



**Continued Strengthening Livelihood Sovereignty for Villagers Wellbeing through  
Approaching Holistic Landscape Ecosystem Components  
“Peak Forest/Rừng – UpLand Farm/Rẫy - Valley/Ruộng”**

**OVERALL LISO (SPERI/CODE/CENDI) 2022-2025-2030**

**Challenges facing Indigenous People in PoE, Mang Canh and Dak Nen communes today**

With the globalisation of the market economy in a relentless search for ever-increasing levels of economic growth, the balance of humans and nature is being rapidly destroyed. This is nowhere more clear than in the chemicalization of agriculture and plunder of natural resources that has now reached its ecological limit. In an effort to overcome natural limitations, countries are now turning to artificial intelligence and digital technologies for the precision application of chemical inputs, and searching out new territories to apply these techniques. As a result, indigenous communities all over the world are suffering new forms of land dispossession and livelihood destruction as these new technologies encroach upon their territories. Traditional systems of food production based upon a human-nature balance and which contain important lesson for human survival are being destroyed. The latter need to be protected, preserved and strengthened for the lessons they contain and the populations they support. This is more than just a social justice issue; it is an issue of species survival. This proposal for strengthening the holistic landscape approach of villagers in Kon Plong district for their livelihood sovereignty and wellbeing seeks to address this challenge.

**The 3 R<sup>1</sup>'s Universal View of IP (HRE, CA DOONG, M'NAM, SE DANG in Kon Plong**

‘3R’ is the Vietnamese acronym for Rung (Forest) - Ray (upland farm) - Ruong (rice field). It represents the ecological interconnectedness of the three landscape zones utilized in traditional composite (composed of many forms) highland farming systems. ‘3R’ is an indigenous knowledge-based Ecological Landscape Management and Governance system that has been maintained sustainably for hundreds of years from one generation to another.

At the peak of the landscape is the forested mountaintops (where the nature spirits live), preserved as a source of nutrition (water and minerals) for the lower zones. The lower mountain slopes are zones of rotational shifting cultivation. Here there is a mosaic of regenerating forest at different stages of the rotational cultivation cycle, and active seasonal cultivation plots of diverse species for saving and enriching the biodiversity. In the river valleys, water and nutrition from the mountaintops is channelled to wet rice fields. Each zone is a rich source of different foods and materials flows that make for a prosperous and sustainable traditional ecological livelihood. The whole system is the gift from nature to all living things living inter-dependently and harmoniously.

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<sup>1</sup> 3 R = Forest – Up Land Farm – Rice Field Valley

Crucial to the maintenance of this IP lifestyle system is the system of social arrangements based upon relationships of kinship between village households according to which voluntary resource sharing and labour exchanges are organized. Village solidarity is in turn maintained by a common commitment to maintaining the ecological balance upon which their common livelihood depends. Sustaining this common commitment to ecological balance is an annual cycle of ritual practices and ceremonies spiritually acknowledging the interconnectedness and mutual dependence of humans and nature.

Such systems have lasted for hundreds of years, sustaining not only highland populations but also lowland communities to whose fields the holistic ecological highland village economy delivers valuable nutrients carried by a steady flow of clean fresh water. This system is now under dire threat from the encroachment of industrial systems of agriculture aimed at profitmaking, via the forced extraction of natural resources for growing crops and livestock for export. In addition to extracting natural resources, the industrial system of agriculture is also implanting unnatural pollutants in the form of artificial chemical pesticides and fertilizers.

To find space for these industrial enterprises and the hydropower systems that empower them, vast tracts of forest are being destroyed, and large areas of productive land formerly used for feeding local human populations are being turned over to the production of industrial crops for animal feed or to feed processing factories for biofuel. Vast areas of environmentally nurturing and ecologically sustainable systems of crop cultivation are being turned over to factory systems of dairy and meat production – enterprises now scientifically recognised as the most environmentally damaging and wasteful of all method of food production.

