

**Cooperative Action Plan between Ha Tinh/Quang Binh (Vietnam) and  
Bolikhambxay/Khammouane (Lao PDR) to control illegal transboundary  
hunting, trading and transporting of wild fauna and flora  
*for the period*  
2005 - 2010**

**I. General introduction:**

The governments and people of the two countries of Lao PDR and Vietnam have a long-standing and concrete relationship. Numerous cooperative programs and agreements have been signed between the two countries, such as the Agreement on the Viet-Lao Border (1980); the Agreement on Economic, Cultural, Scientific and Technological Cooperation, signed January 15, 2002 in Vientiane; the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam) and the Ministry of Forestry (Lao PDR), signed April 26, 2002 in Hanoi; and the Working Memorandum between the Forest Protection Department (FPD) of Vietnam and Department of Forestry (DOF) of Lao PDR, signed July 2, 2004, among many others.

Ha Tinh and Quang Binh are the two provinces of Vietnam that share a border with the Nakai-Nam Theun National Protected Area (NNT), which lies in Bolikhambxay and Khammouane provinces of Lao PDR. NNT has been cited as having the highest biodiversity in Southeast Asia, with an abundance of endemic fauna and flora. NNT was established in 1993 under Prime Minister Decree 164, covering over 350,000 hectares. It is Lao PDR's largest and most diverse natural forest area, and has been identified by the Government of Lao PDR as the most important protected area in the country.

A complex set of habitats occurs in and around NNT, due a unique combination of ecological factors relating to altitude, latitude, soils and microclimates. Largely because of this, the area harbors a rich diversity of flora and fauna, with high numbers of endangered and endemic species. Notable among these species are Douc Langur, Clouded Leopard, Tiger and Asian Elephant. The presence of both Saola and Large-antlered Muntjac – two large mammal species until recently unknown to science – highlight the conservation importance of NNT.

After the mission of Vietnam to Lao PDR in July 2004, the two countries signed a memorandum in which both sides committed to strengthen transboundary cooperation to prevent the illegal exploitation, hunting, trade and transport of wild fauna and flora between NNT in Lao PDR and neighboring provinces in Vietnam. In order to effectively strengthen cooperation on the ground, the two states agreed to assign relevant agencies at the local level to develop a detailed and clear action plan.

This cooperative action plan between Ha Tinh/Quang Binh and Bolikhambxay/Khammouane provinces was developed by field level officers of the two countries and reviewed for approval by FPD (Vietnam) and DOF (Lao PDR). This plan will be implemented by relevant local agencies at the field level of the two countries, as part of and in addition to ongoing implementation of cooperative programmes signed between the provinces. This is the first time a cooperative joint action plan to control the transboundary wildlife trade at the field level has been signed, and thus this plan represents an important contribution to the protection of natural resources and biodiversity of Lao PDR and Vietnam. The plan also recognizes the importance of socio-economic development, and will therefore aim to improve the living conditions of people in border areas.

This action plan stands as a guiding document for managers at the grassroots level, strengthening cooperation and agreeing on actions necessary to combat the transboundary wildlife trade, promote natural resource management and biodiversity conservation in this area, and contribute to sustainable development for local people. Simultaneously, it helps relevant agencies of the provinces and central governments of both countries, as well as international organizations,

to identify conservation targets and priority areas for programme/project development. The action plan is, therefore, both a framework for current actions as well as for future needs.

## **Legal background for development of the action plan**

### *The Socialist Republic of Vietnam:*

- Law on Forest Protection and Development 1991
- Law on Environment Protection 1993
- Criminal Law 1999
- Decree No. 11/2002/ND-CP dated January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 on management of import-export and transit of wildlife.
- Decree no. 48/2002/ND-CP dated April 22<sup>nd</sup> 2002 issued by the Government amending the list of unique wild fauna and flora accompanied with Decree no. 18/HDBT dated January 17<sup>th</sup> 1992 of the Council of Ministers
- Management Strategy for Protected Area System in Vietnam to 2010
- National Action Plan to strengthen control of trade in wild fauna and flora to 2010

### *Lao PDR:*

- Forestry Law 01/96 NA, 11 October 1996
- Water Law 02/96 NA, 11 October 1996
- Land Law 04/03 NA, 21 October 2003
- Prime Minister's Decree 164/PM on the establishment of National Biodiversity Conservation Areas (1993)
- Prime Minister Decree 193/PM on the establishment of the Nakai-Nam Theun corridor, Nam Theun reservoir, and resettlement management, dated 29 December 2000
- Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Regulation 0360/AF on National Biodiversity Conservation Areas, Aquatic and Wildlife Management, dated 8 December 2003

In addition, both parties have signed the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and are committed to its effective implementation.

