family-level agricultural development and plans a transition to community forestry as a long-term goal.

In the study sites, there are two types of community forest management committees:

1. Village chiefs make up the committee members itself or hold high level position, such as committee chairperson.
2. Villagers make up the committee members and occupy the different positions, including the committee chairperson. Village leaders can become members of the committee without holding a high position.

In both forms, committee members are elected by villagers who are participating in the CF project. In some cases, the next higher administrative authority, such as the commune chief, appoints the leaders of the management communities. In Kampong Chhnang Province, the team examined two villages that, upon hearing about Concern Worldwide's community forestry program elsewhere in the province, sought its assistance with setting up community forestry program to safeguard their village forests. These cases illustrate situations where a community expresses its desire to manage its village forest after observing a similar program implemented in nearby communities. The FAO Participatory Natural Resource Management Project in Siem Reap reported that some communities have approached its staff requesting help to set up

community forestry program in their villages, after seeing how other communities benefited from their own community forestry programs.

2.6.1 Lessons Learned

The "best practice" case studies are already generating interesting findings for the CWG. Some of these preliminary findings are presented below.

For community development

- Community forestry programs serve as an entry point for outsiders to work in communities and can lead to other village development activities.
- Following the establishment of a CF program, villagers felt that there are more clear and secure long-term benefits from the forest. This includes future shared-benefits and stronger rights to use the forest.
- Villagers' outlook begins to change as they realize that by protecting and caring for their forest now, they will benefit from it in the future. This outlook is supportive of community development as people begin to think about long-term needs rather than short-term with respect to their utilization of natural resources.
- A successful program in one village can encourage neighboring villages to utilize CF programs.

For government

- CF could assist the government to manage some of the state's forests by allowing local communities to assume a greater role in managing forests and to benefit from them.
- Although government officials have gained considerable knowledge and understanding of community forestry through training and practical field experience in recent years, national and provincial government organizations lack the capacity and financial resources to initiate community forestry programs at the village level.
- Community forestry guidelines and the sub-decree currently being developed will be important to clarify the benefits for communities and the management roles of communities and government.
- The government needs to consider providing extension services to assist communities to establish community forestry by linking them with sector NGOs.

For NGOs and IOs

- NGOs and IOs will continue to play important and necessary intermediary role in the foreseeable future in establishing and expanding community forestry in Cambodia due to their access to technical and financial resources.
- NGO activities at the grassroots strengthen the capacity of communities to mobilize and organize.
- Continued efforts are required to strengthen linkages between local people and provincial government staff (including the Forestry Office or Department of Environment) and provide training to improve understanding of community forestry concepts, especially regarding future benefits.
- NGOs and IOs, given their vast field experience, need to continue their close collaboration with the national government to increase its awareness and acceptance of community forestry and to help with shaping community forestry policies.

2.7 WORKPLAN 2000-2001

During the regional workshop, the CWG identified a number of steps that would enhance its structure, operations and activities in the coming year.

The CWG plans to:

1. Formalize its identity through the issuance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the government institutions operating in the forestry and environment sectors.
2. Retain current members and enhance the current composition by attracting new participants from:
 - Department of Fishery (which has been assigned responsibility for the flood forests surrounding the Tonle Sap Lake).
 - Faculty of Fisheries.
 - International organizations and NGOs working on forest related issues in Cambodia including JICA, the Cambodia German Forestry Program and Oxfam.
3. Establish stronger institutional alliances and identify mandates for each participating institution by exploring the individual interests of government officials and assessing their willingness to commit staff and resources.
4. Provide a range of incentives and opportunities for its members, which could include the development of:
 - Mechanisms for information exchange
 - Informal communication channels for individuals from different agencies
 - An egalitarian environment for dialogue

- Means for members to learn and acquiring new skills, knowledge and experiences (for instance through meetings, field research and cross-visits within and outside Cambodia).
5. Enhance the efficiency and performance of the group's operations through the following steps:
- Improve facilitation at meetings.
 - Plan meeting schedules to take into account members' time constraints.
 - Shape meeting agendas to respond to the interests and professional needs of members.
 - Provide documentation in Khmer and English.
 - Improve the quality of written reports and other information products through better editing and production techniques.
 - Seek more feedback from the users of CWG information products through questionnaires and workshops.
 - Prepare a plan to secure and diversify financial support.
 - Resolve ownership and management requirements for the community forestry and resource management library.

In terms of its activities, the CWG plans to:

1. Create a core group to develop a strategy to institutionalize the CF database.
2. Further develop the CF database through the creation of linkages with Cambodian and international organizations to allow exchanges of information and experiences.
3. Share information collected, analyzed and produced by the CWG through MEKONGINFO (www.mekonginfo.org) and the Asia Forest Network's publication series.
4. Find ways to increase the amount of CF materials available in Khmer, including the definition and translation of terms commonly used in CF planning and research into Khmer.
5. Support the development of clear national guidelines for CF implementation to address confusion over forest settlement and encroachment, and conflicting claims on state forest lands. The development of guidelines should build on existing CFM typologies and commission case studies of encroachment situations to better understand conflicts emerging between forest users. The goal will be to identify conflict resolution and tenure strategies that address forest land disputes in a just and equitable manner, reflecting the interests of local forest dependent communities. The primary stakeholders will include the Ministry of Environment, the Department of Forestry and Wildlife, the Land Title Department, Department of Fisheries, provincial authorities, private logging companies, NGOs and community organizations.



Part III: THAILAND

Community forestry policies have been under active discussion by the Government of Thailand for nearly a decade. Senior officers of the Watershed Management Division in the Royal Forest Department (RFD) attending the Ho Chi Minh workshop reported that continuing deforestation in Thailand is creating increased interest by the government to promote the involvement of communities in the management of state forest lands. A community forestry bill has been pending and is considered likely to be approved in 2000.

The new constitution of Thailand ensures the right of people to manage their resources. The government recognizes that the protection of ecological functions, bio-diversity conservation and the needs of local people need to be balanced. While there has been heated debate over the nature of this balance among the NGO community, RFD, academics and communities, conflicts appear to be decreasing as consensus-based strategies emerge at the field-level. Yet much remains to be done to resolve disputes over village and protected area boundaries, and create understanding at the local level regarding the need for national conservation strategies, while incorporating traditional rights and integrating indigenous knowledge and practices into formal management systems. Thai participants at the meeting stated that they are committed to establishing a working group to examine how community involvement is progressing in the Upper Ping Watershed, and how it can be supported as new, more comprehensive CFM policies are enacted by the central government.

3.1 FOREST CONTEXT AND MANAGEMENT HISTORY

Thailand, like its neighbors in mainland Southeast Asia, was once heavily forested. In 1953, it is estimated that 60 percent of the country possessed dense natural forest cover. Heavy commercial exploitation, combined with land clearing by migrant farmers, reduced forest cover by one-half over the next thirty years. Between 1961 and 1991, Thailand's population rose from 23 million to 58 million, with forests viewed in some regions as a "open access" resources capable of providing farmland for rural families. By 1995, the official estimate of forest area was 26 percent of national territory, however conservation groups maintain that it could be as low as 18 percent.

Over the past thirty years, many policies, supported by the Ministry of Interior, the military and even the RFD, have promoted the expansion of communities into the forest reserve areas.

Subsequent policies, however, have been inconsistent regarding community rights in natural forest areas. Neither the National Forest Policy of 1985, nor the Land Reform Act, included any specific provisions to transfer forest management rights and responsibilities to communities. In recent years, RFD staff, university researchers and NGO leaders have been developing and lobbying for a national community forestry bill that would include protected areas. Participants have been challenged by the need to create a policy that is responsive to the different social and physical environments existing in the country.

Thailand has a diverse and rich tradition of household and communal natural resource management systems. Changing demographic, political and socio-economic factors are also stimulating the emergence of new community-based forest management groups. A national inventory, conducted by the RFD in 1992, documented over 12,000 rural groups protecting forest patches ranging in size from 1 to 4,000 hectares. Northern regions possess a much larger proportion of forest than other parts of the country, covering 55 percent of the land area in 1995. Much of the land that retains good forest cover is located in the uplands and highlands. Many communities, aided by their isolation, were able to protect their forests against lowland logging interests during the timber boom of the 1960s and 1970s. Ethnic minority groups in the North use the forest in different ways and each group has a variety of forest use systems and categories. Some forests are strictly protected, including many funeral and spirit groves. Other forested areas are reserved for watershed protection, especially woodlands lying in the immediate proximity of springs and water sources.

Long-term rotational systems of agriculture, such as that practiced by the Karen, regulate the opening of new forests to ensure secondary forests are established on fallow fields. Over the last ten years there has been an increasing conflict between the ethnic minorities that inhabit these watersheds, and national planners and environmentalists seeking to establish new protected areas and remove communities from within park boundaries. The question of the rights of ethnic minority peoples to the land and forests of the upland watersheds of Northern Thailand continues to be hotly debated.

As deforestation has progressed, Thailand has seen a rapid decline in its rich biodiversity and loss of forest habitat. Environmental NGOs, sometimes referred to as the 'dark green' in Thailand, have strong support within parts of the RFD, academic institutions and among Bangkok's middle class. Environmental groups have effectively lobbied for more of the country's forests to be designated as national parks and sanctuaries. The policy commitment to conservation is reflected in the 1993 Forestry Master Plan, which mandated 42 national parks and 31 wildlife sanctuaries be added to the 119 existing conservation areas. Current estimates indicate that the creation of new protected areas would require 3.3 million hectares.

Since much of the area for the new national parks and sanctuaries is located in the North, the implications for upland people are immense. Up to 53 percent of the forest land in the North could be declared off limits for hunting, agriculture and other traditional resource uses. The proposed expansion of the protected area systems will enclose the land of approximately 2,700 villages in the North. Most of these inhabitants are ethnic minority farmers, some of whom lack Thai citizenship. This policy trend is in conflict with other RFD Departments that are promoting community forest management, as well as with the Ministry of Interior, where participation of communities in forest management activities is being encouraged under decentralized governance programs.

In Northern Thailand, many upland and highland communities remain uncertain regarding their tenure status. Ethnic minority communities feel pressure from one another, from lowland Thai migrants moving upland, from government conservation programs, as well as from private sector investors. Many upland and highland farmers are moving away from shifting cultivation due to a shrinking availability of land, government pressures and new opportunities to grow market crops as they gain access to capital and new markets. Decades of project experiments with intensive vegetable, fruit and cut flower cultivation, promoted through government and non-governmental projects, have contributed to a gradual transition to sedentary farming, with more marginal fallow swidden lands now regenerating as secondary forests. Some communities point to their commitment to adaptive management as proof of their desire to work with government and to remain in their upland communities.

Due to the relatively low population levels and periodic movements, the customary systems of communal resource management of many ethnic minority communities were not highly elaborated in Northern Thailand. It has only been in recent decades that internal and external pressures have generated the need to establish more specialized systems of forest and water management that allow communities to better regulate their own resource use, as well as to smooth interactions with outsiders. Since the 1980s, a great deal of activity has focused on CFM initiatives in the North both in terms of spontaneous local dialogues, as well as government and NGO sponsored programs. Many new community forest management organizations are initiated with help from the RFD, local universities, development projects and NGOs.

