



# Practices and Policies on Food Security and Resources



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Vietnam

Non-Timber Forest Products  
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# Overview

## THE (WILD) FOOD SCENARIO IN THE ASIAN REGION AN OVERVIEW TO THE WILD FOODS, BIODIVERSITY AND LIVELIHOODS COUNTRY PAPERS

by Madhu Ramnath (NTFP-EP India; Wild Foods,  
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### INTRODUCTION

Across the indigenous and rural communities of Asia there exists a deep knowledge about uncultivated foods. In addition to this, the cultivation systems include many lesser-known crops, be they millets, various legumes, yams, and other tubers. Quite often, within these farms and fields, various freshwater snails, crab, and fish, as well as some edible plants too are harvested. Such uncultivated foods have supplemented the diets of the rural and indigenous communities for many generations; apart from the obvious nutritional values that they provide, many of these foods have cultural and sociological links to these societies, as we shall see from some of the case studies.

For the purposes of this paper, wild foods encompass all edible material that is found in the wild (both land and water) and includes leaves, flowers, fruit, seeds and stems, tubers and rhizomes, resins and gums, honey, fungi, as well as eggs, fish, and game.

Mainstream agriculture has, by emphasizing quantity over diversity and quality, delinked food production from nutrition and culture. It is almost as if food production has only one goal: the filling of stomachs! Identity and tradition, exchange, and reciprocation with food and foodways, have been left out. More importantly, wild foods and other traditional crops provide communities that grow (or collect) and consume them with several essential micronutrients necessary for health; in addition, the diversity of crops in a farm supports their food security when a certain crop fails, or if the monsoon is not as good as expected. National and international policies around food and food subsidies, and an official oversight about wild uncultivated foods in most rural diets, have led to a decline in the knowledge about wild foods in the region. In addition, the sole promotion of a skewed agricultural policy in Asian countries, has led to the expansion of monocultures, further reducing spaces where wild foods thrive.

In this series of country papers, it was found important to include all the foodways prevalent in the region. This includes rotational farming systems that focus

on several non-mainstream crops, as highlighted from case-studies from India; aquatic foods such as freshwater fish and crab from rice-fields; and forest foods, such as small game and insects, as from the various forest areas in the region. These case studies, and related fieldwork in Kalimantan and Sarawak, show the strength and the vibrancy of these food systems as they exist, and the various threats that they face while holding their own. The several forces that such food systems are up against—such as the loss of knowledge due to migration of the youth to urban centres, the intrusion of fast foods into remote indigenous areas, the expansion of palm oil and other monoculture plantations at the cost of forests, and other forces of modernity—are not easy to contend with. The modern diet is a massive trade-off: i.e., “the typical fast-food diet... now has only 40% of the wholeness of that of hunger-gatherers...”; ... changing from the hunter-gatherer diet to that of the agriculturalist was associated with a trade-off of quality for quantity, and with enormous changes in the incidence of specific diseases.” (Diamond, J., *The Third Chimpanzee*). One of the Non-Timber Forest Products – Exchange Programme (NTFP-EP)’s mandate is to revive the traditional and wild food systems among the communities it works with.

NTFP-EP’s work requires continuous updating of new food species and their status, the gaps in knowledge noticeable after workshops, and designing appropriate interventions to close them. Importantly, the link between wild foods and their nutritional and cultural values need to be also kept in mind. Other concerns, such as tenure security, climate change and biodiversity, and access to forests that have been declared Protected Areas, are equally important and will be a crucial part of the discussions as we progress in this field.

In 2020, the NTFP-EP Asia received grant support from the Swedish International Agricultural Initiative (SIANI) through its expert group program, enabling it to explore further the topic of wild foods and its links to tenure, biodiversity, livelihoods, and food security. Learning exchange and discussions were carried out through a series of focused dialogues participated in by actors from across sectors based in Sweden, Asia and beyond.

The following are some of the country highlights which will help us understand some of the overall similarities in trends, making it possible to draft appropriate interventions to some of the problems faced by indigenous and rural communities in accessing wild and traditional foods.

## Cambodia

Wild foods are collected from all landscapes in Cambodia and in the village documented for the case study (as well as in other forest villages), all the people harvest food from the wild. The knowledge about such foods is quite high, but there is a decline of available species due to deforestation (expansions of monocultures) as well as flooding and changes in river-flow due to hydropower dams. Rotational farming practices, though decreasing, are still being practiced, as in the case of the Kreung in Chuy Village. Many people who practice rotational farming often do so at the edge of their settlements where they gather insects, various greens (including flowers and flower-buds), mushrooms, fruit, and stems for consumption as well as for sale. In many parts of Cambodia, the indigenous people gather 'payab' leaves (*Gnetum* spp.), a local delicacy as well as an important item for sale into neighbouring Vietnam. Rattan is gathered and used as food as well as for handicraft, as it is in most parts of Southeast Asia.

## Indonesia

The ironic fact about the Indonesian food situation is the emphasis on rice and, more recently, wheat. Both these food crops were and are imported into the country in large quantities, despite there being other staple foods of the people. Sago has been predominantly harvested from the wild in the past (as in Kalimantan), and cultivated (as in Papua); there has been an array of forest and marine aquatic foods that have been a part of the people's traditional diets for centuries. These have included ferns, fish, a vast array of small game, wild boar, and sago, the latter two being a staple among the deep forest nomadic Punan.

Indonesia is one of the countries facing a huge challenge in terms of malnutrition which has become worse during the pandemic. Media reports confirm that thousands of families suffered from hunger in Jakarta, Depok, Bogor, Bandung, Medan, Muara Enim, Batam, Pekanbaru, Maluku, Bengkalis, and Polewali Mandar; the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) data shows that food export is also increasing every year. The export of fruits in 2019 was the highest in recent years (USD 1.5 billion), double the amount in 2015. However, in 2018, Indonesia imported 9.23 million tons of wheat, 4.6 million tons of sugar, 2.5 million tons of salt, and 2.4 million tons of soy. Meanwhile for rice, dependence on imports is very high, shooting up to one million tons annually at present from a figure of 990 tons in the period 1980–99. It is the primary cause of making Indonesia vulnerable to food security.

The displacement of traditional foods by rice and wheat has led to these being cultivated through subsidies even in places where they are not suitable, leading to clearing of new forest areas

and the extraction or pumping of groundwater, both detrimental to the larger ecology of the region. The country has also been made vulnerable as they depend largely on imports; this situation was accentuated during the pandemic period. An additional factor with the change in the food system is that the knowledge about traditional and wild foods is being lost; rice and noodles and various fast foods, all wrapped in layers of plastic, have invaded the indigenous territories.

## India

In India, cultivation and food collection occur in all landscapes and rotational farming systems, practiced by various indigenous groups in the central and the northeast parts of the country, provide a diversity of food crops. However, most government policies concerning food, with the aim of providing food security to the population, focus on the quantity of cereals distributed. In fact, the subsidised food provided by the state covers 75% of the rural, and 50% of the urban households. What is missing is that the Food Security Act has no mention of wild and uncultivated foods that supplement the diets of most rural peoples.

Much of the present-day situation regarding food systems, both mainstream and traditional, can be traced to the several decades of Green Revolution driven policies. Over these decades many mainstream foods and food patterns—rice- and wheat-based—displaced and overwhelmed traditional diets. The subsidized food distribution system as well as the compulsory education drive, which kept children away from homes and in school hostels, have been deciding factors in changing the way Indians as a people view food. Overall, one may say that diets have become more uniform across the country, also thanks to the intrusion and acceptance of fast foods. Unfortunately, many traditional foods and food systems have fallen by the wayside.

Many commercial crops, rice, sugarcane, wheat and, more recently, palm oil, have been encouraged. These ventures, many like palm oil supported by state subsidies, have drastically changed the landscape, even encroaching into the commons formerly utilized by marginalized or landless peoples to graze cattle, or to harvest various food plants. Simultaneously, Protected Areas (PAs) across the country have increased, denying indigenous peoples the access to harvest wild foods or non-timber forest produce that are used for their livelihoods. The latter move, of declaring PAs, has continued despite the assurance of tenure rights through the passing of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, a legislation meant to guarantee land rights to the indigenous and other forest dwellers in the country.