## **II. Objectives:**

The objectives of this plan are threefold:

1. Restrain and progressively stop the illegal hunting, trading and transporting of wild fauna and flora in the border area;
2. Develop linkages and strengthen cooperation among localities and relevant agencies of the four provinces;
3. Raise awareness on biodiversity conservation in general and wildlife trade in particular among communities in the border areas of the four provinces, while working to improve local livelihoods.

## **III. Principles:**

The parties to this action plan will implement the plan in accordance with the following guiding principles for cooperation:

- Respect the laws of each country, including national legislation, local regulations, and international law.
- Equal cooperation and mutual support in all activities.

- The plan is developed based on the spirit of cooperation, and follows the policies and legal documents of each country.

#### IV. Lead and coordinating agencies:

	<b>Vietnam</b>	<b>Lao PDR</b>
1. Steering Agencies	Provincial People's Committee, Forest Protection Department	Governor's Offices, Department of Forestry
2. Key Responsible Agencies	Forest Protection Departments of Quang Binh and Ha Tinh provinces	Provincial Offices of Agriculture and Forestry of Bolikhamxay and Khammouane
3. Coordinating Agencies	Border Army, Police, Customs, Market Management Boards, Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, District and Commune People's Committees, Management Boards for Special Use and Protection Forests.	Watershed Management and Protection Authority, Border Police, Customs Agencies, National Protected Areas
4. Supporting Agencies	International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations	International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations

#### Responsibilities of lead agencies

- Action plan development and annual workplans;
- Organize and chair meetings;
- Act as focal point for management and information exchange;
- Hold and lead patrols;
- Inter-sectoral control;
- Handle violations;
- Coordinate and implement awareness raising programs for local communities;
- Manage Forest Protection Stations and Forestry Teams in the border districts of Minh Hoa, Bo Trach, Huong Son, Huong Khe, and Vu Quang (Vietnam), and Boualapha, Nakai, and Khamkeut (Lao PDR) for direct transboundary collaboration;
- Guide and implement information exchange between Hin Namno NPA and Nakai-Nam Theun NPA (Lao PDR), and Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park and Vu Quang National Park (Vietnam), as well as between provincial protected areas;
- Develop proposals and seek funding for underfunded activities.

## V. Specific priority actions:

### Objective 1: Restrain and progressively stop the illegal hunting, trading and transporting of wild fauna and flora in the border area

No.	Action	Responsible agency in Lao PDR	Responsible agency in Vietnam	Timeframe
1.1	<i>Establish more control stations in the border areas where are sufficient and sensitive</i>  <i>Establish village forest protection teams</i>	<i>Governor's Offices, Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Offices (PAFOs), District Agriculture and Forestry Offices (DAFOs), WMPA</i>	<i>PPC approve, forest ranger submits proposal/ forest ranger provides consultation for communes in submitting to district for approval</i>	2005-2006
1.2.	<i>Revoke illegal guns and hunting equipment in border areas</i>	<i>Forestry Sections, Army and Police</i>	<i>District Army, Border Army and Police</i>	2005- 2006
1.3	<i>Rigorously control and strictly handle border violations</i>	<i>Forestry Sections of PAFO and DAFO, Village Forest Protection Teams, Border Police</i>	<i>Forest Protection Forces, Border Army, Police, Customs</i>	Continually
1.4	<i>Conduct training to increase capacity of enforcement staff (rangers, border police, commune and village protection team) on skills of identifying primary fauna and flora in trade (unique and common under CITES)</i>	<i>Forestry Section, WMPA, and Experts</i>	<i>Forest rangers and experts</i>	Annually
1.5	<i>Conduct training to increase enforcement capacity focused on violation investigation and treatment of confiscated wild fauna and flora</i>	<i>Forestry Section, WMPA, Experts</i>	<i>Forest Ranger and Border Guards</i>	2005
1.6	<i>Support finance and equipment for enforcement</i>	<i>Governor's Office, International organizations</i>	<i>Provinces and International donors</i>	2005- 2010
1.7	<i>Develop wildlife rescue centers</i>	<i>PAFOs and DAFOs submit to Department of Forestry</i>	<i>FPD submits to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development</i>	2006