Local leaders have played a large role in stimulating community interest in addressing resource conflicts, often relying on traditional institutions and communication channels. Local initiatives often focus on negotiating specific resources use rules, rights and agreements among a group of neighboring villages, including the banning of logging, regulating hunting, placing tighter controls on burning and forbidding the use of chain saws. Inter-village meetings have helped strengthen customary practices of conflict resolution, while clarifying territorial boundaries. Some

communities that possessed forest protection values in the past, but lacked an ability to enforce them, are now developing both rules and enforcement mechanisms. Other communities are learning collective bargaining and adaptive management skills in the effort to prove to government that they are responsible resource stewards and should be allowed to continue living in their forests, even after they are designated protected areas.

Social forestry programs supporting community involvement in Thai forest management have been evolving since the 1970s, however it has only been in the past decade that a clear legal framework for community forestry has begun to emerge. Developed through interactions among RFD staff, university researchers and NGO representatives, the draft Community Forest Bill has been under discussion by a series of national governments since the early 1990s. After almost a decade of debate, the law is now awaiting ratification by the current Chaun II Cabinet. Since the proposed CFM law was first placed before the government policy makers, the need for a formal legal basis for community resource management has become more acute.

While CFM legislation has not yet been approved, the concept has gained legal support under the new constitution and decentralization laws. The 1992 Tambon Administration Organization (TAO) Act strengthens the role of village governments in forest use and planning decision making. In the 1997 Constitution, Article 45 vests traditional communities with the right and duty to manage resources in their area. Unfortunately, without enabling CFM laws, current conservation policies exist in conflict with the community rights provisions listed in the Constitution. A recent agreement regarding the legal definition of community forests may help break the policy stalemate. The new definition extends RFD classifications to acknowledge traditional use forest categories, including indigenous types of conservation forest. The CFM bill will formally recognize communities as resource managers, even within protected areas.

New constitutional and legal provisions are creating an opening for the RFD to develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships with Tambon government and local communities. These partnerships are being fostered within the context of four pilot projects including; community forests within buffer zones, small scale forest plantations for Tambon councils, forest and forest protection and service support for forest management activities. Within the context of these pilot projects, the RFD is working with NGOs and Tambon government partners. It is anticipated that when the Community Forestry Bill is passed, possibly as soon as the summer of 2000, it will provide a sufficient legal basis to move beyond current pilot projects to initiate a national program.

3.2 WORKPLAN 2000-2001

Over the past twenty years, Thailand has been the home of many interdisciplinary research networks, drawing together experienced scientists, younger researchers, government planners, NGOs and development agency staff. In the early 1980s, farming systems research networks operated in the North and Northwest regions through Chiang Mai and Khon Kaen University. The regional Southeast Asian Universities Agro-Ecosystem Network (SUAN) was based in Thailand, as is the Regional Community Forestry Research and Training Center (RECOFTC). A number of nationally oriented working groups dealing with natural resource management issues including forests, watershed and water resources, operated through much of the 1990s. The delayed approval of the Community Forestry Bill due to differences of opinion within the NGO community, as well as inside the RFD appear to have contributed to the decline in national community forestry networking in the late 1990s. In 1999, a number of the senior officers within the RFD Watershed Management Division began meeting to discuss the establishment of a collaborative group to focus on community forest management strategies in Northern Thailand.

During the meeting in Ho Chi Minh City, participants from the RFD, RECOFTC and Wildlife Fund Thailand established a new working group to focus on Northern Thailand. During their presentations, members of the group noted that new participatory policies were being approved in Thailand, and that it was important that a mechanism be in place to monitor and analyze their impact in the field. The group felt there was a need to insure that village voices were heard at the provincial and national level as new, experimental policies are implemented.

In the coming year the Thai Working Group proposes to examine strategies to strengthen community organizations as they take on new management responsibilities for public forest lands. New policies will require close coordination between local communities, Tambon Administration Organizations of the Department of Local Administration, the RFD and other government agencies. In addition, there is a need to build alliances and coordinate with NGOs, academic institutions and international organizations (e.g. RECOFTC, SMRP, REPSI-WRI, AFN, IUCN). The new Thai Working Group will bring individuals together from these organizations to collectively monitor policy and programmatic transitions to community forest management systems and to study and design more effective strategies to build the organizational capacity of communities to sustainably utilize and protect upland watersheds (see Figure 6).

During the first year, field monitoring, community dialogues and other operational activities will focus on the Upper Ping Watershed on the Burmese border. The Thai Working Group will examine currently existing forest management practices and institutions, social conflicts, community forest values and stewardship goals. Through case studies, community meetings and

forums, the WG will also explore where communities are confronting difficulties in taking on management tasks due to inadequate policy support, organizational capacity, knowledge or other resources. Policy and program relevant information from the field will flow upwards, while capacity building knowledge will flow down to the communities in a variety of forms.

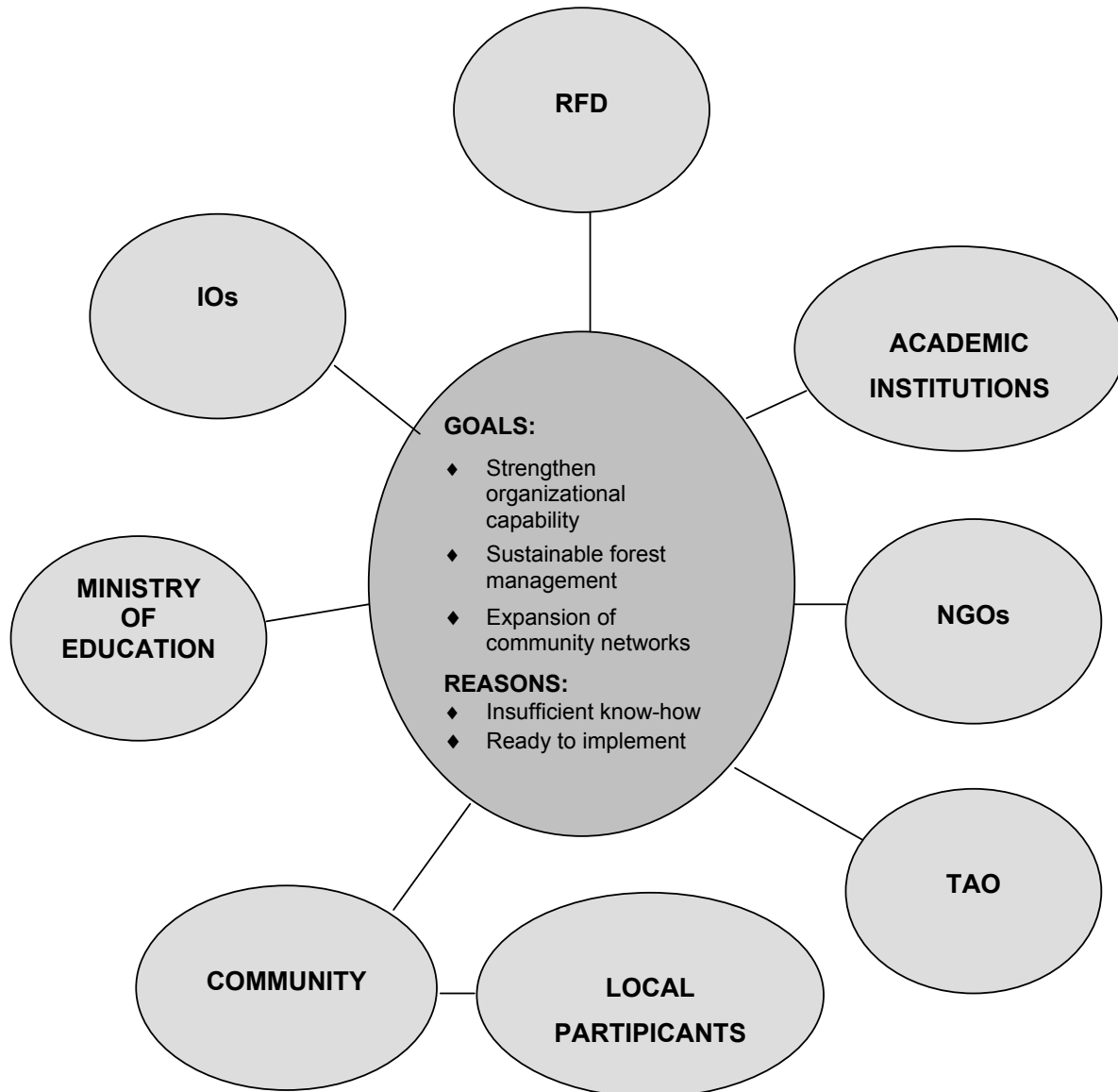
At the provincial and national levels, issues emerging at the field level will be discussed during WG meetings with recommendations directed to the RFD through the Watershed Management Division, as well as to the Department for Local Administration. At the local level, the WG will organize a number of different programs to interact with community organizations including organizing meetings and workshops, people's forums, study tours and cross-village visits. Watershed networks have already demonstrated their value in building the capacity of scattered hill tribe communities to work together in coordinating resource use, as well as in interacting with government agencies. The WG proposed to promote and facilitate the development of watershed networks in the Upper Ping Watershed during the coming year (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

WORK PLAN 2000-2001								
ACTIVITIES	2000				2001			
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
Administration								
Documentation								
Public Relations								
Field Outreach								
Training/Study Tour/Workshop								
FINANCIAL SUPPORT								
WG				OUTSIDE				
◆ RFD	◆ REPSI	◆ AFN						
◆ DOLA	◆ IUCN							
◆ WFT	◆ SMRP							
◆ RECOFTC	◆ TAO							

FIGURE 6

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHENING





Part IV: VIETNAM

Community-based forest management (CFM) has been gaining attention in Vietnam, in part due to the activities of the Vietnamese Working Group (VWG). One WG member stated that the best way to create jobs, curb illegal logging, reduce shifting cultivation and increase investment in the forestry sector is to shift policies and programs to support community forestry. He further noted that Vietnam is still struggling to shift from state forestry models to community-based strategies for sustainable forestry, and noted that:

"We need to change the law as some articles are not supportive of community forestry. There is a need to pay greater attention to benefit sharing to provide incentives, food and land security to forest-dependent communities. Decentralization and land allocation are part of this. Community forestry is not yet supported by government and we need to create conditions that will allow it to be recognized in policies and programs".

The VWG informed participants at the workshop that Vietnam's ambitious target to reforest five million hectares of land over the next decade will require the active support of rural people. The VWG is attempting to inform national planners and generate interest within the government about policies and projects that would assist households and recently tested community forestry management systems to gain legal recognition. Over the past eighteen months, the VWG has conducted seven field studies, developed national typologies and analytic models to study problems faced by communities in stabilizing and sustainably utilizing forest resources. The VWG also seeks to identify opportunities to build on indigenous management systems and exploit the natural regenerative powers of the country's forest ecosystems to restore degraded forest lands. The VWG is currently organizing a national workshop on CFM and producing policy guidelines for national planners. To understand the approach being developed by the VWG to support village forestry, it is useful to review the forestry history and current policy context in Vietnam. A more detailed description of the VWG can be found at www.mekonginfo.org

4.1 FOREST CONTEXT AND MANAGEMENT HISTORY

Vietnam can be broadly divided into nine forest regions. Forest statistics are very revealing in terms of the diverse contexts in the country. The densely populated Red River Delta and the Mekong Delta possess less than one percent forest cover, while over half of the Central Highlands are still well-forested (see Table 4). Due to the dramatic differences in population densities, land use patterns, economic infrastructure and social conditions, forest management policies and programs need to be shaped to respond to the country's diverse regional contexts.

