



**THE VISIONING APPROACH
– IN COMMUNITY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING**

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Below: Three Muong ethnic ladies from Ba Thuoc resting on an irrigation canal created through the visioning process and built by the villagers and CARE. It supplies water for 30 ha of paddy fields.



COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Communities today find themselves in the midst of many changes influenced by political, environmental and economic factors. There are many possible future scenarios and our participation in community planning shapes the reality we face. Planning for the future is about steering your community towards more sustainable livelihoods and appropriate management of the natural, human and economic resources we depend upon.

The 'visioning approach' helps communities to align their values and interests and to create a plan of how to make this vision a reality. The approach works on the premise that in order to change your community for the better first you need to know what your community resources are and then you need to know what you and the rest of the community want to change. As a community member you need to ask yourself, 'what do we want it to be like when the change has taken place?'. You need to have a vision that you can steer towards when decisions are to be made. You also need to have a plan as well as the necessary resources and skills in order to achieve the vision. In other words, the clearer you are about what you and your community want to do, the easier it is to achieve the goal.

The visioning approach is not an easy task. It is already difficult making a plan for one's own life or business. It is an even bigger task to set up an inclusive plan for a whole community, village, watershed or landscape, because everybody in that area has to live with the outcomes of the vision and the plan. In order to work really well the vision and the plan of how to get there has to be acceptable, feasible and sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms. The vision for a community, village, watershed or landscape is created with the participation of the people living there and with those who make decisions the use of resources and planning for a given area.

"I was surprised because this approach was very good in helping people to see their past, their current situation and their future and how to connect between these different periods in time. Previously, we were used to the top down approach where people from the district office would impose their ideas and the plans were often subjective and irrelevant. Planning was done to suit funds and the need to disburse, not really to suit peoples' needs. Now there is a huge difference. The visioning process was exactly the opposite because it started from the grass roots level," says Mr. Pham Kim Tan from the partner organisation (Thanh Hoa union of Science and Technology Association – TUSTA).

In the following pages the visioning approach to community-based watershed management will be introduced. A case study is examined to illustrate some of the successes and limitations of this new approach and in order to show how this approach can be replicated. The case study looks at the planning process for socio-economic

and environmental development of Ba Thuoc District, Thanh Hoa province in northern Vietnam. Here the visioning approach- based on the participation and visions of locals- was used to strengthen and reinvigorate the district planning process. Lessons learned and recommendations for future uses of the visioning approach are discussed in conclusion.

WHAT IS THE VISIONING APPROACH?

Visioning is an effective methodology for empowering communities to take command of their future by deciding how they wish it to be in their own terms. Participants discuss and develop a single vision, an ideal future, for the entire community. Visioning creates a forum where people can express their hopes, share their expectations and come to a consensus about an ideal future. Developing a long-term vision can also be an important step in developing sustainable natural resource management strategies. It fosters a positive, collaborative atmosphere².

WHY DOES CARE WORK WITH THE VISIONING APPROACH?

BOX 1: REDUCING THE GAP



The visioning approach is used as a *strategic tool* to support coordinated, equitable and relevant planning for communities. In other words, it helps to identify what needs to be changed in a community or watershed as well as supporting the creation of a vision and a plan of how to reach a desired future. The approach can be used for long-term and community-based watershed management planning, environmental planning for natural resource dependant people and planning of business development, collaborative groups

¹A watershed is the area of land where all of the water that is under it or drains off of it goes into the same place. John Wesley Powell, scientist geographer, put it best when he said that a watershed is: "that area of land, a bounded hydrologic system, within which all living things are inextricably linked by their common water course and where, as humans settled, simple logic demanded that they become part of a community." – (Sources: <http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/whatis.cfm>)

²Evans, K., Velarde, S.J., Prieto, R., Rao, S.N., Sertzen, S., Dávila, K., Cronkleton P. and de Jong, W. 2006. Field guide to the Future: Four Ways for Communities to Think Ahead. Bennett E. and Zurek M. (eds.). Nairobi: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), ASB, World Agroforestry Centre. p.87. URL: <http://www.asb.cgiar.org/ma/scenarios>

BOX 2: A FRAMEWORK CONTEXT

The visioning approach is a tool that supports CARE's overall approach to development including its goals, principles and strategic responses to the challenge of promoting empowerment and eradicating poverty

	CARE in general	The Unifying Framework	Participatory Watershed Management project
Goals, principles and objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promote empowerment- Eradicate poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Improve human and material conditions- Improve social positions- Create a sound enabling environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Community-based natural resource management- Livelihood improvement
Strategy and tools	Address immediate, intermediate and underlying causes of poverty	Rights-based approach: Enable duty bearers and rights holders to take on their responsibility	Participatory and inclusive visioning approach to planning

and livelihood strategies, to name just a few examples. These plans can in turn be integrated into the Socio-Economic Development Plan of communes, districts and provinces.

THE VISIONING APPROACH AS A VEHICLE FOR THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH

CARE strives to achieve two complimentary aims: firstly to empower poor people to be aware and lay claim to their rights while improving livelihoods; secondly to enable policy and decision makers to meet their obligations and responsibilities.

Underlying causes of poverty are most often the result of a combination of political, social, economic, and environmental factors that are related to the systemic and structural underpinnings of underdevelopment, residing at the societal and often the global level³. Identifying the underlying causes enables a strategic response, termed the 'rights-based approach'⁴, in order to alleviate the context of poverty.

The right-based approach is reflected through all of CARE's work. The visioning and rights-based complimentary are approaches that have helped to achieve CARE's overall goals of promoting empowerment and eradicating poverty by raising awareness of the immediate and underlying causes of poverty.

As the visioning approach is highly participatory and includes stakeholders on all levels (ie. farmers, local authorities, development partners and project staff) it ensures a bottom up approach to planning where local users' voices are heard and their opinions and ideas included. It also helps to empower poor and vulnerable people to be aware of their rights on one hand, and on the other hand to enable decision and policy makers to meet their obligations

because they all work together to co-create the vision and the plan.

In this light, the visioning approach is an efficient vehicle to reach poor, marginalized farmers because it can raise the voices of the poor, both women and men, and include them directly into the planning process. It allows farmers and decision-makers to understand their situation more objectively and comprehensively because they work on the watershed-scale (inter-commune area), as well as the farm and village-scale resources and needs. It works equally well with literate and illiterate people due to its creative and visual mediums.

The visioning approach is a first step to help the participants recognize how to improve livelihoods and how to achieve improved social positions, human conditions and an appropriate enabling environment. More broadly, the visioning approach also helps to identify the immediate, intermediate and underlying causes of poverty.

³For more information on CARE's Unifying Framework and the Underlying Causes of Poverty please refer to <http://pqdl.care.org/Practice: Unifying Framework for Poverty Eradication and Social Justice>.

⁴CARE's definition of RBA- An approach that deliberately and explicitly focuses on people achieving the minimum condition for living with dignity (i.e. achieving their human rights). It does so by exposing the roots of vulnerability and marginalization and expanding the range of responses. It empowers people to claim their rights and fulfil their responsibilities. A rights-based approach recognizes poor, displaced and war-affected people as having inherent rights essential to livelihood security rights that are validated by international law.

THE PARTICIPATORY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT

BA THUOC DISTRICT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

The planning process of the socio-economic development plan, the 5-year plan, used to be in the hands of very few people at the District planning and financial office. Previously, it had no mechanism to include understanding of local needs, knowledge, resources or capacity. Pilot implementation in CARE project communes based on the visioning approach has shown that the implementation became more feasible with fewer delays and increased efficiency. District staff said that because local resources and capacity were considered to a greater extent than before, local people were more motivated to see their own plans become reality. The district authorities then acknowledged that by using the visioning approach to include local voices, their planning of land use and natural resource management could be more economically effective and relevant to local needs, thereby strengthening the socio-economic development of the district. Participatory visioning workshops were held in each commune of the district where the needs and dreams of the local people were captured and became the foundation of the next 5-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011- 2015).

