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Part II: Yearly Report of MECO-
ECOTRA's Thematic Networks and
SPERI's Departments

Laos-Thailand-Vietnam Traditional Cultural Herbal Network

Laos-Thailand-Vietnam Network on Traditional Cultural Herbal Medicine has been working on the three interlinked core values: herbal spirits, indigenous knowledge in using herbal plants and biodiversity governance. The network in the name of eco-dependent ethnic groups (EDEGs) includes H'mong, Thai, Khmu, Dzao in Laos and Vietnam.

The network is seen as a strategic action-based initiative in cultural biodiversity preservation (CBP) and livelihoods security of the EDEGs in Mekong region.

During 2006-09, the network has cooperated strongly with farmers field schools (FFSs) of SPERI to provide practical training on knowledge, ethics, and skills in using, managing herbal resources in the sustainable manner for minority youths.

In July 2008, the Network has connected with healers from Thailand at a seminar on civil society perspective in Mekong region.

The current need of the network is to urge for lobby and advocating for community right on herbal medicine forests. Moreover is how to set up and running community-based herbal enterprises?



Acronyms

DECODE:	Department of Community Development
CHFs:	Community Herbal Forest
CIRUM:	Center for Cultural Identity and Natural Resource Management
CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
HM:	Herbal Medicine
DHC	Dzao ethnic Herbal Cooperative of Ba Vi commune, Ba Vi district, Ha Noi city ¹
MECO-ECOTRA: Mekong Minority Community Networking for Ecological Trading	
TEW:	Towards Ethnic Women
FFSs:	Farmers Field Schools
OD:	Organizational Development
ID:	Institutional Development
CIRD:	Center for Indigenous Knowledge Research and Development
L-VTHEN:	Lao-Viet Traditional Cultural Herbal Network
L-VCBO:	Lao-Viet Healer Board

¹ According to National Assembly's resolution on merging Ha Tay province into Hanoi city, Ba Vi district belongs to Hanoi city since August 2008.

Introduction

Laos-Thailand-Vietnam Traditional Cultural Herbal Network (LVTHEN) has continued its internal and external cooperation activities, thus addressed outcomes and impacts during this period (July 2008 to June 2009). The network aims at determination of traditional values, particularly those of herbal wisdoms of ethnic minorities in the watershed, their land and forest rights for preservation of herbal resources as well as livelihood security.

Specific objective of the network for this period is to 1) offer favourable conditions for leaders / coordinators to set up strategic action and coordinate activities by the network; 2) provide advices and support for the network to act for community land and forest rights, including the rights to preserve and use of herbs; 3) facilitate cooperation between herbal network and formal healthcare sector, so that to recognize the role of traditional herbal healers at the grassroots; 4) set up training curricula and strengthen network members' training capacity on herbal garden at FFSs.

LVTHEN's Networking of Action

Bridging L-VTHEN and Thailand partners



Nine herbal healer elders from Laos, Vietnam, four Thai researchers, one Black Thai student, one researcher from Ho Chi Minh Academy of Thought and four SPERI staff have attended the workshop on civil society and herbal values during from 21st to 22nd July 2008.

Thai researchers shared their facts, experiences of herbal maintainance and herbal network in Northeast of Thailand, their effects and influeces to local authorities. Such network experiences of

herbal wisdom transmission from old to younger generations (e.g. herbal healers boil herbs and offer to children to taste, or elders share traditional herbal discriptions for mother and children); set up sauna room, investigate herbs in the forest, the way to get sound payment from patients and maintain traditional ceremonies, worship for herbal spirits.

Ms. Panarath, said: "Before Thai legal system did not allow herbal healers to practice their traditional knowledge, so they tried to overcome difficulties. They gather elderly herbal healers to protect forest, herb species and transfer knowledge to younger generations. With patient efforts, they have attained formal recognition for four years".

