

APPROVAL FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND FOREST CERTIFICATION

THE PRIME MINISTER

Pursuant to the Law on Organization of the Government dated 19 June 2015;

Pursuant to the Government's Resolution No. 71/NQ-CP of August 8, 2017, promulgating the Government's Program of Action for implementation of Directive No.13-CT/TW of January 12, 2017 of the Central Secretariat Party on enhancing Party leadership on forest protection and development;

At the proposal of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development,

DECIDES:

Article 1. To approve the Project on sustainable forest management and forest certification (below referred to as the Project) with the following contents:

1. Objectives & Orientation

a) Objectives

- To sustainably manage and utilize forest resources, biodiversity conservation, ecological environment protection and value of forest environmental services; to Promote forest certification in Vietnam in order to meet the requirements of the domestic and international markets for legal timber origin;
- To generate material sources from planted forest timber in forests applying sustainable management of forests, meeting at least 80% of the demand for production of export wooden furniture;
- To raise the value of planted timber, contributing to poverty reduction for forest workers and enhance added value for the forestry sector.

b) Orientation

- On sustainable forest management

All the management boards of protection forests, special-use forests, economic organizations and enterprises currently managing 7,216,889 ha of forests to complete the development and implementation of sustainable forest management.

- On certification of sustainable forest management

- + To recognize a variety of legal forest certificates of the world forest certification organizations in forest assessment and certification in Vietnam;
- + To form domestic organisation complied with professional requirements to carry out forest certification in accordance with the regulations of Vietnam and the world forest certification organizations;
- + To maintain the total area of certified forests of 235,000 ha (88,000 ha of natural forest, 147,000 ha of plantation forest);
- + For the period from 2018 to 2020: To develop and organize the certification for 300,000 ha of plantation and protection forests for organizations, households and protection forest management boards; For the period from 2020 to 2030: To develop and organize forest certifications for 1,000,000 ha of plantation and protection forest for organizations, households and protection forest management boards.

2. Tasks

a) Develop legal documents and guidelines for sustainable forest management including:

- Circular guiding the contents of the sustainable forest management plan; and procedures for developing, appraising and approving sustainable forest management plans and forest certification.

- Vietnam's standards for sustainable forest management in line with the standards of the world forest certification organizations.

- Criteria and professional requirements for the team of auditing and forest certification in Vietnam.

b) Develop a plan for sustainable forest management

- Organize training courses to guide the development of sustainable forest management plans for forestry companies, management boards of protection forest, special-use forest management boards and some forest owners as economic organizations managing 7,041,128 ha of forest.

- Organize appraisals of sustainable forest management plans for forest owners: The provincial Agriculture and Rural Development Departments shall appraise the forest owners in their respective provinces and the General Department of Forestry shall appraise forest owners belonging to ministries and central branches.

- Synthesize and develop data sets and maps on sustainable forest management and forest certification in each province, city and nationwide.

- Organize the inspection and assessment of results of sustainable forest management by forest owners.

c) Develop a sustainable forest management model(s) towards forest certification in some localities

- Purpose: The model(s) will serve as real time examples for field visit and capacity building for professional staff and forest owners. It will also be the site(s) for pilot assessment(s) of Vietnam's sustainable forest management criteria before being put in use.

- Content: To support forest owners in implementing the following contents: Develop sustainable forest management plans and submit them to line authorities for approval; to manage and use forests in accordance with sustainable forest management standards; to apply for certification procedures for sustainable forest management and chain linkage.

- Develop sustainable forest management models for: Forest owners who are households, individuals or groups of households and individuals associated with about 2,000 ha; The owners of a planted forest by a forestry company with an area of about 3,000 ha; rubber plantations, forest owners who are enterprises with an area of about 2,000 ha; forest owners undertaking sustainable forest management, linking the production chain with wood processing enterprises, with a scale of about 3,000 ha.

d) Training, capacity building and propaganda in forest protection management and forest certification:

- Organize training courses with the guidance of international and Vietnamese experts in areas of expertises and qualifications needed in sustainable forest management and forest certification; in development of national and international standards and standards for sustainable forest management; staffing and experts for forest certification bodies (CB).

Raise the awareness and capacity for forest management agencies, managers and enterprises and forest owners to develop a sustainable forest management plan.

- Establish a communication network on sustainable forest management and national and international forest certification, including the development of a website on sustainable forest management; a database on sustainable forest management.

- Disseminate and propagate on the mass media the significance, importance and activities of sustainable forest management; promote the national forest certification system to domestic and international associations, processing enterprises and exporters.

đ) Establishment of the national forest certification system

Establishment of national forest certification system including agencies and units: National Forest Certification Bureau/Body (NGB); consultancy organisations on forest certification and assessment (CB), and a number of relevant agencies to ensure that the implementation of sustainable forest certification practices in Vietnam align with the international forest certification system's regulations and practices..

