

Social Forestry Support Program (SFSP) 1994-2002

Impact analysis five years after the end of the phase



Changing the working approach and attitude of forestry teachers and students are the most positive impact the Social Forestry Support Program has achieved. The picture shows how the teacher (Ms. Cao Thi Ly, standing on the left side) and her students are working with farmers. The picture was taken when forestry students from Tay Nguyen university were doing their practicum on social forestry in the village.

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Abbreviations

BSc	Bachelor of Science
CFM	Community Forestry Management
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (at provincial level)
ETSP	Extension and Training Support Project for Forestry and Agriculture in Uplands
GoK	Generation of Knowledge
HRD	Human Resources Development
IE	Information Exchange
KSA	Knowledge – Skill - Attitude
LCTM	Learner Centered Teaching Methodology
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
NTFP	Non-Timber Forestry Products
PAEC	Provincial Agricultural Extension Centre
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PCD	Participatory Curriculum Development
PMU	Project Management Unit
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisals
ProDoc	Project Document
PTD	Participatory Technology Development
RETE	Research Education Training and Extension
SDC	Swiss Agent for Development and Cooperation
SEDP	Social Economic Development Plan
SFSP	Social Forestry Support Program
SFTN	Social Forestry Training Network
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
VDP/CDP	Village/Commune Development Plan(-ning)
WPI	Working Partner Institution

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Our thanks is also expressed to leaders of relevant organizations and training institutions under MARD, MOET, and staff from the provincial Extension Centers of Dak Nong, Thua Thien Hue and Hoa Binh provinces for their comments and opinions on the status of newly-applied methodologies and methods in social forestry development in Vietnam. We would like to convey our special thanks to men and women in villages where SFSP carried out experiments on PTD in the 3 above mentioned provinces for sharing with us advantages and disadvantages in the process of field-based activity implementation, sustainability and replicability.

Due to time limits and the complexity of the task, the report may present some inevitable shortcomings. It would be highly appreciated to receive comments from interested audience which can be sent on behalf of the team to Helvetas, 298F Kim Ma street, P.O. Box 81, Hanoi, Vietnam, Mrs. Ngo Thi Kim Yen, (kim.yen@helvetas.org), mobile phone +84 91 360 14 41. Thank you very much.

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of the study

The Social Forestry Support Program (SFSP) implemented by Helvetas, Swiss Association for International Cooperation, and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), focused over a period of eight years (1994 to 2002) on the improvement in forestry education at BSc level, on the generation of knowledge and the creation of links among training institutions with provincial extension services and research institutions. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) and the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), were governmental partners at the central level.

SFSP expanded from one Working Partner Institution (WPI) in Phase I (1994-1997), the Vietnam University of Forestry in Xuan Mai, Ha Tay province, to seven Working Partner Institutions (WPIs), spreading all over the country in Phase II (1998-2002). It included the Social Forestry Training Center of the Vietnam University of Forestry in Ha Tay province (under the management of MARD), four forestry faculties of the Agriculture and Forestry Universities in TT-Hue, Dak Lak, Thai Nguyen provinces and Ho Chi Minh City (all under the management of MoET), the National Institute for Soils and Fertilizers (NISF) which is under the management of MARD, and the Extension Center of DARD in Hoa Binh province.

In the years 2003 and 2004 the seven WPIs of SFSP were further supported with a small portfolio via the follow-up Extension and Training Support Project (2003-2007) to finalize pending tasks.

The **development objective of SFSP's phase 1** was formulated as follows: *To establish social forestry in order to have a more effective management of forest lands and renewable natural resources to upgrade the living standards of rural people.* And the **development objective of phase 2 (SFSP 2)** was: *To develop an effective forestry training capacity which is responsive to the demands of implementing sustainable and participatory forest land management.*

SFSP 2 Specific Objectives were divided into three separate categories: (1) Human Resources Development (HRD/the “*how to do*”), (2) Generation of Knowledge (GoK/the “*what to do*”), and (3) Information Exchange (IE).

1. **Specific Objective 1 (HRD):** To train a nucleus of individuals in the Working Partner Institutions (WPIs) in appropriate methodologies for participatory curriculum development (PCD); learner-centered teaching methods (LCTM); participatory research and extension; information, extension, training and learning materials development; HRD management; and other relevant skills.
2. **Specific Objective 2 (GoK):** New knowledge is generated through research and field activities, existing knowledge is collected and compiled to improve quality of teaching content in social forestry training courses.
3. **Specific Objective 3 (IE):** Systems and mechanisms are established to facilitate exchange of information and sharing of experiences between the Working Partner Institutions.

On March, 09, 2007, the Steering Committee of ETSP approved the proposed impact study. The two main justifications for the study which include one from the Vietnamese side and the other from the Swiss side are as follows:

1. The **Vietnamese Government** calls for changes in education at all levels, particularly on quality, accountability and on more participation of involved stakeholders. Hence, the quality aspect of “*how to do modern form of education*” plays an increasingly important role.
As SFSP focused mainly on quality improvements by introducing innovative teaching/education methodologies, this impact study shall provide the decision makers in MARD, MoET and SDC with guiding information on what is finally incorporated (in use) and at which levels; what should be further disseminated and what would now be opportune to be further institutionalized, in order to spread the introduced methods and approaches at a broader level.
2. In **Switzerland**, the debates on the effects of development cooperation are presently held in a controversial manner, often with undifferentiated arguments. Examples from development projects or programs which show tangible impacts are rare. Politicians and citizens want to see evidence, results. Such proofs can be provided more easily in humanitarian aid interventions or in projects dealing with infrastructure improvements for example. In the educational sector sound impact analysis is still rare to find, because impacts from capacity building interventions are difficult to visualize. Due to the intensive and long-term investment through SFSP, it should be worth to conduct this study, because results should be visible.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of the assessment is to analyze the impact of the SFSP concerning the development of Forestry and Agriculture education and training in Vietnam, and the links with field-based activities.

The specific objectives are:

1. To analyze the application of innovative education and training approaches and methods in agriculture and forestry education in Vietnam.
2. To analyze the working performance of graduated forestry students in practice.
3. To analyze how SFSP contributed to the social forestry development in Vietnam.

1.3 Methodology

Approach

In this report, the term “*impact*” should be understood as *changes* or *effects* in a status quo brought in by a program/project, which may be positive and negative, primary and secondary, intentional and unintentional, and direct and indirect.

Impact evaluation is often a challenging task which requires the systematic comparison between the context before and after an intervention happened. Process development requires regular repetitions of measuring the changes. Interventions by programs/projects increasingly focus on processes (‘software’ elements such as capacity building), make it more costly and complex for impact evaluation. In addition to one single project/program intervention, the involved stakeholders are also influenced by other factors. Bilateral project or program inputs remain small when we start to link them with national development goals, such as poverty reduction or socio economic development over a specific time period. This leads to the fact that it is almost impossible to proof accurately that a *change is directly related to an intervention*. It is the debate

on alignment and harmonization, which is increasing the constraint to show what one particular donor or agency achieved with its own development funds.

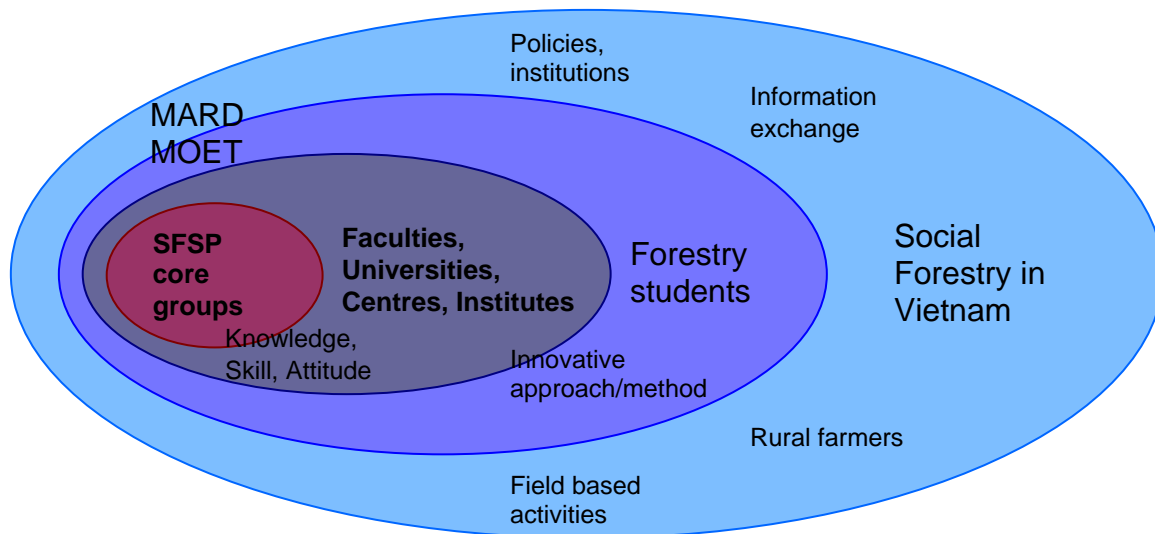
Impacts from educational interventions such as SFSP are difficult to measure directly because educational processes are influenced by a multitude of human and institutional factors. The correlation between specific inputs (e.g. PCD and LCTM) over a period of time (1994 to 2002) to a positive/negative effect on teaching staff in particular and on the forestry education in general is a complex task. Bearing this in mind, the ETSP management selected a ***flexible and soft approach*** which takes a bit away the rigidity of the logical framework with related inputs and outputs, but explores more deeply people's memories and their (selective) perception through *interactive social research techniques*.

Analytical Framework

A “*stepwise circle approach*” is adopted in the study to understand SFSP’s impacts, from direct to indirect and primary to secondary ones (see Figure 1).

- Firstly, impacts on core groups in its working partner institutions (WPIs) are measured. Such group members were the *direct beneficiaries*. The aim is to understand changes in their knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) after the period of introducing approaches/methods in forestry education and field-based activities.
- Secondly, innovative approaches and methods in forestry education should be enlarged to other non-core group members in the same WPIs and in other related institutions (faculties, universities, extension centers, research institutes near by). Therefore, analysis on the application and adaptation of the introduced approaches and methods by those target groups should be done.
- Thirdly, it is assumed that using innovative approaches and new methods brought up by SFSP do contribute to the improvements of the teaching and learning environment. Hence the performance and attitude of graduated students who will be the future teachers, researchers, managers, extensionists, etc. will change in a positive manner.
- Finally, SFSP was expected to have a wider impact on social forestry development in Vietnam through policy and institutional changes, its field-based activities and interactions between farmers with members from core groups, working partner institutions, graduated students; and through public information/dissemination and other channels. Such impact is reflected in the development goal of SFSP.

Figure 1: “stepwise circle approach” model – scope of SFSP’s impacts



Assessment tools

The study started with literature work followed by discussions with stakeholders. The fieldwork period lasted 4 weeks in May 2007 in which a variety of methods and tools were adopted, e.g. *group discussion*, *semi-structured interviews*, including the “*story telling method*” (see *Annex 5*) and the “*behavior ladder*” (*Annex 4*). For the field visit agenda and the locations, see *Annex 2*.

- **Group discussions:** were carried out with core group members in each WPI, 4 to 5 final year students in the 5 universities and farmers in provinces of Dak Nong, Hoa Binh and TT-Hue (where field based activities were implemented under SFSP and then ETSP). A number of participatory tools were used in discussions including brainstorming and ranking.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** were carried out with 2 to 3 experts in each WPI; representatives of MARD, MOET and provincial extension centers of Dak Nong, Hoa Binh and TT-Hue; leaders and teachers of 6 vocational schools under MARD in 3 main regions of the country; one school under People’s Committee of Hoa Binh province. **The ‘Story telling method’** was incorporated in the interviews to allow informants to better describe their involvement of SFSP, the ‘milestone’ changes, their feelings and comments on SFSP and to excerpt quotes for this study. See also description of the “*Story telling method*” used in this study in *Annex 5*.
- **Questionnaires:** Three types of questionnaires were developed and sent in advance to SFSP related groups of core members, leaders of relevant faculties/universities and forestry graduates. See examples of questionnaires in *Annex 6*. The research team received 20 responses from core members, seven from leaders of faculties/universities and 49 from forestry graduates from the five universities. Questionnaires for leaders of faculties/universities helped to validate and complement the qualitative information from the semi-structured interviews. The sent back student’s questionnaires were just enough in quantity to generate tabled data for reference information.
- **Behavior ladder:** inspired by the “*outcome mapping method*” was used in discussions with WPIs core groups. This tool focuses on one particular type of result – changes in

behavior of individuals, groups and institutions influenced by innovative approaches/methods.

