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“Resilience of agricultural systems against crises”

Implementation of Sustainable Forest Management in two Different Forest Management Unit Models in Vietnam and Malaysia

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Abstract

By the 1990s tropical forests in Southeast Asia had been exhaustively logged, mainly for economic growth and development of the countries. Over harvesting and poor forest management had led to the decline and degradation of natural forest areas. In the following years sustainable forest management (SFM) became one of major topics of the annual meetings of the Asian Senior Officials on Forestry (ASOF) at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). But so far, the number of certified natural forest areas in the region is still behind the expectations.

This study was based on two forest management units (FMUs) in Vietnam and Malaysia to evaluate the lessons learnt while implementing SFM concepts in natural forests for timber production under state forest enterprises (SFEs). The case study involved the Deramakot Forest Reserve (Sabah, Malaysia), - the first natural tropical forest certified in 1997; and the Dak To Forestry Company (Central Highlands, Vietnam), which was the first controlled wood certified natural forest in Vietnam, in 2011. Both FMUs were certified under the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification scheme for natural forests, and initially received extensive technical support from German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) during the initial phases with little involvement by local communities.

Literature review and discussion were used to understand forest management practices in the FMUs. Study findings indicate that forest management of the two case study models is very different. The Deramakot Forest Reserve model is very successful, with a high capability of duplication, whereas the Dak To Forestry Company model is still facing challenges from such issues as illegal logging, conflict over forest and land uses, and lack of support from the relevant stakeholders during the SFM process.

The management aspects of these two models are explained by the “top-down” management oriented approach with the involvement of an international technical support agency and the centralised administration. It is recommended that a greater involvement of players from private sectors and other stakeholders is necessary in order to expedite the performance of forest management at the FMU level.

Keywords: Forest management unit, Malaysia, model, natural forest, stakeholder, state forest enterprise, sustainable forest management, timber production, Vietnam