**Objective 2: Develop linkages and strengthen cooperation among localities and relevant agencies of the four provinces**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action 2</b>	<b>Responsible Agency in Lao PDR</b>	<b>Responsible Agency in Vietnam</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
2.1	<i>Organize periodic meetings (alternate country annually)</i>	<i>Forestry Section</i>	<i>Forest Ranger</i>	<i>Annually</i>
2.2	<i>Conduct training to increase awareness for enforcement staff on both sides on expertise and legal issues</i>	<i>Forestry Section, WMPA</i>	<i>Forest Ranger</i>	<i>2005</i>
2.3	<i>Investigate and generally evaluate border biodiversity and identify threats</i>	<i>PAFO, DAFO, WMPA, NPA staff</i>	<i>Led by forest management boards and province</i>	<i>2006</i>
2.4	<i>Develop separate socio-economic development projects to improve local livelihoods in border areas</i>	<i>Province and International organizations</i>	<i>Province and International Organizations - Board of Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Affairs</i>	<i>2006</i>
2.5	<i>Provide and exchange information periodically and spontaneously for both chairing agencies</i>	<i>Forestry Section, NPA staff, DAFO</i>	<i>FPD</i>	<i>Monthly (via fax or telephone)</i>
2.6	<i>Develop new National Protected Areas, National Parks and Transboundary Heritage Sites</i>	<i>MAF, other concerned ministries, UNESCO</i>	<i>Provinces, UNESCO related ministries</i>	<i>2007-2010</i>

**Objective 3: Raise awareness on biodiversity conservation in general and wildlife trade in particular among communities in the border areas of the four provinces, while working to improve local livelihoods**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Action 3</b>	<b>Responsible agency in Lao PDR</b>	<b>Responsible agency in Vietnam</b>	<b>Time</b>
3.1	<i>Organize workshop on development of plan, projects and seek for assistance of international organizations (both technically and financially)</i>	<i>Province and International organizations</i>	<i>Province and International Organizations</i>	<i>2005 and annually</i>
3.2	<i>Develop forest protection agreement for border villages</i>	<i>Forestry Sections, WMPA, and villages submit to districts for approval</i>	<i>Forest rangers and communes-district approves</i>	<i>2005-2006</i>
3.3	<i>Publish documents and leaflets in local languages</i>	<i>Forestry Sections</i>	<i>Forest ranger</i>	<i>2005-2006</i>
3.4	<i>Hold village meetings to disseminate regulations and sign agreement on protecting forest and wild fauna and flora</i>	<i>Forestry Sections, WMPA, and Forest Management Units</i>	<i>Forest Rangers collaborates communes and forest management boards</i>	<i>2005-2006</i>
3.5	<i>Train and develop models of sustainable forest management for community people</i>	<i>Forestry Sections, NPA staff</i>	<i>Forest Ranger and authorities</i>	
3.6	<i>Monitor and evaluate plan implementation, effectiveness and carry out adjustment</i>	<i>DOF, Province, PAFO, DAFO, WMPA and donors</i>	<i>Province, Forest Rangers and Donors</i>	<i>Annually</i>
3.7	<i>Develop plan for the next period 2010-2015</i>	<i>DOF, provinces, PAFO, DAFO, WMPA, international and local organizations</i>	<i>FPD, Province, International and local organizations</i>	<i>2010</i>

**V. Implementation organization:**

- Sign the joint agreement;
- Develop draft plans to submit to FPD, PPC, PAFO, and DOF;
- Submit budgets;
- Develop regulation for working and coordinating;
- Implement plans.

**VI. Budget:**

- State budget;
- Available resources of localities and agencies;
- Funding of international and non-governmental organizations.

This document is made in two languages (Lao and Vietnamese) with equal legal value providing the foundation for relevant agencies and localities of the four provinces to implement conservation activities in the border area.

This cooperative action plan between Ha Tinh/Quang Binh and Bolikhamxay/Khammouane provinces to control illegal transboundary hunting, trading and transporting of wild fauna and flora was developed in Ha Tinh in November 2004, and is signed and implemented by both sides.

**Representative of Provincial Office of  
Agriculture and Forestry  
Bolikhamxay Province**

**Representative of Provincial Office of  
Agriculture and Forestry  
Khammouane Province**

**Representative of  
Ha Tinh Forest Protection Department**

**Representative of  
Quang Binh Forest Protection Department**

**Tran Khac Phu  
Director  
Ha Tinh Forest Protection Department**

**Bui Ngoc Tu  
Deputy Director  
Quang Binh Forest Protection Department**

We agree to adopt this Cooperative Action Plan between Ha Tinh/Quang Binh and Bolikhamxay/Khammouane provinces to control illegal transboundary hunting, trading and transporting of wild fauna and flora, and hereby authorize local agencies to carry out this plan.

**Representative of Department of  
Forestry - Lao PDR**

**Representative of Department of Forest  
Protection - Vietnam**

**Veunevang Bouttalath  
Deputy Director**

**Ha Cong Tuan  
Director General**