Outcome mapping explores the logical link between interventions and behavioral changes in boundary partners (the ‘ladders’ shows the behavioral changes at different levels). Outcome mapping assumes that the boundary partners control change and that, as external agents, development programs only facilitate the process by providing access to new resources, ideas, or opportunities in a certain period of time. This applies especially for programs focusing on capacity development as SFSP. The “behavior ladder” was developed for the ETSP household income survey which was conducted in January 2007. The SFSP impact study helped to fine-tune the method. For more details, see introduction to “behavior ladder” in *Annex 4*.

Study team

The assessment group consisted of the head of the team leader, one external consultant and of two ETSP staff who were involved in SFSP activities in the past. There was a good gender balance and complementing approach among the group members:

- Associate professor, Dr. Dang Dinh Boi, Dean of Forestry Faculty – Agriculture and Forestry University, Thu Duc of Ho Chi Minh city, previously head of SFSP core group in the university (team leader).
- Mr. Hoang Xuan Thanh, senior consultant, director of Truong Xuan Company Ltd. (Ageless).
- Mrs. Nguyen Kim Phuong, ETSP Technical Assistant.
- Mrs. Ngo Thi Kim Yen, ETSP Project Officer and former SFSP Technical Assistant.
- Mr. Nguyen The Bach, ETSP Coordinator participated partly in the field visit period to some schools under MARD.

2. Application of innovative approaches and methods in forestry and agriculture education and training

This section of the report will take a look at the application and replication of innovative approaches/methods in forestry and agriculture education/training introduced by SFSP to partner institutions and other relevant stakeholders after the support program ended. While a number of participatory methods were introduced in the program, the study team only explored the ones that absorbed significant inputs in SFSP. These include:

- Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD),
- Learner-centered Teaching Methodology (LCTM),
- Participatory Technology Development (PTD),
- Human Resources Development (HRD),
- Gender Mainstreaming in teaching and research activities.

During the SFSP implementation period (1994-2002), participatory methods were relatively new to Vietnam. Teaching and training methods were mainly of theoretical and one-way nature. In addition to that, teachers/trainers were not yet equipped with participatory and field-based research methodology to integrate field reality into teaching practice. The above mentioned participatory methods were, therefore, selected for introduction and adaptation. The introduction and application processes involved all required steps consisting of introductory training, field-based experiments or piloting, reflection workshops and documentation with technical assistance from international and national experts. Activities were divided into two categories. One was generic for all 7 working partners and the other was dedicated to the needs identified specifically for respective working partners. For further information, see also the summary of main intervention approaches in *Annex 3*.

After the completion of the support program, each Forestry Faculty owned a ***nucleus of experienced experts in curriculum development and teaching methodology***. This was one of the most important achievements of SFSP. These experts were to be seen as pioneers in application of PCD and LCTM methods which were adapted to specific actual contexts in Vietnam. They have been core actors that contribute to the active replication of innovative approaches/methods to other faculties/universities in particular and to other related parts of the education system (especially vocational schools under MARD) through their consultancy missions and information exchange activities.

Vice-director of Tay Nguyen University stated that “*there is a clear distinction between SFSP-involved people and non-SFSP ones, which is reflected in better teaching methods, more systematic class and seminar organization, also more proficient computer and English skills... Teacher Huy’s group (SFSP core group) is often invited to provide consultancy to other programs....*”

It is clearly recognized that the positive effects of changes resulted from the integration of theoretical and practical aspects. They were spread from core group members to other staff of the forestry faculties. This is also confirmed by members of core groups, leaders of faculties/universities and by students.

As commented by a group of students from Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city, “*forestry teachers are the ones who have good experiences and often*

stress that it's more important to use practical experiences than the theoretical knowledge”.

Vice- director of Hue Agriculture and Forestry University compared “*talking about all participatory methods, the Forestry Faculty members applied them better than others”.*

Considering the trend in curriculum and teaching method reform in Vietnam’s current education/training system, it can be stated that the ***introduction of innovative approaches/methods*** by SFSP at the end of the nineties were a ***pioneering step ahead of the tendency in curriculum and teaching method reformation*** towards an open, positive and participatory way that converge step-by-step to the international standards (see Box 1).

A recent decision by MOLISA on the institutionalization of participatory curriculum development methods in vocational schools confirms the pioneering move of SFSP to update/modernize training curriculum at tertiary level. Furthermore, under the pressure of teaching methodology reform in the education sector (introducing the “2-way methods”), the SFSP materials helped boosting this reform process by having made early expertise in PCD, LCTM, and action research (PTD). This early strategic investment contributes now effectively to the current reform in the education sector, especially to education at bachelor level.

Director of Bac Kan DARD who was former Vice- Director of Social Forestry Training Centre, Vietnam Forestry University remarked “*SFSP is the first program that introduced PCD, LCTM and PTD into forestry education in Vietnam. These innovations have gone beyond the forestry sector, especially in agriculture & rural development domain”.*

Box 1: Trend in curriculum and teaching methodology reform in Vietnam education

Sustainable development in Vietnam is now facing big challenges by lack of high quality human resources. After 20 years of renovation, a lot of social and economic achievements have been made. Low progress, however, has been seen in the education and training sector to meet the increasing demands of the society. To overcome its shortcomings, many reformative measures have been initiated in the sector in an open, positive and participatory way which converge with the international standard:

- **MoET transferred more decentralized management** to universities.
- ISO standard management has been promoted to be applied in universities and colleges with **mandatory quality inspections and pro-active teaching/learning methods**. Training programs following the international standards have been piloted in the key universities.
- MOLISA (Decision No 01 dated 4/1/2007) institutionalized participatory approaches in curriculum development for vocational trainings. E.g. it is required to set up a *curriculum-development board* consisting of different relevant stakeholders and a maximum of 1/3 proportion from subject teachers.

2.1. Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD)

Curricula following PCD process are still in use by the working partner institutions. All 5 universities joining the support program adopted the PCD process for the development of curricula for 6 subjects including *Introduction to Social Forestry, Social Forestry Project Management, Agriculture and Forestry Extension, Non-timber Forestry Products, Forest*

Inventory, Agro-forestry with the support by SFSP. Those curricula are now formally in use and frequently updated.

The newly developed curricula provided valuable contribution to the development of the Social Forestry major course and to the Forestry Faculties in all concerned universities.

The Vice-director of Hue University said *“Without the support by SFSP to the forestry faculty, at the very beginning of its existence, this faculty would today not be so strong.*

Mr. Hoang Huu Cai, an experienced senior lecturer at the Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city stated: *“Social Forestry subject has been introduced to the university since 1994. The subject consisted of only one topic at that time and there were no social forestry related subjects as by now”.*

The lesson plans developed by PCD process presented distinct differences to traditional ones. These have been updated with innovative knowledge of social sciences, participatory approaches and skills on how to work with farmers, as well as practical learnings from social forestry reality in Vietnam.

A remark from a group of fourth year students in Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city: *“Previously, text books approved by the ministry consisted of mostly Russian examples. Now the materials are more updated with many practical examples of social forestry related matters in Vietnam. Now, there is more information about social forestry of Vietnam”.*

The Vice-director of Tay Nguyen University shared this viewpoint: *“The text books of forestry faculty are composed of new and updated samples and contents”.*

A lot of efforts were made on PCD replication in and among the WPIs during the process of reviewing existing curricula and developing new ones and short training courses. Attitude of core group members and leaders of PCD-involved WPIs showed high “commitment/willingness” and “scaling up/pushing” in the attitude measurement scale (see Figure 2).

While PCD could not be institutionalized with formal governmental guidelines, a number of universities took initiative and introduced PCD to other faculties through specific training workshops, teacher clubs (Tay Nguyen university), refreshment training for young lecturers by the Trade Union (Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry and Agriculture and Forestry University of HCMC).

Figure 2 : Behavior Ladder for PCD

<u>Expect to See</u> (easy, due to existence/incentives of project supports)		<u>Like to See</u> (more difficult, push from project but needs more self-efforts from boundary partners)			<u>Love to See</u> (profound changes: sustainable)		
Constraints							
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
							Self-Innovation
						Ownership/Decision	
					Scaling-up/ Pushing		
				Commitment / Willingness	Tay Nguyen University		
			Acceptance		TT- Hue University		
		Confidence			HCMC University		
	Interest				VN Forestry University		
Awareness			Thai Nguyen University				
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Interventions/supports							

Figure 2 shows that the current levels of PCD application vary in different Forestry Faculties.

Some WPIs are at the ladder of “scaling up” (Forestry Faculties of Tay Nguyen University, Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh City and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry). These WPIs received certain financial supports from their universities for organizing workshops with relevant groups and external consultants for the curriculum development process. Support was also provided to make PCD replication to other faculties by other projects which operate in participatory curriculum development (e.g. a SIDA project in Tay Nguyen university, a Dutch project in TT-Hue and Ho Chi Minh city, and DANIDA in Ho Chi Minh city). These universities carried out reviews of different curricula, organized workshops on curriculum development and repeated the PCD training courses for their own staff.

PCD in Thai Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry university is located lower on the ladder compared to the rest of WPIs. This is because none of the interviewed persons participated in one entire PCD process (the ones who did were not available). A few efforts have been made recently to update or improve curriculum framework. In addition some core staff of this WPI have been replaced by others.

Recognizing the importance of further incorporating and adopting innovative curriculum development and teaching methodology to the vocational training system, the Organizational and Personnel Department (OPD) under MARD requested ETSP to provide a number of training courses on PCD/LCTM for 37 vocational schools under MARD. Those training courses were carried out by some SFSP core group members in 2004 to 2006.

Experiences and documentation in PCD (and LCTM) by SFSP have been shared with and applied by VOCTECH II, a Dutch funded project on capacity building for nine vocational training schools of MARD.

Some faculties and universities that were introduced to PCD have used a variety of ‘information channels’ for their training needs assessments (i.e. interviews, contacts with relevant groups, workshops) in the process of reviewing old curricula and developing new ones. Attention was also paid to the preparation of detail lesson plans, class room observation, provision of student’s evaluation on the performance of teachers.

However, ***formal PCD replication and sustainability is still limited***. In addition to PCD processes supported by SFSP, no full or adequate PCD processes have been applied to any other training subjects in partner institutions so far. Efforts on PCD replication by ETSP support to vocational schools under MARD were limited to some training courses to group of lecturers. The course participants, on the other hand, were exchanged in each course; and there was no follow-up support done from the program for PCD practical application.

There are different reasons that put constraints to sustainability and replicability of PCD regardless its widely flexible nature (see Box 2).

Box 2: Main causes that limit PCD replication

- University leaders still consider PCD as a costly and time-consuming practice that goes beyond their financial feasibility and personnel capability, especially the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) stage which involves a number of different stakeholders.
- MOET approved standard curriculum framework and compulsory subjects occupy a major part of given time. This leaves little room for reformation of an individual curriculum by any type of schools. One core group member of Tay Nguyen university commented: *“There is a contradiction in applying PCD: if it is applied for one subject, then it is too expensive. On the other hand, PCD is not in a favorable condition to be applied for a major in terms of regulations (on compulsory subjects, complex approval process required for new curricula, budget allocation) and time pressure. Furthermore, it is likely that changes will be made to lesson plans from time to time but not to the curriculum framework.”*
- A few PCD tools introduced by SFSP are difficult to use under current condition such as monitoring tables (too complex, time-consuming and difficult to evaluate lesson plans). Class room observation and student’s evaluation of teacher performance were considered as a ‘sensitive issue’ in many universities when students have to assess their teachers.
- SFSP focused on “knowledge-skill-attitude” (KSA) but did not pay due attention to the institutional aspect in applying PCD. A majority of lecturers consider PCD as something procedural that should be under the management of the faculty but first of all under formal direction of the university. Some leaders of the universities said, *“SFSP cooperated with faculty only, not with the university as a whole, and SFSP did not touch aspects of training management”*.
- Lessons from PCD learning process was not adequately documented for the sake of scaling-up. SFSP was not followed up with a strategy or a plan and additional support measures to assure the sustainability of achieved results in WPIs.
- Parallel to PCD process introduced by SFSP, other curriculum development methods were also introduced by different projects (with similar participatory nature but using different steps, tools and scopes). There was a lack of coordination of projects dealing with curriculum development during the SFSP period and after that. This is one example of untapped, ineffective use of installed innovative human resource competence or potential for reform processes.
- Social context is subject to fast changes, and so do the training needs. PCD method may create risks to PCD practitioners if it is not applied on a regular basis. And this can only be realized when PCD is institutionalized.