The visioning approach was piloted in the *Participatory Watershed Management (PWM)* project in Ba Thuoc District in Thanh Hoa Province. The Muong and Thai communities living in the sub watersheds of the Ma river amongst flat rice paddies and steep limestone mountains are among the poorest communes of the district. They struggle to derive a livelihood based on farming and natural resource use. Many households have a member working outside the province in urban areas to send back remittances and consequently many households are headed by women in the absence of their husbands. The underlying causes of the increasing environmental degradation include high levels of poverty (ranging from 40 to 75%), small land allocations, a lack of coordinated and relevant environmental planning relevant to local needs, as well as limited rights to participate in land use management. Increased incidence and severity of draughts and floods adds further to a negative cycle of poverty, competition for water access and forest resources.

The rights-based approach fosters an inclusive, participatory and equal planning process in which communities were presented with opportunities to develop a common understanding of the area and its environmental issues to raise awareness, foster forums for discussion and access capacity building based on development visions identified by the communities themselves. The solution for a desirable process was a combination of a simplified *Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)* model, Box 3, to inspire watershed management and adapting the new visioning approach to the local needs.

BOX 3: PAYMENT FOR ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Payments for Ecosystem (or Environmental) Services (PES) broadly defined, is the practice of offering incentives to farmers or landowners in exchange for managing their land as an ecological service that benefits the community. These programmes promote the conservation of natural resources. Ecosystem services have no standardized definition but they are commonly aimed to confer the benefits of nature to households, communities, and economies. Specific ecosystem services were identified and assessed by the UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, including:

- food production in the form of crops, livestock, aquaculture and wild foods
- fibre for example timber, cotton, hemp and silk
- cultural services including spiritual, religious and aesthetic values, recreation and ecotourism
- genetic resources like natural medicines and pharmaceuticals
- water purification, fresh water and water regulation
- natural hazard regulation and erosion regulation
- climate and air quality regulation
- waste treatment, disease regulation, pest regulation and pollination

Notably, there is a “big three” among these services which are currently receiving the most funding and interest worldwide. These are climate change mitigation, watershed services and biodiversity conservation and demand for these services in particular is predicted to continue to grow. PES programs are voluntary and mutually beneficial contracts between consumers of ecosystem services and the suppliers of these services. The party supplying the environmental services holds the property rights over an environmental good that provides a flow of benefits to the demanding party in return for compensation. The beneficiaries of the ecosystem services are willing to pay a price that is lower than their welfare gain due to the services. The providers of the ecosystem services are willing to accept a payment that is greater than the cost of providing the services.

Source: Wikipedia

The diagram illustrates the institutional framework for watershed management in Ba Thuoc district. It features several interconnected entities and processes:

- Ba Thuoc district Peoples' Committee** (top left) is connected to **TUSTA** (top center) and **CARE management** (top right) via horizontal double-headed arrows.
- TUSTA** is connected to the **Participatory Watershed Management board at district level** (middle) via a vertical double-headed arrow.
- The **Participatory Watershed Management board at district level** is connected to the **Sub-watershed management boards at (inter-) commune level** (bottom center) via a vertical double-headed arrow.
- The **Sub-watershed management boards at (inter-) commune level** are connected to **Watershed management models** (bottom left) and **Livelihood improvement models** (bottom right) via vertical double-headed arrows.
- Watershed management models** (bottom left) includes:
 - Inter-commune model
 - Inter-village model
- Livelihood improvement models** (bottom right) are connected to the **Watershed management models** via a horizontal double-headed arrow.
- Two vertical grey bars, labeled **Support and feedback**, are positioned on the left and right sides. Each bar has arrows pointing upwards towards the district-level board and downwards towards the inter-commune level boards, indicating a flow of support and feedback between these levels.

The PWM project phases I and II are part of the program Civil Action for Socio-economic Inclusion in Sustainable Development for northern ethnic minorities in Vietnam (CASI). It aims to promote the marginalised ethnic minorities in northern Vietnam to determine and realise their own equitable and sustainable development, with dignity. The PWM project seeks as its main objective to operationalize community based natural resource management and livelihood improvement systems in sub-watershed communities of Ba Thuoc District in Thanh Hoa Province of Vietnam.

PARTNERS IN THE PROJECT

The partner staff actively shape work plans, discuss project implementation, do monitoring and technical consulting on income generating activities. PWM contributes to TUSTA with advice and technical support, encourages participatory methodology and creates initiatives within natural resource management.

COMMUNITY VISION BUILDING

Building visions of the future community was a new approach used to overcome the challenge of setting up a model that would integrate land, forest and water resources with sustainable livelihoods. The PWM project set out to strengthen existing structures and processes by working with 'both sides of the table' to foster equal respect and willingness to listen. Community vision building included all stakeholders in the area to determine future landscape and livelihoods together. Pilot visioning workshops were conducted to create a understanding of shared community values and a clear vision of future livelihoods and watershed management. The participants experienced a process of assessing their own development potential in accordance with the natural and cultural resources within the watershed. This way the communities were empowered to advocate for their needs, rights and visions and to build capacity of the local authorities to better support and appreciate community participation, knowledge and contributions.

POLICY FEEDBACK AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Watershed management and watershed protection activities, which also contribute to improved agriculture and forest production were identified and supported. Experiences and lessons from the community level are captured in the work and documentation done by the community-based organisations, for example the sub-watershed management boards. The feedback from these community-based organisations provides evidence for district and provincial decision-makers to go ahead with tested models of watershed management and new planning tools, like the visioning process. Box 4 about the project organisation illustrates flow of support for the communities, including technical advice on irrigation systems and afforestation at sub-watershed level and livelihood income generating activities, as well as flow of policy feedback from lessons learned.

THE VISIONING APPROACH IN PRACTICE

"I have worked with participatory approaches before, but this one was different. Actually, the way previous projects had been conducted made it difficult to understand this new approach. Other projects made plans already before coming, but CARE did not have a set plan. They did not do anything for the people – but they helped them to make and implement their own plan themselves, to draw their future and reach it too," says Mr. Le Trung Luong from the Agricultural Extension Station.

A lot of preparation is needed before the visioning workshop itself can take place. Understanding what visioning is about, training facilitators to conduct the workshop is an essential step in discovering what and how participants can make the vision happen. The preparation is a part of the visioning process as well as the implementation and monitoring.

The facilitation of the visioning process involves eight steps from introduction of the project through assessment of resources, development of the vision and work plans, endorsement of plans, implementation and monitoring. On the following pages we will discover how the visioning process was carried out step by step.



Small group discussions improve participation, particularly by women.

BOX 6: TIMELINE OF THE VISIONING PROCESS

Step 1: Before the workshops

- Community assessment of natural resources and management opportunities for example Risk analysis, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) or key drivers of change
- Meetings in project management to decide for the visioning approach
- Preparing for the visioning workshop and selecting facilitators and participants
- Training facilitators and piloting the visionary process

Step 2 – 5: The Visioning Workshops

- Discovering resources
- Dreaming of the future
- Developing a vision statement
- Planning for action and management of the watershed

Step 6 – 8: After the workshop

- Presenting the vision statement and draft watershed management plan to the village
- Feedback and adjustments to the watershed management plan at village and commune level
- Adjustments from local authorities and approval of the watershed management plans by District Peoples' Committee or other decision-making

BEFORE THE WORKSHOPS

STEP 1: PREPARING THE GROUND FOR THE VISIONING PROCESS

Preparing the visioning process is like preparing for a project. The current state of the natural resources and socio-economic conditions of the community and watershed area can be captured, for example with a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). An analysis of the situation can then be used to understand what needs to change and who is there to change it. Villagers, community groups and organisations, local authorities and other relevant stakeholders are invited to partake in the project and form management units on watershed or community basis. In these units it can be discussed how and why it is appropriate to use the visioning approach for planning of activities of the project.