We could not require good policy immediately; we would be accepted formally if we had done well. We have to prepare and practice first. We may set up little brochure for herbal medicine and our wisdoms. Without brochure, practicing herbal healers may be bothered or arrested by the police. Then, we clarified our knowledge, effects, and support

organizations on the brochure. That made state officers feel safe, and then they allow traditional herbal healers to practice. In order to stimulate herbal healer practice and effects, we need to maintain our cultural identity, use herbal vegetables everyday - sharing by Dr. Komatra.

Such Thai researchers' sharing have stimulated Laotian and Vietnamese herbal healers to feel easier against their real situation of the shortage of granted certificate for medicine and healthcare profession.

Integrate herbal knowledge into FFSs



Training and practicing herbal knowledge is one of essential theme at different FFSs. Multifunctional trees for disease prevention and treatment or herbal vegetables are planted at Human Ecology Practice Area (HEPA) in Huong Son district, Ha Tinh province. SPERI staff and students carried out inventory, classification of herbs at HEPA during July 2008. They recognized 8 wooden herbal species, 9 grass herbal species and 4 other vegetable-herbal species.

Si Ma Cai herbal healer network has regularly integrated their meeting and sharing knowledge with young students of K6B in at FFS-Si Ma Cai. They cooperate with young students to plant 35 different species of herbs (20 species are resettled and 15 others are contributed by herbal healers) at the community herbal garden of FFS. Those herbal species are good for health and treatment of back-ache, broken bone, stomachache, etc. This kind of activity becomes essential part of FFS curricula. They do not merely contain practical skills of a certain young farmer; moreover, they contribute to preservation of ethnic minority cultural values and wisdoms.

Determine community rights through Pa Co community herbal forest

Base on community initiative, herbal network of Black Thai healers in Hanh Dich commune, Que Phong district, Nghe An province set up a plan for preserving and using of herbal species in 2.5 ha of forest in Pa Co village. This plan was sent to and approved by Hanh Dich communal authority. The herbal healers suggest SPERI for advice for their carrying out the plan. The herbal healer addressed three steps of actions to obtain herbal forest recognition and protection. Firstly, herbal healers went to the forest together to make initial inventory and exploration of herbal resources and made border line of the area. Secondly, they recognized every herb by Thai and Vietnamese names, and created larger border line of 2.5 m width, so that they would be easy to visit and protect herbal forest. Thirdly, herbal healers, villagers and local authorities discussed to set up community regulation of protection and management of community herbal forest. This regulation would be informed to all people, who live inside and outside of the village after the approval by the communal authority.

The herbal healers have made forest border, recognized herbal species in Pa Co community herbal forest in January 2009 according to their plan. Communal authority have helped them to do mapping, so that to specify their rights and obligations for herbal forest protection and management. The herbal healers also collaborate with a SPERI staff and 3 young Thai ethnic students from class K1A of HEPA to take pictures and take description of 113 herbal species, which exist in Pa Co community herbal forest.

Broaden exchanging scope for Si Ma Cai herbal healers



14 H'mong ethnic herbal healers (including one director of district healthcare department) from Si Ma Cai district, Lao Cai province participated in a study tour to Dzao ethnic Herbal Cooperative of Ba Vi commune, Ba Vi district, Ha Noi city² (DHC) and Doi Can commune, Tuyen Quang provincial town, Tuyen Quang province and exchange with herbal healers there during from April 13th to 16th 2009.

Participants learnt experiences of establishment, organization of DHC, which was initiated by Dzao herbal healers. The hosts and guests discussed on values of herbal recourses for biodiversity as well as local livelihood security and environment. Mr. Leu Van Trong, leader of DHC told about effective of herbal knowledge sharing that, "we live here for hundreds of years, but we have not shared knowledge to each other well for the first 80 years, then we accelerate

sharing in recent 20 years. That brought in great positive changes, as you see our cooperative, our life, our forest and nature nowadays".

Si Ma Cai herbal healers had chances to learn from members of the healthcare service in Doi Can commune, Tuyen Quang province how to make planning, classify herbal into different sections. From experiences and sharing of local herbal healers, those from Si Ma Cai recognized threats of losing land, community and household forest because of industrial zones or mining industry.