2.2. Learner Centered Teaching Methodology (LCTM)

Commitment to application, replication and possession of LCTM is one of the most visible change brought about by SFSP to the WPIs. Groups of graduated and final year students from forestry faculties stated that such kind of teaching methods are now more frequently in use in social forestry related subjects such as agro-forestry and project management than in many other subjects. A majority of lecturers also agreed that LCTM was used more effectively in social forestry related subjects, and particularly in short courses for a variety of participants. LCTM application also improved the quality of meetings and training workshops organized by WPIs (less lecturing time, more group discussions and recognition of other ideas, etc.).

In the behavior ladder, core group members and leaders of faculties/universities ranked LCTM at “*scaling up*” and “*ownership*” levels – higher ladders compared with other ‘*products*’ elaborated by SFSP (see Figure 3).

Innovative ideas were implemented in some WPIs to disseminate LCTM through teachers’ club (Tay Nguyen university), Trade Union’s coaching activities to improve young lecturer’s performance (Agriculture and Forestry University of HCMC), or regulated timing of at least 30% of a semester for non-lecturing activities like practical exercises, group discussion or essay writing (Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry). All WPIs reported that they could make prioritized distribution of stationery expenses and training materials to eight social forestry-related subjects for applying LCTM.

<i>Figure 3: Behavior Ladder for LCTM</i>							
<u>Expect to See</u> (easy, due to existence/incentives of project supports)		<u>Like to See</u> (more difficult, push from project but need more self-efforts from boundary partners)			<u>Love to See</u> (profound changes: sustainable)		
Constraints							
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
							Self-Innovation
						Ownership/ Decision	
					Scaling-up/ Pushing	Tay Nguyen university	
				Commitment/ Willingness		Thai Nguyen university	
			Acceptance			HCMC university	
		Confidence				TT- Hue university	
	Interest					VN forestry university	
Awareness							
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Interventions/supports							

Many of the core group members said that ***changes in teaching attitude are the most meaningful changes*** brought in by SFSP. Its selected international experts and consultants provided an important contribution to the process of change.

Dr. Bao Huy, a member of SFSP core group, head of Tay Nguyen WPI, remembered: “*I was extremely impressed and liked the way SFSP advisor Peter Taylor was working with visualization aids, e.g. with one jar of full knowledge being poured into an empty brain to describe the teaching and learning process. Since that event my attitudes towards teaching and learning changed. I do not any more consider students’ brains as being empty, and I avoid the pure transfer of knowledge to them. Instead, I tell them whether something is realistic or not*”.

Dr. Bui Viet Hai, a core group member, Agriculture and Forestry University in HCM, stated: “*I was impressed by the way the SFSP advisors and consultants were working. They were realistic and practical, not academic. I myself now assimilated the results-oriented approach in teaching as well as in doing research. Training courses by advisor Peter Taylor and consultant Rudolf Batliner provided us with new and very good methods, e.g. of using ‘dart board’ to evaluate different aspects of the course itself. I remember well the main essence shown by those two consultants that results were not as important as the methods and chosen process. This reminded me very often when teaching*”.

Core group members agreed that LCTM was easier to apply than PCD due to its flexible utilization by individuals, and because of having less compulsory frame conditions compared to PCD. This can be one reason that LCTM is the method which continues to be applied at a larger scale and thus is spreading easier. Of course, both are different in nature and application.

Dr. Bui Viet Hai, Agriculture and Forestry University in HCM said: “*LCTM application could be managed by individuals, depending on their own capability; its costs are not that high. PCD on the other hand requires favorable institutional conditions with leaders from faculty/university initiating the process and allocating funds to make PCD application achievable*”.

While its application continues to be sustained and scaled up, ***LCTM is still facing big challenges to remain its original nature***. Many teachers and leaders of the universities considered LCTM as some plain tools or skills. They do not yet see it as a process to change teaching behavior, teaching quality respectively (learner-centered focus). LCTM, therefore, was partly even mistaken with teaching aids or illustration tools (media). Some students also considered LCTM only as changes by teachers to allow them to discuss in groups and to be exposed to color cards and projectors. The ‘*LCD projector abuse phenomena*’ was mentioned several times in this study. Thus in some places, LCTM somehow became ‘*LCD-centered*’ not ‘*Learner-centered*’. Due to lack of full awareness, leaders of universities kept talking about inadequacy of facilities and education budget as the main constraint to not be able to introduce and apply LCTM.

LCTM application is not (yet) institutionalized at university level or elsewhere. Few efforts were made to develop ‘*code of conducts*’ or criteria for evaluation of education quality when applying innovative teaching and learning methods, thus limiting the motivation of the teachers and hindering a wider application of LCTM.

Introductory courses were repeated by SFSP on using LCTM for a large classes. However, it was raised by all WPIs as main constraint to application of LCTM. In addition, limited conditions for teaching and learning at university level were hindering an effective spreading of LCTM. Hindering elements mentioned:

- Class furniture arrangement still followed the traditional approach of lecturing,
- Students were passive and rather non-responsive instead of taking initiative to improve their own learning environment,
- Heavy compulsory knowledge transfer (front teaching) and limited time availability made it difficult for teachers to prepare carefully learner-centered lesson plans,
- Senior teachers found it difficult to change their settled teaching habits,
- There were changes in participants of TOT courses on LCTM. Therefore it became difficult for part-time participants to continue as ‘trainers’ of LCTM.

Another constraint to LCTM was the lack of systematic integration of PCD and LCTM. The introduction by SFSP itself created an impression of distinction/isolation of ‘*PCD here and LCTM there*’. PCD was introduced by different instructors prior to LCTM. Some core group members of WPI from Agriculture and Forestry University in Ho Chi Minh city commented: *The program’s interventions were not so consistent between PCD and LCTM, because the consultants were not the same and so was their time availability”.*

2.3. Participatory Technology Development (PTD)

PTD was added into the formal teaching schedule. In the mid of nineties, SFSP was the first project that introduced PTD into tertiary education system in Vietnam as a field-based participatory action research methodology. The introduction of PTD aimed to creating practical field knowledge to feed into developed curricula of the universities and providing links between research, teaching and transfer of technology. At the time, PTD was a relatively new approach which was tested and improved. Up to now, PTD methodology, related field experience and documentation are relatively complete. PTD became a teaching subject covering 30 credits under the “*Social Forestry Major*” at the Vietnam Forestry University. The subject has one chapter in the theme “*agriculture and forestry extension*” at all four other universities.

The previous ‘PTD places’ have now become a frequent ‘practice base’ for students (Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city). Many under-graduate students have chosen PTD for their graduation thesis. And PTD was also included in course schedules for post-graduate students (Tay Nguyen University, Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city). A number of Master Degree thesis used PTD or PTD-related approaches.

Based on initial experiences and lessons learnt within SFSP together with continued supports by ETSP, ***PTD was approved to become a formal extension method in the government extension system of Hoa Binh province (one location for piloting PTD under SFSP to be continued under ETSP).*** This is an important ‘milestone’ in the effort to institutionalize participatory extension methods at provincial level. Annual budget is now allocated by Hoa Binh province to provide PTD training for all extensionists at district and commune levels; all district extension stations have budget projections to implement PTD ideas with farmers. Hoa Binh province is now aware of the importance of the role of PTD in demand-driven commodity production due to requests of advanced steps in technology improvement by farmers and local communities.

PTD practice helped change attitudes of WPIs and extension organizations at different levels when working with local farmers. Traditional ‘*technology transfer*’ role was converted into ‘*working together with farmer*’ role through PTD processes (see front cover picture).

Dr. Bao Huy, Tay Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry University shared his confidence: *“PTD helped me change my perception: mind power of one person is not equal to several people’s. When PTD was initiated in Dak R’Tih commune in Dak Nong province, discussions with farmer groups provided solutions to problems which I did not think they could have been found”*.

Ms. Luong, vice director of Hoa Binh provincial extension center shared the viewpoint: *“PTD helped us change our perception: before we thought of us being teachers, now we should work together with farmers.*

Nevertheless, ***it still faces difficulties to apply the participatory research approach by the lecturers after the end of SFSP***. In some forestry faculties where PTD was piloted (e.g. Thai Nguyen and Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city) when the support program ended or chances to provide consultancies to other projects finished, PTD was not sustained or restarted by the teachers to create practical learnings for improvement of their way of teaching. Reasons given to this were that a PTD-applied research process was at high costs while a limited fund (3-5 mil. VND) was allocated to one university-level scientific research topic.

At the moment, ***commitment to PTD varies from WPI to WPI and extension organizations at different levels*** (see Figure 4). Some WPIs had good working conditions and could achieve tangible results, as they had opportunities to cooperate with other projects through PTD consultancy assignments (Tay Nguyen University and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry) or received continued support by ETSP (Hoa Binh extension center). In other WPIs, PTD was only taught as one chapter in the forestry major (Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh City) due to long distances from field base, the study team was told so.

District extension stations (except the ones in Hoa Binh province) reported to have stopped applying PTD by themselves due to the fact that there was no budget available by higher authority levels, and PTD was never officially introduced as a formal extension method. In fact, the district level extension stations provide mainly training/coaching and demonstration models to transfer techniques by order, which is completely different to the piloted PTD approach with ideas often coming from the farmers involved.

Figure 4: Behavior Ladder for PTD

Expect to See (easy, due to existence/incentives of project supports)		Like to See (more difficult, push from project but need more self-efforts from boundary partners)			Love to See (profound changes: sustainable)		
Constraints							
↙	↙	↙	↙	↙	↙	↙	↙
							Self-Innovation
						Ownership/Decision	
					Scaling-up/ Pushing	Hoa Binh PAEC	
				Commitment/ Willingness		Tay Nguyen university	
			Acceptance			TT-Hue university	
		Confidence				Thai Nguyen university	
	Interest		VN forestry university		HCMC university		
Awareness		Thuy Duc (Dak Nong)	Nam Dong (TT-Hue)				
↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗	↗
Interventions/supports							

It is still a long way to go making PTD become an applied holistic approach for education/research/extension which in a long run will bring benefits to farmers. PTD, as many other participatory methods in rural development work in Vietnam, is not yet institutionalized in the extension system. The often cited reasons are budget unavailability and weak human resources.

Vice-director of the National Extension Center (NAEC) under MARD (former head of WPI core group of Vietnam Forestry University – Xuan Mai) mentioned: *“It is feasible to carry out participatory methods at a smaller scale with full supports from donor programs/projects, but it becomes extremely difficult to up scale them on a larger institutionalized basis due to its dependence from the state budgets”.*

Difficulty in the replicability of field results was one constraint which hampers PTD process when there is no further support from project side. The study found out that while PTD pilots were successful in some SFSP-supported households, it was difficult to replicate PTD in other non-SFSP beneficiary households or communities (see Box 3). The main reasons for this are:

- Lack of careful selection of participating households and the elaboration of good ideas;
- Lack of follow-up supports for “post-PTD” period to provide evidences to better proof the final results of higher incomes for farmers in one specific ecological area;
- Lack of market-driven background and passive attitudes of being dependent on government subsidies by some ethnic minority groups in poor rural areas where development projects are operating.

Box 3: PTD results remain in Vanh village, Ky Son district, Hoa Binh province

PTD pilot activities here were initiated in 2000 and ended in 2004 (ETSP support).