Local authority or mass organisation staff and community members are usually trained to become facilitators of the visioning process. They should be trained sufficiently prior to the visioning workshop as the process requires some personal experience both as a participant and a facilitator to be conducted well. If possible, do a pilot or test workshop before launching the full community visioning workshop.

Participation of stakeholders

It is usually not possible to invite all community members to the visioning workshop, although it is ideal to let everyone get involved in the watershed to participate. Therefore criteria have to be applied to the participants. These should be decided by the project management and other management units. The partici-

pants have to be representatives who have a good understanding of what is happening in their community and should include farmers, local authority staff and decision-makers in strategically relevant positions. Giving an example, in Ba Thuoc the following were invited:

- *Community members:* collaborators (mainly women), leaders of each village and elders and others who were respected by villagers.
- *Commune staff:* all the government staff working at the commune office – 19 people.
- *District staff:* all members of the district project management board. The members are also leaders of different departments, like Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Forest protection, Women's Union, Farmers' Union, Agricultural Extension Centre and later also Department of Health, Planning and Financial department and other departments.
- *Gender representation* of about 50% women and men. Women who were ordinary household members of the Women's Union were invited to join the workshops.
- *Socio-economic status:* Ideally one third of participants should be from poor households, one third from just above the poverty line and one third well off households or another fair representation of community socio-economic status.

THE VISIONING WORKSHOP

"I was surprised at how differently people in my area pictured the future and their dreams. Even if we have discussed it many times, their drawings showed a different dream than mine. It was very inspiring and it gave me hope and encouragement. Basically we all wanted the same things: clean water, irrigation dam, a bridge for the children to go safely to school, more wildlife and forest. Now we understood each other better and could start shaping a future together," says Mr. Hinh from Trung Thanh village.

We will now go through the workshop step-by-step to demonstrate how it can be carried out. The steps should be adapted to suit the needs of the particular community and planning purpose. Some of the activities can be changed for other activities and participatory methods or left out. The workshop normally takes two days, the first day is for raising awareness about the need to change management of the natural resources, dreaming about the future and co-creating a common vision of what the community wants for the future. The second day is for planning how to achieve the common vision and committing time and resources to the plan.

DAY 1

STEP 2. INTRODUCTION AND RAISING AWARENESS OF THE WATERSHED SITUATION

- The workshop can start with opening remarks from local authorities and project management.

- A brief introduction of the project to participants ensures that everybody has the necessary knowledge about the project.
- Introduce the objectives of the workshop and what the expectations are. Also talk about the principles of the project, for example that the focus is on poor, natural resource dependent people, inclusion of ethnic minorities, empowerment of especially women, and that the scale is the community or watershed area.
- To help participants have an overview of the situation in their community a short film about the natural resources and things happening around their community can be made by project staff in advance of the pilot workshops and shown to the participants.
- After the local movie, if time permits, you can show participants a short film about a watershed management program in a different location or country. Ask the participants to discuss what they thought after seeing their own and the other watershed area in the other location.

"Many people were happy to see their own faces during the video clip. We filmed a fisherman who threw a net into the river – it was very surprising for him to see himself in the clip and it made him very happy. We also filmed a lot of women carrying firewood from the forest, bringing children to the river or collecting water etc. People discussed the two movies very actively and they were surprised that in the movie from India the villagers didn't have very good

natural resources but they managed them well. They said that if the Indians could do it well, why not do like them. They also realise that their community had lost all the wildlife and the natural resources had been reduced remarkably," says Mr. Pham Kim Tan from the partner organisation TUSTA.

STEP 3. SITUATION ANALYSIS

- Ask people to discuss the current situation of natural resources in their area.
- Divide the participants into groups of 5-8 people each depending on location. People who come from the same village and adjacent villages form groups together.
- Give the groups a map of their commune so they can check if the map is still relevant, for example if the map shows correctly where there is forest and fields, streams and lakes, houses and schools etc. Information available from other activities, such as participatory rural assessment can be provided to improve the map.
- Start a discussion with the participants about their village today:

Discussion questions:

- Describe your community.
- What are the families like?
- What is the land and forest like?
- What do people do for a living?
- What are concerns or problems in your village?
- What would you like to see changed and why?
- What are good things that should not change?

Make sure the note taker is thorough! Accurate recording the discussions in each group is essential.

- Give the groups one hour to discuss. Ask each group to select a representative to present results of their discussion.

STEP 4. DRAWING A VISION OF THE FUTURE

"The most memorable thing about the workshop was when the facilitator from CARE asked the participants to close their eyes and imagine their village, their house, their families in 15-20 years. He let the participants dream freely and told them not to worry about time, resources, constraints etc – just dream. He asked them afterwards to draw the picture that was in their mind – it didn't matter how they drew – just to draw what was in their dream," says Mr. Pham Kim Tan from the partner organisation TUSTA.

- Explain what a vision is and discuss the timeframe for the vision. The number of years will depend on the situation. Perhaps the local government uses 5-year planning cycles. Maybe the community is participating in a 20-year forest management project. It may be more useful to imagine even further into the future.
- Request that participants relax, close their eyes and clear their minds. The facilitator starts them on an imaginary trip into the future. You can elaborate as much as possible to try to pull the participants into an imaginary state. Have fun but be careful! Do not attempt to tell them what they see in the future; that is their job.

Below is a possible script to start. The script is an example and should be adjusted based on the context:

Imagine that you have left the community. After 20 years without

BOX 7: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE VISIONING WORKSHOP

Objectives

- Thinking about an ideal future
- Understanding how people's expectations of the future within the community can be different
- Bringing together different people from the community and the local government to build a vision together
- Arriving at a consensus about a common vision – the vision statement
- Developing a draft plan for the community
- Products
- Visions of the future drawn by each participant at a given point in time.
- A vision statement synthesized from the drawings made by each participant to reflect the most important ideas identified and agreed upon by the group..
- A draft plan of activities in the watershed area and commune building upon the vision statement with identification of opportunities for watershed management and livelihood activities.

Time and materials

- Decision to have workshop: minimum one month in advance. Invitations sent: one week in advance. Preparation of the workshop venue: two days in advance. Workshop duration: two days.
- Maps and data about the community and its resources
- Movie made in the community if possible
- Drawing pads, flipchart, markers, masking tape, colour cards, colour pencils

Team and participants

- Two facilitators
- Two note takers (can be from the village)
- 30 to 70 participants

contact, you return to find that things have turned out well. You are walking around and observing the community. Describe (silently in your mind) how you know things are better:

- What do you see in your community after twenty years?
- What does the village look like?
- What are the houses like?
- What are people doing?
- What are the families, the children, the trees and animals like?
- What does the land around the community look like?
- How has the community changed: the houses, roads, water, and school?
- What do you notice about the forest, land, streams, and farms?
- What has changed?
- What has not changed?

After a few minutes of imagining, the participants open their eyes and draw the things that stood out most in their vision. 30 minutes is usually enough, but it can be longer to allow for people not familiar with this kind of exercise to get into their drawing and also to get some more details in the drawings. This step is best done without facilitation, allowing the participants to decide how they will complete the task.



- Place a map of the commune on a board and ask people to stick their drawing on the relevant spot on the map, for example if they have drawn the forest, place their drawing on the forest on the map. If the drawing has more elements then the participant can choose any relevant spot.
- The facilitator reviews the pictures and describes them. The simple ones are presented by the facilitator and the more complex drawings can be presented by the participants who drew them. Comparing these ideas, it becomes clear how similar or different everyone's visions are. Make sure the note taker captures the presentation.
- Ask the entire group to discuss and compare the visions. During this process, a note taker writes out a list of the ideas presented on a flipchart.

