

CBAsia 2014 International workshop:  
Learning from the practice of consensus building  
and participatory planning in Asia

*Community Participation in Mangrove Forest  
Management in Vietnam*

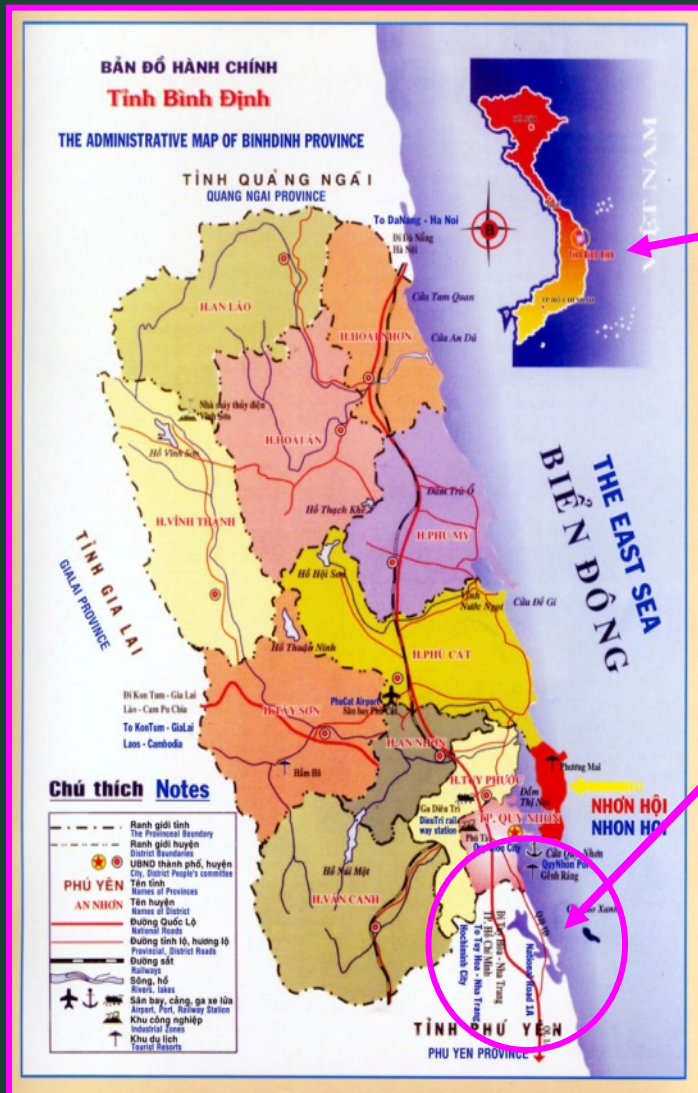
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University of Tokyo, Japan

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# Quy Nhon City and Thi Nai Lagoon



# Quy Nhon City of Binh Dinh Province



## Binh Dinh Province

- Area: 6,025 km<sup>2</sup> (2,326,3 sq miles)
- Coastal line: 134 km.
- 1 city and 10 districts
- Population: 1,510,000 (2012)

## Quy Nhon City

- ❖ Provincial city
- ❖ Area: 286 km<sup>2</sup> (110 sq miles)
- ❖ Coastal line: 42 km.
- ❖ 16 wards, 5 communes
- ❖ Population: 280,000 (2012)

# Mangrove forest in Thi Nai Lagoon

- Thi Nai lagoon: 5,000 hectares
- Importance of mangrove forests
  - serve as first buffer against extreme weather events from the sea
  - Provide livelihoods to approx. 60,000 people
- Loss of forest over the past 15-20 years due to
  - policies that encouraged conversion to aquaculture ponds for export oriented production
  - increased settlement and expansion of urban services such as roads, dikes, etc
- At present, about 70 hectares of mangrove forest left



# Rockefeller-funded Project on Ecosystem Services for Climate Resilience in Quy Nhon City

- **Objectives**
  - Restore 150 hectares of mangrove forest to reduce climate risks and protect low-lying shores
- **Key tasks include**
  - Site selection based on ecosystem assessment and consultation with communities (with experts from Institute of Oceanography in N.Trang)
  - Boundary marking
  - Organizing user groups
  - Reforestation
  - Negotiating and securing rights to mangrove and aquatic resource access, linked to reduced exploitation and protection of mangrove areas
- **Approaches**
  - Participatory management planning and co-management strategy (with experts from Research Centre for Resources and Rural Development-RECERD)

# Implemented activities

- Site selection
  - consultation meetings organized at commune by Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography (Nha Trang IO), participated by commune cadres and villagers
  - Nha Trang IO suggested places and species based on ecological conditions
  - villagers did not strongly support
    - pointed out that the mangroves in this area have historically been poor
    - suggested the challenges of protecting these areas, which are intensively used for clam harvesting as well as fishing
  - villagers requested alternative livelihoods and mechanism for forest protection and management