There is an overall decline in the knowledge and use of uncultivated foods in India. This is often due to the lack of access to spaces that were earlier accessible (now fenced off as protected areas, or privatized as plantations, etc.) or for various other reasons associated with modernity (migrating youth, fast foods, modern education that derides wild foods, etc.). These trends in changing diets are reflected in health. Female obesity in the country is 21% while male obesity is 19%; anemia among women and children is 50%, and 11.8% of the people suffer from diabetes.

### **Philippines**

Though field work was undertaken among the Kankana-ey of Sagada, Mountain Province and of the Higaunon in Malitbog, Bukidnon, the work also analyzed policies that impact the state of wild foods found in indigenous communities.

From the data gathered from the field as well as relevant literature it was clear that, as in other countries indigenous peoples have an inherent and intricate relationship with nature. Wild foods are used beyond subsistence alone; they are also used for their medicinal purposes and for their cultural and spiritual values. Knowing the importance of the 'wild' in their day-to-day lives, indigenous communities have developed resource management systems, practices and customary laws that have kept the forests pristine and intact.

Another key finding is that indigenous women and youth are crucial actors in sustaining wild foods and the overall traditional resource management systems. As community nurturers, indigenous women hold key roles in food and health systems. Meanwhile, the youth are expected to carry on the cultural practices which includes the sustainable use and management of wild foods. While migration for education and work significantly affects intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge, indigenous communities are exploring means to reintegrate the youth back to the community. One such example of this is the Higaunon's panlaoy, a traditional forest walk that enables youth to learn from elders about the biodiversity in their ancestral domains, including the wild foods and herbal plants found inside their conserved forests.

The review of legal frameworks relevant to wild foods and indigenous communities revealed that the policies meant to provide IPs protection are in place (e.g., Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997 (IPRA/Republic Act 8371), Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act (ENIPAS/Republic Act 11038) but do not materialize well on the ground. The FPIC process remains plagued by corruption, deforestation and plunder of natural resources remains unabated, and sustainable traditional resource rights remains curtailed and criminalized.

In addition, many indigenous communities face land use conversion due to business expansion and the encroachment of government projects that violate their right to self-determination. Communities also grapple with challenges such as tourism and the bad farming practices of non-indigenous peoples. Even with this seemingly bleak backdrop, however, indigenous communities maintain a positive outlook as they continue to assert their rights and secure their lands to maintain life in their territories.

### **Vietnam**

In Vietnam, 'wild foods' as a term has hardly found usage, even in official circles. The management of "wild foods" deals with the plants, animals, and fungi, and, at times, their relationship with their habitats and the ecosystem. However, all studies completely leave out the communities that use these foods and are closely connected to them. These communities are often the ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples who have been living in the forest areas for generations, and relying on these resources, especially for food. However, their community rights and benefits are not always included into the overall development and conservation plans of the state. Without an inclusive agenda that also cares for the indigenous people and local communities (IPLCs), their settlements will soon disappear or be replaced by the common modern forms of urban areas, causing the loss of their traditions and knowledge. This might prove to be a vital flaw in the process of sustainable development in the long term for the forest areas. NTFP Asia's work is therefore to find possible solutions by first trying to establish a comprehensive framework for inclusive wild food management that can not only cover all related aspects, but also care for all the involved parties, including the IPLCs.

Wild food has always been an important source of food for certain communities and populations, especially the vulnerable ones in forest, mountainous, or rural areas where agriculture is difficult or not allowed to develop. In times of economic difficulties, it can greatly contribute to the temporary alleviation of food scarcity. Products of wild food could also be a source of income for native and local people, mitigating the burden of poverty. Wild food plays an irreplaceable role in traditional spiritual or recreational occasions, events, or festivals of most native communities. This requires the local knowledge on how to find, gather, process, use, and preserve wild food, as well as how to organize these events. It is felt that only when wild foods are legally recognized that further actions to manage and develop it can be taken. Moreover, a legal framework on wild food, together with relevant policies, can practically help guide the implementation of effective wild food governance, especially with the inclusion of local communities and native people.

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This publication presents perspectives and cases from Vietnam. It is part of the series of country papers produced by dialogue partners of the SIANI Expert Group Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihoods Network. Other countries in the series include Cambodia, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

The present paper does not attempt to provide a comprehensive review of the state of wild foods in Vietnam. Rather, it presents a snapshot of the situation of wild foods in the country, illustrated through case studies and review of available literature, and offers ideas on addressing challenges and seizing possible opportunities.

Apart from this paper, the group also produced a policy brief and discussion paper on sustaining wild food practice which highlights the key messages and insights from the dialogues and interventions of the WFBL network from 2020–2021. It is recommended that you pair the reading of this country paper with the policy and practice briefs to learn more about the wild food scenario in the Asian region.

It is hoped that the publications in the series contribute to available literature on the role of IPLCs and forests in ensuring a planet that is healthy, safe, and secure for all.

## ABOUT THE WILD FOODS, BIODIVERSITY AND LIVELIHOODS (WFBL) NETWORK, SIANI EXPERT GROUP AND NTFP-EP

### WFBL Network SIANI Expert Group

The Wild Foods, Biodiversity and Livelihood (WFBL) Network is an Expert Group supported by the Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI). The group is composed of individuals and organizations from multiple sectors, tied together by a common interest to consolidate knowledge about wild foods in Asia and its links to food security, poverty reduction and sustainable forest management. The network is convened by the NTFP-EP.

The group aims to consolidate traditional ecological knowledge about wild foods in Asia and bridge it with the relevant policy arenas to ensure wise, inclusive, and impactful decision making in the areas of food security, poverty reduction and sustainable forest management.

With support from SIANI, the group has facilitated and convened dialogues and knowledge-sharing activities at the regional level, engaging national and regional representatives from the forest and indigenous communities, government, science, civil society, and development agencies, creating an enabling environment for forest communities and indigenous peoples in Asia, going beyond conservation and expanding the understanding of the value of forests, especially wild foods, and traditional ecological knowledge and systems. Implementation of the activities ran from 2020–2021.

Learn more about the expert group by visiting [siani.se](http://siani.se) and [wildfoodsasia.com](http://wildfoodsasia.com).

### NTFP-EP

NTFP-EP stands as a diverse and collaborative network of over 100 NGOs and CBOs who all work with forest-based communities to strengthen their capacity in the sustainable management of natural resources in Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

Starting out in 1998 as an informal group of practitioners working in local initiatives in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Vietnam and the Philippines, the group recognized the potential benefits of sharing experiences and pooling expertise. In September 2003, NTFP-EP was registered as a non-profit organization based in Manila, Philippines.

At present, NTFP-EP serves as a platform for information and knowledge exchange of appropriate resource management and forest-based livelihood techniques and experiences. It is present in six (6) countries, particularly Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

The network provides technical support and training, assistance in strategy formulation, documentation of best practices and success stories, mobilization of resources, advocacy for local initiatives, and lobbying efforts for enabling policies.

NTFP-EP work is focused on the following thematic outcomes: community-based conservation, indigenous food and health, tenure rights and governance, and sustainable community livelihoods, culture, youth engagement and empowerment, and gender equal community agency and voice.



# List of Abbreviations

CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DoH	Department of Health
DoNRE	Department of Natural Resources and Environment
DoST	Department of Science and Technology
ICCA	Indigenous and Community Conserved Area
IPLCs	Indigenous Peoples Local Communities
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoNRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
MoST	Ministry of Science and Technology
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Product
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation
VASI	Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands
VEA	Vietnam Environment Administration
VMHA	Vietnam Meteorological and Hydrological Administration
VAF	Vietnam Administration of Forestry
WFP	Wild Food Plant

# Executive Summary



In Vietnam, the concept of “wild food” is still rather new, not only to the public but also to the scientific community and the governmental bodies. Although several small aspects related to wild plants, animals, and fungi are regulated across a wide range of legal documents in various fields, at different levels, there has not yet been a comprehensive framework that identifies, defines, and regulates all these aspects. Therefore, the management of wild foods is still unclear and very inefficient.