Discussion questions:

- *What seems to be most important in each vision?*
- *What do the visions have in common?*
- *What is different between them?*
- *What is most surprising to you?*

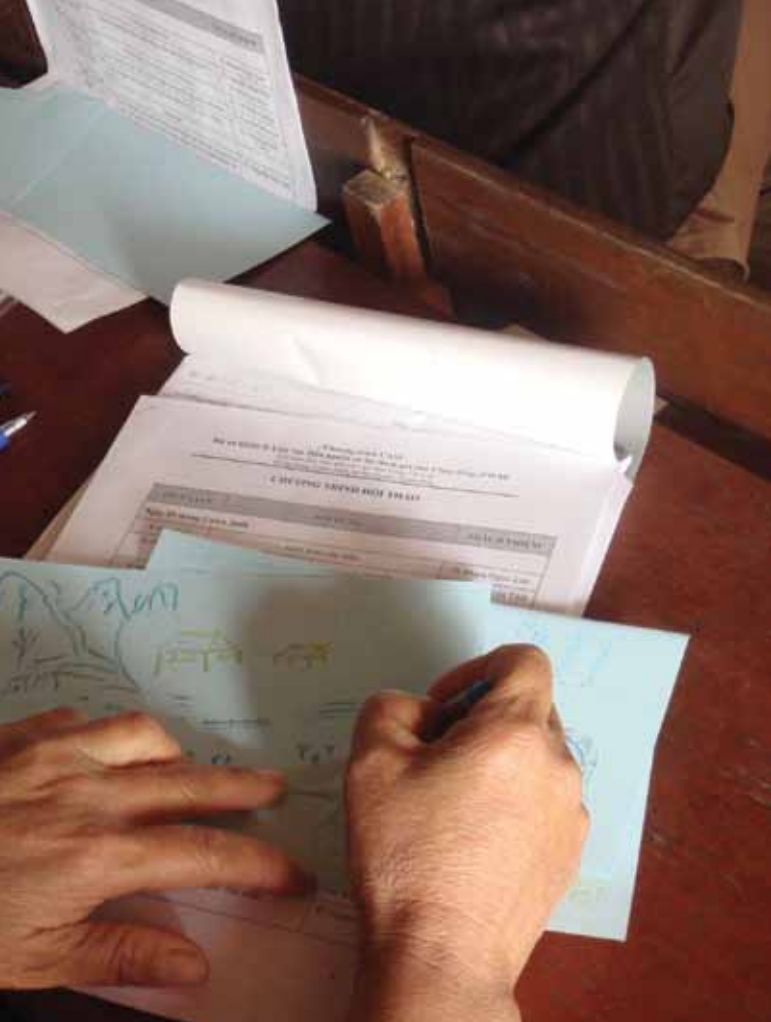
Day 1 of the workshop could end here to have enough time to synthesise dreams. Otherwise, the participants are asked to have a break while the facilitator uses 30 minutes or so to synthesise all the dreams and ideas together into a draft vision statement.

- Put draft vision statement on the screen so the participants can see it. Read it to them and ask if they have comments

and if the facilitator did it right. Confirm to participants that the document was based on the participants' visions and dreams, not on the facilitator's idea. The participants review and approve of their vision statement for their community.

When the visioning approach is new to project staff, organise a debriefing after the first day, because facilitators will want to discuss what happened and if there are things that need to be followed up. When new facilitators have been through the workshop a few times they will feel more confident and can take on the responsibility without support from expert facilitators.

"A woman drew a couple sitting on a hill with the sun shining above – she would like to have a happy future where she and her husband could climb up to the hill and look at their village. The dreams were very different – some were small and realistic, others were big dreams. Some of them just wanted to have a small bridge so the children could cross and get to school safely or they could bring the rice to their house easily. Others dreamt of city-like area with traffic lights and roads. Many people dreamt that their village would come back to the past when they had the forest and the animals and birds," says Mr. Ha Thanh Thuy, vice-chairperson of Luong Noi commune. Mr. Thuy was a member of the team that replicated the visioning workshop in the communes of Ba Thuoc district.



DAY 2

STEP 5: PLANNING FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VISION

Start with a sum-up of the vision statement to let participants remember the previous discussion and get into the tasks of the day.

- List the vision from the vision statement that links to the current status of the watershed areas.
- Divide the participants into groups of 5 to 8 people to discuss for their village area. Ask the participants to find themselves on the map and group with the people of neighbouring villages in their watershed area. Start a group discussion on how to move from the current to the future status by identifying solutions (in the form of discreet activities) and by developing a time frame for the watershed management plan.
- Each person receives several votes and can place a vote next to one or more of the ideas that are the most important to him or her. Count up the stars and rank the ideas. This activity requires that the participants share their ideas, they seek to understand the concerns and visions of the other participants, and they prioritize working towards reaching a consensus. It also gives an equal voice to all participants.
- District and CARE staff can initiate and guide the discussion. However, if the group is working well, there is no need to stay with the group because the people can talk more freely amongst themselves.

Discussion questions:

- *Are these the most important ideas for the community?*
- *What is missing?*
- *Is there anyone whose opinion is not included here?*
- *How can you use these ideas for planning?*
- *What will be the next steps that you will take with the ideas?*

Through the discussions in the groups the participants start to see link between the current context and the future. During this step some of the people may realise that their dream is way too big compared to the resources available. Participants also get more awareness about what the community, the project and the government has to do to achieve the vision.

Ask the participants to make a very detailed plan for their community and watershed area based on the ideas discussed. A *logical framework* or an alternative planning tool can be used to develop a watershed management plan in more detail. Lead in questions / considerations for establishing the link between the current context and future:

- How much forest they want to plant where and when. Who is planting the trees; Where the seedlings come from. Who will pay for the work. What is the need for new skills and training.
- How many livelihood models they want to carry out, e.g. beekeeping, cattle rearing, chicken or pigs raising, better maize, soybean, rice cultivation, intercropping and how to make compost, Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques etc. When and where they need the models, who is going to be training them, with what budget, who will be the contact person etc.
- How to manage their watershed and irrigation system, including what the responsibilities of the different villages in the watershed are, how they want to cooperate, what the exchanges are between different village in the upstream and downstream areas. This planning is taken further in development of watershed models; please see the section on achievements.
- How to build roads, bridges, schools etc. and how big or long, who to build it, where, when and with what budget this infrastructure is going to be built.
- At the end of the group discussions, the local authority staff can contribute with ideas in their areas of expertise. The aim is only to facilitate and support not to dominate discussions.
- After discussion in groups, the groups take turns to present the results of their discussion. During their presentation the facilitator will notice if the plan is too general and ask the group to provide more detail. The members of other groups are free to add and comment on the plans of the other groups.

Through this approach the community and watershed scale management plans are made very detailed and very relevant to the ideas of local people.



AFTER THE VISIONING WORKSHOP

STEP 6: FEEDBACK FROM THE WIDER COMMUNITY

After the participants have made the draft watershed management plans in the visioning workshop, they bring it back to the villages they are representing to get the feedback of the other villagers. At a village meeting, where everybody is invited including women and men, the plans can be discussed and more details supplemented or ideas added or deleted.

- The watershed management plan is presented by the community facilitator then villagers contribute their opinions to the plan and agree upon it.
- The village development plan is prepared based on the watershed management plan where sustainable land use models and livelihood models are prioritized for the purpose of supporting socio-economic development.
- Communities show their commitments to implement the watershed management plan to improve their living conditions by volunteering to activities.

47 village meetings were held in the six pilot communes and further 226 villages gave comments and feedback on the draft plans from the remaining 17 communes. Big changes were not needed because the plans reflected quite well the general dreams of the villagers.

SCALING UP

The pilot workshops and the following community meetings will provide valuable experience in how to conduct the visioning workshops and community meetings on a larger scale. If the project is to be implemented on a larger scale, setting up visioning teams of experienced facilitators who can train others might be an option. At least one facilitator on each team should have been through the whole visioning process.

INTEGRATION OF THE LONG TERM WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLANNING AND THE DISTRICT SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

"You know a good leader, because when they are gone, the people say they did it themselves" Lao Tzu, Tao master.