# Implemented activities

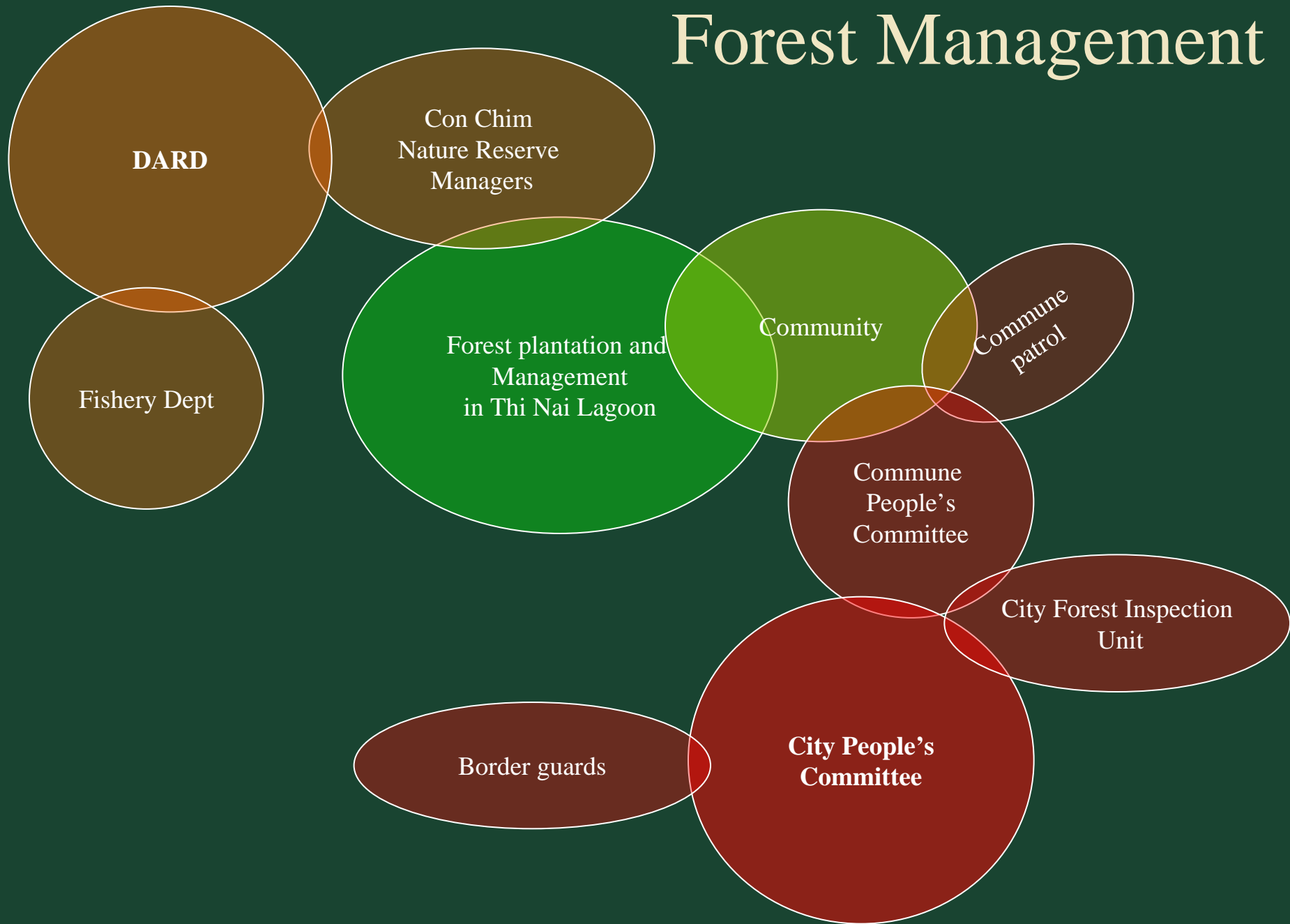
- Organization of contracted households (facilitated by Research Center for Resources and Rural Development - RECERD)
  - discussed selection criteria: commune government wanted mass organization to be in charge, villagers wanted to give responsibility to groups of households as they did not trust that any organization would be able to clarify responsibility among members.
  - strong dispute in selection criteria among 2 villages
  - RECERD asked the Fatherland to mediate the negotiation between the cadres and villagers.
  - final selection criteria: live nearest to the to-be-planted forest, poor (but have labor), female-headed, have aquaculture and particularly preferably have great sense of responsibility
  - selected households received contracts for plantation and protection activities during project life (3 years)

# Implemented activities

- Developed regulations for forest use and protection within communities (facilitated by RECERD)
  - unofficially refer to sharing the community's long-term benefits: reserving 30% of planned reforestation area for local households' fishery exploitation
  - Con Chim NR managers rejected as there was no government decisions and no precedent cases in the province to back up
  - household benefits are attached to the protection of their contracted area - not long term
  - the local people questioned what would happen with their benefits once management of mangrove forest is transferred to Con Chim Nature Reserve as planned. In that case, would the regulations be still valid to contracted households?