Thanks to observing and sharing with experienced hosts of the study tour, Si Ma Cai herbal healers discussed, reviewed and pointed out the need for enrichment of herbal garden, preservation of herbal knowledge and customary laws on herbs, practice of such traditional ceremonies as 'Nao Long' for protection of community (herbal) forest simultaneously. Mr. Hoang Minh Hang, said: Dzao in Ba Vi and herbal healers in Doi Can have built up very nice herbal gardens already. If we do not enrich our garden as good as theirs, we will be very ashamed if others come to visit us later".

² According to National Assembly resolution, Ba Vi district belongs to new extended Hanoi city since August 2008.

Si Ma Cai herbal healers discussed to set up action plan right after the study tour. They will report results and lesson learnt from the trip to local authority, local healthcare staff and members of herbal groups. They will contribute herbal species to plant at Sin Cheng community herbal garden and attach description card for each species, so that to make that garden become a pilot model. The herbal healers focused on strengthening values and effect of traditional 'Nao Long' ceremony, to prevent from damaging trees by human and cattle, so that to protect generally forest and particularly community herbal forest.

Maintain sharing activities among Si Ma Cai healers



One-year-evaluation workshop of Si Ma Cai herbal healer network was organized at FFS_Nan San in Si Ma Cai district on November 27th 2008. Despite remote distance and hard weather the coordinating board of the network (including elder Sung Seo Nha, Hoang Seo Cau and Ly A La) worked very actively and effectively. They check, stimulate and support network members regularly. They maintain sharing activities among coordination board on the date of 8th every month. Recently, Si Ma Cai

district has 50 herbal healer members in 12 working herbal groups at 12 out of 13 communes in the district.

According to data from reviewing report of the network, their members have provided successful treatment to 172 patients, successful treatment to 10 buffaloes and 2 pigs during 2008. They set up and are maintaining 34 household herbal gardens and 6 herbal gardens at communal healthcare centers. Total herbal species growing in herbal healers' garden are aggregated to 2,630 turns, i.e. an increase of 280 turns in comparison to data of 2007. Network leaders lobbied the authorities in Sin Cheng commune to allocate one community herbal forest to the herbal healer group this year. That means so far the network have been allocated 3 community herbal forest (in communes of Can Ho, Lung Sui and Sin Cheng). According to rapid inventory by the herbal healers, total herbal species was aggregated to 260 turns in those three communal herbal forests. Seeing effective from the network activities, communal authorities paid more interest and support, especially those of Man Than, Sin Cheng and Can Ho communes. Recently, Sin Cheng communal People's Committee is ready and willingly to allocate one more community herbal forest to herbal healer groups.

Some stubborn illness is unable to treat by formal healthcare system, and then the patients have to come back their home. However, our herbal healers have provided successful treatment. The case of Mr. Tran Seo Cuoi, a district policeman is one of those kinds of example.

Si Ma Cai herbal healers identified their weakness, i.e. transmission of their herbal knowledge to younger generation, or book keeping, updating data/ records of treatment and patients, so they could not gain sound profile.

In January 2009, all Sin Cheng herbal healer group members worked to build up one community herbal forest in Ngai Phong Cho village. They have planted herbs on a half of the forest area. Because of shortage of herbal seeds, they planned to require herbal healers from other groups to contribute seeds and plant there later.

Herbal healer group members of Man Than commune helped each other to build up and upgrade herbal garden. For instance, they contributed labor to make fence, plant herbal species and take care for herbal garden of Mr. Leu Seo Lung, so 76 herbal species are growing well in that garden recently. Communal leaders are interested in encouraging group activities. For instance, communal party leader contributed VND 100,000 when he attended the meeting of the group. The members have provided treatment to many human patients and also animals in 2008, but they could not record because they are unable to write. Herbal garden of Mr. Su consists of 69 herbal species while that of Mr. Sang contains 40 species. However, those species are integrated into such various areas as vegetable garden or nursery.