Moreover, the management of wild foods here only deals with plants, animals, and fungi, and, at times, also their relationship with their habitats and the ecosystem, and almost completely leaves out the people, which are also a closely connected part to all of them. These are often indigenous peoples who have been living in the forests for generations and rely on resources from the forest, especially food, for their living. However, their rights and benefits are not always included in development and conservation plans. Without an inclusive agenda that also cares for the indigenous people local communities (IPLCs), their settlements will soon disappear or be replaced

by urban areas, causing the loss of their traditions and knowledge.

These might prove to be vital flaws in the process of sustainable development in the long term for the forest areas. This paper, thus, seeks to find a possible solution to that flaw by first trying to establish a comprehensive framework for inclusive wild food management that can not only cover all related aspects, but also care for all the involved parties, including the IPLCs.

In order to achieve that, the paper looks into relevant existing research studies, protocols of some IPLCs, and the policies of the government (national, provincial, and communal). This is to try and define all the necessary concepts, scopes, their relationship with the real world, from globally to locally, the status of legal documents related to wild foods in Vietnam, challenges and opportunities, as well as the outlook for wild foods in Vietnam now and in the future. Systematic review, expert interviews, group discussions, and thematic analyses are the main methods used in this paper.

# Introduction

## WHAT IS WILD FOOD?

Since the late 19th century, the term 'wild food' started to appear in various scientific research papers as scientists began to look into native tribes around the world as well as the food security that directly linked to their existence. Melvin [1], Tylor [2] and Starr [3] were among the first researchers who used the term in their work. However, *wild food* was not the main subject in these studies. And from the late 20th century, the term began to be used more and more frequently in the works of international nutritionists and botanists like Morton [4] [5], Lee [6], Berkes & Farkas [7], and many others. Nevertheless, the term was still used in its common sense and no scientific definition had been assigned to it.

One of the earliest descriptions of *wild food* that describes the broadest sense of the term seems to lie in the work of Ichikawa [8], where he did mention "wild game, plants, and honey," "nuts and roots," and "edible mushrooms." Nowadays, although there are no all-round definition for 'wild food' that is universally accepted by all concerned communities and parties, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) did provide the concept of the "wild plants and animals" in the "forests and woodlands" [9]. In an attempt to define in more details of what wild food plants are, Söukand & Kalle [10] mentioned the characteristics of "without secondary disturbance," "neither managed nor cultivated," or "without particular manipulation." Unfortunately, these only apply to plants and left out animals. In fact, these characteristics could also be applied for wild animals as well. Fungi, in addition, were also considered wild foods as well, and have made their appearance in the works of Boa [11], Shunko & Vogl [12], Kang et al. [13], Schulp et al. [14].

In Vietnam, the term 'wild food' is still unclearly defined, however, it is often commonly accepted to comprise all the 'edible plants, animals, and fungi in the wild.' As this is a relatively new concept in scientific terms, this definition will be employed for the purpose of this paper.

## CATEGORIES OF WILD FOOD

Thanks to the diversity of natural landscapes, climates, and habitats, Vietnam is home to "more than 13,200

floral species and about 10,000 fauna species" in the terrestrial ecosystems, "more than 3,000 aquatic creatures" in the interior wetlands, as well as "more than 11,000 sea creatures" in the marine ecosystems [15, p. 3]. Although in a more recent assessment of Sun Mountain Intl. and the Cadmus Group, Inc. [16, p. 40], the numbers of species are a little different, but both documents recorded over 300 species of mammals, more than 800 of birds, nearly 300 of reptiles, around 160 of amphibians, around 900 of fresh water fish, more than 2,000 of salt water fish<sup>1</sup>, and around 13,500 of plants.

Within this paper, wild foods would be considered to consist of three main categories: plants, animals, and fungi. Some edible by-products like honey or tree gum will be in the same category as their producing bodies (bees in animals, or trees in plants).

### A. Wild Plants

According to Krishnamurthy [17], there are about 7,000 edible species of plants, in which, 3,000 are widely considered as food sources for humans. Only around 200 species have been domesticated, and the rest are usually found in the wild. In Vietnam, 11,000 species of vascular plants have been identified [15, p. 12]. The total number of wild edible species of plants in Vietnam has yet to be specified. However, many research studies conducted in the national parks, nature reserves, and protected areas in Vietnam indicated that the potential for the wild plants to be used as food is high. In protected areas, access to harvest wild foods is allowed, although the amount is very limited and mostly just for domestic uses and not for any possible commercial purposes. The research also show that local communities can harvest the wild plants for home use, but they have also illegally used these for commercial purposes..

### B. Wild Animals

Of the nearly 2,500 known terrestrial animal species in Vietnam, most are in the wilderness. Over 400 species of wild animals in Vietnam have been listed in the Red Book [18, p. 14]. Their edibility is not clear but a lot of animal trafficking for meat indicate that they are potential sources of food.

<sup>1</sup>In MoNRE Report only



### C. Wild Fungi

For a long time, fungi were considered part of the plant kingdom. However, since scientists discovered that they are more closely related to animals, but also have unique characteristics that could form their own separate category, they are now in a kingdom of their own. It is estimated that there might be up to 2.2 to 3.8 million species of fungi, or even more, in the world. Among these only around 120,000 species are commonly accepted. In Vietnam, the number of fungi species is not specified, but the number of moss and big fungi species together sums up to about 2,400 [15, p. 12].

The indexing and categorization of wild foods in Vietnam is currently facing great difficulties due to lack of sufficient awareness as well as effective methodologies and mechanisms to scan, map, and monitor them. Apart from further scientific research studies to be conducted soon, a dedicated legal framework on wild foods would prove to be of great help in this process. An effective legal framework could help establish the identification for wild foods, facilitating any further research, programs, or projects that promote the sustainable management and development of wild foods in Vietnam.

### SIGNIFICANCE OF WILD FOOD

With the recent advancements of scientific research studies regarding wild foods in the last decades, its significant values have been uncovered and acknowledged globally. The values that wild foods offer could be summarized as follows:

#### A. Food Security and Livelihood

Wild foods have always been an important source of food for certain communities and populations, especially the vulnerable ones in forest, mountainous, or rural areas where agriculture is difficult or not allowed to develop. In times of economic difficulties, it can greatly contribute to the temporary alleviation of food scarcity. Products of wild foods could also be a source of livelihood for native and local people, mitigating the burden of poverty. In fact, most households living near the forests in developing countries have been benefiting from wild foods this way [19].

In addition, wild foods could also serve as livestock feed, making the production of animal-based food more viable to poor households, thus, enhance their diets. Another significant contribution of wild foods is that of therapeutic/medicinal attributes [20].

#### B. Nutrition and Medicine

The contemporary food sources of humans come from just a few species of plants, animals, and fungi

that have been cultivated over millennia. In Vietnam, many species of rice make up a large portion of the food source, together with some breeds of livestock and species of fungi. This means that the nutritional diversity is dramatically limited. Wild foods could help diversify the sources of nutrient intake, especially the micronutrients. In fact, many wild species of plants have been now known to have higher than, or equally high concentrations of important micronutrients as their cultivated alternatives [21]. These micronutrients are very important to the nutritional demands of not only the vulnerable people in rural areas but also to those of the people in already developed urban areas where diets are generally considered to be of better quality, especially to children and women.

Many species of wild plants, animals, and fungi can be used as remedies for not only human but also for livestock, improving the overall quality of people's lives.

#### C. Ecology, Education, and Research

Existing wild plants, animals, and fungi act as a reserve for the genetic materials necessary for the biodiversity that keeps the balance of ecosystems. In the long term, keeping this balance could also mean protecting the environment and combating climate change.

