

Harmonizing Poverty Reduction and Environmental Goals in Policy and Planning for Sustainable Development

1. Background

Vietnam has experienced rapid growth and significant poverty reduction over the last 20 years. This growth, however, has also increased environmental problems. Currently 90% of the poor still live in the rural areas and their main income depends heavily on natural resources. Moreover, 25 million people living in remote forested mountainous regions suffer from the most severe rates of poverty. To deal with these issues, the government and donors have implemented many programs and projects such as Program 135, Program 139, 661 etc, but most either focus only on environment or on economic goals without considering their relationships. Unless poverty reduction is considered in environmental policies and programs and vice versa, sustainable development cannot be achieved.



Photos from a peri-urban area of Hanoi (left) and midlands in northern VN (right)



2. Hypothesis and Objective

The hypothesis are:

Can we compromise between poverty reduction and environmental protection? Can the livelihoods of the poor be improved while the environment is protected?

The objective is to expand the knowledge base on Poverty – Environment Linkages (PEL) through conducting 10 case studies, reviews of national programmes and the development of policy and investment models.

3. Work Plan

The knowledge of PEL will be enhanced using a three steps process (Fig.1). It starts from (i) the combination of knowledge and perspectives of relevant stakeholders, including voice of the poor in Parts I and II, (ii) Continuing with more in-depth studies of the five focus thematic studies in Part III, and (iii) Concluding by proposing policy and investment models to be applied in the pilot provinces of Ha Tinh and Ha Tay provinces. The research is carried out during 2007.

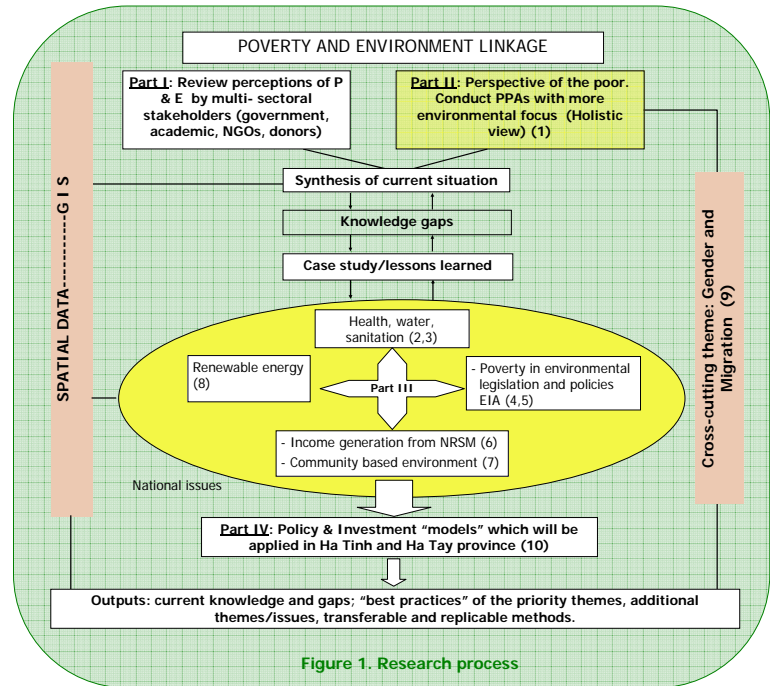


Figure 1. Research process

4. Study sites



Phu Tho, Thai Nguyen, Ha Tay (midland to lowland and peri-urban to urban contexts)

Ha Tinh, Thua Thien Hue, Quang Tri, Nghe An (upland, midland, lowland, rural coastal zone).

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