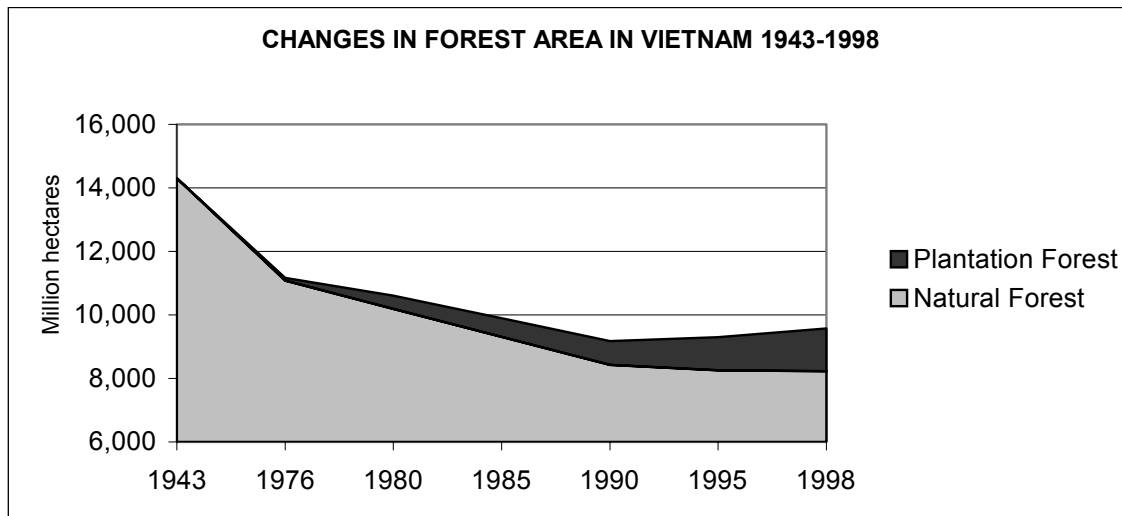
TABLE 4

FOREST AREA OF ECOLOGICAL REGIONS UP TO DECEMBER 31, 1997				
Ecological region	Total land area (1,000 ha.)	Natural forest (1,000 ha.)	Plantation forest (1,000 ha.)	Forest as % of total land cover
Total Country	33,111	8,252	1,049	29%
Northwest	3,595	464	62	15%
Central	3,332	667	169	25%
Northeast	3,368	598	138	21%
Northern Delta	1,251	22	37	0.06%
Northern Middle	5,118	1,564	266	36%
Middle Coast	4,587	1,439	192	36%
Central Highlands	5,556	3,088	72	57%
Southeast	2,345	346	90	19%
Mekong Delta	3,955	45	164	0.05%

Fifty-eight percent of the total land area of Vietnam is legally classified as forest land and under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). While legally classified as forest land, only part of this area actually possesses forest vegetation. By the late 1980's, Vietnam's forests were under intense pressure with fifty-three percent of designated forest land listed as "barren". Annual forest loss from 1990 to 1995 was on average 1.4 percent. Forest cover fell from 14.3 million hectares in 1943 to 9.6 million hectares in 1998 (see Figure 7). Tree planting activities have increased plantation area by 1.2 million hectares over the past

twenty years, however much of Vietnam's natural forests continue to degrade as a result of inadequate protection and management policies. According to an official from the Policy Department of MARD, only 1.5 million hectares of forests are currently in good condition.

FIGURE 7



Population expansion and increasing consumption are important factors driving forest clearing and timber utilization. The population grew from 15.6 million in 1921 to 75 million in 1998, and is projected to reach 100 million by the year 2000. As urban centers grew and industrial development expanded in the lowland plains and deltas, demand for forest products has increased dramatically. Local demand for forest land and forest products has also risen steadily as upland populations have grown due to the combined effects of natural increase and migration. In addition, the rapid expansion of plantation crops in upland areas, notably the Central Highlands, has also been an important cause of forest clearing. While massive investments in lowland and midland tree planting have begun to stabilize national forest cover statistics, natural forests in upland regions remain under mounting extractive pressure. Old growth natural forest is estimated to have fallen to 2 million hectares. Recent estimates indicate that deforestation is progressing at an annual rate of 100,000 to 200,000 hectares.

The government nationalized large areas of land in midland and upland regions of Northern Vietnam in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Forest land with a slope above 25 degrees was designated for forestry purposes and put under the management of State Forest Enterprises (SFEs). Control over the management of forest resources was centralized. Forest policy was based on direct state involvement in the exploitation, processing and distribution of Vietnam's forest resources in order to achieve their "rational" utilization. The Ministry of Forestry required

SFEs to follow strict silvicultural regulations and seek the Ministry's approval for their annual operational plans. In 1972, the government instituted a system of forest protection units to achieve forest preservation. Through this system the government intended to enforce forest protection regulations and guide the exploitation of forest resources.

In the highlands, state forest management was part of a larger attempt to transform the traditional use of rural resources and the underlying social structure. As in the lowlands, people in the highlands formed agricultural producer cooperatives. Under the cooperative, the land was farmed collectively and the products shared proportionate to the expenditure of labor. The cooperatives were relatively free from state interventions, in sharp contrast to the centralized control over the forests. By 1968, nine out of ten agricultural households in the Northern Mountains belonged to cooperatives. The transformation of social structures and resource use also included massive programs of resettlement and sedentarization. The programs were designed to increase cultivation and to exploit the natural resources in areas seen as "under-utilized".

The Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarization Program had the objective of providing pioneering swiddeners with permanent settlements either in the same area or in more fertile, more accessible, non-catchment areas at lower altitudes. By 1990, the program included 1.9 million highland people. In addition, the government envisioned state forest and agricultural enterprises to play important roles as poles of regional development in the highlands. To provide the human resources for uplands development, the government sponsored schemes to resettle over five million people in highland areas over the past 40 years. These projects were phased out by the early 1990s, in part due to recognition that highland areas were already densely populated in terms of available resources, and that further population growth could exacerbate deforestation.

These state policies and programs have placed some forest dependent communities in competition or conflict with state forest policies, programs and management agencies. In recent decades, forest management decisions have increasingly become the domain of government authorities and agencies, with a new code of regulations constraining local use patterns and management practices, enforced through fines and other punitive actions. In some areas, community members began to view the forest as property of the state, administered by the forest protection units. Many state officials became convinced that local people were a major threat to forest protection. At the same time, the exploitative activities of SFEs increased.

However, the state was often not able to enforce its legal restrictions. The people continued to use the forests to meet their subsistence requirements and generate income. Particularly in remote areas, where lack of infrastructure hampered state management, local people often managed forests. Ethnic minority groups practiced a diverse range of long rotation swidden

farming systems with various consequences for the forest. In some places, local users protected watershed forests, funeral forests and other forests of cultural and human-ecological significance. However, restricting local rights over forest lands provided little incentives for communities to conserve these resources. Not surprisingly, the Ministry of Forestry noted in 1991 that many areas experienced a "continuing expansion of agriculture into such forest land that is of reasonable fertility and accessibility".

In 1991, the Tropical Forestry Action Plan, the Forest Resources Protection and Development Act and the first National Forest Policy introduced a new framework for forest management. The new policy designated private households to replace SFEs as new units for forest management. New forest policies followed the lead of agricultural reforms, which transferred land management from collectives to private households during the 1980s. With appropriate guidance by the state, local people appeared on the way to becoming keepers of the forest.

The 1993 Land Law gave local people extensive use rights over agricultural and forestry land. The law stipulates that long-term usufruct rights should, for most lands, be issued to non-state entities, including households, groups of households and organizations. The use rights include permission to exchange, transfer, lease, mortgage and pass on land for inheritance. The management of forest zoned for production purposes has generally followed a farm household model which gives households long-term land use rights for barren land and land with planted forest located outside critical watershed areas. The farm household model has produced significant results in areas in which families have received support through national and international afforestation programs and where there is good market access. For example, forest plantations have re-greened the hills of the Vietnamese midlands, once a symbol of land degradation and unproductive land use. However, the actual implementation of the Land Law and forest decrees has generally resulted in the allocation of unstocked and barren "forest land" to households, while the better stocked forest land has mostly been allocated to state organizations and mass institutions. Communities have played virtually no role at all.

Forest management activities are being influenced by a number of policy instruments that can broadly be categorized as: i) basic laws, ii) legal documents, and iii) development programs. However, case studies sponsored by the VWG indicate that community-based forest management systems are operating informally in different parts of Vietnam, especially in upland ethnic minority areas. In some cases, local forest resource use and conservation systems continue to retain customary leadership patterns, organizational structures, rules and regulations, while in other areas new community management mechanisms have emerged. Many forest-dwelling communities retain spirit forests, forest gardens and traditionally protected watersheds. In some cases, district governments have issued usufruct certificates and protection contracts to

community groups, however there are no policies or programs designed especially to recognize the rights and responsibilities of small communal groups as public forest land managers.

International development agencies and government organizations are increasingly interested in working on forestry related issues in Vietnam. In 1998, 32 of 136 government branches were dealing with forestry in some manner. At that time, MARD had 29 separate forestry projects funded by bilateral or multilateral agencies. In addition, there were 33 NGO projects focusing on community forestry. A broad-based Technical Working Group was formed by MARD to discuss social forestry, land allocation and planning issues. However, no special group on community-based forest management was operating until the VWG was established in November 1998.