Study tour for Laotian herbal healers and local authorities



The participants were interested in learning and sharing experiences of formation and development of herbal groups, maintain traditional customary laws for natural resources management and maintain herbal resources and knowledge.

Si Ma Cai district leaders and herbal healers warmly received, shared with Laotian friends. The participants understood disadvantages caused by shortage of forest and efforts of H'mong

people in keeping their forest base on their own 'Nao Long' ceremony, sacred forest and customary laws. If such pilot models as community forest in communes of Sin Cheng, Can Ho, Can Cau are spread out, Si Ma Cai district will be able to achieve their goals of reforestation and prevention of desertification as well as improvement of livelihood.

Laotian participants visited 'Nao Long' community forest of Pho Cu village of Si Ma Cai commune, Can Chu Su village of Can Cau commune and Ta Can Ho village of Can Ho commune and discussed about customary-based community forest protection.

The participants visited FFS_Nan San in Simacai district, where ethnic elders and youths share knowledge, skills to set up land planning, landscape design, terraces and practice integrated crops. Laotian friends offered some of their indigenous seeds as teak, vegetables and suggested FFS Nan San give them seeds of indigenous pine at suitable time.

To compare Si Ma Cai (shortage of forest) to HEPA (available forest), the participants saw different approach and solutions to challenges, so that to achieve common goal for improvement of organic agriculture.

FFS_Nan San and HEPA helped to generate initiatives from Laotian herbal healers and local authorities. They suggested CHESH-Lao and SPERI to start and develop a field school in Laos, so that to adapt curriculum to their specific situation and they are ready to support this activities.



The participants visited model of herbal processing and herbal product for sauna, club of handicraft in Ta Phin commune, Sa Pa district, Lao Cai province. This created food for their thought of possible linkage of herbal healers for herbal product and its market in the future.

Laotian participants learnt experiences of good cooperation and support between herbal healer network and formal healthcare system, local authority of Hanh Dich commune, Que Phong district, Nghe An province. Herbal healer network were supported by formal healthcare system, so that to maintain and develop their activities even after the reduction of SPERI support. Village-level community forest is allocated to herbal healers, so that they could actively manage, protect and use herbal resource in a sound way. On the other hand, formal healthcare system obtains good appreciation from higher level and outsiders thanks to their support and integrates traditional herbal medicine to common healthcare interest.

Organizational Development - OD

L-VTHEN

L-VCBO has maintained their relation and share information through linkage by SPERI staff. At the workshop between herbal healers and researchers from Laos, Thailand and Vietnam in July 2008, the participants discussed solutions for preservation and promotion of herbal species and herbal knowledge. They understood and agreed with each other that, professional certificate create favorable conditions for the granted herbal healers. However, they are able to maintain their knowledge and practice if they address and ensure their sound treatment service, good book keeping and brochure for their job even they are not yet granted certificates.

Study tours and workshop discussion helped the whole network and each members gain more herbal knowledge and mobility to compete for protection and promotion of their herbal knowledge, herbal garden or forest at both household and community levels.

Herbal healer network of Si Ma Cai district, Lao Cai province

Although, Si Ma Cai herbal healers' sharing activities are not as much as previous period, but they try to improve substantial, practical quality for each action. Each communal herbal healer group voted one leader representative to involve in consolidation and review of the group operation (e.g. herbal garden management). That representative is

responsible to report, share and join cross checking with other communal representatives. One district coordination board was set up, which consists of 3 herbal healer elders, who are responsible for three different parts of the district and one new young follower.

Note taking and documentation of Si Ma Cai herbal healer network was done by SPERI staff during previous period. To respond to the network's need for better independent and active initiatives, participants of the yearly review workshop agreed to vote Ly A Dung as a new young follower member of coordination board in November 2008. Ly A Dung is a former student of FFS - Si Ma Cai. He is very enthusiastic, willing to join network activities and learn. After graduation from FFS, he tries to integrate network activities with his work in the commune.