They could also serve as the subjects of education for students, or subjects of study for scientists that could help promote even further advancements in better understandings and conservation of the forests and the species that they house, contributing to the prevention of deforestation, and preserving it for various branches of scientific studies.

#### D. Local Culture, Knowledge, and Recreation

Wild foods play an irreplaceable role in traditional spiritual or recreational occasions, events, or festivals of most native communities. This requires the local knowledge on how to find, gather, process, use, and preserve wild food, as well as how to organize these events.

Visitors from neighboring communities and tourists could learn much about their culture and knowledge via the native food specialties.

### NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCT AND WILD FOOD

Although most wild foods could be found in terrestrial ecosystems, and a major part of them is considered non-timber forest products (NTFPs), many kinds of wild foods could be found in freshwater as well. Therefore, not all wild food products are NTFP products. On the other hand, NTFPs include many other non-food products such as those of plant-based oil, traditional handicraft, tools and other cultural products. Thus, the



term NTFP is generally used for more versatile types of products in the terrestrial environment. These two terms cover some overlapping domains; however, they are not the same.

While there have been several programs and projects, such as those of the NTFP Exchange Program, to support NTFPs in general, the products from wild food domain still receive inadequate attention, and little effort have been made to formulate a governance framework for them.

One reason is that wild foods have not earned its legal identity yet. Only when it is recognized officially that further actions to manage and develop it can be taken. Moreover, a legal framework on wild foods, together with relevant policies, can practically help guide the implementation of effective wild food governance, especially with the inclusion of local communities and native people.

### WORLD POLICIES AND MOVEMENTS ON WILD FOOD

Recognizing the importance of global food security in the future, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) presented the publication "Food security policies: making the ecosystem connections" [22] in 2013 to highlight the significance of the availability of food, especially wild foods. It stated that "the idea that there is an inevitable trade-off between agricultural productivity and ecosystem conservation is now outdated, given our current understanding of the dependence of agriculture on **wider ecosystems**. There is no choice but to do both, otherwise food security will remain a pipe dream." The document also emphasized the need to establish the identity and legal position for the native communities regarding their tenure and access to wild foods, as well as to recognize wild resources, especially wild foods, to be one of the key resources of food.

On the same track, the "Voluntary Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Crop Wild Relatives and Wild Food Plants" [23] in 2017 elaborated in more detail the roles of wild plants in the overall food security situation around the world, and how they are being endangered. It even mentions the threats of extinction to these resources without good governance, and provides general instructions on how to formulate the institutional entities and strategic plans to tackle this issue.

Regarding wild animals, there have long been numerous laws and policies in the developed countries to protect the natural environment and the trade of wild animals. For example, in the US and UK, there are laws and regulations on foraging for wild animal-based food. In the European Union, several regulations related to the trade of wildlife, most

importantly, the Council Regulation (EC) No. 338/97 have been dealing with the protection of wild fauna and flora by regulating the trade of them.

As for the management of fungi, particularly the wild edible fungi, FAO presented a publication in 2004 [24] to introduce a general view point dedicated for them among many other forest products. Several issues and conflicts across multiple sectors and parties have been mentioned in the said document. It also discusses about the harvesting methods and approaches, as well as how important practical planning is to the sustainable production of wild edible fungi. Some suggestions on how to prepare the management guidelines for wild edible fungi are also mentioned in the said document.

In 2010, Morgera in "Wild life law and the empowerment of the poor" [25] looked in to the "legal tools for the empowerment of local and indigenous communities," "with a view to ensuring environmental sustain-ability and strengthening the role of disadvantaged people and increasing their participation in the sharing of benefits." This study could serve as an effective guide for those who are concerning themselves with the improve-ment of their national laws on wildlife.

From a broader context, there have been so far five major global legal instruments for wildlife conservation namely (1) Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar Convention) (1971); (2) UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972); (3) Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) (1973); (4) Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS / Bonn Convention) (1979); and (5) the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) (1992). At least 60 other regional and specific-scope-based instruments (initiatives, memorandum of understanding, treaties) have also been identified, as of 2017, for this same purpose [26]. It is clear that the development of the policies regarding wild products and all other aspects relevant to them is happening at a faster rate.

All in all, regardless of the abundance and good insight of all those global policies and movements mentioned, there are always limitations to the application of them in a national context. The difference in ideologies of the nations, the broad definitions of scopes, and the unclear accountability for the implementation of the international treaties and agreements are hindering their effectiveness. Even the laws within a country, no matter how effective they are, are also just one of the many tools applicable for the achievement of conservation and development objectives. For wild foods, a relatively new field of development, the situation is even more complicated.

The existence of a national legal framework would be the very first step in the short-term action plan to achieving any further goals in the long-term strategies regarding the sustainable management and development of wildlife and wild products in general, and wild foods in particular.

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## Scope and Limitations

This paper works with both existing legal framework and policies as well as the actual situation of the management and development of wild foods in Vietnam. It aims to point out the current issues and challenges, and the opportunities in this field, and seeks to contribute to the institutionalization of the management and development of wild foods in Vietnam. The goals are not only to conserve the resources of wild foods, protect the natural environment, but also to empower the vulnerable, first and foremost, the local and native communities, with the help of a legal framework as a basic tool.

However, the concept of wild food management and development is still relatively new to Vietnam. The lack of scientifically reliable data and legal bases prevents more accurate and insightful findings of the paper. The insufficient human and financial resources for the research also hinder its final results. The short period of time for research is also a major factor that limits the overall quality of the paper.

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## Methodology

In carrying out this work, methodologies employed were systematic review of related literature, expert interviews, group discussions and thematic analyses.

### SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

- Existing research studies, protocols of sustainable harvesting of some communities will be collected
- Policy (Institutional framework at the national, provincial, and community level)
- The following search terms are used in various combination for the search of data and information:

wild food	traditional
wild plant	medicine
wild animal	indigenous
wild fungi	local
definition	livelihood
Vietnam	forest
plant-based	non-timber forest product

### EXPERT INTERVIEW

Five persons from various regions of Vietnam were part of expert interviews conducted.

### GROUP DISCUSSION

Participants included 20 persons from four (4) provinces: Binh Thuan, Ninh Thuan, Binh Dinh, and Lam Dong. An expert meeting via Zoom was conducted on June 15, 2020

### THEMATIC ANALYSES

The contents from the various selected literature, interviews of the experts, as well as the discussion of the communities were examined for the themes and patterns of meaning.

# Findings

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR NTFPS & WILD FOOD PLANTS IN THE WILD

In the last decade, developing a legal document system on NTFP management and protection as well as wild food crops has been approved by the government, ministries, and provincial agencies with wild food plant resources, or NTFPs in general. However, Vietnam does not yet have a separate legal system for wild food plants. The current legal documents related to this issue (Laws on Forestry, Fisheries, Biodiversity, Environmental Protection, Planning, Tourism, Mineral, Water Resources,) lie in a key concept that NTFP plants are managed by different agencies (the Ministries of Natural Resources and Environment, Health, Science and Technology and their Administrations (Environment, Fisheries, Science and Technology, Meteorological and Hydrological, Sea and Island) and Department, National Parks, and Programs, and the municipal People's Committees and their Departments).

Particularly for forest resources, IPLCs are allowed to enjoy all of the results from the investment and development of forests, and to utilize forest products in the planted forests. However, access to resources in special-use forests and protected forests must follow the management regulations of each forest type. In fact, for special-use forests, the management regulations are very strict, communities are almost prohibited from enjoying the direct benefits from the utilization of natural resources, and just mainly benefit from the payment for forest environmental services and tourism activities, forest protection contracts.

It is worth noting that within most native communities, however, there are some mores that regulate how the native people gather / hunt for NTFPs, in general, and wild food plants, in particular: they can only gather or hunt some certain species for the needs of their family only. These mores can be even stricter in some communities where the members can only enter the forest during some certain days in the year. Anyone who violates these customs will be fined with their crops, livestock and wine, and have to be criticized in front of the whole community. Usually, these punishments are much more severe than those in the legal regulations of the government if available. These traditions have been practicing for generations, and have been proven to be effective in conserving the forest resources sustainably.

