

Research for Development Platform in Northwest, Vietnam



The fragmented landscape of Northwest, Vietnam- by Ha Van Tiep

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Field visit of cluster 4 project in Mai Son district, Son La province- by Ha Van Tiep

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Introduction

Humidtropics, a CGIAR Research Program, seeks to transform the lives of the rural poor in tropical Americas, Asia and Africa. It uses integrated systems research and unique partnership platforms for better impact on poverty and ecosystems integrity.

In Northwest, Humidtropics is focusing on research for development (R4D) of appropriate technical and social innovations in integrated farming systems and nutrient interventions, and led by the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF). The R4D Platform was initially launched in August 2013, but was revitalized by ICRAF Vietnam in 2015 at a meeting in Son La on March 13th.

The goal of R4D Platform is to create an open forum where researchers and other relevant actors from both national and local levels can share their experience and knowledge, jointly identify and analyze the key issues and solutions for sustainable agricultural production in the region.

From R4D Platform, many different initiatives have been created and implemented such as the Cluster 4 project, Innovation Platform (IP) for commercial vegetables, nutrient interventions and so on. This is the first newsletter of R4D Platform to share its activities and results achieved in 2015.

Activities in 2015

▪ Key events



R4D Platform meeting - by Hoang Thi Lua

- A meeting of the R4D Platform was held at Son La province from 12-13th March 2015 with the aim to share common understanding about Humidtropics research program and the R4D Platform in Northwest Vietnam. More than 40 participants from various organizations attended the meeting. They experienced one day field visits and one day of discussion. The key issues and problems of agricultural production systems in the region were identified in the meeting and the research activities were proposed as well.

- The second R4D Platform meeting in 2015 was held from 29-30th October in Son La province with the aim to evaluate the results of “Cluster 4” research project achieved in 2015, share the successful research stories with all local partners in Northwest region, and discuss on research proposal in 2016. In the meeting, the researchers and local government officers also get the feedbacks from farmers who directly involved in project activities. More than 30 participants from various organizations attended the meeting, they also experienced one day field visit in Mai Son district. Some issues discussed during the meeting were how to control diseases on vegetables, and cassava and coffee should not be scaled up in the area due to degraded and high steep of soil.

sustainability of project was to scale up those new techniques by key farmers within the community.



The second R4D Platform meeting - by Ha Van Tiep

- Dr. Kwesi Atta-Krah, Director of Humidtropics Research Program, and Dr. Lisa Hiwasaki, Flagship Manager in Central Mekong Action Area, visited the field trials of Cluster 4 research project on 29th August 2015 in Mai Son district, Son La province, and had a meeting with local farmers who directly joined with project activities. Dr. Kwesi Atta-Krah highly appreciated their active participation in project activities and the new techniques of agricultural production they were trained by the project. However, he addressed that the only way to reach



The field visit of Dr. Kwesi Atta- Krah - by Ha Van Tiep

▪ R4D Platform Research project (“Cluster 4”)

In 2015, Cluster 4 research project was implemented by local partners namely SFRI, FAVRI, NOMAFSI, and CASRAD; and core partners as AVRDC and ICRAF with the overall aim is to improve the income of small households by increasing productivity and the resilience of agro-ecosystems in the Northwest Vietnam through integrated farming interventions.

The project focused on establishing different on-farm trials, developing innovative farming practices and organizing different training courses. Twenty eight key famers directly participated in trials, and more than 100 farmers were trained on agricultural techniques such as integrated upland farming systems, nutrient management for coffee, grafting techniques for fruit trees, composting, fodder grass planting and processing, and animal feeding and disease prevention.

▪ Innovation Platform (IP) for commercial vegetables

The innovation platform on commercial vegetable was undertaken by AVRDC - The World Vegetable Center. The first meeting of IP for commercial vegetables in Mai Son district was held from 14-16th December 2014 in Mai Son district, Son La province. More than 40 participants from various organizations and farmers experienced field visits and desk discussion. In the meeting, four groups of production, research, private sector, and local government were formed and agreed to work together in the IP to develop vegetable production and marketing in Mai Son. The representatives of each group and facilitator were also identified and the work plan was formed for all stakeholders as well.



Field visit of safe vegetable production - by To Thi Thu Ha

Three core member quarterly meetings of IP for commercial vegetables in Mai Son district, Son La province were held at March, July and October 2015 in Son La and/or Hanoi. These meetings reviewed activities during each 3 months from January to October 2015; addressed the difficulties and solutions for problems in each group. In addition, some concerns in the meeting were how to cultivate vegetables under Vietnamese Good Agricultural Practice (Viet GAP) and how to help farmers to produce safe vegetable efficiency.

The second IP meeting of commercial vegetables was organized at 10th December 2015 in Mai Son district, Son La province with more than 40 participants attended. The aims of the meeting were to present information and share activity results of IP with relevant organizations. The participants experienced field visits and desk discussion. Compliance with requirements of VietGAP was still a pressing issue for safe vegetable cultivation. Some farmers did not join the VietGap group, which caused difficulties in the safe vegetable production process, thus the management agencies need to strengthen involvement and monitor the vegetable production. The plan of activities in 2016 was also proposed.



The field visit of safe vegetable cultivation - by Ha Van Tiep

▪ Agroforestry for Livelihoods of Smallholder Farmers in North-Western Vietnam (AFLI project)

AFLI project is funded by both ACIAR and ICRAF and mapped onto Humidtropics program. It officially started in 2012 and led by ICRAF in collaboration with local partners namely Tay Bac University (TBU), Forest Science Center for Northwest Vietnam (FSCN), Northern Mountainous Agriculture and Forestry Science Institute (NOMAFSI), and Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development in Son La, Dien Bien and Yen Bai provinces. The overall aim of project is to improve the performance of smallholder farming systems in North-Western Vietnam through agroforestry systems.



Agroforestry model of AFLI project-by Ha Van Tiep

Different on-farm agroforestry trials, from simple to complex systems were designed and tested. Initial evaluation in terms of economic and environmental benefits of the tested system has been carried out.

Suitable agroforestry options for each agro-ecological zone have been suggested taking into consideration the biophysical and socio-economic conditions of the region.

The plan of R4D Platform activities in 2016

- The third R4D Platform meeting will be organized in early October in Son La province. The aims of this meeting are to share and further promote the innovations of the Cluster 4 research project and other activities implemented in Northwest Vietnam under Humidtropics in 2016 and discuss possible next steps of the R4D Platform. More information about this meeting will be sent in due course.
- Cluster 4 research project will focus on the following activities:
 - Maintain innovations in 2015 such as integrated upland farming systems, nutrient management for coffee, and so on.
 - Promote safe vegetable production and establish market linkage for safe vegetable products in Muong Bon commune
 - Farmer field day (planned for mid-June)
 - Identify and scale-up the successful innovations to other households.

For more information, please contact us

Dr. Ha Van Tiep, R4D Platform Facilitator

Email: havantiep@gmail.com

Dr. Hiwasaki Lisa, Flagship Manager, Humidtropics Central Mekong Action Area

Email: L.Hiwasaki@cgiar.org

Dr. Hoang Thi Lua, Project Field Coordinator

Email: H.Lua@cgiar.org