



NARRATIVE REPORT TO MISEREOR

1. Formal detail

1.1. Name of partner organization: Community Entrepreneur Development Institute (CENDI)

1.2. Project title: Customary Law in Natural Resources Co-governance in Kon Tum province, Vietnam

- **Project number:** 339-004-1013 ZG

1.3. Reporting period: January 2017 to March 2017

1.4. Brief description of report preparation

- People involve in report preparation: Young activists from MECO-ECOTRA¹ secretariat (Vang Sin Min and Dinh Chat) who involve in carrying out project activities together with villagers from Dak Nen and key farmers from H're community; and also CENDI field staff provided activity reports reflecting views comment, ideas and suggestions from the villagers and other stakeholders. A CENDI staff was in charge of selecting suitable information and coordinating to complete this narrative report.
- Sources of information: field reports, note taking and stories from the fields, administrative filing system (official letters, decisions, notification of project approval, working plans, fieldtrip outlines, pictures, video clips, records from the field, etc.).

2. Changes in the project setting

2.1. Important changes in the project setting

On 6th January 2017, the Government enacted Decree No. 01/2017/ND-CP amending a number of articles of the decrees detailing the implementation of the Land Law. This Decree clarifies a section of the 2013 Land Law, which had previously stated that only organizations could benefit from the allocation of production forests. The revised Decree now states that households, individuals, and communities who are living in forest areas can be legally allocated forest areas, which are natural forests for production purpose. This is a good legislative change for accelerating land allocation and granting land certificates to communities and households.

2.2. Important changes within the partner organization

No changes.

¹ Mekong Community Networking for Ecological Trading (MECO-ECOTRA) is a community-based network, long-term partner of CENDI.

3. Implementing the project and achieving its objectives

3.1. Achievement of the project objectives (in this reporting period)

1. Greater understanding by the research team and stakeholders as well as the local Ka Dong people themselves of the cultural value, community institution of the Ka Dong and their current livelihoods challenges.
2. Greater confidence and ability of the Ka Dong people in presenting their spiritual beliefs, ecological knowledge and customary law of natural resources management to the local officials and professional staff.

3.2. Outputs

Core team, including traditional leaders and selected young farmers completed traditional mapping describing local names of all 68 mountains in the ten villages of Dak Nen commune. These results created a good tool for community representatives to present community customary law on managing and using each type of forestland, field, stream, reservoir at a meeting held at Dak Nen communal office. This is a basic step to transform local landscape design, local names and customs into mapping system and community regulations in the next steps.

Via field study at 10 villages in Dak Nen commune, the involved MECO-ECOTRA secretariat activists and CENDI field staff identified 35 key persons from the Ka Dong ethnic group, who will be able to cooperate in the forest land co-management network with the existing 24 members of H're ethnic group from Po E commune in order to expand the future grassroots inter-ethnics networking action to co-governing the forests.

3.3. Implemented activities

3.3.1. To get project approved and project profile completed

1. A profile of CENDI legal entity and organization was completed, which consists of its Operation permission, Science-Technology Registration, legal stamp, organizational structure, personnel profile, and headquarter office.
2. Project Contract and Grant Approval Notice were translated into Vietnamese with suitable language for CENDI partners, including the Asian Research Association of Vietnam (SEARAV), community representatives and local stakeholders to discuss, understand and approve.
3. CENDI obtained official approval of Contract 339-004-1013 ZG via Decision No. 62-2016/QD-TWH dated 29th November 2016, which was signed by the Chairperson of the Central Standing Committee of the Asian Research Association of Vietnam (SEARAV).
4. On the basis of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CENDI and Kon Plong district People's Committee (DPC) on the implementation of Project 339-004-1013 ZG in Dak Nen commune, the DPC has enacted Decision No 1137/QD-UBND dated 6th December 2016 regarding establishment of the taskforce for land and forest allocation for village communities in Dak Nen commune.