A legal framework for wild food plants will help IPLCs improve their livelihoods and ensure food security, promoting more focused and active implementation of the forest protection contracts by the native people.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

In the management field, protection and sustainable use of biological resources/NTFPs are related to several departments. However, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development plays a key role in the decision-making management. MARD is primarily responsible for state management issues in sectors and fields directly related to NTFP such as Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Development.

The main sources of information on NTFP/food plant development, use and conservation policy frameworks will be carefully consulted and studied from laws, decrees and circulars guiding the implementation of the law and decree or directive of the government can be seen in Table 1 in the Appendices.

## INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AT PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL

The policy framework for NTFP or wild food plants with natural origin in localities in provinces will be studied in accordance with several policy frameworks and models of localities according to forestry ecological regions as follows:

- 1. Northeast Region:** including 4 provinces Hoa Binh, Son La, Dien Bien and Lai Chau;
- 2. Northwest Region:** including 12 provinces: Cao Bang, Lang Son, Bac Can, Thai Nguyen, Quang Ninh, Bac Giang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang, Phu Tho and Vinh Phuc;
- 3. Northern Delta Region:** including 9 provinces: Hai Phong, Hai Duong, Bac Ninh, Hung Yen, Hanoi, Thai Binh, Nam Dinh, Ha Nam and Ninh Binh;
- 4. North Central Region:** including 6 provinces: Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Thua Thien-Hue;

**5. South Central Region:** including 8 provinces: Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, and Binh Thuan;

**6. Central Highlands Region:** including 5 provinces: Lam Dong, Dak Nong, Dak Lak, Gia Lai, and Kon Tum.

**7. Southeast Region:** including 6 provinces: Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Dong Nai, Binh Duong, Binh Phuoc, Tay Ninh, and Ho Chi Minh City

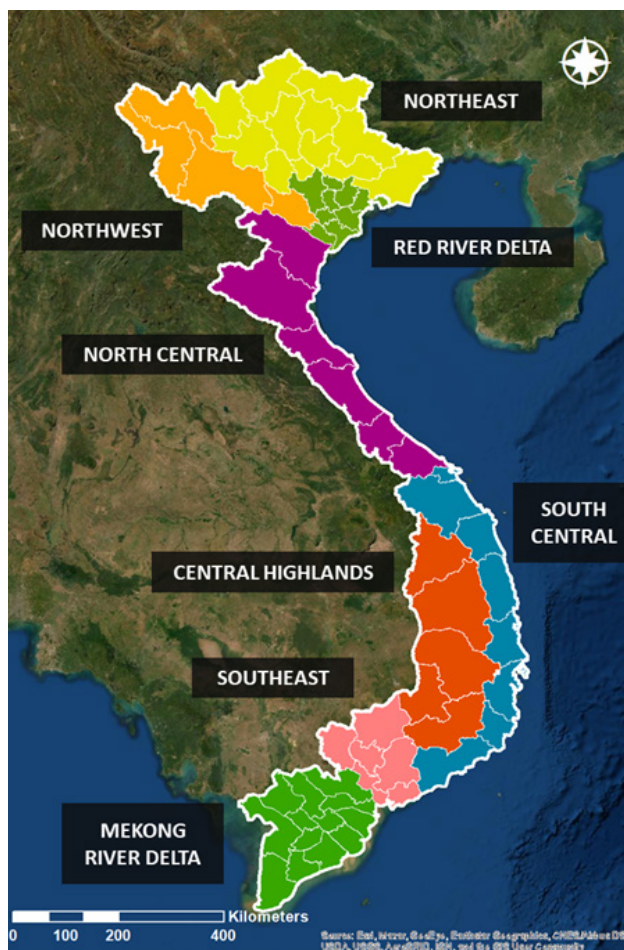
**8. Southwest Region:** including 13 provinces: Long An, Ben Tre, Dong Thap, Soc Trang, Vinh Long, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Tien Giang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang, An Giang, and Tra Vinh.

At the provincial and city level, the provincial People’s Committee will be responsible for state management related to the protection of forests and natural resources under the NTFP group. To assist the Provincial People’s Committee in professional implementation of natural resources management of medicinal plants in nature and NTFP trees, food crops in forests where units such as DARD are responsible for management and licensing of local resources, under DARD is the unit directly manages forest types.

In the eight main forest ecoregions, the methodology will focus on the content of NTFP development program in joint programs or individual projects, or in completed/performing models according to the following content:

- Provincial biodiversity conservation planning in the 2016-2025-2030 period
- Program of re-planning 3 types of forests in the province
- Planning to use wetlands
- Agricultural extension and poverty reduction program in the province
- Forest allocation program in difficult areas in the province
- Reports on medicinal plants, food plants, food crops in nature
- Peripheral conservation models of NTFP trees/wild food crops in the mountainous regions and the Central Highlands.

The steps to conduct the research on legal frameworks in the localities may be illustrated as in the table on the following page.





#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
1	Decision No. 760/QĐ-UBND dated February 28th, 2018 promulgating regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province	Program to develop NTFP plant according to the regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province.
2	Decision No.1864/QĐ-UBND dated July 03rd, 2017 approving the project of non-timber forest products in Ha Tinh province during 2016–2025 period, orientations to 2030	<p>Understanding the Project on non-timber forest products in Ha Tinh province during 2016 – 2025 period, orientations to 2030.</p> <p>What is the Plan for Conservation and Development of Non-Timber Forest Products, limiting deforestation, degradation of forest resources and forest ecosystems?</p> <p>Issues of sustainable development and use of non-timber forest products, reducing pressure on natural forests, creating income opportunities from non-timber forest products in mountainous districts?</p> <p>Developing NTFPs with Ha Tinh REDD + Action Plan.</p> <p>Improving capacity and awareness of people and communities on the conservation and development of NTFPs.</p>
3	Plan No.2005/KH-UBND dated August 05th, 2019 on development of material areas for processing industry of timber and non-timber forest products in Kon Tum province	<p>Based on the Prime Minister’s Directive No.08/CT-TTg of March 28th, 2019, on a number of rapid and sustainable development tasks and solutions for processing industry of timber and non-timber forest products for export, considering the Development Plan of material areas for non-timber forest products in Kon Tum province.</p> <p>Does NTFP resources meet the market demand for domestic and export products? Contribute to addressing employment needs for local people, stabilizing livelihoods for people working in forestry, limiting deforestation of natural forests, contributing to protecting the ecological environment and conserving biodiversity.</p>
4	Decision No.2842/QĐ-UBND July 24th, 2017 approving the project on developing forestry seedlings in Quang Ninh province until 2020	<p>Summary of important contents of NTFP in the project on developing forestry seedlings in Quang Ninh during 2017–2020 period.</p> <p>NTFP plant in the list of forestry plant varieties on demand for plant varieties for afforestation and enrichment towards sustainable forest management? Varieties of precious indigenous species through natural forests enrichment, especially for protection forests and special-use forests.</p>

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
5	Decision No.3419/QĐ-UBND dated November 13th, 2019 promulgates plans to implement the project of protection, restoration and sustainable development of forests in the Central Highlands during 2016 – 2030 period.	Summary of NTFP development program in implementation the project of protection, restoration and sustainable development of forests in the Central Highlands during 2016 – 2030 period.
6	Decision No. 169/QĐ-UBND dated January 23rd, 2017 approving the biodiversity conservation planning of Lam Dong province until 2020, orientations to 2030	<p>Summary of NTFP conservation plan in Lam Dong's Biodiversity Conservation Plan up to 2020, orientation to 2030, with contents related to natural resources such as:</p> <p>Harmonizing combination of conservation, rational exploitation and use of biodiversity resources – NTFP to maintain and develop ecological services, environmental protection, protection and embellishment of natural landscapes, biodiversity conservation.</p> <p>Enhancing cooperation with provinces in the Central Highlands on NTFP resources to improve the effectiveness of biodiversity conservation.</p>

## INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSION

### Contents:

#### 1. Situation of wild foods and traditional food systems:

- There is not yet a comprehensive, separate, and dedicated legal system for this in Vietnam. It is mainly under the management of MARD, with some incoherent by-laws or policies that do not help much in sustainable livelihood development, forest conservation.
- The lacks of effective policies and mechanisms for sustainable development and co-management of the forests (especially the special-use forests and the forests in nature reserves and national parks) are posing threats on to those forests such as: illegal extraction of resources, forest fires, loss of biodiversity, declining local livelihoods, intrusion and extraction of outsiders, loss of native cultures, local extinction of some species, threatened security and health of native communities...
- Dependence of NTFPs (medicinal, wild food plants, wild animals) on Chinese markets which are seasonal and unstable, while the true potential of these NTFPs are not utilized, and the demands of other global markets are unknown

- Lack of capacity for IPLCs and local authorities to scan and map the potential NTFP resources, develop strategies and planning, make and implement plans, conduct research studies and networking activities etc. to define stable outputs and markets are hindering the development of NTFPs and management of forests
- #### 2. Impacts of policies (forest and conservation policies; food security, resource management, including access, tenure rights) on wild foods; Perceptions, changing practices in terms of consumption, management (harvesting, conservation):
- Some positive examples of forest protection contract with the IPLCs in which native people can co-manage the forests and partly utilize its resources (gathering of some seasonally abundant NTFPs in the wild) so that they can secure their short-term livelihoods, and focus on more active and effective protection of the forests
  - Suggestions on the need to advocate the true values of the forests, NTFPs as well as the native cultures, so that they can be preserved/conserved and developed sustainably, suggestions on the needs for lobby/advocacy activities to raise awareness on the conservation of forests and NTFPs for IPLCs, local authorities and public

- Suggestions of the need for regulations on the technical standards and scientific techniques methods for sustainable harvesting and processing of NTFPs, the needs research studies on market demands (both domestic and global) to define sustainable outputs
  - Introduction of a network with retail supermarkets that can help with more stable domestic market for NTFPs in Vietnam
- 3. Agreement to keep networking, collaborating, and supporting each other among the participants in the near future for capacity building and promoting the formation of dedicated policies/mechanisms for sustainable development of NTFPs, and conservation of forests**

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## Challenges and Opportunities

### CHALLENGES

- Unawareness of the significance of wild food among the general public
- Lack of capacity and authorization for the sustainable management of wild food of local authorities
- Lack of comprehensive, heterogenous, and dedicated legal framework, policies, strategies and planning for the sustainable management of wild food
- Exclusion of the local indigenous communities and their invaluable native knowledge in the management of wild food
- Limited access to wild food is hurting their livelihood in terms of self-subsistence and income
- Unsustainable exploitation of wild food itself is leading to the extinction of some species. Deforestation also indirectly affects wild food as it reduces the possible habitats of wild plants, animals, and fungi
- Dependencies on a limited number of certain markets for the outputs of wild food products
- Weak or missing networking for parties concerned of wild food

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Existing international policies and framework could be good sources of reference for Vietnam
- Some existing research studies and databases contextualized for the situation of Vietnam could be a very useful foundation
- Concerns of the national scientific communities and global organizations regarding wild foods, together with the concerns of the local communities and native people
- Existing national, regional and global networks could be a useful mechanism for further development of the legal frame, and the practical channels for the distribution of Vietnam's wild food products

# Outlook for Wild Food in Vietnam

- Sustainable harvesting of wild foods from effective governance with the inclusion of local native communities
- Better awareness by the public, leading to more stable demands and consumption of wild foods, as well as better conservation of wild food species (Some highly nutritious are not known of and consumed, while products from endangered species unbalancing the whole ecosystem)
- Better enhanced scientific and business networks for further research, bioprospecting and distribution of wild foods
- Wild foods as valuable sources of livelihood for local native communities, not only for subsistence and domestic sales, but also international sales

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## Appendices

### QUESTIONS ON WF/NTFP – COMMUNITY

- Which WFPs / NTFPs are recommended for use and cultivation?
- Which species are strictly prohibited for gathering and trading?
- Have there been any programs to support the community to cultivate WFPs/NTFPs in the locality /community?
- Is the overexploitation of local WFPs / NTFPs concerned and prohibited by the authorities?
- Have there been any policies to support the trading of WF/NTFP products between the localities and to further markets?
- Have there been any programs in the locality to train / guide local people to exploit and use WF/NTFP resources sustainably?
- Do local authorities promote the participation of the people in the conservation of WF/NTFP species in the locality? If yes, then how?
- Where can information on rare and valuable WF/NTFP species be found?
- Have there been any policies among the community to safeguard the indigenous knowledge on WF / NTFP resources of the local people? If yes, are the people entitled to these safeguards?
- Can the people, on their own, establish the centers for the exchanges of the typical WF / NTFP products in the locality, or the networks for inter-localities exchanges?



# Table: Existing Conservation Policy Frameworks in Vietnam

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
1	Directive No. 08/CT-TTg dated March 28th, 2019 on several rapid and sustainable development tasks and solutions for processing industry of timber and non-timber forest products for export	<p>Timber and non-timber forest products are Vietnam's 6th important exports.</p> <p>What is the role of NTFPs in the national economy? How to promote afforestation, environmental protection, and sustainable livelihoods for rural mountainous households? It's role and position in forestry restructuring.</p> <p>What are the challenges and difficulties? How to develop a sustainable, efficient, modern and reputable NTFPs processing industry in the world?</p>
2	Circular No.04/2017 TT-BNNPTNT dated February 24th, 2017 on the List of wild plants and animals specified in the annexes to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	List of NTFP species and food plants included in the appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) includes: Appendix I is a list of wild plants and animals that are the most endangered animals and plants, strictly prohibited from export, import, re-export, import from the sea and transit of specimens from nature for commercial purposes. Appendix II is a list of wild plants and animals that are not currently threatened with extinction, but could lead to extinction, if the export, import, re-export, import from the sea and transit of specimens from nature for commercial purposes are not regulated. And Annex III is a list of wild plants and animals that a CITES member requires another CITES member country to cooperate to control the export, import and re-export for commercial purposes.
3	Decree No.06/2019/ND-CP dated January 22nd, 2019 on the management of endangered, precious and rare species of forest Fauna and Flora and observation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora	Refer to the latest updated list to replace Decree No. 160 – NTFPs species and endangered, precious and rare food plants? What is the regime of management, protection, order and procedures for exploiting endangered, precious and rare forest plants? Implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna (CITES) in Vietnam.
4	Circular No.12/VBHN-BNNPTNT dated November 28th, 2017 providing the main exploitation, full utilization and full collection of forest products	Understanding and assessing the change in policy of NTFP exploitation and collection in community-managed forests, amended and supplemented in Circular No. 17/2017/TT-BNNPTNT dated September 11th, 2017 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.
5	Decision No.18/2007/QĐ-TTg dated February 05th, 2007 approving Vietnam's forestry development strategy in the 2006-2020 period	<p>An overview of the situation of forestry sector in the past and the current situation of Vietnam's forests. Considering issues related to the current status of NTFP and food plants in the Vietnam Forestry Sector Development Strategy 2006-2020.</p> <p>Assess forest quality and biodiversity related to the development of the NTFP resources.</p>