- At the moment, there are 3 PTD results sustained in some households: Giant tea for fodder, rattan protection fences and planting Luong bamboo in gardens.
- One typical successful household was the one from Mr. Liep who gained income from rattan and bamboo. Mr. Liep also developed his rattan nursery garden to sell seedlings to other households. Now, Mr. Liep continues to try other pilots without external supports.
- Although PTD showed positive results, other households in the village still found it difficult to follow up due to the limitation of land availability and other critical land use aspects.

PTD left behind some arguments that require answers. Through discussions with WPIs, it is necessary to clarify the following points before proceeding any further:

- How to involve farmers in PTD without provision of external subsidies (or with minimal subsidies)? Theoretically, PTD may be more successful without subsidies; however, at field reality it is difficult to encourage farmers to apply PTD. In many cases, local staff and farmers still use the name “*PTD model*” – something similar to *technology transfer models* supported by the governmental system.
- How to adjust the PTD process when the ‘tripartite association’ of ‘farmer - researcher – extensionist’ did not happen? In practice, often only one of the required ‘professional’ – extensionist involved in local PTD process, while roles of the ‘researcher’ in local PTD process were still limited due to the lack of budget and appropriate arrangements outside the donor-funded program.
- How to integrate PTD into the local SEDP/Village/Commune Development Planning (VDP/CDP) processes?
- How to develop PTD to become a participatory method, formally taught in the wider education system of agriculture and forestry. At present stage the PTD approach is only included in teaching schedules of SFSP partner institutions. It is not yet included in other faculties/universities.

2.4. Other Interventions

Human Resources Development (HRD)

The SFSP supported process of HRD plan development provided the partners with more profound knowledge and skills in this important aspect. However, the participatory developed HRD plans remained somehow *on paper*. They could not be officially initiated (except Thai Nguyen University). Most of the partner institutions placed HRD plan in a low position in the “behavior ladder” (see Figure 5).

HRD plan development process supported by SFSP showed some difficulties to transfer them into action. The reasons, as stated by the partner institutions, are the following:

- The capability based HRD planning methods were new to the Vietnam context of this period. No lessons were learnt from application of this method in other Vietnamese institutions
- HRD national consultants themselves did not have sufficient practical experience and did not distinguish much between applied methods for enterprises and the adapted ones for training and education institutions.
- Only a small group of people in each WPI was involved in the HRD plan development process. The organizational and personnel departments or leadership of the universities

did not take part into the process, therefore there was a lack of consistency and co-ordination between the developed HRD plan of the faculties with the strategic plans of the universities as a whole. Furthermore, the new HRD planning method by itself would not be feasible if not linked systematically with the whole administrative reform process of each involved institution.

In the particular case of Thai Nguyen University, core members and leaders of forestry faculty and university realized that the HRD planning methods should be applied to other faculties as well based on a consistent university development strategic plan.

Figure 5: Behavior Ladder for HRD plan

<u>Expect to See</u> (easy, due to existence/incentives of project supports)		<u>Like to See</u> (more difficult, push from project but need more self-efforts from boundary partners)				<u>Love to See</u> (profound changes: sustainable)	
Constraints							
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
							Self-Innovation
						Ownership/ Decision	
					Scaling-up/ Pushing		Thai Nguyen university
				Commitment/ Willingness			
			Acceptance				
		Confidence					
	Interest	TT-Hue university					
Awareness	HCM city university						
	VN forestry university						
	Tay Nguyen university						
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Interventions/supports							

Gender mainstreaming

Gender issues have been included as one section or one chapter in some social forestry related subjects. Vietnam University of Forestry (in Xuan Mai, Ha Tay province) set gender as one separate subject under Social Forestry and Agro-forestry Major. Gender issues have been more or less integrated in research and technology transfer activities in rural development by core groups.

Nevertheless, core group members stated that gender mainstreaming is “*difficult*”, “*ambiguous*” and “*rather vague to see results*”. It required practical skills for actual application in teaching and doing research. However, the national consultants on gender in SFSP phase were still

inexperienced to provide the required support in field work situations and to justify attributed results: i.e. how much better the results became when incorporating gender mainstreaming. The commitments to gender mainstreaming seem to be higher in Thai Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry University and Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, as gender has been integrated in the overall development plans of faculties and universities (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Behavior Ladder for Gender mainstreaming

<u>Expect to See</u> (easy, due to existence/incentives of project supports)		<u>Like to See</u> (more difficult, push from project but need more self-efforts from boundary partners)				<u>Love to See</u> (profound changes: sustainable)	
Constraints							
↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
							Self-Innovation
						Ownership/ Decision	
					Scaling-up/ Pushing	Thai Nguyen university	
					Commitment/ willingness	TT-Hue university	
			Acceptance				
		Confidence	VN forestry university				
	Interest	HCM city university					
Awareness		Tay Nguyen university					
↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Interventions/supports							

3. Improved quality of forestry students

As stated by all WPIs, it is rather difficult to evaluate SFSP impacts on graduated forestry students due to constraints related to economic conditions and social awareness in forestry education. The society's opinion to the profession and the accelerating process of urbanization made it impossible to measure the program impacts on improved forestry training/education, especially on social forestry in Vietnam through such direct indicators as '*increased number of students registering to the forestry major*' or '*ratio of students working in the same professional background after university graduation*' (see Box 4). Therefore, the impact is mainly considered/reflected by *changes in working attitude of students towards local communities* and *increase of time and expenses* spent for social knowledge/skills and field practice.

Box 4: Limited absorption capacities in economic issues and social awareness have lowered the impact at the student level

- The entrance student resources for forestry faculties are pupils mainly from rural and mountainous areas. Their entrance exam marks are too low for the enrolment of new students, even only at the minimum '*general entrance marks*' requirement. As a matter of fact, the total number of students in forestry faculties remained the same in the past five years.
- More opportunities are opened to students to select their education because universities started opening new major and even private owned colleges have been established. Work market is expanding rapidly, especially in urban areas and jobs do not necessarily require the same professional background. On the other hand, forester profession is considered as being a 'tough' and 'unattractive' one.
- When being asked the majority of forestry students say that this study place was not their first choice. Many students accepted forestry university enrolment because they did not pass entry requirements for their first choice. Therefore, some try to change the school after 1 or 2 years of enrolment. Due to the difficulties of the profession and the working localities, it is almost impossible for the support programs/projects to increase the enrollment rate of forestry students and improve their interests in the profession without government influence at the policy level.

SFSP made positive contribution to provision of trained foresters with new knowledge and a new way of working in the transition period from centralized forestry to community based/managed forestry. Annually, between 500 to 700 forestry students graduate from the five partner faculties which were equipped with knowledge in social forestry and which practiced communication and participatory oriented methods to better work with farmers. Their field assignments in government agencies are now the transmission channel for the program to spread its secondary leveled impact to influence approaches and ways of working in forestry agencies at local levels, especially to extensionists at the district and commune/village levels.

When being asked, the majority of forestry students provided positive comments on curricula and teaching methods applied by forestry faculties, saying that it helped them getting acquainted with good practical opportunities for their future profession. The students (still in enrolment as well as working after the graduation) evaluated subjects with the following criteria: (i) enriched, updated and adapted content of the subject; (ii) pedagogical skills, LCTM application, training materials; (iii) sufficient practicing and field work, tools and materials to support rehearsal period; (iv) capability, enthusiasm, practical experiences of teachers. SFSP supported social forestry related subjects received good assessments in terms of content and methods, using the above mentioned criteria.

Responses by 49 students to mailed questionnaires showed that most of them are now working in the same trained professions. They could find jobs less than one year after graduation, and it

took them about one year to get used to their work situation. The questionnaires filled in and sent back lead to the conclusion that *the perceived knowledge and skills are useful or highly useful for the student's current work*. About half of them are of the opinion that there was a gap between what was taught at the university and what they encountered in their first field assignments (see Table 1).

Table 1: Tabulated results of graduated student questionnaires (N=49)

Question	Reply	
	Quantity	Percentage (%)
1. Is your current employment similar to your major/occupation trained in university?	Yes : 37	75
	No: 8	16
	Unemployed: 4	9
2. How long did you get familiar with your job after graduation?	Under 1 year: 35	71
	From 1 to 2 years: 5	10
	Unemployed or not replied: 9	19
3. Are your trained knowledge and skills useful for your work?	Very useful: 14	29
	Useful: 29	59
	Little or not useful, not replied: 6	12
4. Your comments on the difference between knowledge/skills perceived in university and current forestry production	Very different: 3	6
	Different: 21	43
	Little different: 20	41
	Not different or not replied: 5	10

Social forestry related subjects and the related practicum have changed student's attitudes towards working and communicating with local communities. Innovative knowledge and skills in sociology, communication and gender issues were included in the teaching schedule for forestry major. Prior to SFSP supports, the duration for practical exercises of different subjects were short and rather isolated. However, an integrated and combined practicum is now scheduled for social forestry related subjects with more time (about 2 weeks). Confidence is built and improved for students in communicating with local farmers and learning to share concerns with them through observing SFSP involved teachers' behavioral attitudes.

One student from Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city mentioned: *"Forestry students are more fortunate to have longer field exercise period than others"*.

Another student from Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city said: *"After graduation I came to work for the municipal 'green park' company and was assigned to supervise a nursery in an outskirts district of HCM city. At the beginning I noticed that many workers were late and idle, especially in the afternoon. Recalling teacher's lessons particularly during the practical field lessons when I was taught how to communicate with farmers, I found out that many workers were also doing farm work for their own, such as grazing their cattle in the afternoon. Therefore, they did not concentrate on their work in the nursery. I rescheduled the work in the nursery that allowed them to leave the nursery early in the afternoon for their grazing duty. The workers then started treating me warmly and their work effectiveness in the nursery also improved much"*.

The students' recommendations direct to an **increased time allocation for practicum** (longer field work periods, selection of field localities according to ecological areas, better improved

social and team work skills, more chances for students to be involved in actual scientific research work, etc.), more **computer training** (professional software application such Mapinfo, GIS), and more comprehensive training on **foreign language (English)**. Some graduated students proposed extra activities during schooling time, such as the provision of updated legislations on agriculture and forestry or the introduction of ethnic minority languages for forestry students. In fact, any responses to the above students' suggestions depend on the individual teachers'/faculties' flexibility which also relates to the "learner centered" nature of the LCTM method.

In addition, almost all students would like to see a **decrease in number and allocated time for general compulsory subjects (MOET-standard schedule) which adds little value to the graduated students**. This is a critical and serious issue not only to forestry training but also to the whole tertiary and vocational education/training in Vietnam.

Another issue raised by the students and teachers is the question: Should Social Forestry be regarded as a separate major? In SFSP 1, a 'social forestry training center' was set up by Vietnam University of Forestry (in Xuan Mai, Ha Tay) to establish a new major (producing bachelors in 'social forestry'). At that time, this was considered as an important achievement. Over the last two years the enrolment of social forestry students decreased. In 2006, the enrolment was not even enough to run a separate class, and it had to be combined with the agro-forestry major. The main reason for this, according to students, is that the name of '*social forestry*' is a too general term. It seems to be difficult for graduates to find jobs compared to other professions. The head of the training department at the Vietnam University of Forestry revealed: "*The social forestry major course might be stopped*". Whatsoever, the Social Forestry Major now is dissolved, it is more a question to the Vietnam University of Forestry itself; but in the future, the setting up of a separate major course program in social forestry for all forestry universities is questioned.

4. Contribution to social forestry development in Vietnam

SFSP was a program that introduced social forestry approach and concepts at an early stage to Vietnam's tertiary education system. Its nature characterizes a program that supports training and education activities. It was not a project for piloting and replicating innovative field-based methods. SFSP differs from other social forestry supported projects which introduced different methods to extension systems in provinces/districts, such as projects funded by GTZ, EU, UN, Helvetas, Finland, and even SFSP's follow-up project, the ETSP. SFSP contributions, though secondary and indirect, have been reported as fundamental and long-lasting to social forestry development supports in Vietnam by investing strategically and gradually in the forestry education system of Vietnam.

Up to now, *social forestry development has become a formal orientation of the forestry sector in Vietnam*. This is stated in different legislations, for example in the *National Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2020 (2007)* or the *Law on Forest Protection and Development (2004)*.

