

**THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**  
**Independence – Freedom – Happiness**

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**MINUTES OF LEADERSHIP MEETING OF  
CENDI, MECO-ECOTRA AND YIELDS-AGREE**

No: 23 /BBH-BĐH

Today, 11 July 2015, at the CENDI Office located at A4 Pham Huy Thong street, Ngoc Khanh ward, Ba Dinh district, Hanoi, a meeting is held by CENDI's Board of Directors to evaluate the organization's activities in the first half of 2015 and outline orientations for the second half of the year.

**I/ Attendees:**

1. Tran Thi Lanh: Chairman of the Board of the Institute and Director of CENDI;
2. Le Van Khoa: Member of the Founding Board;
3. Dang To Kien: Deputy Director of CENDI;
4. Nguyen Minh Phuong: Financial Manager;
5. Tran Quoc Viet: Chairman of HEPA's Management Board and Coordinator of MECO-ECOTRA;
6. Vang Sin Min – Head of YIELDS-AGREE Secretariat of MECO-ECOTRA
7. Pham Bich Thuy – Secretary

**II. Contents:**

- Assess challenges of CENDI and needs arising at the community in 2015;
- Discuss MOU on Forest and Land Allocation (FLA) in Violak village and approaches to lobby rights of the H're ethnic minority community to 174 ha of Vang Ha Ro forest;
- Discuss MOU-based progress of FLA in Phin Ngan commune, Bat Xat district, Lao Cai province;
- Summarize case studies which have been approved by the Secretariat of MECO-ECOTRA at HEPA from 15 – 20 January 2015.

**III. Discussions: Opinions and Comments of attendees**

**1. Mr. Tran Quoc Viet**

The biggest challenge for CENDI at this moment is to create favorable conditions for HEPA to establish Rao An Agro-Ecological Enterprise in accordance with the Cooperative Law on new model of Cooperatives based on voluntarism, which fully meets CENDI's philosophy. Once the Rao An Enterprise is born, it will: 1) become a legal entity which enables HEPA to prevent upstream environment pollution caused by outsiders who come to HEPA for swimming in the summer time, making the whole area full of rubbish; 2) realize CENDI's strategy for community entrepreneurs development in HEPA from 2015 – 2020; 3) become a pilot model for sharing professional enterprise – oriented governance with the communities that are looking forward to commercializing their local agro-ecological products, such as the Hmong ethnic group in Long Lan village, Luang Prabang (Laos). The Thai ethnic group in Pom Om village, Cao Quang commune, Nghe An province, who, under the SPERI's

facilitation and support for lobbying forest and land allocation over 11,000 ha, really needs such model like Rao An Agro-Ecological Enterprise for sharing and networking. The community in Lung Sui village of Simacai district also expects that the model will help them identify their local products for cooperation and co-production towards a niche market. 11 local rice varieties of the H're ethnic minority group in Violak village are anxious for being researched for preservation in order to build up a seeds bank in the village for further promotion and extension to other locations in Kon Tum province. Likewise, Khe 5 village in Son Kim commune, Ha Tinh province also would like that seeds of their high value and fast growing native *Cong* (*Castanopsis cerebrina*) will be collected and widely planted in nurseries in order to provide native species to the community to gradually replace acacia and rubber trees. Furthermore, when Rao An Agro-Ecological Enterprise runs its operation effectively, it will serve as a model for the communities of MECO-ECOTRA to learn and share knowledge and experience on how to govern a self-reliant community-based ecological entrepreneur.

## **2. Mr. Vang Sin Min**

I totally agree with Mr. Viet on establishment of the agro-ecological enterprise in HEPA. We will then follow HEPA to establish a similar one in Simacai district.

## **3. Ms. Dang To Kien**

Regarding the FLA methodology to the Red Dzaio ethnic people in Phin Ngan commune, Bat Xat district, Lao Cai province, CENDI's Board of Directors should pay a special attention to types and levels of conflicts. As for the conflict between villages, we should maximize the traditional leadership of village elders. Opportunities and basic conditions should also be created by CENDI in order to encourage the village elders to sit down together and come up with solutions for reconciliation. In addition, the mapping experts will assist the village elders and key farmers to identify the disputed areas on the map, discuss on how to handle the situation and prepare paperwork clearly stating solution of the village elders. The next step is to help the village elders organize a village meeting to share their solution to the disputed areas with all villagers. Upon the consensus of the whole village, the mapping experts will position coordinates and conduct demarcation, and then ask the village elders and all village members for acknowledgment of the agreed boundaries via signatures. Key farmers and YELDS's members such as Chao A Phin, Kho May and other village young people should also be involved in the reconciliation process so that they well understand their village boundaries as well as learn from the village elders how to reconcile the conflicts based on the customary law.