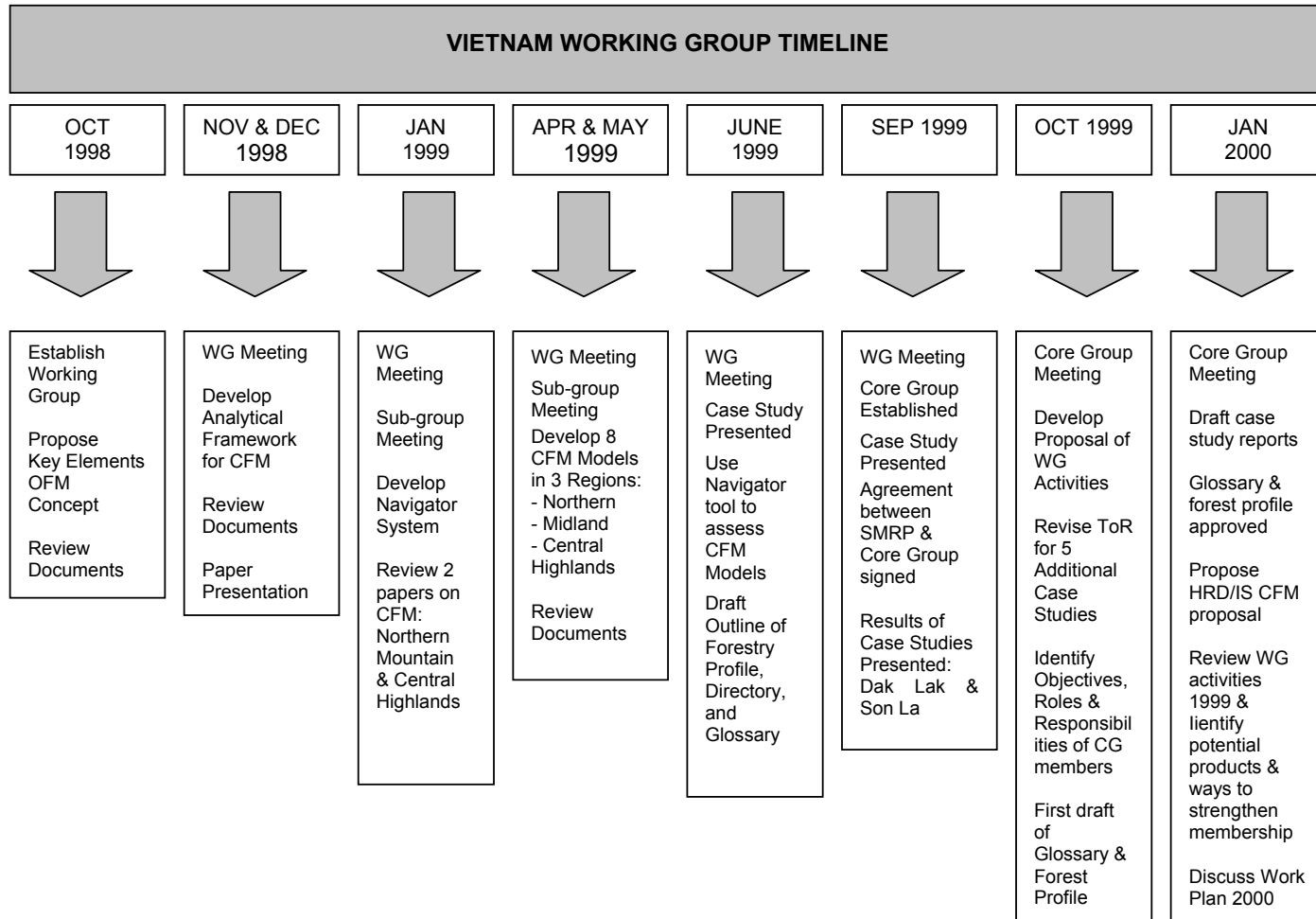
4.2 WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES

The first meeting of the Vietnamese national working group (VWG) took place in Hanoi in October 1998. At that meeting there was a consensus that a special forum would be useful to help guide the development of community forest management policies in the future. The group has met regularly to create a strategy to assess progress and analyze developments related to participatory systems of forest management. The VWG defined its goals in the following way: “to explore policy and operational strategies to facilitate and strengthen the role of communities in managing forest resources in Vietnam by providing a forum for examining, monitoring and accelerating progress in the sector”. Specific tasks include:

- Initiate discussions on CFM issues among relevant partner institutions.
- Identify relevant CFM experiences and sites whether indigenous or project-based or initiated by government.
- Develop appropriate definitions and strategies for CFM.
- Organize meetings, diagnostic surveys, cross visits and other activities to share experience, knowledge and learning.
- Conduct case studies to assess CFM in both traditional and current settings.
- Analyze constraints and opportunities affecting CFM.
- Develop and present recommendations for CFM policies and programs to government planners.

While most of the members of the VWG are government officials, members also include individuals from NGOs, donor agencies and academic institutions, as well as independent CFM experts. To facilitate the operations of the VWG, a core group was established. The core group takes responsibility for managing financing and administering the VWG activities. Over the past 15 months, the WG met regularly to design and implement its program. The WG process depicted in Figure 8 outlines the evolution of the group's work and strategic development.

FIGURE 8



4.3 CREATING AN ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK FOR CFM

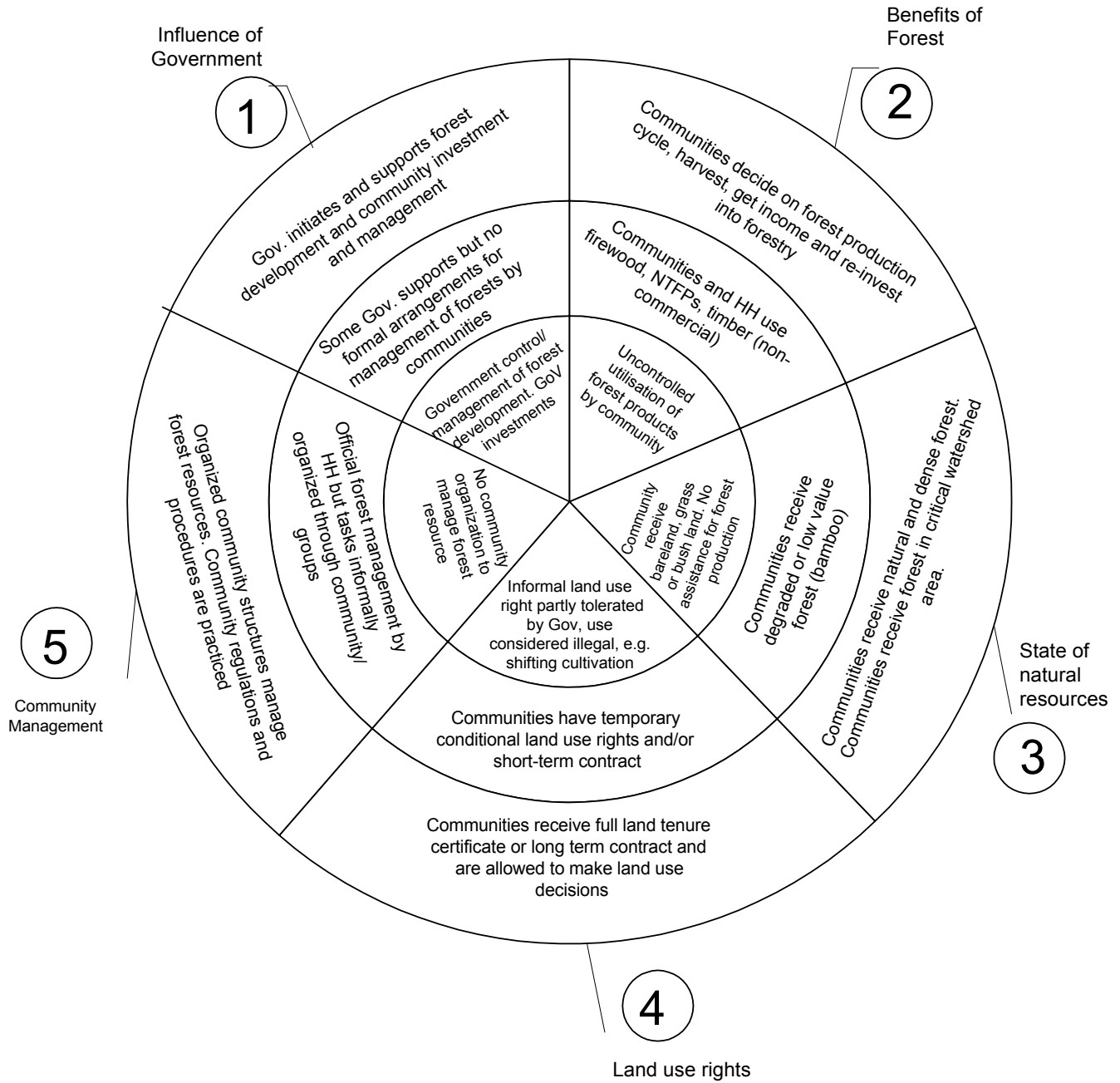
During the first meetings of the VWG, the participants decided that a framework should be developed to evaluate forest management strategies in terms of the opportunities for communities to meaningfully participate, whether they be indigenous, supported by development agencies or sponsored by the state. The analytical framework needed to provide the VWG with a systematic method to analyze case studies that the group planned to conduct in the future, drawn from a diverse set of contexts. Over the coming months, the VWG began designing an analytical tool, which became known as the "Navigator". The group determined that the "Navigator" could be used to evaluate community engagement in terms of five broad parameters, assessing whether the orientation towards the community was weak, moderate or strong (see Figure 9).

The parameters considered included:

- 1) Influence of government – the extent to which government activities in the study area are supportive of community involvement in state forest lands management.
- 2) Forest Benefit Flows – the level of direct economic benefit to the community and an evaluation of resident households.
- 3) Forest Resource Availability - the degree of forest resource surplus or scarcity.
- 4) Forest Rights and Security – the extent of government recognition of local community rights and perceived security of community members over forest resources.
- 5) Community Management Capacity - the level of sophistication of community rules and regulations over forest use, strength of leadership and ability to sustain local management institution in the face of conflicts and threats.

The Navigator has demonstrated its value in providing the VWG with a common platform for discussing and evaluating information generated by subsequent case study research.

FIGURE 9
NAVIGATOR TO ASSESS CF AND ITS COMPONENTS IN VIETNAM



4.4 CFM TYPOLOGY

Vietnam is an extremely diverse nation, stretching from the tropical Mekong Delta in the south, to the temperate Northern Mountains along the Chinese border. With over 50 ethnic groups and a wide variety of ecological contexts, it is difficult to generalize regarding forest management settings, policy requirements and development strategies. For that reason, during the initial meetings of the VWG, it was determined that some type of CFM classification system would be needed.

The VWG has been examining the characteristics of village-based forest management in different contexts in Vietnam in order to construct a geographically based typology. The preliminary typology envisions four basic CFM regions including the Northern Mountains, Midlands, Central Highlands and Coastal Mangroves (see Table 5). The VWG commissioned two review papers on the status of forest management in the Northern Mountains and Midlands, and in the Central Highlands of Vietnam. Based on these regional profiles, a series of case studies sites were selected to provide field data for comparison local conditions.

The typology relied on four major geographical zones, comparing and contrasting the regions in terms of physical nature of the forest types found in each area, the dominant forest stakeholders in each region, the orientation and priorities of government, and the important forest products and benefit flows. The first round of case studies focused on three of the four categories including the Northern Region, the Midlands and the Central Highlands, while mangrove regions were postponed for the second round of case studies.

TABLE 5

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA TYPOLOGIES IN VIETNAM & THEIR CHARACTERISTICS					
Analytical Elements		Northern Area	Midlands	Central Highlands	Mangrove
a	Natural Resource/ Forest Land	- Watershed forest - Conservation Forest - Forest garden (natural or plantation)	Forest garden	- Natural forest - Conservation forest - Plantation - Mixed	- Mangrove forest - Aquaculture
b	Stakeholders/ Community	Household-based or group of households	Household based or group of households	- Traditional ethnic minority - SFES	Household-based
c	Influence from Government	- Protected area under government control - Temporarily allocated - Contracted for protection	Allocated to households with land tenure certificate	-Protected Area/ Conservation - SFE control forest & forest land - Land allocation	- Contracted by SFES - Lands are allocated to households
d	Benefits	- Subsidized by government for protection - NTFPs - Lack of market	- Good market system - Timber & NTFPs	- Timber for non-commercial purpose - NTFPs used by households	Good market

4.5 CASE STUDIES

In the following pages, short summaries of three of the seven case studies completed by the VWG are presented. The cases are drawn from the Northwest, the North and the Central Highlands. Each case documents how communities are responding to local conditions such as population growth, economic liberalization and other social changes, as well as the impact of national policies and projects. In most cases, the studies reflect the dynamic efforts of rural Vietnamese communities to control and sustainably manage their local forests. Despite the absence of a national policy on CFM, a number of the case study communities are effectively managing local forests through hamlet-based institutions, frequently with the tacit support of local government officials and programs. Each case concludes with a brief summary of some of the observations and learning emerging from the fieldwork.