If the ambition is to integrate all the community and watershed management plans into a watershed management or district socio-economic plan, the draft plans should be approved at each administrative level. The village plans are approved by the villagers and gathered at the commune level for approval. Once approved here, the draft plans are sent to the district Planning and Finance Department. When the Planning and Finance Department has received all commune plans, the project management board can work with the Department to synthesise the draft commune watershed management plans into one draft watershed management plan for the district. When it is ready it is sent to different district departments for feedback. The project management board finalises the district plan together with the Department of Finance and Planning following the comments received. A conference can then be organised to present the visions of the communes to the leaders of the district. The draft district watershed management plan is approved by the Peoples' Committee as their official Socio-Economic Development Plan. Finally, the District Peoples' Committee can instruct the communes to base their activities on the watershed plans made.

"The visioning approach has shown that people think both about their immediate needs, for example to increase their income in the short term, one to five years ahead, but they think also about the long term sustainable production in 20 years time," says Mr. Cao Minh Nhan from the Health department.

*See for example CARE's publication of Farmer Field Schools - the CARE way for criteria on sustainable livelihood models and their implementation.

STEP 7: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATERSHED MANAGEMENT PLAN

Once a watershed management plan for the commune is developed the next step is to establish a management board at community level to implement and monitor activities developed in the plan. This step includes village meetings to determine how to operate a watershed management system based on existing organizations (if identified), the watershed management plan and the socio-economic development plan at all levels. All activities in the plan should be acceptable, feasible and sustainable in economic, social and environmental terms, both to the community and local authorities⁵. The final watershed management system is proposed to the local authorities for approval. The plan can include:

- Piloting and development of sustainable livelihood models such as: Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques (SALT), production of organic fertilizer, afforestation with appropriate tree species

- Piloting and establishment of interest groups such as: chicken raising, bee-keeping, bamboo generation, planting rattan and nursery gardens that help to improve livelihoods and protect the watershed area at the same time.
- Establishment of a community based watershed management system, including inter-village governance, expansion and repair of irrigation dams, building of canals to redistribute irrigation water to downstream villages and for protection of watershed forests and other resources.

STEP 8: MONITORING ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROCESS

The eighth step of the visioning approach is about monitoring achievements of the process. We will look at how the communities have changed and how they are proceeding into the future, following their vision statements and their plans. More details and a case study are presented in the following chapter to give examples of governance structures and community-based organisation achieved through the visioning process.

BOX 8: TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

In Ba Thuoc district, visioning workshop were conducted in six communes under the PWM project. At the time when the People's Committee decided to run the visioning process in the whole district, the project was coming to the end of the first phase and the deadline for presenting a new 5-year plan to the People's Council for approval was near, hence timing was crucial. The District People's Committee made a decision to establish a Visioning team to incorporate the watershed management vision planning into the SEDP. The team was headed by the president of the Peoples' Committee. Members of this team included heads of all departments, including health, forest protection, agriculture and rural development, education, district TV and radio... The co-director of the PWM project acted as the vice-director of the team.

The scope was to apply the visioning process in the 17 remaining communes of the district. Since the workload of organising 17 workshops was huge and the time was short, the Visioning team decided to establish a working group and they invited the sub-watershed management boards in the six pilot communes to be members of the working group. This working group was trained to carry out the visioning workshop and to apply the visioning process in planning. The Visioning team decided to let the working group pilot in one commune and they held a debriefing session after the pilot workshop. The working groups were divided into four smaller teams to conduct the visioning workshops in four or five communes. Each group was supported by CARE or partner staff or someone who had already been in a visioning workshop.

BOX 9: VISION STATEMENT FOR SUB-WATERSHED BAN CONG - TAN LAP

- We wish we would have a happy life.
- Participatory community-based watershed management system would be established and functioned.
- Our forests would grow verdantly, well-managed, exploited and protected sustainably.
- Wild animals would come back to our forests.
- The streams would have enough water all the year round and irrigation systems would be built and managed to supply enough water for agriculture and aquaculture.
- People would earn income from forests, agricultural products and livestock and aquaculture.
- Family members would have knowledge of animal health and raising techniques to be able to protect their animals on their own.
- Some eco-tourist areas would be built to generate more income for the villagers.
- Village level factories or enterprises would be built and run to create jobs and thus bring about more income.
- There would be no more poor families. Their meals would be improved. Villagers would have enough money to build a house themselves and live in happy homes.
- Village health care stations would be accessible for all people here.
- Schools would be built for all the children.
- Transportation system would be improved for people to travel back and forth and to transport goods and agro-forestry products.
- A buyer network would be constituted to collect agricultural produces from villagers to avoid middlemen dictating prices.
- The villagers would have enough capacity to be able to plan for their village development, and to host sharing and learning workshops with support of modern facilities.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE VISIONING APPROACH

We will now look at examples of achievements of the visioning approach, which is an important last step of the process. If the approach was successful, the participants will in cooperation have changed their watershed management for the better and have obtained better livelihoods and income generating activities that are sustainable in social, economical and environmental contexts. Involvement of all stakeholders, including the local government, can result in the successful inclusion of the visioning approach into the government's management of the communities and into the government's planning. We will discover what changes happened in Ba Thuoc district as an outcome of the visioning process being first piloted in six communes and later used as the planning tool for the Socio-Economic 5-year Development Plan of the district, the SEDP.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNING - SEDP

The watershed management plans based on the visioning workshops were approved by the People's Committee to function as the SEDP for 2011 to 2015. The most significant outcomes include:

- Incorporation of local knowledge and development objectives into the District 5-year plan, covering 23 communes, 226 villages, 22,405 households and a population of more than a 100,000 people. 5467 people and 70 staff of partner organisations have directly benefitted from PWM.
- Changes in the planning procedure to strengthen grassroots democracy and policy feedback, including the voices of ethnic minorities, women and poor people.
- The attitude and activities of the State officers, community based organisations and ethnic minorities showed that dis-

crimination decreased.

- Awareness of rights to fair access to natural resources increased within both the ethnic minorities and the local government as well as with women.
- Capacity to manage watershed activities has improved with the establishment of governance structures like watershed and sub-watershed management boards.
- Protection forest: maintenance and protection of more than 3800 ha is planned for the period 2011 to 2015. Production forest: replanting of more than 3300 ha is planned for 2011 to 2015.
- Land and forest allocation to households totalled 8283 ha for 2304 households.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MODELS

The key to the pilot models implemented by the PWM project is that they link forest and land use management to livelihoods and economic development through community watershed planning. The models to be chosen for implementation need to be socially, economically and environmentally sustainable to obtain the best result.

Two types of models have been carried out: the households' livelihood income generating activities and those related directly to watershed management models.





FACILITATION OF COMMUNITY INTEREST GROUPS AND ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The income generating activities are short-term models in the sense that they are able to provide the households with an income within a short period of time, generally a year or two. They can continue sustainably into the future. People were encouraged to select income generating activities compatible with the long term sustainability of the land use plans. The diversified livelihoods have helped to reduce food shortage. Some chose improved land use techniques like SALT for use on their own land or rattan and bamboo cultivation. Others were more interested in raising live-stock like chicken, pigs and cattle and received training in how to care for the animals, especially how to feed them without exhausting forest resources. Bio-secure pens for chicken to avoid disease, such as avian influenza, have been replicated in the whole district. Others again chose to improve their beekeeping skills. This occupation has resulted in the interest of farmers in setting up a col-laborative that can market and sell the honey and other bee

products for a reasonable price, with a standardised quality. In each village key farmers have been selected for further training and women are well represented.

The watershed management models work on a long-term time scale for example the time it takes a tree to reach a mature state for harvesting, generally 10 to 20 years. The models are also long term regarding the protection and regeneration of the natural resources, including water and soil.