Through its field-based activities, documentation and information exchange workshops, *SFSP supported the establishment and reinforcement of the social forestry concept in both theoretical and practical terms. It can be concluded that an important part of the achieved accomplishments during the initiation process of social forestry development in Vietnam is attributed to SFSP*. See also Box 5 for a clearer picture on current status of social forestry development in Vietnam, as stated by relevant stakeholders during our study.

Mr. Hoang Huu Cai, a SFSP core member in Agriculture and Forestry University of Ho Chi Minh city shared his view: *"I was impressed with the first national workshop on community forestry in 1999. The active and controversial arguments in the workshop interested me because this was the first time the social forestry concept was introduced and discussed among relevant stakeholders, including five universities granting diploma in forestry and the related ministries. Vice- minister of MARD – director of SFSP delivered an impressive speech promulgating the orientation "from now, change to social forestry"*.

Box 5: Current status of social forestry development in Vietnam

Before 2000, forestry in Vietnam was still under 'forest enterprise-centered' practice. Since the year 2000, the state-managed forestry has begun a shift to 'social forestry'. This term is a process of 'socialization' adapted to Vietnam's condition, involving the participation of local people, the communities and different economic sectors in a step-by-step increasing manner.

Social forestry has been further developed in a holistic and broader scale. The shift to social forestry processes can be stated as dynamic in all aspects:

- Social forestry is determined as one orientation in forestry development, which is now stated in legal and policy papers.
- Social forestry has been included in training programs of all universities with a forestry faculty. This is perhaps one of the most important contributions by SFSP.
- Countrywide information exchange of social forestry processes is ongoing through research, education, field-based activities, documentation, websites, seminars and workshops.
- Various types of piloted models in social forestry have been gradually replicated in all regions of the country.

Stakeholders commented the **benefits** from social forestry development processes under SFSP as follows:

- Changes in *social awareness* of the role of forestry in community development and poverty reduction.
- Contribution to poverty reduction: Establishing the rights to have access to and benefit from forest resources for different actors, including local farmers and ethnic minority communities in mountainous and forest areas.
- Better protection of forest resources when strictly applying social forestry approaches (e.g. through models of community forest management – CFM).
- Improved professional and social capacities for foresters in community organization, land use management, market access to forest products (timber and non-timber forest products).
- Improved knowledge and skills for state managers and extension staff in working with local communities.

Constraints and challenges in social forestry development have been identified by relevant stakeholders as follows:

- Scales of piloted models on social forestry remain small. It takes time to prove effectiveness in social, economic and ecological terms (difficult to see short-term results from forest investments). Therefore, it is still difficult to attract active participation of local people and release government funding to go on broader scale.
- Social forestry, at the moment, focuses on decentralized land use planning and management practices (through land allocations to individual households). These approaches show their effectiveness in a short run. However, in the long run individual household ownership of forest land will hinder the efforts of promoting community-based forest management and restrain enterprises from investing in forest enrichment and forest product processing.
- Social forestry is favorable for forest protection (where forest coverage exists), but difficult for reforestation and forest enrichment (there are a few areas where local people invest in forest plantation on bare lands; people still depend on state supports for this).
- Legal aspects on forest allocation to communities, benefit sharing, administrative process for forest exploitation, etc. are still too complicated and demanding for local people to create favorable and sustainable conditions.
- There is still a lack of awareness on interdisciplinary approaches which trigger social forestry - oriented support program/projects (i.e. holistic interventions on integrated aspects of planning, budgeting, providing extension services, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the local communities living in particular ecological conditions). But this awareness is required to provide solutions in a systematic way for the further elaboration of policies and regulations on the one hand and the development of the required human resources and institutional arrangements.

SFSP provided support for a nucleus of national experts who were trained and became knowledgeable/skilled in social forestry, contributing to the development of Vietnam's social forestry in many ways. Its main contribution can be summarized as follows:

- Contribution by national forestry experts to the forestry sector through policy dialogue that lead to the development and approval of various legal documents, of forest development strategies and plans. For example, the involvement of SFSP core members (Dr. Bao Huy and his group in Tay Nguyen University) in the preparation of the National Forestry Development Strategy 2006-2010 which was approved by Prime Minister in February 2007. Other examples: the Decision No. 106, issued by MARD on Nov. 2006, on the Guidelines for Community Forestry Management; some forest strategies and community forestry management procedures in a number of provinces.
- The training of thousands of foresters at bachelor level from the year 2000 to now. They could be equipped with innovative knowledge and social skills, now working in all provinces nation wide. They are an important source of human power for social development processes which bring about further changes in social attitudes at larger scales.

- Creation of a huge amount of knowledge from social forestry approaches and field-based activities (within and outside the scopes of SFSP and ETSP).
- Provision of consultancy on social forestry related methods and models for many programs/projects operating in the field of rural development. For example, Tay Nguyen core group members provided durable inputs to help PTD introduction and land allocation to groups of households in Dak R'Tih commune (Thuy Duc district, Dak Nong province) to enable them to have access to piloted activities in natural forest utilization.
- A number of SFSP core members have been promoted to leading positions in universities, in different government agencies and other public service providing organizations like extension centers or provincial forest sub-departments. They have been continuously making use of innovative approaches/methods introduced by SFSP, not only in training/ education/ research/ extension but also in other fields.
- Step-by-step contribution to the development of links between research, education, training and extension (RETE) in the forest sector of Vietnam, e.g. through the collaboration among WPIs, including universities, research institutes and provincial extension centers in SFSP field-based activities, such as PTD pilots, and in the development of curriculum and teaching materials.

SFSP helped establish and maintain information exchange activities in social forestry training network (SFTN), involving members from working partner institutions (through website, newsletter, workshops, seminars, meeting, discussions, etc.). This network support brought up benefits for its members and other people interested in social forestry. The website <http://www.socialforestry.org.vn/> of SFTN is working and maintained well. It has been recently merged with the information channel on agro-forestry education network (VNAFE). The web site is highly appreciated by students as an important source of information on participatory approaches/methods and training tools for social forestry related matters.

The collaboration and exchange through the network, however, are rather informal. There is no budgetary plan for common activities. Therefore, the updating requirements are facing some difficulties due to limited submission of news/articles by core group members (except efforts made by Tay Nguyen University group).

5. Concluding remarks and recommendations

1. This review five years after terminating SFSP shows that the program made an important contribution to the initiation and development of social forestry concept and the creation of a nucleus of human resources with relevant knowledge, skills and excellent attitudes.

Participatory approaches/methods introduced by SFSP, especially PCD and LCTM, have been widely applied in tertiary forestry education and to some extent replicated at the vocational education/training level with the help of ETSP (2004 to 2006).

SFSP helped develop the capacity of a group of competent national experts who continue to contribute to the development of social forestry. *Those people have become catalysts for the general social development in Vietnam which in fact is lacking behind its impressive economic part. As those national expert's time availability is limited, they should be consulted selectively and effectively.*

The study team concludes that SFSP 1994 to 2002 is an evidence to justify the need for more intensive investment into education and human resource. Through its capacity building support to forestry teachers, SFSP has equipped indirectly thousands of forestry students with practicable approaches/methods and a sound knowledge to better communicate with rural people.

2. The SFSP impact analysis done five years after its completion provided a number of lessons for similar project/program designs and implementation of donor funded education projects. For the responsible managers and decision makers on both sides, MARD and SDC, the following recommendations can be extracted:

a) **Recommendations from the SFSP structure and implementation 1994 to 2002 for the Vietnamese government and the donor agencies:**

- It is reasonable to focus capacity building support at the beginning of a phase on a certain group of targets/beneficiaries to first generate a pool of competent experts who then can scale-up processes at a later stage. However, more attention should be given to the institutional factor in capacity building intervention for the educational working partners. The improvements in knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA) for the 'implementers' (teachers and leaders of faculties) could not sufficiently be put in place, in both phases of SFSP. Such inputs should also be installed at a larger scale within the institutions, e.g. with the leaders of the institutions or even at higher levels. By doing so, more favorable conditions for the sustainability of newly applied approaches/methods can be created. In the case of SFSP, policy makers (from the relevant ministries) and leaders from the involved universities should have been involved from the very beginning to make them more aware of the required changes and the related actions and lobbying support at policy making levels.
- By nature, investments in education require long-term commitment, similar to forestry! Continuity and long-term strategic planning are decisive factors that trigger effectiveness. The strategic shift in 2002 – to move SFSP away from education towards forestry and agriculture extension in upland areas – came too early. Instead, the program should have focused on a strategic spreading/replication of the achieved results on

education/training at tertiary and vocational level under MARD/MOET, with specific contributions to the concerned policy level. Such a pragmatic continuation on supporting forestry and agricultural education could have broadened and deepened the impact of SFSP at once. The records of SFSP show that it was MARD that even made such a pragmatic proposal during the debriefing meeting of the SFSP external evaluation in 2001 (see also Annex 1, second page), but it seems, it's representatives did not make it clearly or persistently enough. The situation at the vocational training level would perhaps look different today.

- It is generally difficult to visualize or measure impacts of education program/projects. The most important achievements and their related impact *indicators* of an education program or project do not only comply with the *increase of knowledge* or the *personal income* of the end-of-the-line beneficiaries. They also lie in personal changes of *behavioral attitude*. It can be stated that part of the significant SFSP impact is the change in involved people's attitudes related to the way of working and communicating with other people involved. Those direct changes created positive secondary impacts on the future generation of foresters. Those secondary impacts are difficult to measure, but such trends could definitely be sorted out during interviews and Story Telling events.
- In designing the capacity building program/project, more attention should be given to the *outcome monitoring* of the field-based interventions. In the case of SFSP, outcomes of PTD activities in the piloted locations (in terms of natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods of the local people involved) should have been monitored and documented, taking into account the other actors and factors influencing the changes at the same time. The better visualization of outcomes of field-based interventions would result in more persuasive motivation for application/replication of the new social forestry-related approaches/methods in Vietnam.
- Gender issues and gender equity are important and need attention. However, gender mainstreaming approaches should be better adapted to specific conditions and realistic contexts to become more effective. In the case of SFSP, there should have been more careful and participatory gender analysis done during the field-based interventions in each particular ecological region and ethnic group. Then practical solutions could have been consistently carried out and monitored to measure realistic changes. The comprehensive generation of knowledge on outcomes of gender mainstreaming would not only enrich the training on gender issues, but also persuade the stakeholders on the practical values of such 'abstract' gender approaches.

b) Recommendations for education managers and policy makers in Vietnam

- Empower university faculties and MARD vocational schools to develop their curricula based on their own analyzed needs done in the region. This will at the same time strengthen the application of participatory methods such as PCD to renew and modernize education and training at tertiary and vocational levels.
- Invest more funds and time in thorough sharing and reviewing lessons/experiences from curriculum development and teaching methodology improvements. Such investments should be integrated in development programs to avoid duplications and reduce waste of resources.

- Provide comprehensive training and re-training on LCTM for the pool of teachers at all levels. The LCTM methods are extremely important for improving the education quality in the fast changing context of Vietnam. Experiences from SFSP implementation shows that it is not the facilities or budget to ensure the successful application of LCTM, but the behavioral attitude of the teachers and the commitment of the school's leaders.

Annex 1: Concept paper SFSP Impact Analysis, 1994 - 2002

1. What is SFSP?

The Social Forestry Support Program (SFSP) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of the Vietnamese Government, implemented by Helvetas and financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), focused eight years on the improvement in forestry education at BSc level, generation of knowledge and created links among teaching bodies and provincial extension services. It covered the period 1994 to 2002.

While expanding SFSP from one partner (Phase I: Forestry University Xuan Mai; 1994 to 1996) to seven partners spread all over the country (Phase II 1997 to 2002), the objectives and the entire logframe were defined in a more interdisciplinary manner. Two ministries, MARD and the Ministry of Education and Training, MoET, were joint partners. From 2002 onwards, SFSP involved seven so called *Working Partner Institutions*: 5 faculties granting diploma in the forestry sector (Forestry University Xuan Mai, Ha Tay province under MARD; forestry faculties under MoET of the universities in TT-Hue, Thai Nguyen, Tay Nguyen/Dak Lak and Thu Duc/Ho Chi Minh City); one research centre (National Institute for Soils and Fertilizers in Hanoi), and one *Provincial Extension Centre* (Hoa Binh province). The last two partners were particularly added to test out and create formal linkages between the research, education and extension sectors (partner network, see **Annex 4**).