## **3. Ms. Nguyen Minh Phuong**

CENDI's FLA programs require much flexibility in financial governance, especially in the period of lobbying district authorities and functional offices. I, therefore, propose the Board of the Institute to allow the budget adjustment up to 20 percentage among the activities in order to meet the requirements of the field sites.

Whenever the MOU has been signed, it should pay a special attention on methodology in terms of task assignment among the stakeholders. For instance, the district authorities should ensure the prompt legalization progress, while professional officers engaged in FLA process should strictly follow the schedule stated in the MOU and make financial settlement in accordance with CENDI's financial regulations and Law.

### **3. Mrs. Tran Thi Lanh**

Regarding the FLA programs carried out in Phin Ngan and Po E communes, we should clarify 7 outcomes to be achieved as follows:

1 - All legal maps should indicate the spiritual name of the local sites according to the perception and regular naming of the Red Dzao and H're ethnic people. Therefore, the post-FLA legal maps should, at the same time, indicate two different ways of natural resources classification based on two different concepts of governance: one by the Red Dzao and H're people based on their wisdom in spiritual ecosystem, and another - by the government;

2 - Coordinators of the two programs should summarize steps of approach to legalize customary laws of the Red Dzao and H're communities (how many steps, how to implement each step and who is doer) so as to obtain the approval from the authorities at commune and district levels and branches in form of legal documents;

3 - Once the customary law is legalized, we should create basic conditions for traditional leaders - village elders of the communities to share details of the legalized customary law with the villagers and let them know that their customary law-based forest protection is legal. It is also necessary to enhance awareness of the outsiders as well as the whole society on the legalized customary law by releasing printing documents and hanging signboards;

4 - Coordinators continue the FLA steps of approach based on the customary law by having the village traditional leaders in collaboration with the village key farmers and youth to conduct field trips and surveys, position each ecological transect cutting and identify locations and sacred trees in the forest areas to be allocated to the community by the authority with land title grant for 50 years. Accordingly, maps will be built by the locals and experts in the way as mentioned in the Outcome 1;

5 - Village FLA task team should involve the village elders, key farmers, especially women and youth in the process. Their engagement will help them more understand the logics of boundary identification of the traditional leaders: boundary between villages, between village and Communal People's Committee (CPC), between village and Watershed Management Board (WMB) and between village and enterprise (if any);

6 - Upon completion of field and office procedures for land use right certificate, original record should consist of 5 sets of document for archives, including: one for the village, one for the commune, one for the district, one for CENDI Office and one for the provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment;

7 - Plans for organization of regional conferences to review FLA programs should be prepared within October 2015 to be notified to the local authorities in Kon Tum and Lao Cai provinces for guidance in order to prepare detailed schedules and notify the participants. Invitees should be officers from National Assembly Ethnic Council; Central Committee for Economics; Legal Division of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Policy Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Committee for Ethnic and Mountainous Affairs and district Offices of Justice. The attendees will focus on analyzing and making comparison between two concepts of forest governance: community customary law based on voluntarism and one-way top-down bureaucratic management budgeted by the Government. The coordinators, therefore, should make big efforts on collecting practical data to prepare concise and convincing presentations (with photos and video) for the conference.

### **3. Prof. Le Van Khoa**

I highly appreciate your opinions. We need to promptly organize an extension conference for the key farmers in order to coordinate with them in implementing the orientations for the second half of 2015 set by the Board of Directors. The Board of the Institute fully support and will create all favorable legal conditions for the Board of Directors to work effectively and efficiently.

### **IV. Conclusions**

1. The Board of the Institute agrees to promote the establishment of the Rao An Agro-Ecological Enterprise at soonest. Mr. Tran Quoc Viet is requested to start working on the Enterprise's rules and business plan so that the legal status of the enterprise can be obtained by June – August of this year;
2. The Board of the Institute agrees with the Financial Manager Nguyen Minh Phuong on budget adjustment up to 20% among the activities to support the FLA programs in Bat Xat and Kon Plong districts and to ensure the smoothness of lobbying;
3. The Board of the Institute agrees to 7 important points presented by Mrs. Tran Thi Lanh regarding the FLA programs with emphasis on the cross-cutting role of the traditional leaders at all steps of approach;
4. The Board of the Institute agrees that FLA records should go in the CENDI's archives and that of other relevant agencies.

This Minutes of Meeting has been agreed upon by the undersigned.

*Hanoi, date 11 month 07 year 2015*

**Coordinator of  
MECO-ECOTRA**

**Head of YIELDS-  
AGREE Secretariat**

**Deputy Director of  
CENDI**

**Tran Quoc Viet**

**Vang Sin Min**

**Dang To Kien**

**Financial Manager**

**Secretary**

**Director of CENDI**

**Nguyen Minh Phuong**

**Phạm Bích Thủy**

**Tran Thi Lanh**