4.5.1 Doi and Ke Hamlet, Hoa Bin Province, Northwest Vietnam

While devolution of state forestlands has emphasized management by households under Program 327, some exciting developments are occurring at the community level as well. In the Forestry Protection and Development Law of 1991 it is stated that "villages which still have village forests prior to the promulgation of the Forest Protection and Development Law...shall be recognized as legalized owners of the forest". In Vietnamese, the word *tap the* is used to refer to communal groups. While it is used in reference to collectives, in the north it is often used as a term for hamlets in the study area. Between 1994 and 1996, the Forest Protection Department allocated 536,000 hectares to 1677 *tap the*, equivalent to 54 percent of the land allocated to households.

In Hoa Binh Province, each *tap the* receives a forest plot averaging 175 hectares. In Doi and Ke Hamlets, the predominantly Muong villages have received formal recognition of their rights to 574 hectares of forests that covers over 80 percent of the land area of the two villages. Traditional hunting and gathering practices are an important part of the economy of community households, especially during years when agricultural harvests are poor. The most economically important non-timber forest products are bamboo shoots and poles. The 146 families that live in the two villages practice wet rice agriculture, as well as maintaining rain-fed fields, mixed gardens and fishponds. Due to its proximity to Hoa Binh dam and reservoir, commercial timber exploitation was banned in the late 1980s, with the forest now part of the protected watershed. The government helps finance forest protection contributing 70 to 80 million VND (\$5,000) each year to the commune for forest guard wages and another 120 million VND (\$7,500) for plantation activities, allowing for the planting of 50 hectares of barren land each year.

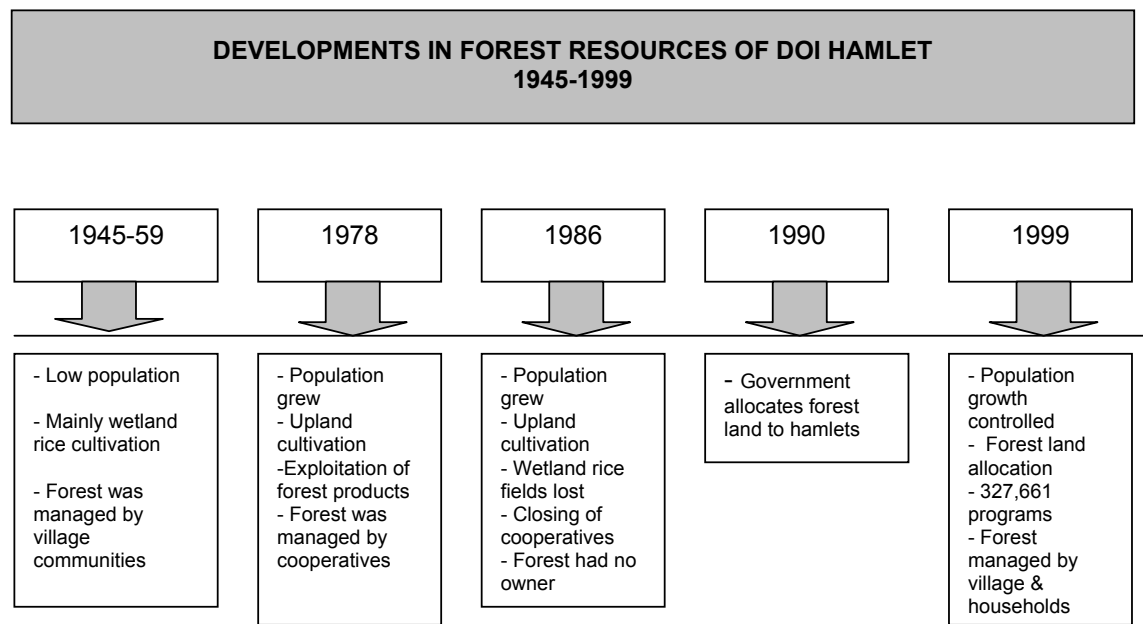
Figure 10 indicates that forests in Doi Hamlet were degraded as growing populations cleared forests for farmland between 1945 and 1975. Commercial timber extraction by the forest cooperatives further accelerated deforestation during the 1970s and early 1980s. The closing of cooperatives and absence of a clear management structure in the mid-1980s resulted in some uncontrolled tree felling and bamboo harvesting. Since the transfer of management authority to Doi and Ke Hamlets, forests have started to recover through natural regeneration and plantation activities.

While the study found that households tend to manage forest plots more intensively and achieve better natural regeneration and plantation results than those managed by hamlets, this applies primarily to forests near the village. In Doi and Ke Villages, the majority of community leaders agreed that forests that were more distant from the hamlet should be managed by the group. In part, this reflects traditional Muong beliefs that natural forests belong to God and should not be privatized but held under the stewardship of the group. As a favor from God, products from the

forest should be available to the entire community, supporting low-income families as well as the more wealthy. Villagers noted that the advantages of hamlet-based management included the following:

- Group management avoids potential social conflicts that can arise when forest resources are divided among households in ways that are inequitable.
- Group management allows common water supplies to be protected by the hamlet as a whole.
- Natural forests should be common assets so that all households can harvest when necessary for house making without having to purchase timber from the market.

FIGURE 10



Following Muong tradition, the *lang dao* (hamlet chief) is the primary authority overseeing forest protection and authorizing timber extraction for house construction. According to community leaders, community members are responsible for paying a forest protection fee of VND 50, 000 (\$3) and have an equal right to harvest forest products. Hamlet leaders in Doi and Ke Village are determined to protect the current hamlet community forests. The hamlet will ensure the future provision of house-making timber and waters supply. A forest protection force has been organized and a set of protection regulations drafted and approved. One of the biggest questions facing the hamlets is how to finance forest protection once the government subsidy expires when Program 661 ends.

4.5.2 Phuc Sen Commune, Cao Bang Province, Northern Vietnam

Cao Bang Province is located in the Northern Mountains of Vietnam. Village forest management was established in Phuc Sen Commune over 40 years ago in response to widespread deforestation taking place in the area resulting from commercial timber extraction and the expansion of shifting cultivation. Although the community forest management systems operating in the village have not yet received formal recognition from the government, village forest stewardship has contributed to the regeneration of 1,000 hectares of natural and plantation forests, that now cover 77 percent of the commune's land area. The commune has a population of 2,000 people, almost exclusively from the Nung An ethnic minority, residing in ten hamlets.

The Nung An believe that they have lived in the area for 12 generations, nearly 200 years, with the first settlers migrating from southern China. Before 1930, there was only one hamlet with nine households located in the valley bottom, while the surrounding limestone hills were densely covered by old growth forests. The forests were held under the common management of the community, though there were no written rules for resource protection and utilization. In 1932, the construction of National Road No. 3 connected this once remote mountain area to Hanoi and other industrial centers. Logging was initiated to supply timber for the construction of bridges along the new highway, while migrants began moving into the area clearing the forests for agricultural and settlement land. From 1945 to 1959, the limestone hills surrounding the hamlets of Phuc Sen were completely deforested. There were no controls over forest use, no clear lines of use rights or responsibilities. As the population tripled over the next fifteen years, water shortages became a chronic problem during the dry season, while the commune experienced growing scarcities of firewood and timber traveling up to 15 to 20 kilometers for fuel collection. According to one village elder:

Between 1957 and 1960, our villagers were disgraced when they would go to other communes for firewood collection, and they were often driven away and abused. This was the reason why we were determined to rehabilitate the forest, following the call of Uncle Ho for afforestation in 1960.

Responding to the call of Ho Chi Minh, in 1960 the commune decided to assign special tracts of forest to each hamlet for management. Larger tracts of forest were allocated to the village closest to the area. Each village determined their own management regulations, with fines established for unauthorized tree felling and fuel wood collection. Violations had to be addressed in public meetings, with offenders excluded from community harvest ceremonies and other festivals. Fallowed swidden fields with little agricultural potential were placed under the responsibility of individual households who took charge of plantation or regeneration. Over the past 40 years as the forests have recovered, the hydrological functions of streams and springs have returned. Agricultural yields have increased with rice yields rising from 2.5 metric tons (mt) per hectare to

3.5 mt per hectare, and corn harvests increasing from 2.7 mt to 4.5 mt per hectare. Community requirements for fuel wood and timber are now met from village forests.

Community forest use rules and regulations are determined by hamlets with benefits flowing primarily for village requirements, while smaller forest plots managed by households are used for family's timber needs. In village forests, timber extraction is used for the construction of schools, medical stations and other village buildings. The common forest is opened to households for fuel wood collection in January and July. Each family is allowed to send one to two persons to the forest to collect 100 to 150 kilograms of fuel wood, mainly bushes and lianas in accordance with fuel gathering guidelines. Village forests also provide firewood required for funerals and weddings, as well as for timber needed to build houses for families who have lost their homes due to natural disasters such as fire, storms or other events. While village forest management systems are operating effectively in Phu Sen Commune, these systems could be strengthened by:

- Developing maps and issuing formal documents that clarify the rights and responsibilities of each community over its forest resources, including a clear demarcation of forest boundaries.
- Developing strategies to mobilize human resources to conduct enrichment planting of timber species within the natural forest to ensure a stable supply of high grade lumber.
- In some larger villages, the community has found forest management improves when forest tracts are managed by small clusters of households located near the forest. Ten to twelve households can more easily agree on management methods and product sharing, resulting in a more effective and efficient system.
- Small forest plots of 800m² allocated to households in 1960s have been well managed in Phuc Sen. Families follow forest management guidelines established by the village, but retain all products for their own use without any taxes or contributions to the community. Many families have invested in enrichment planting of local species of bamboo, timber species and fruit trees.

4.5.3 Dak Tover, Gia Lai Province, Central Highlands

Dak Tover Commune is in Gai Lai Province in the Central Highlands. The commune has four villages of Jarai and Bana people. It has a population of 1250 who rely on 3,700 hectares of land for their livelihood. Forest land has long been managed through customary laws and practices. The establishment of state forest organizations, the absence of policies that recognize community claims to the forest and social changes underway within the villages, have all undermined traditional laws and customs.

Like other ethnic communities in the Central Highlands, the Jarai and Bana rely on upland cultivation and forest products for their survival. For the Jarai, mountains, forests, rivers and

streams are community property, falling under the administration of the village headman. As a matriarchal society, Jarai women hold the position of village headman, though husbands often act as executor. Village headman must have a number of qualifications including an extensive knowledge of community customs and laws, community respect, public speaking ability, skills in mediation and negotiation, as well as technical skills. The village headman must act in a democratic way, consulting village elders and other community members before making important decisions.