3. Solutions to implement the Project

a) Regarding organization: The focal point for sustainable forest management and the national forest certification shall be the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

b) Background Mechanisms and policies

- Implement effectively the State policies approved by the Prime Minister in the Decision No. 38/2016/QĐ-TTg dated 14 September 2016 on forest protection and development policy and investment in infrastructure support, assignment of public interest to agricultural and forestry companies, and the Decision No. 886/QĐ-TTg dated 16 June 2017 of the Prime Minister on the Target Program on Sustainable Development of Forestry in the 2016-2020 period;
- Resources from forestry ODA projects with the objectives of promoting sustainable forest management and forest certification;
- Continue to study and formulate new mechanisms and favourable policies on credit and land policies in order to mobilize resources for the implementation of sustainable forest management and forest certification activities.

c) Financing

- The estimated budget for the implementation of the Project is about VND 1,269 billion, including: VND 707 billion for developing a sustainable forest management plan; VND 270 billion for forest certification and about VND 6 billion for membership fee and operating the forest certification system in the first two years.
- Funding source: State budget (about VND 301 billion from the non-business budget) to support forest certification according to the Decision No. 38/3016/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister in the period of 2016 - 2020; support in the membership fee for international forest certification organizations in the first two years of cooperation and mobilized from forest owners and socialized sources (about 968 billion VND).

d) On human resources development

- Strengthen cooperation with international organizations operating in Vietnam with strong experience to provide training and capacity building for a contingent of capable and qualified cadres and specialists who can meet international requirements for sustainable forest management and forest certification.
- Develop curriculum and compiling documents and training contents suitable to learners who are forestry managers at all levels, researchers and lecturers at research institutes, universities, and forest owners on the implementation of sustainable forest management.

đ / On information and propaganda

- Set up a propaganda network on sustainable forest management and forest certification in the country and abroad, including the development of a website on sustainable forest management and a database on sustainable forest management.
- Disseminate and propagate information on the rationale, importance and activities of sustainable forest management on the media.
- Promote the national forest certification system to domestic and international associations, processing and exporting enterprises.

4. Organization of implementation

a / The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- To take the prime responsibility for the development of guiding documents for localities to implement sustainable forest management and forest certification.
- To take the prime responsibility for and coordinate with related ministries and sectors and provincial People's Committees in organizing the implementation of the Project.
- To synthesize the annual plans and the central budget allocation plans to the ministries, sectors and localities to send to the Ministry of Finance consolidation.
- To take the prime responsibility for and coordinate with ministries and sectors in inspecting and supervising the implementation of the Project.
- To assign tasks of sustainable forest management and forest certification and international cooperation with the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) to a unit under the Ministry, in accordance with the decentralization of sustainable forest management and the forest certification in accordance with the law of Vietnam and the international treaties signed by Vietnam.
- To take the prime responsibility for communication activities to promote sustainable forest management and forest certification in various forms.

b) Ministry of Finance

- To take the prime responsibility for and coordinate with the Ministry of Planning and Investment in appraising current expenditure using the proposal prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for implementation of the Project.
- To allocate the membership fee of approximately 40,000 USD for the first two years of cooperation with the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC).

c / The Ministry of Science and Technology

To collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to promulgate standards for forest certification and assessment organizations in accordance with current national and international regulations.

d / The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

To collaborate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to organize activities to raise awareness and capacity building on biodiversity conservation in developing a sustainable forest management plan.

đ) People's Committees of provinces

- To take the prime responsibility for directing departments and sectoral branches to formulate sustainable forest management projects in their respective localities and send plans to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Finance for consolidation and budget allocation for implementation.
- To elaborate plans and approve projects, following priorities in the budget allocation from central budget support and mobilize balance from local budgets according to mechanisms and policies approved by the Prime Minister for implementation of the plans.
- To coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in organizing training activities, guiding forest owners to develop sustainable forest management projects.
- To coordinate information and dissemination activities on sustainable forest management and forest certification.

Article 2. This Decision takes effect from the date of signing.

Article 3. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the ministers, the heads of the ministerial-level agencies, the Chairmen of the Provincial People 's Committees and centrally-run cities and the related agencies and units shall bear the responsibility and the implementation of this Decision.

Recipients:

- Secretariat of the Party Central Committee;
- Prime Minister, Vice Prime Ministers;
- Ministries, ministerial-level agencies, governmental agencies;
- People's Councils, People's Committees of provinces and central-run cities;
- Central Office and Party committees;
- Office of the General Secretary;
- Office of the President;
- Office of the Congress;
- The Ethnic Council and committees of the National Assembly;
- Central bodies of mass organizations;
- Government Office: Minister, Vice Ministers, Prime Minister's Assistants, General Director of E-portal, Departments of Technology and Financing and Administration, Science-Education-Culture-Society, Legal, Home Affairs

**PP. PRIME MINISTER
VICE PRIME MINISTER**

Trinh Dinh Dung