In the years 2003 and 2004 the WPIs of SFSP were further supported with a small portfolio via the follow-up Extension and Training Support Project (ETSP). The aim was to complete unfinished tasks (objective 4 of ETSP).

The objective level in the logframe says the following:

Development Objective: To establish social forestry in order to have a more effective management of forest lands and renewable natural resources to upgrade the living standards of rural people.

Phase II Objective: To develop an effective forestry training capacity which is responsive to the demands of implementing sustainable and participatory forest land management.

Specific Objectives: The division of the Specific Objectives into three separate categories has been done for operational purposes. Human Resources Development (HRD) focused on methods for improving skills, knowledge and attitudes - "how to do"; Generation of Knowledge (GOK) was more concerned with the content - "what to do"; and the Information Exchange (IE) dealt with the supporting and facilitating mechanisms for HRD and GOK.

Specific Objective 1 (HRD): To train a nucleus of individuals in the Working Partner Institutions (WPIs) - five Forestry Faculties, one national research institution, and one provincial extension center - in appropriate methodologies for participatory curriculum development (PCD); learner-centered teaching methods (LCTM); participatory research and extension; information, extension, training and learning materials development; HRD management; and other relevant skills.

Specific Objective 2 (GOK): New knowledge is generated through research and field activities, existing knowledge is collected and compiled to improve quality of teaching content in social forestry training courses.

Specific Objective 3 (IE): Systems and mechanisms are established to facilitate exchange of information and sharing of experiences between the Working Partner Institutions.

The program was **evaluated externally in 2001**¹. The findings were:

1. The impact of SFSP-2 was primarily on core team members of the Working Partner Institutions and participants in the learner-centered activities they generated (students, farming households, extensionists and Commune, District and State Enterprise officials).

¹ Evaluation of the SFSP, Phase 2, November/December 2001, Robert Douglas Macadam et al, January 2002

2. A secondary impact was on colleagues within WPI institutions and the Boards of Management of Colleges, on officials within MARD and MOET, with an interest in the project, and on managers and advisers associated with other social forestry and related projects.
3. Although the impact was limited to relatively few people, the strategic significance of the nature and quality of the impact is widely acknowledged by informed observers.

MARD as agreement partner proposed to continue in the same modus but involving the vocational education level. Due to a strategic shift of SDC towards poverty reduction, and the interest of the Dutch government to finance a new vocational education project, this somehow logic next step for a phase 3 did not happen. MARD at the moment is behind schedule on improving education at vocational level. The lack of trained people at lower level is *THE bottleneck* of the government's present five year plans.

Important considerations for the impact analysis:

- This external evaluation highlighted all important points, pros and cons, of the SFSP by analyzing the outcomes along the defined logframe with its expected results. Therefore the impact analysis shall complement the external evaluation of 2001 with a *soft approach*.
- The aims were supported mainly by educational measures (methods, approaches). The most important methods applied were:
 - a) a methodology on Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD);
 - b) Learner-Centered Teaching Methods (LCTM), skills development in facilitation/moderation;
 - c) Participatory Technology Development (PTD), a link approach to bridge farmers, researchers and extension workers.
- From both phases there exists a brochure which is summarizing the achieved results². The key elements (methods/approaches) to indirectly measure the impact of the program have been extracted from this document.

2. Why measuring the impact of former SFSP?

There are three main reasons to do this analysis. The first one is more conceptual, the last two ones are more on the practical side:

1. To show the long-term potential of the investment for different educational levels when improving the teaching and learning environment.
2. Through a series of decrees the *Vietnamese Government* accelerates the decentralization and its related *reforms*. Both call for strong *changes in education* at various levels, particularly on *quality, accountability* and on *participation* of various involved stakeholders. The five year plans contain more and more *performance based outcome monitoring*. Hence, the *quality aspect of "how to do modern forms of education"* plays an increasing important role.

As SFSP mainly focused on quality improvements in education, the impact analysis of SFSP's phases 1 and 2 shall give the decision makers in MARD/MoET some guiding information concerning what and at which level is finally in use (intended/unintended), what should be further disseminated and what would now make sense to institutionalize ("stamp") to make things happen at a broader level.

3. In Switzerland, over the last two years, the *debates on the effects of development cooperation* were often held in a controversial manner and with very diffuse arguments. Good examples on impacts by development programs are rare. The complexity of development cooperation can often not be explained in a TV debate in a few seconds only. On the other hand, politicians and people want to *see* the achieved results; they want to have *proofs* that the investment is done *effectively* and *efficiently*. Moreover, they want a visual proof of reasonable relations between costs and effects which results in *show me the impact!* All that is not that easy due to the said complexity, its many involved stakeholders, different cultures and a multitude of interests and processes. This analysis would

² The SFSP, Vietnam, 1994 – 2002, Capitalization of 8 years of experience, Hanoi, July 2003 (by ETSP).

contribute a practical example of a specific case where the funding support went to education improvement of which achievement is not easy to be visualized.

3. The challenge of measuring impacts or outcomes

Interventions through projects or programs tend to focus more and more on *processes* (via *soft elements*, such as capacity building for example). Therefore the assessment of positive or negative effects triggered by development cooperation interventions is becoming even more complex as well as costly. Besides one single project/program intervention, the involved stakeholders are also influenced by other factors, other inputs. This leads to the well known *attribution gap* (almost impossible to proof accurately that a change is directly related to an intervention).

Another challenge is the fact that bilateral project or program inputs remain *small* when we start linking them with national development goals, such as poverty reduction or socio economic development over a specific time period.

A new phenomena came up over the last two years. It is the debate on *alignment* and *harmonization*. This movement is increasing the constraint to *show* (or *proof*) what one particular donor or agency achieved with its development funds invested into a *harmonized development program* of a particular ministry or department (key word: *Sector Wide Approach*). The impact of one particular donor country in such programs is vanishing completely.

All those changes in development cooperation are increasing the (political) pressures within donor agencies and countries to make results (effects, impacts) of invested funds visible.

Impact assessment as seen by scientists (...systematic analysis of significant changes in people's lives brought about by a given action or a series of actions³) are complex and costly as well. It requires the systematic comparison with/without or before/after an intervention happened. Process developments require regular repetitions of measuring the changes. If not done precisely and systematically and controlled correctly, the value of the impact monitoring investment is rather questioned. The costs to produce such research results are quite high. It is often not "fair" or strange (higher costs than the provided investment itself) to invest so much money in only providing the proofs of an intervention made by a project or program.

Educational inputs like the ones provided by SFSP are additionally complex to measure. Educational processes are influenced by a multitude of human and institutional factors. So, the correlation between specific inputs (*e.g. LCTM or PCD*) over a period of time (*1994 to 2002*) to a positive/negative effect (*impact*) on teaching staff or on the forestry education as a whole is a difficult task and debated often controversially among specialists.

→ Despite those critical factors, ETSP, in its last year of phase 1, decided to invest in such an analysis by incorporating the known constraints and by choosing a specific *soft approach* because we need *constructive learning elements* in both countries, Vietnam and Switzerland.

4. Objective, approach, methods to be used

4.1. Objective

Based on a statement made by Dr. Dang Dinh Boi (University of Ho Chi Minh, Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Vietnam) and Mrs. Ngo Thi Kim Yen (ETSP, Hanoi) at the *25th CIEA-Seminar in August 2006 in Switzerland* that says: "*By participating in the curriculum development process, core members of WPIs and other stakeholders (training managers, leaders of education institutions, policy makers and teachers in non-SFSP supported training institutions) have been aware of the need to innovate their current approach in curriculum development. The dissemination of this innovative PCD approach can be clearly recognized. Many universities and faculties under university management, and*

³ Roche C. 2002, Impact Assessment for Development Agencies, Learning to Value Change, Oxfam UK/Novib

training institutions (such as vocational schools, technical schools) conducted many training courses on PCD and LCTM for the teachers, using their own budget (no project support”, the main objective of the analysis is defined as:

To analyze the impact of the SFSP concerning the development of Forestry and Agriculture education and training in Vietnam.

Complementary sub-objectives:

1. Analyze the application of innovative education/teaching/training and research approaches in agriculture and forestry education in Vietnam.
2. Analyze the impact by analyzing the working performance of graduated students in practice (field reality).
3. How SFSP contributed to the effectiveness of forest management practices and extension work in Vietnam?

4.2. Output

- A concise report containing the main findings for mainly internal use. Based on the results it will be decided later whether a specific brochure will be produced.
- A short, illustrated, reader-friendly information note for the interested reader community (in education, in Switzerland and in Vietnam, in Vietnamese and in English).

4.3 Approach

1. Due to the complexity mentioned further above and the fact that *innovation* is influenced by a multitude of factors, the ETSP management selected a *flexible* and *soft approach* that leads away from the rigidity of logical framework with related inputs-outputs, but explores peoples memories and their selective perception through *interactive social research techniques*. This is reasonable because the study’s purpose is a practical contribution to *support internal learnings* at various levels, in Vietnam and abroad.
2. In line with two SDC papers⁴, we define *impact* in this analysis as *changes in a status quo*, evolving *intentional* and *unintentional*, *expected* or *unexpected*, *positive* or *negative*. Further impact can occur from the very beginning of the intervention, during the entire program term, in different areas. Impact can further be seen as the result of social interaction.
3. Another component of the approach is the measurement through a series of *indirect change indicators: these are the particular methods used by SFSP*. It is assumed that the more participatory-based methods are established and in use, the higher will be the quality of outcomes and the learning environment within the former partner institutions or those who have taken up the methods/approaches at a later stage (e.g. vocational schools). The more quality-oriented and open the learning environment, the better will be the educated/trained graduate conditioned to overcome with the challenges when working in rural, upland areas, confronted with the needs and constraints of forest dependent farmers. And the latter is finally related to the *development goal of former SFSP*, namely *to establish social forestry in order to have a more effective management of forest lands and renewable natural resources to upgrade the living standards of rural people*.
4. The analysis must show the “route” that leads to the impact, otherwise the learning effect will be minimal.

4.4 Methods

⁴ *Current State of the Art in Impact Assessment*, SDC, Brigitte Späth, August 2004 and *English Glossary – 27 most relevant terms related to evaluation and controlling in use in SDC*, February 2002.

1. With the use of *semi-structured interviews, focus (WPI) group discussions*, guided by a set of *crucial and logically asked questions*, the SFSP tested methods and approaches shall be analyzed and grouped. The grouping for a better synthesis afterwards could be done in the same manner as in the *Attitude Change Income Survey* by Mr. Thanh/Ageless Ltd. ("*Behavior Ladder*"; this needs further discussions with CTA or with Mr. Thanh).
2. The *storytelling method* shall enrich/complement the series of interviews. The detailed explanation of how to use the method adapted to SFSP can be found in the **Annex 2**.
 - *In both methods the correct and logic sequence of questions to be asked is crucial to get a sufficient level of information to then make a synthesis on the impact SFSP achieved so far.*
3. The impact shall be *traced in a stepwise circle approach*: starting with the inner circle the Working Partner Institutions (WPIs) within one faculty, followed by the faculty itself, enlarged to the entire university or other involved institution, enlarged to the external environment (neighboring institutions, e.g. vocational schools, others); in all seven places where SFSP was involved (**Annex 3**). This needs a strategic plan to be done by the consultant.

5. Other relevant considerations

1. The analysis needs to be done by Vietnamese experts who were involved in the SFSP period and who can do the data assessment, the analysis and then the synthesis to define the impact. As such it will be a semi-internal impact analysis. ETSP will assist in whatever will be needed.
2. If the "*Behavior Ladder*" (extracted from Outcome Mapping method and adapted to ETSP soft result measurements) method is applied, Ageless LTD/Mr. Thanh could be involved to conceptualize and train the team.
3. The data survey should be done *at once* in a *team* which is *complementing each other*. The team leader shall draft the *survey plan* based on this concept note and make a final proposal to the CTA on methods to be used and the approach set up, the *time* and *work plan* and the *budget frame*, prior to the start of the field work. ETSP will provide one Technical Assistant (Ms. Phuong full time, April/May 2007) and coach the strategic and synthesizing part in the back. Those approved documents from the team leader together with this concept paper will build the working frame to issue the analysis.