"Pilot models show people good examples of the visioning approach carried out in practice. The pilot models should be supported from beginning to the end by staff of the commune and district to learn all the lessons. Local people often do not trust that something good will come out of the workshops, so it is the project management's job to prove that the visioning approach is more than just an idea. Our goal is to prove that is effective because of more participation. It also makes clear to the community that it is their responsibility to protect the forest upstream, because they know that planting forest will improve livelihoods in the long term. The irrigation dam creates a lot of benefit and that inspires people to work together. All models applied by the PWM project raises awareness about the natural resources and about the responsibility of the different partners to protect the natural resources. The local authorities understand better how to provide information and facilitate meetings. Local people understand that they need to stop cutting the trees and change their behaviour," says Mr. Ha Thanh Thuy, vice-chair-person of Luong Noi commune. Mr. Ha Thanh Thuy was a member of the team that replicated the visioning workshop in the communes of Ba Thuoc district.

DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICIPATORY WATERSHED MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION SYSTEM

The watershed management models are inspired by the concept of Payment for Ecosystem Services – exchange of labour and services between upstream and downstream villages; please see Box 3 about Payment for Ecosystem Services and the case study of the inter-commune watershed management model. All watershed management models have been identified through the visioning process. Two of them started as pilots in the first phase of the project, while

MAIN ACTIVITIES OF THE PWM PROJECT	
Watershed management models	Livelihood income generating models
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-village model start 2007 • Afforestation • Irrigation system improvement • SALT, organic fertiliser, intercropping 	Interest groups organised on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chicken raising • Beekeeping • Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques (SALT) • Organic fertiliser and composting • Maize • Soybean
Inter-commune model start 2009, see the case study	
Five new models start 2011	

another five will be carried out in the coming years. They do not have all the features shown in the case study but the concept of exchange of labour for ecosystem benefits is the same.

The first watershed management model in Ha Trung commune included four villages and more than 300 households. Through the visioning workshop their common dream was reflected and included an improved irrigation system and afforestation of barren land. The four villages agreed on a Payment for Environmental Services (PES) mechanism for sharing responsibility of protection as well as sharing benefits and risks between the upstream and downstream villages. They decided to set up a collaboration board with 17 members, including the heads of all villages, representatives of the communist party and agricultural extensionists. Now they have two meetings per year to regulate the irrigation system and to discuss maintenance and other issues, like cooperation between villages.

To support the watershed management system, trainings and awareness raising activities on natural resource management are conducted in cooperation with the forest ranger, for example forest fire prevention, rights and obligations of forest use. Women have taken on responsibility in the watershed management boards on equal terms with men.

The collaboration board sends people to help plant trees in the upstream village and the upstream village sends people to help build the irrigation dam. All four villages share the responsibility for forest protection. Furthermore, people were trained in organic fertiliser production which is used in Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques (SALT) as well as rattan and bamboo regeneration models and a nursery garden for acacia seedlings was constructed.

Afforestation was a key activity for the upper reaches of the wa-

tershed, which includes protection and production forest with the combination of indigenous trees. The downstream villagers supported the plantation in kind, expecting that with time increased forest cover will regulate water flow in the stream. The existing irrigation dam in the midstream village was repaired with help from the downstream villages and local materials to secure enough water for rice cultivation. The midstream village took responsibility for management and operation of the dam and irrigation, whereas the downstream villages pay a fee for this service.

RECLAIMING UNFERTILE LAND WITH SALT

Using the SALT model has become very popular in Ba Thuoc and numerous villages have applied the techniques with and without support from the PWM project.

As an example, in Thanh Lam some unfertile sloping hills were identified in the commune visioning workshop to be reclaimed by Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques (SALT). Until 15 years ago the people of the village tried to cultivate maize and cassava but the productivity was low, so they stopped. The hills were left to grow shrubs.

Now they have harvested the green leaves to make compost and have burned back the bushes. They have dug swales to capture water, topsoil and nutrients to keep the hills fertile and on the top they plant four different native species of trees in a mixed forest. Maize, soybean and peanut will be the main crops from the hills and later they can also harvest timber and non-timber products.

"There have been a lot of changes in the village since the start of the project. Many people use in their daily life what they have learnt from the meetings and workshops. I especially like the cross-visits to other projects, for example the bamboo restoration model



and forest management model. It helps me a lot to have seen the models when I talk to village people. In the beginning I didn't like the meeting, but then I understood that we were given the rod for fishing – not the fish!" says Mrs. Huong who is head of Women's Union in Luong Trung commune.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND THE VISIONING APPROACH

Women face particular difficulties from the combination of a heavy work load and lack of voice. In addition to most domestic tasks, usually including ensuring domestic water and fuel wood supplies, they provide 70% of farm labour. Despite increasing freedom for women to discuss with their husbands, men remain dominant in household and community decision-making.

Given that women are invited to join the meetings, the visioning approach allows women to visualise their dream for the future and encourages them to voice their ideas on equal terms with the men. Women are generally shy and not confident to present their opinions but as the visioning workshops focus on issues close to their daily life they are more confident to participate. Some participants expressed they felt safe to express themselves because they were encouraged to draw their vision first and then to talk based on their drawing.

"More women should be included; in my opinion 80% is better than 50%. Women take a lot more responsibility, they do the housework, take care of children, don't usually participate in non-essential social activities like the men and they are more active in economic activities," says Mr. Le Trung Luong from the Agricultural Extension Station.

"It was a surprise to me how women participated and behaved. Usually they are very shy but they started to speak more openly and confidently and they participated more freely than normal. This was about their own ideas and expectations and because they could draw their dreams it was easier for them to express them. There was a big difference in the drawings of men and women in the visioning approach. Men mostly draw macro things like factories and roads and sending their children to study in the US. Women drew smaller things that they need in their everyday life like irrigated fields, nice houses, small bridges for children to get to school and harvest to get to the house," says Mrs. Vo Thi Ly from Ba Thuoc Farmers' Union. In her job she now uses the visionary approach with the farmers when she needs to make a plan. She recommends focusing even more on women from ethnic groups, because it is hard to overcome the shyness they feel.



ADDED VALUE FROM THE VISIONING APPROACH

Other programs have also benefitted from the visioning approach, for example the Government's program 30A. Because visions and plans had already been developed and integrated into Socio-Economic Development Plans of the eight communes covered by the PWM project in Ba Thuoc, the program 30A based their activities on these plans. The plans included irrigation and transportation systems developed by the local people and based on their visions and needs that directly benefit more than 2000 households. The irrigation and road building projects are now underway.

- The program 30A also support training in agricultural subjects and these too were identified through the visioning process.
- The Government project 147 about forest management systems has helped local people to plant 500 ha of forest in 2010 which were identified through the visioning workshop in different communes.

"There were often problems with implementation before, because people didn't always like the plans imposed. If we didn't implement the plan we did not fulfil our responsibility, but if local people didn't want to do it, we could not force them. With the visioning approach people want to implement because it is their own ideas. In my commune I know that people highly appreciate this new approach that allows bottom-up planning," says Mr. Ha Thanh Thuy, vice-chairperson of Luong Noi commune .

CASE STUDY: THE INTER-COMMUNAL MODEL

Luong Noi-Ha Trung and Luong Ngoai-Luong Trung communes joined together in the visioning process as sub-watershed areas. In the visioning workshop and the Inter sub-watershed management board meeting, the participants recognised the potential of making a watershed management plan including two villages in Luong Trung and four villages in Luong Noi commune. The management plan consists of three major activities: strengthening the organisation between the six villages, building a permanent dam and planting forest in the upstream area to the dam.

A LITTLE HISTORY

The six villages already had some cooperation to maintain the dam. The dam was made of timber from the upland villages and soil. It would break every year in the flooding season and every year the villagers would rebuild it. They tried to convince the government to help them build a concrete dam but the government specialists

would not undertake this task because they assessed that the construction would not have sufficient foundation. When the locals brought forward the idea at the visioning workshop, the priority that emerged was to build a dam. Several livelihood groups were set up to improve income and food security such as chicken raising, beekeeping, making organic fertiliser and SALT.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT

Today the organisation around the new dam is constructed on the existing management system but with a more detailed plan of how to share the benefits and the work. The villages with 272 households all benefit and contribute work differently. A series of meetings were held to reach a final agreement on how many labour days each village should provide, how to run the dam, and how to distribute benefits. Usually the government has to compensate for lost land but in this case the local people also wanted to build the



dam. The locals voluntarily offered labour and land which reflects the sincere participation of the community.