# Institutions engaged in Mangrove Forest Management



# Implemented activities

- Developed regulations for coordination in protection and management among related parties
  - Identified stakeholders involved in mangrove forest protection: DARD (Con Chim Nature Reserves, Fisheries Dept.), City People's Committee (Forest Inspectors, Border Guards), commune People's Committee (economic division, patrol team), contracted households
  - detailed responsibilities of stakeholders and mechanism for coordination in protection activities (e.g. patrol, solving violation cases...)
  - government organizations follow vertical, sectoral accountability structure
  - enforcement of regulations has to fit with the commune's agenda
  - commune PC is mandated and financed for forest management
  - ➔ commune PC in strong position to negotiate coordination terms

# Discussion

# Main motives

- The project has genuine interest in participatory processes
  - participatory approach with co-management principles has been used through out the project from proposal design to implementation, monitoring and evaluation
  - local people provide key inputs to resource management decision-making in collaboration with local government agencies and external experts: selecting site for plantation, selecting households to participate, coordinating protection
  - participatory management enhances quality and feasibility of mangrove restoration planning as it takes into account and incorporate local knowledge into resources planning

# Main objectives through participatory process

- The main objective is to build consensus among stakeholders on mangrove forest management.
  - The nature of consensus building in this project is more about negotiation and mediation for agreements on community-based forest management
  - RECERD mediates negotiation among stakeholders by draft regulations, facilitate discussion among parties...)
  - RECERD helps the households to draft the regulation of co-management to be used for negotiation, organizes and facilitates separate meetings to discuss articles in the regulations, and facilitates communication among management bodies and community households
  - RECERD has no stake in this issue so it plays neutral roles
  - community people engage in the consensus building for their rights to access to the mangroves after plantation



# Challenges/difficulties

- Establishing effective communication
  - community expects government institutions (DARD, people's committee...) to tell them what to do: species, forest zoning....
  - Government institutions do not have sufficient manpower and suitable mechanism to disseminate information
  - RECERD needs to facilitate discussion in both sides to provide feedbacks to management

# Challenges/difficulties

- Power imbalance
  - officials often separate community with management. Zoning for mangrove plantation does not involve community – they do their job and treat community as separate activities (as a component of a project) – not pre-requisite planning for the plantation
  - before plantation, contracts are prepared to sign with households but it is just finalizing the agreement. Contract is to inform the community what to do
  - community being patronized /told what to do – it maybe work for plantation activities but not for ecosystem protection. Local people have to see benefits
  - our project wants Con Chim, DARD, CCCO (local officials) to involve in promoting community participatory

# Challenges/difficulties

- Defining the problem/scope
  - at first only contracted households received benefits from planting and protecting newly planted forest
  - benefit-sharing issue was not reached an agreement among villagers
  - after two consultation meetings we learned that community benefits were more important than individual contracted households
  - we developed a mechanisms that can ensure a harmony between contracted households with un-contracted households (provide technical trainings and loans for un-contracted households that are exploiting aquaculture products in newly-planted forest area to raise oysters.

# Challenges/difficulties

- RECERD takes charge in mediation and provide training to empower local people
  - RECERD plays neutral role but has no power in negotiation
- ➔ It took long time to reach an agreement

# Challenge did not overcome

- the issue about benefit-sharing has not reached an agreement among the stakeholders.
  - not able to let contracted households benefit from plantation and protection like the model in Mekong Delta as they did not make investment.
  - this is the matter of land tenure policy: forest allocation to household not applied to mangroves (it does to upland forests)
  - will request Con Chim Nature Reserves managers to extend management terms to the (project) communities



# Opportunities

- The policy-making power (DARD, Con Chim Nature Reserves, Fisheries Dept, City and commune People's Committee....) is participating in the negotiation. Thus, the results of the negotiation will affect the decision.

# Opportunities

- There is strong interests/dynamics for consensus building
  - the provincial authority is mandated to restore mangrove forest to protect the city from floods and storms and prevent urban expansion towards the lagoon. Thus they are strongly concerned and supportive to measures that ensure for successful protection of planted forests.
  - restoration of mangroves will give them an opportunity to develop a new livelihoods – ecotourism with related services.
  - The policy on community forestry serves as strong foundation for community participatory planning in forest management.





Thank you





# Rockefeller-funded Project on Ecosystem Services for Climate Resilience in Quy Nhon City

- **Objectives**
  - Restore 150 hectares of mangrove forest to reduce climate risks and protect low-lying shores
- **Approach**
  - Participatory management planning and co-management strategy (with experts from Research Centre for Resources and Rural Development- RECERD) used through out 5 components:
    - 1) Ecosystem assessment, site selection and ecosystem criteria
    - 2) Community awareness raising and Community-Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)
    - 3) Resource planning and development of a co-management agreement
    - 4) Support for alternative livelihoods
    - 5) Mangrove reforestation