- 3.3.2. A group of project implementing members was established, which includes key-farmers who have experiences in previous projects, communal and district professional officers, experts and project coordinator.
- 3.3.3. The project implementing group members and completed their job descriptions. The group members have facilitated village meetings and discussed with representatives from 528 households in the 10 villages to set up detail 3-month, 6-month and yearly plans. Therefore, villagers understood and support the project activities, especially forestland co-management and protection of forests.
- 3.3.4. Conducted a field study in order to get insight understanding of local Ka Dong ecological knowledge, customary laws in natural resource management and forest protection. The working team consists of one Dak Nen communal officer, 4 MECO-ECOTRA secretariat activists, and 3 CENDI/ LISO² staff. The team worked with elders, village leaders and key persons at 10 villages to survey and draw their traditional village boundaries and community forests. They studied Ka Dong cultivation experiences, livelihood, and income sources, their customary law on land use, forest protection, village history, community social structure, belief and ritual ceremonies.
- 3.3.5. Organized a seminar at Dak Nen communal office for community representatives from 10 villages to present their current land use situation, local names on village mapping, village ecological transects, and traditional customs relating to land and forest management. 40 community representatives, 5 communal officers, one district officer, 4 young activists and 5 staff from CENDI/ LISO participated in this seminar.
- 3.3.6. Organized a seminar at CENDI office for two researchers to present results of the field study and get comments from other CENDI staff in order to complete their field activity report, find possible application, and prepare for the next activities.
- 3.3.7. Two videos released through provincial and district media channels and also outreach/presented to all LISO Alliance.

3.4. Additional effects and risks

No

3.5. Evaluation

The project has been conducted on the right track. Through initial activities, CENDI has built up good relationship with and gained trust from target communities, communal and district officers. This is a good foundation for them to cooperate and continuously carry out other activities in the coming time.

4. Conclusions

4.1. Lessons learned within the project

1. It is highly efficient to involve MECO-ECOTRA secretariat activists in studying local ecological knowledge and exchanging cultural values with a new target community. Because the activists are indigenous ethnic people, and they have experiences of project

² Livelihood Sovereignty (LISO) is a network of local NGOs, of which CENDI is a member.

activities in their own communities, so it is easy for them to relate, share and inspire a new target community. In comparison to new graduates who come from cities or lowland areas, young indigenous activists found it easier to overcome language barrier, to behave properly in cultural sensitivity and to avoid taboos while working with a new target indigenous community. Involving the mentioned activists is a good opportunity to connect youths from different cultural identities and localities to act for empowerment of young leaders, and simultaneously promote Agro Ecological Farming in Community Forest and Land Use Planning Strategy in Mekong region.

2. It is a good idea to bring people of different cultural background and professional expertise to study such a new target community as the Ka Dong. We found a good cooperation and mutual help among the team of such diversified background.

4.2. Action plan for coming 3 months (April – June 2017)

1. Training on GPS using for community representatives of 10 villages in Dak Nen commune in order to help them apply in surveying their village boundaries and community forestland areas.
2. Survey and do ecological landscape transect cutting throughout 10 villages with the entire forest land areas of 4,500 ha.
3. Training on legal forest and land law for people of the 10 project villages.
4. Open discussion on how to integrated between land law and customary law on forestland right, use and protection (especially analysis on the role of customary law in natural forest management and how to promote customary law to set up community regulations).
5. Working with elders and community to complete draft village regulation on natural resource management and forest protection, then get consultation from surrounding communities and update those draft regulations.
6. Submit the draft regulations to get approval from communal and district authorities in order to legalize the regulations.
7. Disseminate the approved regulations to community members, surrounding communities and related actors to create favorable conditions for enforcement of the village regulations.

Annex: Pictures reflecting project activities



Surveying village land and forests



Studying and collecting local rice seeds



Villagers agree to get community land allocated instead of forestland title granted to household



A woman representing her family to sign agreement to transfer household forestland title to community



A villager performing traditional music instrument at a community meeting



Villagers practicing ritual ceremony in the forest