

National Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme

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Abstract

The National Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme covers protection of existing forests as well as reforestation and has multiple purposes, including environmental protection, bio-diversity conservation, and creation of raw materials for forest industries. It will also generate employment, create a basis for improved production, and contribute to an increase in income levels for people belonging to ethnic minorities in mountainous areas, thus helping them improve their living conditions. Finally, it would contribute to the overall national goals of hunger elimination and poverty reduction, and also strengthen national defense in border areas.

1. Introduction

In December 1997, the second session of the Tenth National Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam passed a Resolution on creation of five million hectares of new forest during the period from 1998 to 2010. On 29 July 1998, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 661/QD/TTg on objectives, tasks, policies and organization for the creation of the forest area. The Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, Planning and Investment, Finance, and also other sectors and ministries were subsequently requested to implement the Resolution of the National Assembly in the field without delay.

Table 1 Summary of Programme Components

Protect existing forests and create five million ha of new forests		
Special-use and protection forests: protect existing forests and create two million ha of forests		Production forests: use existing forest in an effective way and create three million ha of new forests
Special-use forests: - Field projects funded by the State - Foreign-supported projects - Other projects related to special-use forests	Protection forests: - Field projects funded by the State - Foreign-supported projects - Other projects related to protection forests	Production forests: - Field projects where subsidised credit is made available for reforestation - Joint venture projects - Foreign-supported projects - Other projects implemented by forest owners using their own resources.

The long-term National Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme is to be carried out over a twelve-year period, at a time when the overall process of renovation in the country's economy is progressing and is likely to create a changing general environment for the Programme. This requires corresponding changes in the contents and the methods for implementation of the Programme so that its objectives can be achieved.

2. Main contents (key activities)

2.1. Classification of land and forests in the field

- Review and possibly revise the overall land use plans of the localities concerned in order to identify the forest land and classify it into the three categories (special-use, protection, and production)

2.2. Identification of forest owners

The National Reforestation Programme can be successful only if every piece of forest land has its owners who can really decide how to use the land (with or without forest cover) within the framework of the Programme. In order to reach the target "let all forest land have its owner", the following activities should be implemented:

- Summarize the experience from allocation of land and forest during the past few years, especially regarding methods and organization;
- Supplement and adjust the guidelines on allocation of forest land in light of the experience, so as to make them suitable in the present situation;
- Review the situation with respect to ownership of land and forest by State Forest Enterprises in cases where they have not received Land Tenure Certificates. Land allocated to forest enterprises should have clearly marked borders in maps and also in the field. By the end of 2000, allocation of forest land and issuance of Land Tenure Certificates should be finalised. Land no longer under the management of State Forest Enterprises should be transferred to local authorities so that they in turn can allocate or lease such land to organisations, households of former employees or farmers in the locality for utilisation in accordance with the law (Decision No. 187/1999/QD-TTg dated 16 September 1999 by the Prime Minister on renovation of organisation and management mechanism of State Forest Enterprises);
- Determine which organisation is to take the lead and coordinate the allocation work among organisations and agencies concerned, from the central to the local levels;
- Improve the implementation capacity, for example by provision of facilities, funds and other resources.

2.3. Research and application of advanced technologies for forest development

- Search for, test, and apply advanced techniques for forest rehabilitation through assisted natural regeneration;
- Study suitable planting techniques which combine the advantages of pure and mixed forest plantations and avoid the disadvantages of both;
- Study the suitability of different tree species in the specific conditions of each location and also how they are able to meet the development objectives of each forest category;
- Study the problem of seed quality, ensuring that only high quality seeds are used for reforestation;
- Search for and apply intensive techniques in planting to increase productivity and quality of the forests;

- Search for and apply advanced techniques in tending of forest and in preventing pests and diseases.

2.4. Supply of seeds and seedlings and forest extension services

- Identify the annual requirements of seedlings and seeds (each tree species and locality have their specific requirements) for reforestation in local projects.
- Set up a provision network for seeds and seedlings;
- Evaluate, select and support technologies yielding high quality seedlings (through tissue culture cultivation), so that the local needs for such seedlings are met;
- Evaluate, select and support techniques to be used by forest enterprises, communities, households, individuals and other collective bodies (with suitable conditions) in constructing, developing and improving local nurseries providing high quality seedlings at a lower price than seedlings of the same quality from other places;
- Identify and organise import of seeds of tree species which are not available in sufficient quantity or quality in the country;
- Improve the capacity for local forest extension through provision of technical services for seedling production, sloping land cultivation, forest regeneration and reforestation, pest control, etc.

2.5. Development of the market for forest products.

In the present economic situation in Vietnam, the market is a decisive factor determining the success or failure of reforestation for commercial use, e.g. for the three million ha of new forest to be established. Reliable market information for the various forest products is essential for forest owners. If they know what quantities are demanded, what the quality requirements are, what prices to expect, for how long prices can be expected to remain stable etc., they will be in a good position to decide whether to invest in a plantation or not, which species to use and how to get the best economic results. If this information is not available, forest owners take a big risk, except when they can rely on subsidies from the outside, like the State or a foreign donor. For this reason, market research and dissemination of market information to participants in the Reforestation Programme is indispensable.

Forest plantations able to supply raw material to forest industries should be planned and implemented as a component in a joint programme, together with establishment of wood processing facilities. Processing of forest products from plantations by advanced technologies should be strengthened to provide products of high quality. Use of products from plantations instead of those from natural forest is to be encouraged.

Reference

National Five Million Hectare Reforestation Programme (1998-2010) by the Department of Forestry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ha Noi, 2001)