Before 1975, the vast majority of the land surrounding the Jarai and Bana villages was densely forested. From 1975 to 1985, deforestation progressed rapidly throughout the area, with forest cover declining from 80 percent to less than 40 percent of commune lands during that period. Forest fires and shifting cultivation combine with illegal logging by SFEs, estate crop expansion and site clearing for the development of new economic zones has further reduced forests to only 23 percent of the area, while barren land now occupies 61 percent of the village's territory.

While indigenous Jarai and Bana systems of forest management have lost authority over the past 25 years, state administration and forestry projects have not resulted in the emergence of new, effective resource stewardship systems. Most projects have been limited to individual households (under Program 327) and have been of short duration. Legally the Commune's People's Committee is in charge of overall forest management, exercising state administration, however this new structure provides little continuity with previous management systems.

The Jarai of Tuek Village previously had clear laws governing forests and other natural resources. Forests located near cemeteries and at the head of water sources were strictly protected. These forests were considered the shelters of gods and therefore if people logged the wood they would be punished, both by gods and the community. Other forests were also strictly regulated. It was not permitted to sell or exchange forest land since it was the common property of the village. Outsiders were not allowed to log wood, while villages were only permitted to take wood need for building their own houses, but not for sale. Individual families could claim beehives, but the trees in which they were located could not be harmed. Any tree felling first required the permission of the village headman and appropriate ceremonies were needed before logging could take place.

The strength of the indigenous Jarai and Bana systems of resource management was its intertwined social and spiritual components. From a social standpoint, the community could commend and encourage good behavior, or criticize, blame, isolate, or even expel individuals who broke resource use rules. From a spiritual perspective positive resource actions were rewarded by the gods with good health and prosperity or punished by the outbreak of disease,

drought and natural disasters. Indigenous resource management systems are breaking down as the indigenous matriarchal governance structure is replaced by new state guided institutions.

At the same time, existing land and resource tenure patterns, accepted in the minds of individuals and communities are not recognized under state policies. As a consequence, use rights to land and resources are among the most important issues confronting these communities. It is unclear at present who has the power to decide and what method will be utilized to define land tenure and resource use rights. Rights to ownership and land use have not been established, but are regulated unofficially by the traditional customs, which in turn are changing in response to the new social, economic and political environment.

The research team found that sustainable forest management in Dak Tover and in the Central Highlands more generally has been constrained by a number of factors including the following:

- the gap between official forms of social organization (state-oriented) and unofficial forms (indigenous village-oriented) have created a barrier to the use of community laws in regulating resource use;
- state approaches have been primarily top down, enforcing outsiders' ways of thinking;
- national programs to halt shifting cultivation, eradicate traditional customs and extend new farming technique have been overemphasized without considering local needs;
- poor local participation due to lack of responsiveness to community needs and traditions has resulted in poor returns on development investments.

At the same time, the research team found excellent opportunities to re-engage communities in resource management by responding to their own priorities. These included:

- further study of appropriate rotational upland farming systems;
- extension of farming techniques suited to sloping land;
- development of tree garden economic systems including forest gardens, home gardens, spice gardens;
- assistance to communities in mapping and zoning customary forest lands for protection and production.

4.5.4 Lessons Learned

A number of preliminary recommendations have been drawn from the case studies and analyzed with the framework provided by the VWG's "Navigator Tool":

- A policy is needed on forest allocation to communities. Villages are the smallest and often the most stable organization and production unit.
- The role of communities in forest management can be enhanced if policies are adjusted in such a way that forest-based benefits can be increased for local people. A precondition to

sustainable forest management is the recognition of legitimate user rights to ensure legal security for forest dependent people.

- Forest land allocation and land use planning need to be conducted at the village level.
- The government needs to assist villages to develop regulations to guide community forest management.
- Village organizations and leaders (headmen) need formal recognition and a clear role in the implementation of community forest management policies and programs.

4.6 WORKPLAN 2000-2001

In targeting opportunities for the coming year, the VWG has identified a number of topics for attention. The national government is currently formulating new policies to strengthen management authority and capacity at the community level and to clarify benefit sharing arrangements related to products from state forest lands. In the past, the government has approached CFM by providing subsidies to communities to protect natural forests, though rights to benefits from timber and non-timber forest products have not always been clear. Senior government planners have requested the VWG to assist in developing guidelines for benefit sharing. A second focal area will be to design strategies to strengthen capacity at the hamlet level to improve the effectiveness of village-based forest management. As new policies for CFM are developed in Vietnam, it is important that appropriate support programs are put in place to build local organizational capacity to implement forest sector reforms.

4.6.1 Benefit Sharing Policy

The benefit sharing policy development project will focus on providing recommendations and synthesis documents to the Policy Department and the Forest Development Department of MARD during 2000. The goals of the project is to structure benefit sharing arrangements to:

- reduce government forest protection costs;
- increase community income from forests;
- create economic incentives for communities to sustainably manage forests;
- support cross-sectoral development.

The VWG seeks to answer a number of questions important in formulating national CFM policies and strategies, including how can appropriate community forest managers best be identified and how can benefits be reallocated to create stronger incentives for sustainable management?

The VWG hopes that MARD planners will utilize these inputs in drafting laws and policy guidelines, including the creation of new incentives through more generous benefit sharing arrangements for village forest managers. The VWG will draw on findings from its field sites in

Dak Lak, Son La, Hoa Binh, Cao Bang, Gai Lai and other parts of the country, commissioning specialized field studies where needed. The VWG will also seek inputs from community forestry projects being implemented by group members including SFDP, PARC, PROFOR, MRDP and NTFP to examine their experiences. The Asia Forest Network will also provide a synthesis of benefit sharing policies used in the CFM programs of other Asian nations for VWG review. As ideas and options for national CFM benefit sharing policies are developed, consultations will be held with provincial and district authorities, as well as with community groups to elicit their suggestions (see Figure 11).

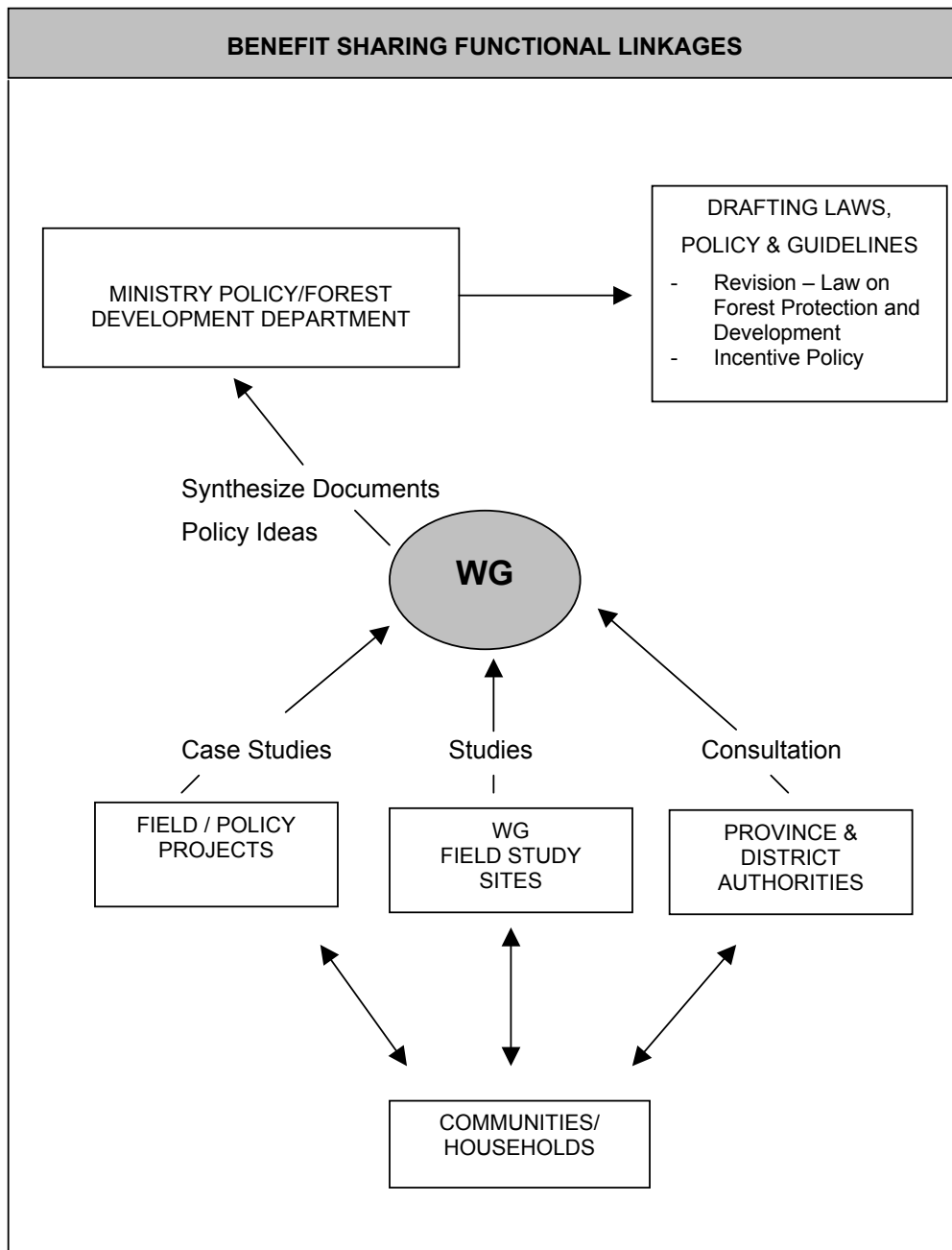
In addition to policy recommendations on benefit sharing systems for CFM, the VWG will generate a number of publications and host a variety of meetings in the coming year. Expected outputs by the end of 2000 include:

- Five new case studies on forest management focusing on indigenous systems and the current status of resource stewardship by ethnic minorities in Vietnam.
- Forestry sector profile.
- Directory of organizations working on upland forest management in Vietnam.
- Glossary of natural resource management terms in English and Vietnamese.
- National Workshop on CFM (June 2000).
- Regional Workshop on CFM.

The VWG also intends to strengthen its organizational capacity and improve the quality of its information products through the following steps:

- Invitation to new members to join the VWG from the Agroforestry Extension Department, the Settlement and New Economic Zone Department, the Forestry College (Social Forestry Center) and the Land Administration Department.
- Strengthen of linkages with provincial organizations and projects including the Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Gia Lai, Kon Tum and Lam Dong, and with the Tropical Forestry Center.
- Strengthen linkages with innovative provincial forest management initiatives.

FIGURE 11



The VWG proposes to enhance its management and operations by:

1. Distributing meeting agendas in advance.
2. Mailing relevant documentation to members before and after meetings.
3. Scheduling regular meetings every two months.
4. Maintaining close contact with members between meetings.
5. Clearly defining and assigning tasks to specific individuals.
6. Establishing mechanisms to expand information exchange among projects working on CFM in Vietnam and in other Mekong Basin countries.
7. Providing new opportunities for members to gain further experience in CFM through field visits as well as cross-visits to other countries in the region.