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The following documents are provided for further studies:

- SFSP capitalization of 8 years.pdf
- SDCs Story-Guide- Practitioner.pdf
- VN SFSP Evaluation 2001.zip

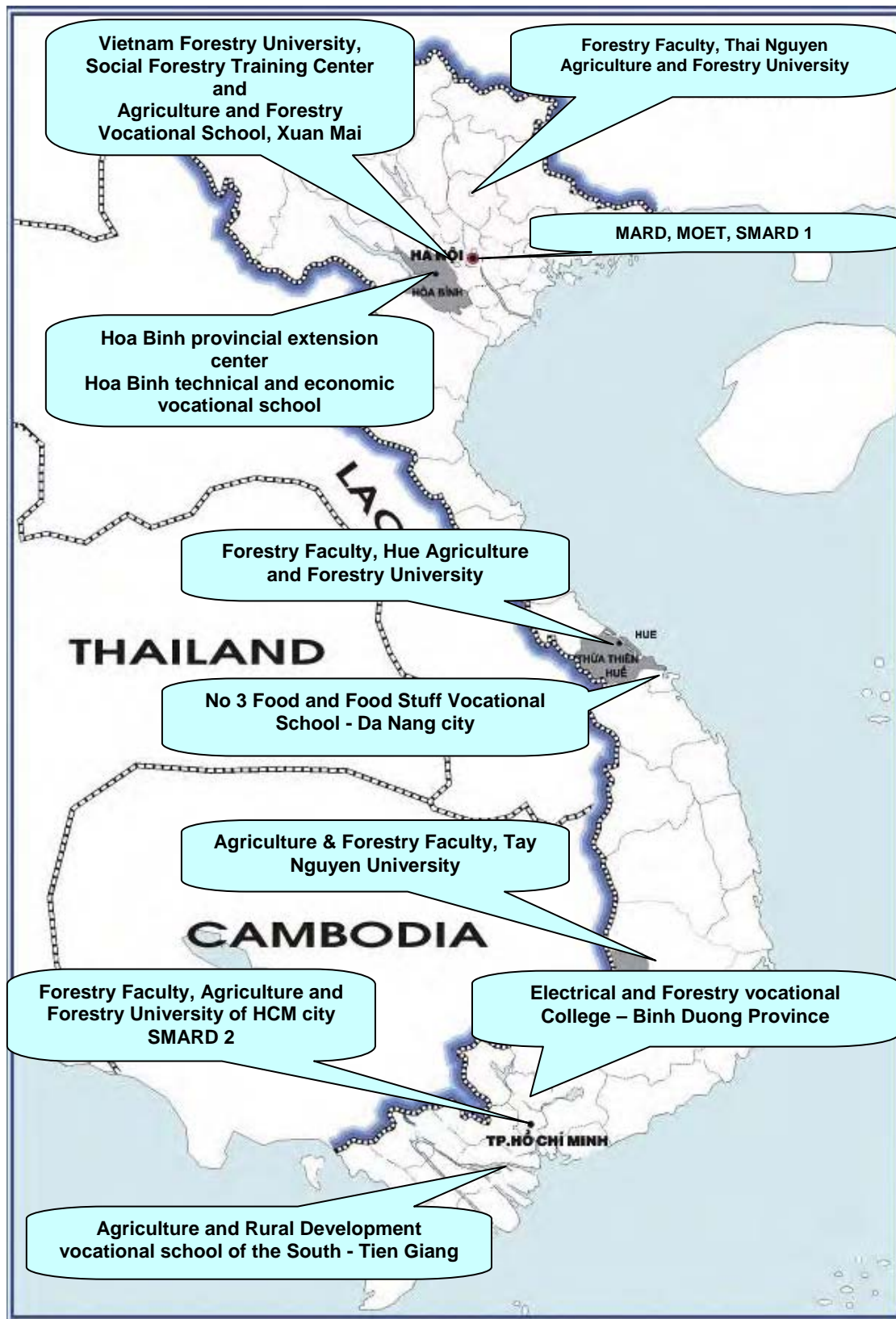
Annex 2: Field work schedule by the study team

Time	Location	Participants from the study team
4,5,6 May 2007	Forestry Faculty, Agriculture and Forestry University, Thu Duc, HCM city	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương, Ngô Kim Yến
7,8,9 May 2007	Agriculture and Forestry Faculty, Tay Nguyen university, Ban Me Thuot, DakLak	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
11,12,13 May 2007	Forestry faculty, Hue agriculture and forestry university	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
14 May 2007	No.3 Food and Foodstuff High School, Da Nang city	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
16,17,18 May 2007	Hoa Binh provincial extension center Hoa Binh technical and economic high school	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
19,20,21 May 2007	School of Management No.1 under MARD (SMARD1), Hanoi Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), Hanoi Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Hanoi	Đặng Đình Bôi, Hoàng Xuân Thành, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
22,23,24 May 2007	Social Forestry Training Center, Vietnam Forestry University, Xuan Mai, Ha Tay Ha Tay Agricultural and Rural Development Vocational School	Đặng Đình Bôi, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
25,26 May 2007	Thai Nguyen Agriculture and Forestry University	Đặng Đình Bôi, Nguyễn Kim Phương,
30 May 2007	Electro-mechanical and Forestry vocational College, Binh Duong Province School of Management No.2 under MARD (SMARD2)	Đặng Đình Bôi, Nguyễn Thế Bách
31 May 2007	Agriculture and Rural Development vocational school of the South, Tien Giang province	Đặng Đình Bôi, Nguyễn Thế Bách

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- Ngô Thi Kim Yến: kim.yen@helvetas.org

Map illustration of visited locations by the study team



Annex 3: Summary of SFSP main interventions

Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD):

Changing the curriculum development approaches is the most important step that should happen right from the beginning of an education reformation process. This involves the replacement of traditional approach (expertise based) with participatory curriculum development (PCD) one.

The latter consists of 5 steps:

1. Contextual analysis and training needs assessment
2. Identification of goals/objectives
3. Preparation of teaching plans
4. Implementation of the developed teaching plans
5. Monitoring and evaluation

These steps are interlinked and subject to adjustments during monitoring and evaluation process. The difference between participatory and traditional approaches is that it requires the involvement of relevant stakeholders in each step of the process. This innovative approach applied in curriculum development for training majors, subjects and short courses.

The SFSP working partner institutions with supports from the programme have applied this approach in the development of curricula for six training subjects including: Introduction to Social Forestry, Project Management, Extension, Non timber Products, Forest Inventory, Agro-forestry.

In addition, supports to seven WPIs involvement in PCD process, in 2005/06 at the request of MARD the program also supported provision of short training courses on Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD) for 37 vocational schools belonging to the ministry.

Learner Centered Teaching Methods (LCTM):

To convey a PCD well developed curricula to learners, the teachers should be trained with learner centered teaching methodology. The nature of this method is to allow learners to participate in a participatory learning process including group works in classrooms as well as field activities and a change from “teacher lecturing everything” to students “taking initiative in learning” with facilitation by trainers and practical activities.

The SFSP core group members participated in LCTM training/coaching courses which were instructed by Dr. Rudolf Batliner. The core member participants then provided LCTM trainings to other members of their institution (including non-core group members).

LCTM was also introduced to teachers of 37 vocational schools belonging to MARD in 2004/2005.

Participatory Technology Development (PTD):

To create knowledge, PTD pilots were one of the activities that set links between research, transfer of technology and training. PTD is a farmer centered approach to development of new technologies suitable to local conditions and creation of cross learning interactions between local farmers and outsiders.

PTD approach applied by WPIs included five main steps: generating ideas; planning pilot activities; evaluating and documenting the pilots; replicating and up-scaling the results.

The pilot process was implemented with the participation of local farmers and the facilitation/support by lecturers and researchers, which established the “*alliance of three doers*”. Doing research on experiments of ideas generated by farmers with minimum external support is an innovative approach, differing to the traditional approach of “*modeling*” experiments and laboratory dominated research. Each WPI carried out a number of PTD pilot activities to draw lessons from the processes and feed them into the adaptation of curricula through review workshops. The results were also aggregated to produce a PTD manual.

Human Resources Development HRD:

The human resource development plan was based on the “*capability method*”. Based on the assessments of individual and institutional capacities, each WPI developed one HRD plan which was suitable to their development strategy and aimed at achieving planned goals/objectives for each WPI.

Gender issues:

Gender issues were trained and incorporated in activities and interventions by the WPIs.

- Interest: want to do pilots and testing (due to financial incentives, want to try new things), or still hesitate to try, or to be reluctant?
 - Confidence: gain necessary knowledge and skills to undertake new things.
 - Acceptance: satisfaction, confidence with the results: necessity, usefulness, or still need “pilot” and “testing”?
 - Commitment/willingness: self-motivation of benefits, can present in workshop, put names in documentation or publication, want/can disseminate the improved practices through training/coaching to others (TOT)
 - Scaling up/pushing: want to replicate, want to corporate/coordinate with others to do it (for co-financing, mobilizing additional human and financial resources to do it). want to change/proactively ask for supports from ETSP or others to do their own works
 - Ownership/Decision: mainstreaming or institutionalization: self-finance: using their own budget, put in strategic papers/action plan of the organization: change other things to move on the new ways. Or still “project dependence” (without adequate allowances: nothing moves)?
 - Self-Innovation: self-learning and exploring: going beyond project ideas?
- Prepare beforehand several cards to name the improved “products”: PCD, LCTM, PTD, HRD and Gender; or draw it out during explanation
 - Clarify boundary partners and leading partner for specific products: ask the participants on their awareness (and participation in implementation) of each products → focus on the products that the participants are (well) aware of.
 - Ask the participants to put each product card in appropriate ladder to illustrate the current attitude in the organization.
 - Facilitate for *explanation* of the chosen positions of the cards.
 - Facilitation of “Why” and “Why not” questions will go around the “Constraints” (or “difficulties”).
 - Ask the questions of what the reasons and why the expected results did not come about and suggest recommendations.

Annex 5: Narrative Storytelling method to underline specific impacts

To be used for the SFSP impact study as a complementary information gathering tool

What is Narrative Storytelling method, which one to choose?

SFSP worked with soft elements which are difficult to measure. It often lead to changes in attitudes and behaviors, in changes of working styles with more participatory elements in discussing, teaching, learning, synthesizing, etc.. Such changes are seen as elements which improve curricula which again improve the learning environment and thus influence the quality of graduates working in the field under various development conditions in gvt. services or in donor financed development projects. So if we analyze such change elements we can indirectly “assess” the outcome and “interpret” possible impacts.

To better highlight such specific changes, the *Narrative Storytelling* is one (among other) useful tool to show what happened to individuals or groups when starting using *SFSP products*, such as LCTM, PCD, PTD in the daily work or when *institutional changes* triggered by SFSP inputs started to become effective.

There are many Storytelling methods. Some of them are compiled in a SDC document called *SDC’s Guide to Using Story and Narrative Tools in Development Cooperation; Practitioner’s version (Draft)*. From that document I took the so called “7-Element Structure” method and adapted it to the need of the SFSP impact study task.

This narrative method complements (enriches/highlights) only the main survey tasks of the study. Themes for storytelling can be prepared in advance. However, the best stories occur during the impact survey when interviewing people. It is their brains that contain such specific stories. The tricky thing is, to make them alive.

“10 steps – 5 elements” storytelling method for the SFSP impact study

The following steps should be made while interviewing people to find elements for impacts which can be highlighted/underlined with good stories linked with the SFSP development processes:

We are looking for stories which show the “*turning point*”, a kicking off moment that changed behaviors, working styles or working atmospheres of partners (...*when it makes suddenly “click” in the brain; often quite personal even intimate reasons*). What was it that triggered this change? What happened exactly? Such stories are often kept in the minds of many people who were involved in program processes, also in SFSP.