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
6	Circular No. 19/VBHN-BNNPTNT dated May 06th, 2014 guidance on logging and full exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products	Considering the differences in Circular No. 70/2011/TT-BNNPTNT dated October 24th, 2011 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development amending and supplementing a few contents of Circular No. 35/2011/TT-BNNPTNT dated May 20th, 2011, guiding on logging and full exploitation of timber and non-timber forest products.
7	Circular No.21/2017/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 15th, 2017 guidance on implementation of Decision No. 886/QĐ-TTg dated June 16th, 2017 approving target program for sustainable forestry development during 2016 – 2020 period	Review of the NTFP development program in Decision No. 886/QĐ-TTg on June 16th, 2017 by the Prime Minister approved the target program for sustainable forestry development during 2016 – 2020 period;
8	Review of the NTFP development program in Decision No. 886/QĐ-TTg on June 16th, 2017 by the Prime Minister approved the target program for sustainable forestry development during 2016 – 2020 period;	Understanding and evaluating NTFP regulations according to: regulations of ordinary forest harvesting procedures; Lawful forest product dossiers and inspection of tracing of forest products; Marking specimens of species on the list of endangered, precious and rare forest plants in the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
9	Decision No.28/2017/QĐ-TTg dated July 03rd, 2017 defining the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Administration of Forestry under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	Understanding the role of the Administration of Forestry/ Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the development and conservation of the NTFP plants and wild food plants in nature.
1	Circular No. 30/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 16th, 2018: List of major forest tree species; recognition of cultivars and cultivar sources; management of major forest tree cultivar materials	Review list of wild NTFP plants in the list of major forest tree species; recognition of cultivars and cultivar sources; management of major forest tree cultivar materials.
1	Resolution No. 30a/2008/ NQ-CP on the program to support poverty reduction rapid and sustainable for 61 poor districts	Understanding the economic development program of home gardens and medicinal plants, production forests and opportunities for the poor in the mountains related to NTFP plant resources and wild food plants, contributing to sustainable economic growth, and implementing social equity in the mountainous districts near the forest, allocating forests in regions with high poverty rate.
1	Circular No. 32/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 16th, 2018 on methods of evaluating forest price and forest price range	Assessing the role and significance of NTFP plants in various forest types in Vietnam (especially production forests) in relation to the regulation of evaluating forest price and forest price range.

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
1	Circular No.35/2010/TT-BNNPTNT dated June 23rd, 2010 issuing "Additional list of some forest tree and non-timber forest products species in 63 poor districts of 21 provinces according to the Prime Minister's Resolution No.30a/2008/NQ-CP"	Pursuant to the Ordinance on Plant Varieties to understand the additional list of some forest tree and non-timber forest products
1	Decree No.35/2019/NĐ-CP dated April 25th, 2019 on penalties for administrative violations against regulations on forestry	Review and evaluate the relevant of NTFP plants. In according with regulations on violations, penalties, fines, remedial measures for acts of infringing on forest resources against regulations on forestry.
1	No. 28/2018/TT-BNNPTNT dated November 16th, 2018 on sustainable forest management	Regarding the Sustainable Forest Management Plan, how is the role of NTFP trees considered guided to exploitation and use? In the regulations on establishment, appraisal, approval, inspection, monitoring, implementation of sustainable forest management plan and forest certification for natural forests, planted forests are production forests and protection forests.
1	Circular No.48/2018/TT-BYT dated December 28th, 2018 issuing the list of medicinal herbs; extracts of medicinal herbs and essential oils for making medicines; imported and exported traditional medicines and herbal medicines are determining using commodity code according to Vietnam's list of exports and imports.	Understanding the list of medicinal herbs; extracts of medicinal herbs and essential oils for making medicines; traditional medicines and herbal medicines imported and exported are determining using commodity code according to Vietnam's list of exports and imports. Especially NTFP plants and traditional medicinal plants, imported and exported medicinal herbs related to Appendix 3 under this Circular.
1	Decision No.49/2016/QĐ-TTĐ dated November 01st, 2016 on promulgating the regulation on production forest management	Pursuant to the Government's Decree No. 23/2006 / ND-CP of March 3rd, 2006, on the implementation of the Law on Forest Protection and Development considering NTFP trees to be added and included in the list of conservation and use in communities and contracting production forests in the Decision on production forest management regulations.
1	Decree No. 57/2018/NĐ-CP dated April 17th, 2018 on incentive policies for enterprises investing in agriculture and rural development sector.	Considering the regulation of incentive mechanisms and policies in investing in NTFP and wild herbs plantations in the agricultural development program (including planting medicinal herbs) and stipulating orders and procedures for giving incentives to enterprises investing in agriculture and rural development sector
1	Decree No. 75/2015/NĐ-CP dated September 09th, 2015 on mechanism and policy of forest development associated with the policy on sustainable and rapid poverty reduction and assistance to ethnic minorities for the period 2015 – 2020	Providing for the mechanism and policy on encouraging forest protection, regeneration, afforestation, non-wood forest product development, income improvement associated with policy on sustainable and rapid poverty reduction for the period 2015–2020. Considering how NTFP and medicinal plants are concerned in this new regulation to develop NTFPs, increase incomes associated with rapid, sustainable poverty reduction policies and support for ethnic minorities living on land planned for forest development and allocated by the State for forest protection.

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
2	Decree No. 156/2018/ND-CP dated November 16th, 2018 on enforcement of a number of articles of the law on forestry	Enforcement of a few articles of the Law on Forestry. Considering the role of NTFP plant in criteria for forest determination and classification, and regulations on forest management. What are the new rules on the exploitation and use of forest resources like NTFP in land allocation or lease for production purpose, conversion of forest types, forest repurposing and forest appropriation? How is localizing and promoting forest reproduction or restoration, regenerating extremely poor natural forests related to NTFP plant? How to assess forest reserves and quality with NTFP plant? Does the full collection include NTFP plant? Defining a forest environment with NTFP resources?
2	No.35/2019/ND-CP dated April 25th, 2019 on penalties for administrative violations against regulations on forestry	The Government promulgates a Decree on penalties for administrative violations against regulations on forest management, forest development, forest protection and forest product management. What are the topics about NTFPs and NTFPs? Policies related to forest-derived products, originating from forests (including aquatic animals of indigenous or non-native origin but permitted by competent agencies rearing, stocking in ponds, lakes, rivers and streams in forests).
2	Decree No. 160/2013/ND-CP dated November 12th, 2013 on criteria to determine species and the regime of managing species under lists of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized protection	Identifying criteria for determining NTFP species and the regime of managing species under lists of endangered, precious and rare species prioritized protection as well as NTFP plant not covered by this Decree.
2	Decision No. 297/QĐ-TTg dated March 18th, 2019 approving the project on Central Highlands sustainable forest protection, restoration, and development in the 2016-2030 period	NTFP resources in the project on Central Highlands sustainable forest protection, restoration, and development in the 2016-2030 period primarily related to conservation and development of NTFP resources in the Central Highlands. Determining the role of NTFP plant in protecting the ecological environment, conserving biodiversity, providing forest environmental services, contributing to socio-economic development, maintaining security, national defense and social security of the Central Highlands?
2	Decision No. 332 / QĐ-TTĐ 2/2002 approving the project VIE/01/G35 - "on-the-spot conservation of some groups of native plants and their wild relatives in Vietnam" issued by the GEF / UNDP funded	Lessons learned for NTFP Trees under Project VIE/01/G35 - "Local conservation of some groups of native plants and their wild relatives in Vietnam" funded by Global Environment Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP): the conservation of agricultural biodiversity, including native plants and their wild relatives in three geographical ecological regions: Northern Uplands, Central Region and mountainous areas of Northwest Vietnam? The problem of replicating gene management models (GMZ) based on community participation; create an advantageous environment for NTFP tree biodiversity conservation with agricultural development.