Indigenous communities in Kon Plong are under increasing pressure from the above-mentioned developments. Industrial cassava growing for biofuel production is having a devastating effect upon the local natural environment and socio-cultural arrangements. Hydropower schemes are encroaching on forest and land used for indigenous traditional farming systems. Formerly preserved forest and traditionally cultivated uplands areas are rapidly being converted to industrial cassava production and traditional ecological upland farming systems with their associated community solidarity enhancing ritual practices and voluntary labour exchange arrangements are in decline. The community is experiencing distress as a result of these changes, but is caught up in them because of a lack of alternative means of income earning.

As a result of industrial encroachment into indigenous territories in Kon Plong, biodiversity is being lost, rich native rice seed varieties are being lost. Local knowledge is being lost. Traditional culture and social solidarity is rapidly degrading as farmers chase after the industrial crop to harvest to pay their debts to exploitative local traders acting as intermediaries between farmers and cassava factory to entrap them into continuous cassava production. The objective of this project is to provide an escape-route to this form of industrial slavery and environmental devastation by recovering, restoring and revitalizing traditional ecological land use practices and building upon these for alternative income earning opportunities. A ‘3R Development Strategy’ is proposed as an economically viable and ecologically sound alternative to environmentally destructive agricultural industrialization.

### **The 3R Development Strategy**

The 3R Development strategy is an indigenous knowledge-based strategy for sustainable ecological development. It recognises and aims at preserving and enhancing the ecological

interconnectedness of the three landscape zones (Rung (Forest) – Ray (Upland) - Ruong (Valley)) that are utilized in traditional composite (composed of many forms) highland farming systems.

**Strategy 1:** Continue working to secure and defend community rights to forestland (highly needed) (Two-Three villages will be carried if possible)

**Strategy 2:** Continue to supervise stronger and more intensive Community Custom-based Agroecology developments in interconnected Rung (Forest) - Ray (Upland) - Ruong (valley) landscape zones. This strategy is aiming at advocacy and lobby for further policy change (The current Kon Plong district Communist Party Leader is supportive of this strategy and is ready to produce a legal paper prioritising CODE-CENDI action in this direction in different communes and villages in Kon Plong district) (Applied Po E case for Mang Canh and Dak Nen);

**Strategy 3:** Select 5-8 villages in the three communes of Po E, Mang Canh and Dak Nen for intensive development of agroecology parallel with strengthening of sustainable territorial governance system. (With regard to forest and forestland, this strategy will connect with Strategy 5) and connect to SCCF-FORPA second phase;

**Strategy 4:** Empower and promote YIELDS-AGREE institutional and organisational movement via ‘Spider Web’ Networking. This strategy for further young movement and revolution of 3R’s universal view of IP and linking with second phase of SCCF-FOSPA;

**Strategy 5:** Advance general knowledge and skills of YIELDS-AGREE Network on the carbon stock carrying capacity of community owned forests and the value of these forests for potential future participation in online carbon market selling of carbon credits;

**Strategy 6:** Continue to build capacity of community for community audit of forest and land for applying statistical calculation of forest and land carbon stocks.

**Strategy 7:** Comparative analysis of case study of H’re spiritual-ecological-livelihood complex from the first phase of CENDI-SCCF and effects upon community-based territorial governance of the introduction of hydropower schemes, foreign owned industrial dairy and beef farming operations, greenhouse and digital technology-based horticulture;

**Strategy 8:** Continue with community-based agroecological enterprise development supported by income from participation in emerging global carbon market, and lobby for long-term support for community agroecology enterprise via *Community Agroecology Enterprise Law in 2025 – 2030*.

## **Finance**

*Note: Financial co-contribution between MISEREOR-SCCF-CODE/CENDI and Government Program (Hopefully).*

*30% of total will be used for policy analysis and publication for lobbying for policy change.*

*70% for community based RRR Agro-Ecology’s capacity building by field farming, seed saving and reforestation, Landscape enriching, empowering networking and Mapping/Re-position for Carbon Credit of all 19 communities in Kon Plong where SCCF-MISEREOR has funded.*