



Alternative Livelihood Strategies of Forest Dependent Ethnic Minorities Within a REDD+ Implementation Area in Bac Kan Province, Vietnam

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1. Introduction

Natural forests play an important role for rural livelihoods in the upland of Vietnam. However, these forests have declined significantly in both quantity and quality. Bac Kan is a mountainous province that has the largest forest cover in Vietnam. REDD+ activities have been implemented in Bac Kan since 2014 with the aim to conserve the natural forest and ensure local livelihoods. However, it is unclear whether REDD+ carbon payments will cover potential household welfare losses due to associated restrictions on forest use. This study examines forest dependence as a livelihood strategy of ethnic minorities in Bac Kan province, Vietnam.

2. Methodology

We employed the concepts of household livelihood strategies and forest dependence. The share of forest environmental income in total household income was used to define a mutually exclusive choice of livelihood strategy by households. The relevant data was collected in four communes in Ba Be and Nary districts. Participatory wealth ranking and income portfolio scoring was applied, followed by a structured household survey (n=245)

3. Results

Figure 1: Forest dependent livelihood strategies

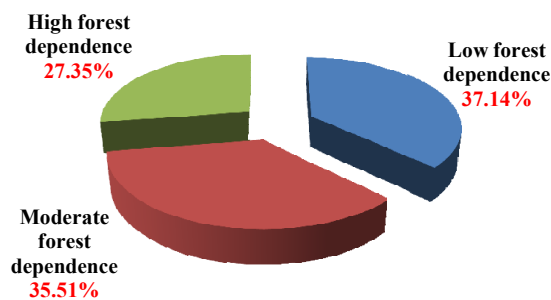
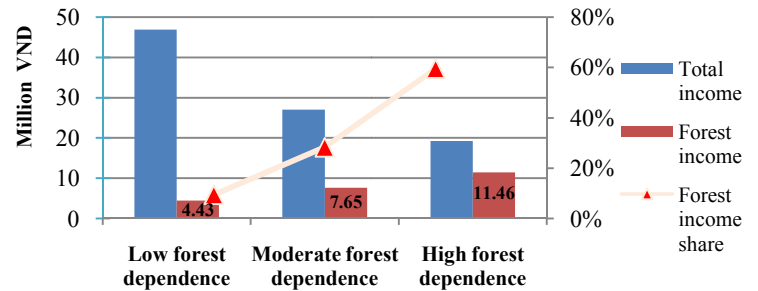


Figure 2: Average Forest income share by livelihood strategies



Note: 1 million VND = 44.51 US dollars

Figure 3: Forest dependent livelihood strategies by Ethnic Minorities

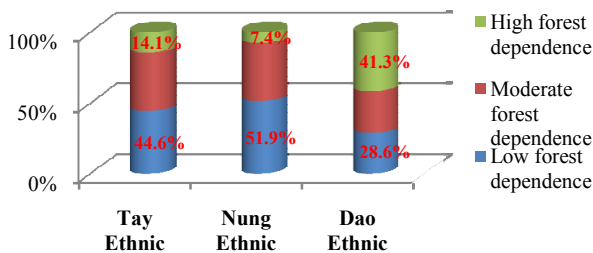


Figure 4: Average Forest income share by Ethnic Minorities

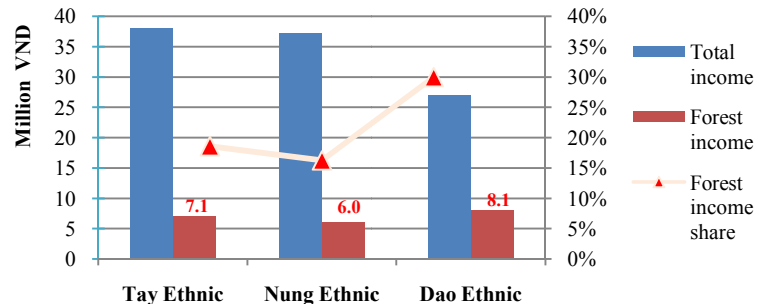


Figure 5: Forest dependent livelihood strategies by wealth

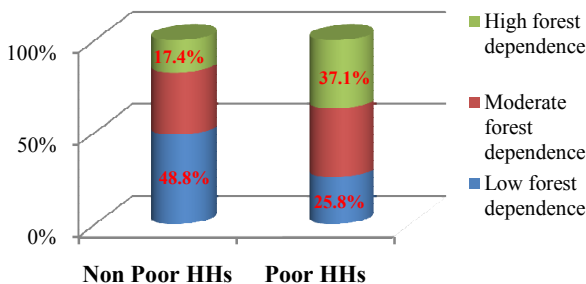
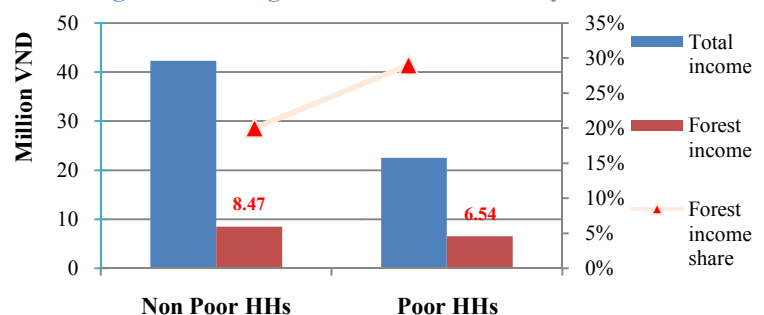


Figure 6: Average Forest income share by wealth



4. Conclusion

- The number of forest dependent HH's is high and will make the implementation of REDD+ difficult.
- Lower income HHs depend more on forest.
- Higher income HH's obtain higher absolute forest income.
- Dao people are the poorest and most dependent on forest.

5. Recommendations for REDD+ implementation

REDD+ Carbon payment needs to be substantial and distributed at the village level to offset any negative welfare implications of increasing restrictions on forest resource use. The benefit sharing mechanism needs to be framed appropriately and transparently. The implementation of REDD+ activities and rural livelihood development has to be balanced appropriately. The focus should be on the poor and the Dao ethnic minority.