#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
2	Decision No. 760/QĐ-UBND dated February 28th, 2018 promulgating regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province	Program to develop NTFP plant according to the regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province.
2	Decision No. 760/QĐ-UBND dated February 28th, 2018 promulgating regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province	Program to develop NTFP plant according to the regulations on lease of forest environment for planting medicinal herbs, non-timber forest products and provision of ecotourism in Quang Nam province.
2	Decision No. 886/QĐ-TTG dated June 16th, 2017 approving target program for sustainable forestry development during 2016–2020 period	NTFP Development Program in the target program for sustainable forestry development during 2016 – 2020 period? Assess the role of NTFP in improving the quality and promoting the value of each type of forest, increasing the value of production forests? NTFP plant in protecting ecological environment, creating jobs, increasing incomes, contributing to hunger eradication and poverty alleviation, improving livelihoods for people working in forestry. What is the role of NTFP plant in increasing forestry production value, forest cover rate, and export value of forest products?
2	Decision No.1864/QĐ-UBND dated July 3rd, 2017 approving the project of non-timber forest products in Ha Tinh province during 2016–2025 period, orientations to 2030	<p>Understanding the Project on non-timber forest products in Ha Tinh province during 2016 – 2025 period, orientations to 2030.</p> <p>What is the Plan for Conservation and Development of Non-Timber Forest Products, limiting deforestation, degradation of forest resources and forest ecosystems?</p> <p>Issues of sustainable development and use of non-timber forest products, reducing pressure on natural forests, creating income opportunities from non-timber forest products in mountainous districts?</p> <p>Developing NTFPs with Ha Tinh REDD + Action Plan.</p> <p>Improving capacity and awareness of people and communities on the conservation and development of NTFPs.</p>

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
2	Plan No.2005/KH-UBND dated August 05th, 2019 on development of material areas for processing industry of timber and non-timber forest products in Kon Tum province	<p>Based on the Prime Minister's Directive No.08/CT-TTg of March 28th, 2019, on a number of rapid and sustainable development tasks and solutions for processing industry of timber and non-timber forest products for export, considering the Development Plan of material areas for non-timber forest products in Kon Tum province.</p> <p>Does NTFP resources meet the market demand for domestic and export products? Contribute to addressing employment needs for local people, stabilizing livelihoods for people working in forestry, limiting deforestation of natural forests, contributing to protecting the ecological environment and conserving biodiversity.</p>
2	Decision No. 2366 QĐ/BNN-LN dated August 23rd, 2006 approving the project on conservation and development of non-timber forest products in the 2006-2020 period	<p>Summary of the "Project on conservation and development of non-timber forest products in the 2006-2020 period", with important contents.</p> <p>Focus on the conservation of non-timber forest products of economic and scientific value, limiting resource degradation and raising the capacity and awareness of people and communities on the conservation and development of non-timber forest products. Increase the proportion of income from non-timber forest products to 10-15% in the mountainous household economy, contributing to poverty alleviation in remote areas.</p> <p>Conservation and development of non-timber forest products in some national parks and nature reserves? Orientation for conservation and development of non-timber forest products.</p>
2	Decision No.2842/QĐ-UBND July 24th, 2017 approving the project on developing forestry seedlings in Quang Ninh province until 2020	<p>Summary of important contents of NTFP in the project on developing forestry seedlings in Quang Ninh during 2017-2020 period.</p> <p>NTFP plant in the list of forestry plant varieties on demand for plant varieties for afforestation and enrichment towards sustainable forest management? Varieties of precious indigenous species through natural forests enrichment, especially for protection forests and special-use forests.</p>
3	Official Dispatch No. 3001/BNN-TCLN dated May 3rd 2019 enhance measures to improve the quality of forestry plant varieties	<p>What is the role of the quality of NTFP plant varieties on the productivity and quality of planted forests?</p> <p>How is the forestry sector restructuring plan related to NTFP?</p> <p>What limitations? Research on genes and molecular genetics of NTFP?</p>
3	Decision No.3124/QĐ-BNN-KHCN dated December 19th 2011 approving the list of programs and projects of central agricultural extension during 2012-2015 period.	<p>List of NTFP programs and projects in the Central Agricultural Extension Program 2012 - 2015?</p> <p>What is the role of agriculture extension in NTFP development and indigenous people development?</p>

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
3	Decision No.3419/QĐ-UBND dated November 13th, 2019 promulgates plans to implement the project of protection, restoration and sustainable development of forests in the Central Highlands during 2016–2030 period.	Summary of NTFP development program in implementation the project of protection, restoration and sustainable development of forests in the Central Highlands during 2016–2030 period.
3	Decision No.3748/QĐ-BNN-KH dated September 15th, 2015 approving the orientations for development of plant varieties and animal breeds up to 2020 and vision to 2030.	<p>NTFP development program in the orientations for development of plant varieties and animal breeds up to 2020 and vision to 2030.</p> <p>List of NTFP?</p>
3	Decision No.4961/QĐ-BNN-TCLN November 17th, 2014, promulgating the list of dominant tree species for production forest planting and the list of major tree species for afforestation in forest ecoregions	List of NTFP in the list of dominant tree species for production forest planting and the list of major tree species for afforestation in forest ecoregions
3	3Decision No. 1976 / QĐ-TTg approving the master plan for development of medical resources to 2020 and orientations to 2030	<p>Summary of pharmaceutical master development master plan to 2020 and orientation to 2030 of Vietnam. With the main content related to NTFP trees and conservation programs for sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishments effectively use all potentials of natural and social conditions to develop herbal planting areas, in association with conservation and rational exploitation of natural medicinal sources; protect biodiversity and ecological environment.</li> <li>• The State shall support investment in research and application of science, technology and technology in the conservation of genetic resources, exploitation of natural pharmaceutical materials, cultivation, processing of pharmaceutical materials and herbal products.</li> <li>• Managing, exploiting and using sustainably pharmaceutical resources to serve the goals of health and economic development; attaching importance to the protection, conservation and development of valuable and valuable pharmaceutical gene sources; preserve, promote and enhance the protection of traditional knowledge on medicinal plant use by ethnic groups.</li> </ul>

#	Policy Framework	Research Interests
3	Decision No.45/QĐ-TTg dated January 8th, 2014 on Master plan approval for master plan of nationwide biodiversity conservation by 2020, with a vision to 2030	<p>Summary of NTFP conservation plan in the master plan of nationwide biodiversity conservation by 2020, with a vision to 2030 with the following contents related to the NTFP conservation program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NTFP Conservation Program</li> <li>• Rational exploitation and use of NTFP resources to maintain and develop ecosystem services, environment and biodiversity landscapes.</li> <li>• NTFP and safe biodiversity, mitigating the degradation and depletion of natural resources, minimizing and adapting to climate change.</li> <li>• International cooperation of biodiversity</li> </ul>
3	Decision No.174 / QĐ-TTg dated February 3rd, 2020 approving the planning biodiversity conservation for the 2021-2030 period, with a vision to 2050	<p>Summary of NTFP development and conservation program in the planning biodiversity conservation for the 2021-2030 period, with a vision to 2050 with the following contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To specify policies, guidelines and policies of the Party and State laws on the conservation and sustainable use of NTFP resources - biodiversity; in accordance with the law on planning, the law on biodiversity and other relevant laws.</li> <li>• Harmonizing between conservation and rational use of natural resources, focusing on maintaining and developing ecosystem services to minimize the level of degradation and depletion of NTFP resources in nature. Conservation of NTFP biodiversity outside natural reserves.</li> </ul>
3	Decision No.1250/QĐ-TTg dated July 31st, 2013 approving the national strategy on biodiversity by 2020, with a vision to 2030	<p>Summary of NTFP conservation and development program in the National Strategy on Biodiversity by 2020, with a vision to 2030 and clarify the role of NTFP / Wild Food Plant in this strategy with the following contents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the key solutions to adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts related to NTFP resources?</li> <li>• Biodiversity conservation of NTFP associated with sustainable use to improve the quality of people's life;</li> <li>• Socialization of international cooperation on NTFP biodiversity conservation.</li> </ul>
4	Decision No.1976/QĐ-TTg dated October 30th, 2014 approving the planning for special-use forest system across the country to the year 2020, and a vision to 2030	<p>Review the program on NTFP tree development and preservation in the national special-use forest system (the latest one) up to 2020, with a vision to 2030 with the following contents:</p> <p>Preserve and maintain sustainable development for NTFP natural ecosystem, valuable natural landscape, historical-cultural remains, scenic beauties, and endangered, rare and precious wildlife in the special-use forest system.</p>



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