To improve the effectiveness of the VWG, members proposed that:

1. Results of commissioned research and case studies should be reviewed by senior CFM experts.
2. Periodic workshops and meetings should be organized to discuss and evaluate results from research activities.
3. Proposed recommendations for projects or policies should be evaluated in the field through discussions with local communities, government officials and project staff before being forwarded to senior government decision makers.
4. VWG products should be supported and accepted by People's Committees.
5. Information products for different levels (provincial/national) should be developed and disseminated.
6. Initiate and strengthen exchange between and within national and provincial level organizations to disseminate experiences in innovative participatory forest management.
7. The financial base should be expanded beyond SMRP funding. The core group plans to approach relevant projects and IOs (e.g. MRDP, NTFP, SFDP, REFAS, Ford Foundation, UNDP) for possible assistance.



Part V: SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

A diverse group of international organizations and projects dealing with CFM are currently operating in mainland Southeast Asia. A number of representatives from this group attended the Ho Chi Minh City workshop to share information regarding their activities and explore possibilities for collaboration. This section provides a brief review of the goals and strategies being followed by each "support" organization, as well as possibilities for country-level and regional collaboration in the future.

5.1 MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION

The mandate of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) is to promote cooperation for the sustainable development, utilization, conservation and management of the Mekong River Basin. The MRC addresses water and related resources for navigational and non-navigational purposes, for social and economic development and the well-being of the riparian States. The MRC recognizes the need to protect, preserve, enhance and manage the environmental and aquatic conditions and maintenance of the ecological balance throughout the river basin and its watershed.

The MRC is an intergovernmental organization comprised of three permanent bodies, including the Policy-making Council (at the ministerial and cabinet level), the Joint Committee (at the department head level) for implementing policies and the Secretariat that provides technical and administrative services. Originally established in 1957 with four member countries that include Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos, the MRC has shown a growing commitment to address requirements for the sustainable management of the upland watersheds of the Mekong. Working collaboratively with bilateral and multilateral development agencies, the MRC has been involved in extensive spatial analysis projects that document and analyze forest cover changes and use patterns.

5.2 GESELLSCHAFT FÜR TECHNISCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT (GTZ)

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) is a government-owned private sector organization implementing some 2,000 projects in 140 countries. Its primary goal is to contribute to global sustainable development while implementing the policies of the German

government and securing a market position for development services. GTZ is involved in community forestry projects around the world including Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia, and is active in policies dialogues on CFM at the international, regional and national level.

5.2.1 Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project

The Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project is financed by the German Government and implemented by national line organizations in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, with support from GTZ. The project focuses on the generation, exchange and dissemination of information and experiences related to land use planning and allocation, and forest management systems in upland watersheds and areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. In this context, SMRP is involved in different activities with partners at the provincial, national and regional levels. In particular, SMRP:

- assists in the collection, analysis and compilation of data and information related to PNRM in upland areas for professionals and decision-makers.
- facilitates information exchange and dialogue by regularly bringing together sector actors and supporting the establishment and development of national community forestry working groups in Cambodia, Vietnam and Thailand.
- supports partners to test innovative and promising approaches in participatory natural resource management. In Dak Lak Province in Vietnam, where the population has grown 500 percent since 1975 placing immense pressures on natural forest resources, SMRP is supporting local government institutions and ethnic minority communities to test promising approaches and methodologies for participatory land use planning and forest land allocation.
- promotes information and knowledge management for the natural resource management sector. A Web-based information system (MEKONGINFO) is being developed to offer a portal to participatory natural resource management in the region.
- strengthens capacity to monitor changes in forest cover in the Lower Mekong Basin through the development of meta-data sets based on forest cover monitoring assessments.
- supports the MRC Secretariat in its role as a regional networking and information dissemination body for lessons learned and promising approaches related to PNRM in the upper watershed.

5.2.2 Cambodian-German Forestry Project

The Cambodian-German Forestry Project (CGFP) is involved in the following activities:

- institutional strengthening through provision of advisory services to the Department of Forestry and Wildlife

- human resources development through the provision of education and training for forestry sector personnel
- development of a forestry extension system.

The project assumes that community forestry will be an integral part of Cambodia's national forest management system and emphasizes CFM in the development of human resources and the forestry extension system. The project has conducted a national workshop on forestry extension in collaboration with the community forestry unit of the Department of Forests and Wildlife. The project has also organized study tours, conducted training programs and provides assistance to the government in designing CF policies and guidelines. In the coming year, the project intends to conduct socio-economic surveys in its pilot area. The pilot area covers 2,800 hectares of degraded forests with 38 villages present in the area. The project seeks linkages with other projects and cooperating partners.

5.3 ASIA FOREST NETWORK

The Asia Forest Network (AFN) has evolved over the past twelve years and now includes nearly 800 members from Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. AFN is committed to promoting community involvement in forest management through creating opportunities for collaborative research, information exchange and policy dialogue. AFN assists with the establishment of national working groups to address community forestry policy and program concerns, while helping government and development agencies to formulate improved forest management strategies. AFN is a non-profit corporation with offices in Manila, New Delhi and Santa Barbara. AFN raises funding for field research and policy studies, provides training in CFM research methodologies including participatory forest mapping and planning tools, conflict mediation and working group management. AFN is a major publisher of reports on CFM experiences at the village level, as well as national policies. Over the past decade, AFN has organized six regional workshops on CFM, conducted a series of cross-visits among South and Southeast Asia countries, and provided policy guidance to international and regional organizations.

AFN has worked closely with SMRP to support the creation of community forestry working groups in Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. In the coming year, AFN proposes to provide technical assistance to country working groups engaged in case study analysis and policy development projects. AFN will also support the publication and dissemination of reports generated by national working groups in Mekong River Countries.

5.4 REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORESTRY TRAINING CENTER

The Regional Community Forestry Training Center (RECOFTC) was founded in 1987 with support from the Government of Switzerland, the Asian Development Bank and Kasetsart University. RECOFTC is located on the Kasetsart University Campus in Bangkok, Thailand. Its mission is to provide training for professionals involved in community forestry activities, to function as a regional resource center for information exchange, to provide technical assistance and to organize seminars and workshops on community forestry. In 1998, RECOFTC entered its third phase of development becoming an international center with a growing emphasis on networking.

RECOFTC also maintains portfolio of field projects to feed its training programs with local experiences. RECOFTC has a Thailand Community Forestry Outreach Program (TOP) with 15 pilot sites across the country. The project also seeks to create a network for disseminating and exchanging information and strengthening cooperation among GOs, NGOs, academics and community leaders.

5.5 RESOURCES POLICY SUPPORT INITIATIVE

The World Resources Institute (WRI) initiated the Resources Policy Support Initiative (REPSI) for mountainous mainland Southeast Asia in 1996. The project supports the study of mountain ecosystems and upland natural resource management practices and policies in Vietnam, Lao PDR, Thailand, Cambodia and Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China (PRC). REPSI is interested in examining the process of decentralizing resource management by studying actors, powers and accountabilities. Research focuses on management regimes, conflict management and benefit sharing, carried-out in collaboration with partners in each of the member countries. REPSI is interested in interacting with community forestry working groups through sharing information on natural resource management challenges at the local level, supporting regional comparison and exchange and assisting in the dissemination of results.

5.6 WORLD CONSERVATION UNION

The World Conservation Union (IUCN) comprises member governments, government agencies and non-government organizations working at the field and policy levels. It currently has 935 member institutions covering 138 countries. The IUCN's mission is to "influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature, and ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable". IUCN organizes commissions or networks of expert volunteers and maintains a Secretariat to administer programs and operations. IUCN is committed to the involvement of communities in forest management. According to IUCN's Forests for Life policy book, "any forest policy that does not

take full account of the needs and desires of local people, including indigenous people, is unacceptable and ultimately unworkable”.

IUCN's Regional Office for Asia in Bangkok oversees a variety of country-level community forestry projects, including the Non-Timber Forest Products Project in Vietnam and Laos, which is actively documenting patterns of forest use and resource management. IUCN also administers the International Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management (WG-CIFM) that has been working with the AFN and SMRP to document community forest management developments in Southeast Asia and support country level working groups and regional exchanges. A regional profile called *Communities and Forest Management in Southeast Asia* was published in 1999.

5.7 SOCIAL FORESTRY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Social Forestry Support Program (SFSP) is funded by the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) and implemented by Helvetas, a Swiss NGO. The SFSP aims to foster the development of an approach to the education of forestry professionals that will build capacity and responsiveness to deal with the dynamic range of needs arising in the area of social forestry in Vietnam. In this context, SFSP has created a social forestry training network linking together seven government training institutions, which offer undergraduate education and extension training, and conduct participatory research. This network has succeeded in jointly developing a participatory development curriculum, including approaches to joint technology development and farmer-interactive extension methods. SFSP also provides support for human resource development (HRD) and institutional strengthening to help build capacity to implement CFM activities. The HRD approach seeks to determine what are the needs for training of personnel engaged in community forestry related activities? It attempts to document what HRD activities are already being implemented, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of ongoing training and capacity development programs, and develop support activities to enhance the effectiveness of training institutions working on CFM. The SFSP is interested in exploring with the VWG a proposal to collaborate on a joint human resource development for CFM.

5.8 FOREST MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The Forest Management and Conservation Program (FOMACOP), financed jointly by the Government of Finland, the World Bank and the Government of Lao PDR, seeks to promote sustainable forest management by developing policies and programs that support village forestry and create conservation areas. It has been operating since 1995. The project area covers sixty villages impacting 19,000 people and 145,000 hectares of forest land. Key elements in the FOMACOP village forestry model include village organizing, participatory forest management,

and entrepreneurial and livelihood development. Important components of the program have included village and forest boundary demarcation, forest inventories, development of village forest management plans, the forming and registration of village forestry association, and the operations of village based timber harvesting. FOMACOP provides a broad range of field experience in implementing village forestry and has been instrumental in providing opportunities for communities and Laotian foresters and government planners to gain experience with formal CFM strategies.

5.9 MOUNTAIN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Mountain Rural Development Program (MRDP), funded by Sweden, was one of the earliest international projects to support CFM in Vietnam. MRDP has been assisting the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and several provincial authorities to introduce and test models of community forest management based on new policies including Decree No. 661 that supports village-based forest protection. Over the past few years, MRDP sponsored research has indicated that field staff are often not aware of new policies that support CFM. MRDP has also found that due to the immense diversity in Vietnam, adaptable planning mechanisms are needed to ensure that new policies are fine-tuned to meet local conditions. Broadly, MRDP is discovering through its field research program that flexibility is a key in designing enabling policies and programs that support CFM. MRDP is an active participant in the VWG.

