



Forests to promote a good (investment) climate

Viet Nam: sequa and ForestFinance support sustainable forest management



The challenge

Well cultivated round timber – the wood from which high-quality furniture for the international market is manufactured – is in short supply in Viet Nam, which means the country has to rely on expensive imports. In addition, if Viet Nam is to be competitive in the global market, it must achieve sustainability certification in line with standards such as those of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Just a few years ago, only five plantations achieved certification nationwide, with no certification at all for natural forests. In the past, the main focus of forestry in Viet Nam has been on non-native tree species, with timber harvested using the clear-cutting system. However, this does not meet the requirements for a sustainable, ecological and internationally certifiable approach to forest management.

The solution

The ForestFinance Service GmbH is a private enterprise, which has the goal of supporting sustainable forest management. Under the slogan 'Wir machen Wald', the company is committed to extensive reforestation projects at the international level – including in Viet Nam since 2009. It offers both large and small investors the opportunity to invest directly in forestry holdings. As such, it is now one of the leading vendors of direct forestry investment in Europe. In its search for potential business partners in Viet Nam, however, the company frequently came up against barriers.

In order to develop its long-term business operations locally, ForestFinance decided on a development partnership with sequa gGmbH as part of the develoPPP.de initiative. develoPPP.de was set up by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Coopera-

tion and Development (BMZ) to foster the involvement of the private sector at the point where business opportunities and development policy initiatives intersect.

'Without the considerable financial support and invaluable political support of develoPPP.de we would not be nearly so well known in Viet Nam. And we would certainly have had to invest a great deal more in financial and personal terms to get where we are now.'

Olaf van Meegen, Director Viet Nam, ForestFinance Service GmbH

Together, the partners set up a training programme for forestry authorities and forestry companies. Their objective was to lay the foundations for nationally mainstreamed advanced training courses in sustainable forest management, develop training guidelines and train trainers to pass on their knowledge. In addition to the regional forestry authority for Quang Tri province, the project's cooperation partners included the forestry company Ben Hai and the Vietnamese non-governmental organisation CORENARM, which specialises in environmental training.

Our services

What does it take to support the growth of a sustainable forest of native trees, one which provides a continuous supply of good quality timber? What international safety standards should be



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introduced to prevent accidents during the logging process? The development partnership focuses on comprehensive advanced training measures with a view to meeting the requirements for the certification of forestry operations in Viet Nam.

All workshops took place at the forestry company Ben Hai, which converted one of its own buildings into a training centre specially for the purpose. Those involved in forestry at all levels were schooled here in international standards of forest management. In addition, the forestry project taught them about new working methods, including the use of GPS systems, to enable them to farm their forest areas more efficiently in future. Practical training sessions gave participants an opportunity to practise handling modern technology, as well as the use of safety equipment. The results of these extensive training activities have convinced Ben Hai CEO, Nguyen Xuan Minh: 'Not only have they brought about an appreciably higher level of awareness of sustainable environmental protection, they have also raised our standards for occupational safety.'

In order to pool forest management content and make it available beyond individual operators, training courses together with locally developed training guidelines were anchored in the province. For Olaf van Meegen, Director Viet Nam, ForestFinance Service GmbH, the net result for the company at the conclusion of the project was extremely positive: 'Management of ForestFinance projects was greatly improved; readiness for a sustainable approach to management has increased appreciably. The situation in the forests has also changed fundamentally: soil erosion is being prevented, conservation areas such as waterways and bodies of water are better protected, operational safety has improved significantly. And not least, yields have risen.' But the greatest success, van Meegen says, has been the 'demonstrable implementation of acquired knowledge among participating companies and municipalities.' He was also impressed with the partnership with sequa: 'Not everything goes to plan with projects like these, of course. But sequa offered us outstanding support and was very flexible in adapting to new circumstances.'

Impacts and results

- Implementation of a Train-the-Trainer programme for 18 people from state-run forestry authorities and 45 people from the state-owned Ben Hai company.
- Development and implementation of a 13-part modular training programme for 61 forestry workers at the Ben Hai company.
- Training of more than 200 forestry workers in the province Quang Tri.
- Distribution of information material (training guidelines and other project documentation) to various decision-makers from other provinces throughout the country.
- Foundation of the Sustainable Forest Association Viet Nam, a regional NGO which distributes training guidelines free of charge and monitors implementation.
- Introduction of comprehensive occupational safety measures has significantly improved safety for forestry workers.

At a glance

Duration	28 November 2011 – 31 December 2013
Country	Viet Nam
Objective	Introduction of further training in the field of sustainable forest management with the objective of meeting international standards.
Partner	ForestFinance and sequa
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Train-the-trainer courses for 63 people from state-run forestry authorities and private companies and training for 61 forestry workers.• Development of a modular training course and free training guidelines.• Much safer working conditions for forestry workers following the introduction of comprehensive occupational safety measures.• Foundation of the Sustainable Forest Association Viet Nam, a regional NGO.

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