



Tropentag, September 17-19, 2018, Ghent

“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

What Makes Small Bamboo and Rattan Handicraft Enterprises Successful? A Case Study from Chuong My District, Hanoi Capital, Vietnam

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Abstract

With the long-standing history, Vietnam has a good reputation for numerous traditional bamboo and rattan handicraft products such as kitchen utensils, home decor objectives, storage bins, trays, baskets, traditional bamboo toys, etc. These products are not only exchanged commercially but also present Vietnamese cultural and historical values. Small bamboo and rattan enterprises (SBREs) cooperate with households in handicraft villages to produce these handicraft products, so SBREs provide employment opportunities and significantly contribute to poverty reduction in rural areas. However, most Vietnamese SBREs face stiff competition by international bamboo and rattan manufacturers from China and other countries. This puts SBREs in the study region at high risk of disappearance and may lead to unemployment and increasing poverty among handicraft households. On the other hand, a few SBREs from the study region have grown successfully and well established themselves in international markets over the last years. Yet, a comprehensive analysis of factors determining the upgrading of SBREs is lacking to date. This paper demonstrates preliminary results from a case study undertaken to close this gap. In-depth interviews, group discussions and observation have been conducted with representatives from six SBREs, five bamboo traders and twelve handicraft households. The methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis were employed to better understand the impact of key factors on SBREs upgrading, and data analysis was made on Microsoft excel and MicMac software. The paper highlights the influence of access to raw materials, laborers, technology, capital, market, along with product innovation as main factors determining upgrading of SBREs in Chuong My district, Hanoi, Vietnam.

Keywords: Enterprise upgrading, small-, medium- and micro-enterprises, non-timber forest products, NTFP commercialisation, rural development