The crucial point is, whether you can make the persons sensitive in such a way that they realize the importance of the event the story is built around. Another challenge is that some events are far back in the past and may need a bit support (kick off) to bring them out of individual memories.

These stories will enrich the somewhat dry matter of analyzing the SFSP impact through semi-structured interviews. They shall be added in boxes to specific *impact themes* which will be touched when doing the interviews.

To find crucial (changing/moving things/minds) stories, the interviewers should proceed as follows:

1. Decide while doing the normal semi-structured impact study interview whether the person might be in a position to tell a “good”, “bad” or “strange” SFSP story and ask the person whether she/he would tell you a story which explains some of the changes (in person’s minds, in a group, in the whole school institution, in structures of the schools linked to higher levels, etc..) when working with SFSP methods and approaches or with staff from SFSP or local/foreign experts or consultants (a story can also contain strange/funny moments; misunderstandings, wrong translations...).
2. Ask the person whether he/she agrees to do such a “trip to the past” and whether it is okay to make use of the story in the impact study (either by adding his/her name and photo or in an anonymous form; it is up to the person to decide and must be recorded and respected).
3. If the place is not suitable, choose a cozy place (quiet, relaxing atmosphere, not being disturbed by people or mobile phones (turned off!!); a place where you can talk openly and in confidence.
4. Make the interview with a tape to really collect all important parts of the story. Do not write down but listen and support the teller in his/her trying to find the memorized parts. Make use of prepared trigger questions, such as “where/at what moment/when did you learn your most valuable lesson? What event triggered behavioral/attitude changes by SFSP methods/approaches compared to *before SFSP* involvement?
5. You can use some photographs of typical SFSP moments (workshops, card production, exchange session, field trips, village meetings, village conditions versus student’s/teacher’s offices) to explain what you want to find in the interviewee’s memory and make his thoughts open up.
6. Then let the teller close his eyes for a few minutes, before starting the story. This is important. Give him/her time and room to find the right memory part.
7. When guiding the teller, try to catch the “turning point” that made things change. Note that every story is about a change from one status quo to another. Be clear by the time you finish what the change implicit in each story is, which then will become the core text in the specific box of the impact study. - Repeat this “turning point” at the end and ask the teller whether what has been just repeated is correct (check-the-turning-point control step).
8. Ask for a good photo that shows perhaps some changes (I know it is difficult) and/or make a photo from the interviewed person to be added (if she/he agrees) in the study in the respective box.
9. After the interview is completed fill in immediately the important data on a template which contains the following **5 elements**:
 1. **Place**/Location/name and address of interviewed person
 2. **Dwelling place**/exact location where story happened
 - 3 The **Challenge** SFSP had in front and might have triggered the story
 4. The **ACTION** (the story itself) with the “turning point” showing the moment when changes occurred/triggered/were pushed through (typed down from tape later/in the evening).
 5. **Specific and personal lessons learnt** by the teller or other useful messages for the impact study (incl. proposals to decision and policy makers at higher levels).
10. Keep this structure throughout the impact study process to have a kind of “logic” comparison or directive line.

Annex 6: Questionnaires used in the study

For core members of SFSP

First of all, we would like to send you the best wishes.

This questionnaire is sent to you in order to collect information for the analysis on application of new methods and approaches in education at Bachelor’s level. This is to find out the contribution and the impact of the Social Forestry Support Program (1994-2002) to the teaching quality in forestry education in Vietnam.

Information to be provided in this questionnaire will be very useful for your analysis. We committed to keep this information confidential and purposeful.

Sincere thanks!

Personal information:

Name:

Number of years involved in teaching:

Which subject are you teaching currently:

Participated in SFSP fromto

Part 1: PCD

1. When PCD is applied in your division or faculty? (*can mark more than one box*):

- a. Develop curriculum for new majors:
- b. Revise current curriculum for the available majors:
- c. Develop curriculum for new subjects:
- d. Revise current curriculum for the available subjects
- e. Develop curriculum for short training courses:
- f. Not applied:

If F option is selected please go to part 2.

2. Which subjects PCD is applied for in the faculty/university (*mark in appropriate box*)

- a. Social forestry
- b. Subjects related to agriculture and forestry
- c. Subjects not related to agriculture and forestry
- d. All types of subjects

3. PCD is applied most successfully/most difficultly and most memorable with which subject?

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- 4. How PCD applied for those subjects?
 - a. Exactly like introduced in SFSP
 - b. Improved to be appropriate with specific conditions

- 5. How many training courses have you involved to disseminate PCD to other teachers:
 - a. None:
 - b. From 1 to 2 courses:
 - c. More than 3:

- 6. Who did you train?
 - a. Your colleagues in the same division
 - b. Your colleagues in the same faculty
 - c. Your colleagues in the university
 - d. Teachers of other training institutions
 - e. Consultants and experts of other national or international projects.

- 7. Up to date, PCD has positive impacts on which areas bellow?
 - a. Attitude and behaviors of teachers
 - b. Teaching quality
 - c. Effectiveness of knowledge application after the trainings

8. In your opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages when applying PCD in the faculty and university?

Advantages:

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Disadvantages:

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9. In your opinion in order to effectively apply PCD what are the necessary conditions?
Please list down:

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10. What are the measures to promote PCD application in your division/faculty/university:

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11. In your opinion, what the faculty and university contributed to the dissemination of PCD to other training institutions?

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Part 2: LCTM

12. Do you apply LCTMs (illustrated talk, group discussion, brainstorming etc.) in your teaching activities:

Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify: a. for formal courses <input type="checkbox"/> b. for short course <input type="checkbox"/> c. both <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/> Please specify the reasons:
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13. Frequency of LCTM application in your teaching activities

- a. In all lessons of formal teaching
- b. Only in some lessons of formal teaching
- c. In all short courses
- d. Only in some short courses

14. Is volunteering class rom observation (quality group) maintained?

- a. Yes
- b. No

15. Any criteria on LCTM application integrated in formal system of teaching quality management?

- a. Yes (please specify the criteria):.....
- b. No

16. How many training courses have you involved to disseminate LCTM to other teachers:
- a. None:
 - b. From 1 to 2 courses:
 - c. More than 3:

17. Who did you train?
- a. Your colleagues in the same division
 - b. Your colleagues in the same faculty
 - c. Your colleagues in the university
 - d. Teachers of other training institutions
 - e. Consultants and experts of other national or international projects.

18. Your assessment on the application of LCTM after the training provided:
- a. Regularly
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Rarely or not at all

19. LCTM application has positive impacts on which areas bellow?
- a. Attitude/behaviors of teachers
 - b. Knowledge/attitude/behaviors of students
 - c. Teaching quality
 - d. Effectiveness of knowledge application after the trainings

20. In your opinion what are the advantages and disadvantages when applying PCD in the faculty and university?

Advantages:

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Disadvantages:

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21. In your opinion in order to effectively apply PCD what are the necessary conditions?
Please list down:

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22. What are the measures to promote LCTM application in your division/faculty/university:

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23. In your opinion, what the faculty and university contributed to the dissemination of PCD to other training institutions?

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Part 3: Integration of new research approach and research results in teaching curriculum.

24. Is PTD still integrated as a topic in extension subject?

- a. Yes
- b. No

25. Do you still apply participatory research (including PTD)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

26. If option A is selected, how the research results integrated and updated and in teaching activities (*mark in the appropriate box*):

- a. In personal lesson plans
- b. In the workbook of a subject
- c. Not updated at all

Part 4: Refection about SFSP

27. Please assess the level of positive impact of SFSP interventions to the improvement of teaching and training works of your faculty (rank from 1- 5, 5 is the most positive impact and 1 is the least one)

Name of intervention	Impact level (1-5)	Reasons
HRD plans		
PCD		
LCTM		
Teaching materials development		
Gender issues		
Participatory Action Research (including PTD)		
Facilitation skills		
Monitoring and Evaluation of teaching work		
Other (list)		

28. Do you have any impressive moments/events with SFSP that contribute greatly to your teaching life?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Questionnaires for graduated students

First of all, we would like to send you the best wishes.

This questionnaire is sent to you in order to collect information for the analysis on application of new methods and approaches in education at Bachelor's level. This is to find out the contribution and the impact of the Social Forestry Support Program (1994-2002) to the teaching quality in forestry education in Vietnam.

Information to be provided in this questionnaire will be very useful for your analysis. We committed to keep this information confidential and purposeful.

Sincere thanks!

Personal information

- Name:
- Graduated from which major:
- Specialized at (if it is the case):
- Faculty:
- University:.....
- Graduated year:
- Working history since graduation:

From year.... To year	Working at?	Do what?

1. Is your current job appropriate with your education background? (*mark in the appropriate box*)
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. How long did it take you get used to the work after getting the job? (*mark in the appropriate box*)
 - a. Less than 1 year

- b. 1-2 years
- c. More than 2 years

3. List down the subjects that you find most useful for your current job.

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4. Please assess the level of usefulness of knowledge/skill provided during your university education (*mark in the appropriate box*):

- a. Very useful
- b. Useful
- c. Little or not useful
- d. No comment

5. Which knowledge and skills you learnt during university education that you can apply immediately in your work now (list down):

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6. After your graduation which knowledge and skills are lacking to well implement your work (list down):

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7. After graduation which training courses have you got? (list down names and duration of these courses)

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8. What are the reasons why you were sent to these training courses:

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9. Please assess the difference between what you learnt in the university with the reality in forestry currently (*mark the appropriate box*):

- a. huge different
- b. different
- c. little different
- d. no different

10. Please give your general assessment on the curriculum of your university :

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11. Through your practical working experiences do you have any recommendations for the teaching activities of your university?

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Sincere thanks!

Questionnaire for university leaders

First of all, we would like to send you the best wishes.

This questionnaire is sent to you in order to collect information for the analysis on application of new methods and approaches in education at Bachelor’s level. This is to find out the contribution and the impact of the Social Forestry Support Program (1994-2002) to the teaching quality in forestry education in Vietnam.

Information to be provided in this questionnaire will be very useful for your analysis. We committed to keep this information confidential and purposeful.

Sincere thanks!

Personal information:

- Name:
- Position:.....
- Have you ever been a member of core group in the Social Forestry Support Program? (Please tick)
- Yes No
- Have you ever participate any event (meeting, workshop) of the Social Forestry Support Program
- Yes No

For the Participatory Curriculum Development (PCD):

1. When the PCD is applied in your university?:
 - a. Developing curriculum for all majors of the university
 - b. Developing curriculum for some majors of the university
 - c. Only applied for forestry/silviculture major

2. Please give the reason for selecting above answer:

3. Have you ever experienced in using PCD?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

If the answer is a, please specify.

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4. Is there any regulation for the wide application of PCD in your university?

a. Yes

b. No

If the answer is a, please specify

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5. Are there any efforts of the Forestry Faculty for the dissemination of the PCD to other faculties of the university?

a. Yes

b. No

If the answer is a, please specify

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6. What are advantages when applying PCD in your university?:

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7. What are difficulties when applying PCD in your university?:

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Learner-centre teaching method (LCTM)

8. How often the LCTM is being applied by teachers in your university?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Rarely

9. Please give the reasons for selecting the above answer:

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10. Do you apply any criteria of LCTM when assessing performance of your teachers?

a. Yes

b. No

If the answer is a, please specify the criteria and give the reasons if your answer is b.

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11. Please assess the contribution of the teachers in the Forestry Faculty in the teaching quality improvement process of the university:

a. Many

b. Moderate

c. Few

d. None

12. Are there any initiative/practices to facilitate the application of LCTM in your university:

a. Yes

b. No

If the answer is a, please specify:

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13. Are there any efforts from university to disseminate LCTM to other universities or training institutions?

a. Yes

b. No

If the answer is a, please specify:

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14. What are facilitating factors for the application of LCTM in your university?:

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15. What are difficulties/hindering factors for the application of LCTM in your university?:

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General assessment

16. Your assessment on the capacity of Forestry Faculty' teachers in compare with teachers of other faculties?

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17. Your assessment on the contribution and roles of teachers from Forestry Faculty (who are core member of Social Forestry Support Program) to the development of the university:

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Sincere thanks!