5.10 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COORDINATION AND JOINT ACTION

The international support organizations met to discuss ways to enhance donor collaboration at both the national and regional level in Southeast Asia. Discussions indicated that there were a number of important cross-cutting issues that could be addressed by the group. These included:

- Legal frameworks to support CFM
- Decentralization processes and CFM
- Land tenure mechanisms
- Village and forest boundary demarcation processes and techniques
- Timber concessions and forest dependent communities
- Trans-boundary timber and forest product trade
- Forest agency transitions

The support group also found a number of opportunities to inform policies at a regional level. It was noted that the ASEAN Forest Ministers Forum and Forestry Working Group may provide a policy audience for learning emerging from national working groups. In addition, the Asian Development Bank is currently conducting a forest sector policy review. Both opportunities will be

assessed by the support group in the coming year. Sources of funding for regional activities were also reviewed. A number of possibilities were raised including the UNDP Program on Forests (PROFOR) and the forthcoming UNDP community forestry small grants program that may be available in late 2000. Finally, SIDA's regional Natural Resources and Environment Program was mentioned as a possible source of support.

The support organizations identified the need to better organize existing information on enabling CFM policies, training programs and curricula, institutional change strategies, best practice learning and methodologies for CFM field-level implementation. An initial table of available information and sources is presented in Table 6. To improve coordination of the support groups in the coming year, a number of ideas were suggested. One suggestion was to form a small working group with individuals from key CFM projects and funding agencies. This group could meet once or twice each year to discuss country working group needs and individual and collaborative contributions from support agencies. Another proposal involves establishing an e-mail list server so that interested members of support organizations could exchange information on their plans more effectively.

TABLE 6

COMMUNITY FORESTRY RESOURCES: A ROAD MAP

INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES			
Multi-stakeholder consultative process at national level	Publication	CGIF Indonesia	www.cgif.org
JFM Support Group	Network	India	
Forum on Communication for Community Forestry	Network	Indonesia	
The Participatory process for Supporting Collaborative Management of Natural Resources	Publication	FAO, Rome	www.fao.org
TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES			
Field Staff Training Modules for CF	Training Guidelines	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project, Nepal	Info@nacfp.wlink.com.np
Forest Policy Development	Training Modules	GTZ, Germany	
Strengthening Policy Analysis	Collaborative Research Opportunities	REPSI, Thailand	www.wri.org/repsi repsi@loxinfo.co.th
RECOFTC training	Regional Training Organization	Thailand	www.recoftc.org
LEGISLATION			
Balancing Acts: Community Forestry legislation (Owen Lynch et al.)	Publication	WRI, Washington, USA	www.wri.org

Asia Pacific Environmental Law Centre	Organization	Singapore	
JFM Guidelines (Indian States)	Publications	Society for the Promotion of Wasteland Development, India	
JFM national Guidelines India 2000	Publication	Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest Management, IUCN, AFN	
Policy that Works for Forests and people	Publications	IIED, London, UK	www.iied.org
CFM Policy + Practice national case Studies for India, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines	Publications	Asia Forest Network	
BEST PRACTICES			
IUCN Publications on CF cases	Publication	IUCN	www.iucn.org
JFM India Experience working paper series	Publications	The Ford Foundation, New Delhi, India	
METHODOLOGIES			
Knowledge management		SMRP	www.mekonginfo.org
Sector Network Rural Development		GTZ	www.gtz-online.asia
Community Forestry Management Plans	Publications	MRDP, SFDP, Vietnam	
CBFM –Indonesia Timber Management Timber marketing Land use Planning Conflict Management	Grey Literature	GTZ	
FAO	Organization	FAO, Rome	www.fao.org
Participatory Techniques for Community Forestry (Jackson and Ingles)	Publication	IUCN, Gland Switzerland	www.iucn.org
Farmer Field School	Adaptation of methodology for	RECOFTC/FTPP/Vietnam	www.recoftc.org

	forestry	Project	
Small Scale Tree and Forest Product Research	Research	CIFOR, Bogor, Indonesia	www.cifor.org
Community based enterprise development		Biodiversity Conservation Network	
Market Analysis and Development / MIS	Publication	FAO, Rome	www.fao.org
Participatory Process	Publication	FAO Rome	www.fao.org
Gender Analysis	Publication	FAO Rome	www.fao.org
Conflict Resolution	Publication	FAO Rome	www.fao.org
CF Range Profiling + microplanning Methods manual	Publication	Asia Forest Network	
Guidelines for CF (planning, regulations) from Nepal	Publication	Nepal Australia Community Resource Management Project, Nepal	Info@nacfp.wlink.com.np
Forest management system package (natural forests0: planning modules, implementation modules, controlling modules)	Publications	GTZ Malaysia	
CF PRA Tools	Publication	Asia Forest Network	
CF Management Planning Methods	Publication	ESSC, The Philippines	
Integrated Forest Fire Management package (detection, prevention, suppression)	Publication	GTZ	www.iffm.or.id
GLOBAL PROCESSES			
Working Group on Community Involvement in Forest management	Email list	IUCN	
Practitioner's Guide to the Implementation of the IPF proposals for action	Publication	GTZ/FAO/UNDP	
Asia Pacific Forestry Commission	Organization		
Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity	Publication	IUCN	www.iucn.org
Support to global forest policy dialogue	GTZ project	GTZ, Germany	www.gtz.de/twrp

Forest Management Certification	GTZ project	GTZ, Germany	www.gtz.de/forestcertification
World Resources Institute, Global Forest Watch	Organization		
REPSI Research Group Local Institutions and decentralization	Project	REPSI	
VARIOUS			
ICIMOD	Organization (Resources on community forestry in Nepal, India, Pakistan, Myanmar, Bhutan, Southern China)	Kathmandu, Nepal	www.icimod.org.sg
IIED	Publications on RRA Land Allocation for Upland Livelihoods in Vietnam	UK	
FAO/ FTTP	Field methodologies Case studies Policy reviews CF overviews (Available form RECOFTC)	Rome	
Rural Forestry Development Network, ODI	Publications	UK	
WWF/ World Bank Alliance	Community forestry and certification publications on the Internet		

POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

IUCN Netherlands Committee, Rainforest Fund
 UNDP-PROFOR Hanoi
 UNDP Manila Small Grants for Community Forestry
 Ford Foundation, Hanoi
 Clean Development Mechanisms "CDM" Kyoto Protocol
 EU Tropical Forest Budget Line

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APPENDIX I: AGENDA

The Role of National Working Groups in Supporting Community Based Forest Management in The Mekong River Basin: Policy Change Strategies & Tools

27-29 March, 2000

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Organized & Facilitated by the MRC-German "Sustainable Management of Resources in the Lower Mekong Basin Project" (SMRP) and the Asia Forest Network (AFN)

This three-day workshop brings together 40 to 50 individuals representing CFM programs and projects underway in countries of the Lower Mekong Basin: Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The meeting agenda is designed to focus participant discussion on community forest management (CFM) concepts and programs, and working group processes to support local and national CFM development. The workshop seeks to identify practical instruments to strengthen national policy development on community forest management for the coming year in MRC countries. The meeting will allow national working groups and networks to present their products and services, to assess the past years experience and further develop strategies for 2000–2001. The meeting will include plenary and panel discussions, as well as in-depth subgroup meetings.

Objective of the Meeting:

National Working Groups and other similar networks on CFM in the countries of the Lower Mekong Basin jointly with other regional and international organizations produce an overview of existing concepts, instruments, country-policies and forms of CFM, and identify practical commitments and recommendations for improvement of their national strategies, programs, and collaborative action.

MARCH 27TH

Who is who?		Overview of countries, institutions and organizations. Programs, products,	
Who does what?		commitments, and visions for the future	
Time	Topic	Presenter	Remarks
08.00 to 09.00	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Participants • Workshop objectives and general orientation • Agenda, the CFM Policy Development Process • Forming Task Forces for the workshop process • Workshop logistics and services • Expectations of the workshop: day 2 and 3 	Hans Helmrich Representatives from 4 countries Mark Poffenberger Hans Helmrich Michael Glueck	Will be kept short to max. 1 hour
09.00 to 10.30	Country Reports Working Group Strategies and Products	Working group Cambodia	Land ownership, land tenure, land management, forest functions
Break			
11.00 to 12.30	Country Reports Working Group Strategies and Products	Working group Vietnam	Presentations follow a given outline, which allows for later analysis and finding possibilities for cooperation
Lunch break			
14.00 to 14.30	Country Report	Representative from Thailand	
14.30 to 15.30	Other Support Organizations in the region	AFN, IUCN, RECOFTC, WRI/REPSI, GTZ, MRC, WB –FINIDA	Presentations address intended support provided to networks and working groups
Break			
16.00 to 16.30	Other Support Organizations in the region		
16.30 to 17.30	Presentation of participants` expectations	Country wise	
Result of the day		Experiences, products, capacities, commitments, strengths and limitations of working groups, networks, and other support organizations in the countries of the Lower Mekong Basin have become clear to all participants. An overview of the country forest sector is provided.	

Evening: Happy hour at the Bamboo Bar

MARCH 28th

Defining Opportunities, Topics, and Target Institutions Identification and prioritization of CFM opportunities, selected topics for Working Group activities, principles of information management			
Time	Topic	Event	Remarks
08.30 to 08.45	Group dynamics and workshop progress	The task force on process monitoring	Observations and recommendations
08.45 to 11.00 includes coffee break	What do we plan to do during the coming year? Topics and Target Institutions 2000-2001 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and prioritization of CFM opportunities for action • Assessing target groups and their needs • Selection of topics for working group activities 	Introduction by Mark Poffenberger Group work by countries	See ANNEX 1 for Handouts
11.00 to 12.30	Presentation and discussion	4 presentations from group work	
Lunch break			
14.00 to 16.00 includes coffee break	What do we plan to do during the coming year? Designing the Information System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definitions of successful CFM practices • Collection of primary and secondary data and information • Analysis of data and information • Compilation in presentable forms 	Introduction by Mark Poffenberger Group work by countries	See ANNEX 2 for Handouts
16.00 to 17.30	Presentation and discussion	4 presentations from group work	
Result of the day	The country groups have clarified their objectives, priorities, target institutions and topics they want to concentrate on during the coming year. There is a better understanding of the important elements of information management leading to presentable information products. The group of regional/international support organizations identified entry points for their possible participation in the process.		

Evening: cruising on the river with music and dinner

MARCH 29th

<p>Working group strategies for the coming year Product Development: Production and packaging, presentation and dissemination, Quality control</p>			
Time	Topic	Presenter	Remarks
08.30 to 09.00	Group dynamics and workshop progress Defining opportunities and targets. Major results of discussion from the first day.	Task force on process monitoring Summary by Mark Poffenberger	Observations and recommendations
09.00 to 12.30 includes coffee break	How do we effectively act as a working group to implement our planning during the coming year? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional alliances • Attractiveness of the working group • Composition of the working group • Financial means and other resources • Efficient operation • Effectiveness of the products of the working group For Product Development Production and packaging Presentation and dissemination Quality control	Introduction by Mark Poffenberger Group work by countries	See ANNEX 3 for Handouts
Lunch break			
14.00 to 15.30	Presentation and discussion	4 presentations from group work	
Break			
16.00 to 16.30	Brief synthesis of the main points raised during the workshop	Mark Poffenberger	All major points from the 3 days workshop
16.30 to 17.30	Final remarks, winding up and vote of thanks	Hans Helmrich Representatives from each country	
<p>Result of the day: The country groups have arrived at practical commitments and strategies for their action during the coming year. Strategies aim at development and dissemination of products, addressing CFM opportunities for action and sector needs. Support organizations confirmed their possible participation in the process.</p>			