Each commune is represented with five members to join the sub-watershed management boards: the commune leader and leaders from Women's Union, Farmers' Union, Agriculture and Youth Union. They have a monthly meeting to supervise the implementation of the management plan. Other villagers are also welcomed to join the meetings.

BENEFITS, SERVICES AND PAYMENTS

The first year the people in the model focussed on the irrigation scheme. CARE financed the majority of the materials and village people provided labour, wood and bamboo for the construction of the dam. They also set up a team of supervisors to control the building of the dam which was done partly with a private company.



In coming years they plan to concentrate on the afforestation of bare land. The National Target Program 147 of the Government supports the afforestation. The forest produces ecosystem services like timber, medicinal herbs, prevention of soil erosion and leaking of nutrients and better water flow.

The two upstream villages have forested areas and need help to patrol for forest fires and illegal logging. Before people would cut down the trees resulting in degradation of the environment through loss of wildlife and increased soil erosion and sedimentation of the irrigation system. This would also exacerbate disaster risk from flash flooding and draught.

In order to secure access to forest resources as well as a steady flow of water for irrigation, the forest had to be protected to re-grow. The villagers from the downstream villages now help to replant and protect the forest as a payment for a better water flow.

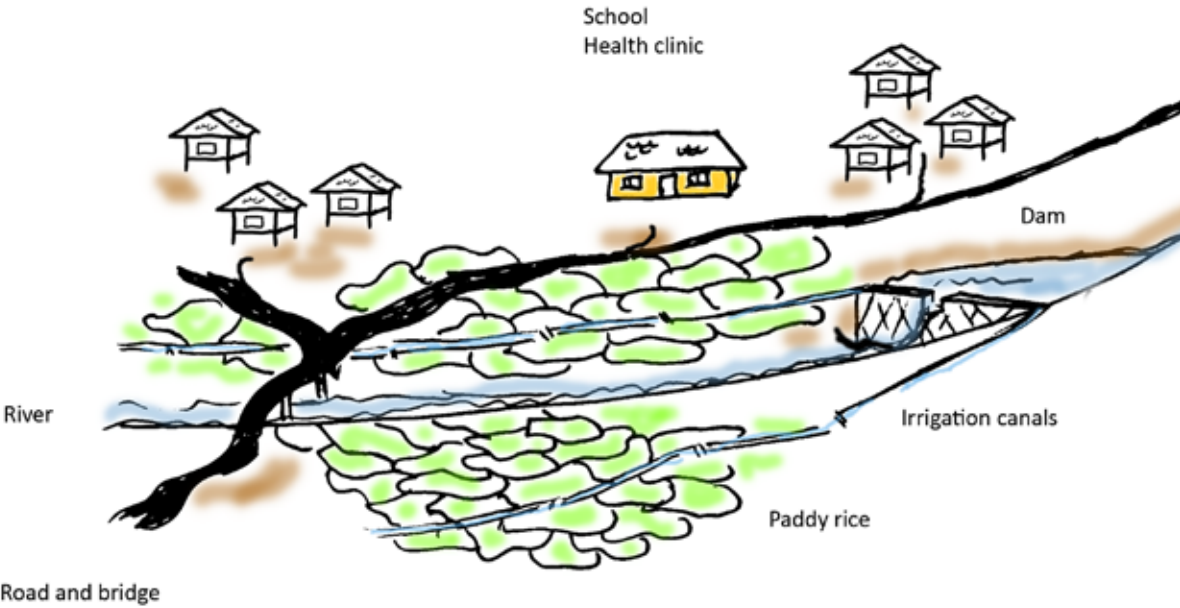
The watershed management plan provides water for 30 ha of irrigated fields and afforestation for about 200 ha of bare land. The mid-stream villages take care of the dam, have irrigation on 3 ha of land and provide labour for afforestation. The down-stream village have irrigation on 27 ha of land and provide labour and rice to the upstream villages.

Several livelihood models were also identified from the visioning workshop like beekeeping, pig and chicken raising, intercropping of maize and beans, better cultivation of soybeans and rice and Sloping Agriculture Land Techniques to prevent soil degradation, for example intercropping, making compost, digging swales and building stone lines.

Downstream villag	Midstream village	Upstream village
Benefits from ecosystem services		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased area for paddy cultivation • More reliable water flow • Reduced sedimentation in irrigation system • Increased access to forest resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More reliable water flow • Reduced sedimentation in irrigation system • Increased access to forest resources • Increased area for paddy cultivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to forest resources • Rice from downstream villages
Payments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour for forest protection and planting forest • Labour for SALT • Labour for building dam • Rice to upstream villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour for forest protection and planting forest • Labour for SALT • Maintenance of dam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour for forest protection and planting forest • Labour for SALT

Downstream village

Midstream village

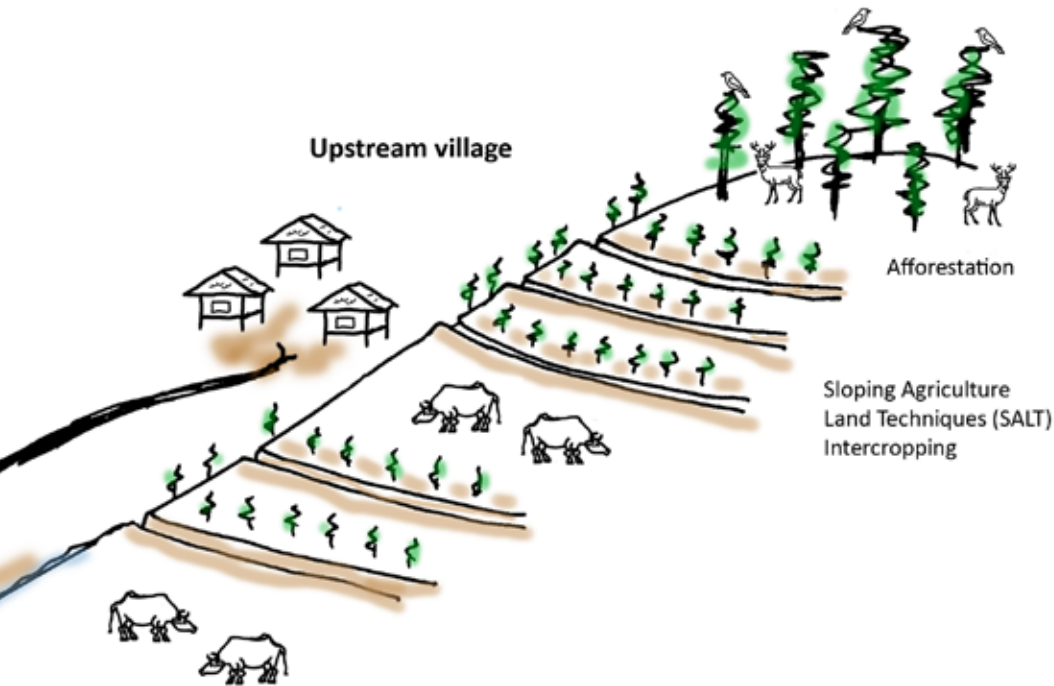


"We have more water after building the dam – before it was not enough for my field. We work more effectively together now to realise the dreams. It's a win-win situation: more forest, more water!" says Mrs. Bui Thi Lien from Trung Thanh village.

"My dream was for everybody to work together in solidarity. They killed wildlife, cut down trees and fought over water resources. Now we have built a dam and share the water and replanted some forest. Five days ago I saw a band of monkeys. That made me happy!" says Mr. Tuan from Man village.

"In my vision I wanted to restore the bamboo forest and have a clean water supply and construct the irrigation dam – these dreams have already been carried out. Now we can have two harvests per

year instead of one. We also save money and trees because of the new dam and even though we put in some labour and supervision for the new dam it is less work than before. We also learned about construction, about mixing cement and keeping an eye on the work. The dam is of good quality because we were supervising the constructors," says Mrs. Bui Thi Lan from Trung Thanh village.



WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE VISIONING APPROACH?

"After I was introduced to the visioning approach I understood that the essential in planning is to get the point of view of the local people. This was a process that left them free and able to express what they wanted to do. In most of the cases, the vision is closer to their own capacity and resources and therefore the plans are more feasible, relevant and sustainable than before," says Mr. Truong Van Lich, who used to work as head of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. He is now Deputy Party Secretary of District Party Committee in Ba Thuoc district and a member of the Project Management board.

TIPS TO GET STARTED

- Facilitators of the visioning process and commune staff should receive quality, focused training on visioning and participatory methods and if possible, assist with some visioning workshops before facilitating themselves. It is also an advantage if the facilitator has an understanding of different sectors such as agriculture, health and transport as it will make it easier to guide the discussions. The facilitator will sometimes need to set an example for discussion and be able to explain well to local people what the visioning is or else participants will not know what to draw. It is recommended that facilitators develop a visioning approach script using the examples mentioned earlier.
- When a community or management unit decides to use the visioning approach it is recommended to start with a pilot area, for example a village or watershed where there is enthusiasm and goodwill..
- The openness and support of the local authorities is critical – the commune level being the most critical.
- Make sure there is enough equipment available for every workshop (ie. paper, pens, projectors and computers).
- The visioning workshops take time and should not be rushed. With more thought and thoroughness the resultant planning will be better.
- When inviting people to join project activities it is important that women are invited when appropriate. Nb: If the invitation is addressed to 'the head of the household' it is likely that a man will generally come.
- When all pictures are drawn, group them together for example on health, education, agriculture and forestry. Then explain and list all ideas. Put them in chronological order according to what can be done now, what can be done in one year, what can be done in five years, etc. Then put all together in the plan.
- It takes about three months to reach agreement on the plan for a commune. For a village it takes about one month.

The plans should be revised with local people every year to update on needs and priorities. "We needed to finish the draft plan before the Communist Party congress, so we only had 15 days to work in 17 communes. We split the team up in four groups. For each commune we spent four or five days for the whole process. We did the preparation, the visioning workshop, the first draft of the plan. Then the villages representatives took the draft back to their village for feedback and we assisted them in all 226 villages. It was a lot

of work in a short time. I recommend to have more time next time we do this!," Mr. Cao Minh Nhan from the Health department.

LIMITATIONS OF THE VISIONING APPROACH

When trying a new approach, the communities and authorities are not aware of its effectiveness and therefore, it can be hard to mobilize their participation. Local government and communities alike are not familiar with participatory processes in which the result and plans are determined collectively and where land users are equally part of decision making. Therefore much awareness raising, confidence building and capacity is needed to handle input from all participants.

Many good visions and plans could not be realised because they lack financial resources. Often the district does not have enough resources and cannot implement the plan fully, so there is a need to balance request with capacity. Therefore some government staff felt that the timeline in the visioning approach should be limited to 5 to 10 years, rather than 15 to 20 years.

The potential impact of climate change is considered in the implementation process only, therefore watershed management plans did not cover climate change impact related activities. With greater proficiency in carrying out the workshop these impacts can be raised in the process.

Legal issues such as land use rights and community fees can prevent landscape and watershed based planning and benefits sharing. However with all relevant stakeholders participating in the visioning process, relevant measures to solving these issues are closer at hand.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Human resources are a limiting factor because the district government usually does not have enough staff specialised for facilitation. The most difficult is to synthesise all the different drawings and visions together into a feasible plan. It requires good knowledge of budgets, planning, computers, reading of maps etc. A very capable facilitator is needed for this step. A good facilitator is not necessarily the head of the department but rather someone who has the right attitude and a broad understanding of several sectors. Some facilitators are sharp and know how to ask the questions that welcome appropriate answers. Look to open a door to the creativity of participants and they become very attentive and active.

"Using the visioning approach makes planning more expensive: more qualified, knowledgeable and skilled human resources are needed as well as finances. However, benefit is bigger than the cost. Giving people a voice is the most important benefit because it is the only way for the management staff to collect peoples' ideas. They need the ideas because the goal of the socio-economic development plan is to change the life of local people to the better, so what the people want is the important. They also understand about planning - for example when they decided to build an irrigation canal: They have to put in the plan who will do it, where, how and with what money. They also understand how to make a survey, calculating the costs, how to get materials, carry out the work and supervise it.

Many local people have been involved in this process and now they know how to do it," says Mr. Cao Minh Nhan from the Health Department.

ADVANTAGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

"I've been involved in a lot of planning before – I was head of the planning department for the Health department in the province. The key difference between this approach and the ordinary planning is that this plan roots from the local people. The plans made by locals are easier to implement for the locals. They know best about their own natural resources, their land, their rivers, the climate and the mountains. If the plan reflects their hopes and their expectations for the future they will participate more effectively – in fact they have all the knowledge to make the plan effective. It is a very cost effective and efficient way of making relevant planning," says Mr. Cao Minh Nhan from the Health department.

- The visioning approach mobilizes the active participation of communities
- The watershed management systems are based on the communities' needs, therefore they have strong support and commitment from communities
- The models are developed as an integral parts of social economic development planning of the local communities
- The visions and the plans contribute to long term environmentally sustainable land use management as well as better living conditions
- The approach helps facilitate local communities to raise their voices (including poor ethnic women) in decision-making processes
- Local communities share responsibilities and benefits when they participate in the stages of planning
- Linkage between benefit sharing and responsibility ensure the sustainability of the model

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION OPPORTUNITIES

"Until recently the issue of climate change has not been taken seriously, but we are aware of the benefits of the forest cover. In planning we discuss how to increase forest coverage. It is obvious to see that good forest coverage reduces soil erosion and increases the flow of water in the rivers. In some areas where the forest covered the top of the hill, no damage happened to the village and fields, but in other areas with no trees, there is always flooding and winters are colder and summers hotter. The farmers don't have enough water for their paddy fields. In the 1980s and 1990s people used slash and burn techniques in agriculture and a lot of the forest was lost and thereby also the water preservation and reservoirs." Mr. Thang, officer of the Finance and Planning department of the district.

Using the visioning approach to plan for inclusive management of natural resources on a landscape scale can be an important step in acknowledging local voices in adaptation to climate change and in ensuring a more integrated approach to tackling people's vulnerability to climate change. Current and future risks may includes climatic risks such as flooding, extended drought periods or seasonal shifts. When analysed by the communities themselves

people can consider how they are vulnerable to those risks. By incorporating this in the visioning process communities have a chance to address climate change vulnerability in a coordinated way, recognising that effective climate change adaptation in many landscapes and watersheds usually depends on the efforts to manage natural resources sustainably.

CARE's approach to climate change adaptation includes building the resilience of individual, households, communities and societies based on local priorities. Climatic changes are likely to impact on agricultural production, husbandry, fishing and human health. Underlying causes of vulnerability to climate change such as the degradation of natural resources, un-equal access to resources because of ethnicity, gender or poverty, and lack of supportive policy environments are issues that become clearer through the visioning approach.

The visioning approach has the potential to capture local knowledge about vulnerability to climate change and to suggest measures for community based adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Political will and transparency in decision-making are key factors of the enabling environment to tackle underlying causes of vulnerability, building resilient livelihoods, developing local capacity and reducing the risk of disasters. Including a Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis in the visioning approach to capture local level observations (ie. changing seasons, drought and flood prone areas and times of the year and extreme hot and cold spells) is the next logical step forward.



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