Herbal healer network of Hanh Dich commune, Que Phong district, Nghe An province

As cooperative promotion and integration with the communal formal healthcare centre, herbal healer network of Hanh Dich have accepted the name '*Chi hoi Dong y*' or Branch of Oriental Medicine Association. However they keep their own organizational character with independent initiatives and operation. They set up group of herbal healers at some villages which contain many herbal healers. There are 3 members in communal coordination board, who represent for the network to bridge and cooperate with communal authority, formal healthcare centre. They also visit, share and stimulate network members to maintain, promote herbal knowledge, community herbal forest and household herbal garden. They assign duty and replace each other to work in turn at communal healthcare centre, so that they can direct check and provide treatments or introduce patients to other suitable herbal healers.

As reforming strategy of SPERI, its professional strengthening, SPERI staff reduces their supportive role towards MECO-ECOTRA in general and herbal healer network of Hanh Dich commune in particular while the network increase their capacity, self-control and co-responsibility. SPERI shifts their function from coordination to advising, from advising to bridging and co-research, and then they will become strategic partners for development together.

During this reforming process, Hanh Dich communal herbal healer network found it difficult to get sufficient budget for operation of the network, or meals for coordination board members to investigate, protect herbal forest, or to make inventory of the herbal resources. To solve this, the network leaders had suggested communal people's committee for support, and then the committee offered the network coordination board 800,000 VND. In September 2008, the communal People's Council appealed call to all 600 households of 11 villages to get agreement of contribution of 1 kg of rice per household per year, so that to support herbal network.

DHC in Ba Vi commune, Ba Vi district, Hanoi

The foundation of DHC in November 2008 addressed sound trend of MECO-ECOTRA reform. Mr. Leu Van Trong, a former coordinator of key-farmer network lead local Dzao people for the cooperative foundation without any financial support from SPERI. Mr. Trong and Dzao herbal healers set up their own strategy, found out and developed suitable cooperative members then worked with different organizations and authorities for completion of the cooperative legal status, including certificate for setting up and

operation of the cooperative and the approved Charter of the cooperative. This type of self-responsible, self-controllable action was rarely observed before 2004, when key-farmer network operated with TEW/ CHESH/ CIRD support.

Mr. Trong and his cooperative gain cooperation and support from Vietnam Science and Technology Institute, then they set up a website³ to scale up domestic and international contacts and cooperation.

Abundant experiences from participation in key-farmer network offered great contribution to confidence and success of Mr. Leu Van Trong and his cooperative. Mr. Trong said: “Thank to working with TEW and key-farmer network, I have shared several types of knowledge and learnt a lot. Those are useful for me to apply to my cooperative nowadays”. Mr. Trong’s idea and the follow-up implementation process of setting up herbal cooperative have rooted from Mr. Trong’s experiences of research and coordination of key-farmer network. Improved vision and experiences of network leader made Mr. Trong confident to deal with cooperative difficulties. Previously, Mrs. Trieu Thi Hoa worked as leader of savings and credit group for herbal garden and preservation of herbal wisdom. Now Mrs. Hoa becomes supervision member for the cooperative. She said: “TEW offered me several study tours and making herbal inventory. So, I know more about herbs in different areas. After study tours and sharing with others, I recognized that our Dzao people have abundant herbal species that may help to maintain our Dzao herbal wisdoms”.

Institutional Development - ID

Herbal healers’ network of Si Ma Cai district changed their organization and operation in a better effective way. The healers decided to regular meeting of the coordinator board at different communes for cross-check, exchange and, learn each other. For instance, they held meeting in Man Than commune in October, then they did that in Sin Cheng commune in March 2009.

Network of herbal healers in Hanh Dich commune, Que Phong district, Nghe An province set up their regulations of herbal forest protection, mechanism for cooperation between the network, local people, communal healthcare service and authority for forest protection. Herbal healers in Pom Om village offered initiative of making sign on big trees in the herbal forest, so that to prevent outsiders from cutting those trees. On the other hand, they will be easy to see their cut trees and be able to apply their regulations against violators. Base on community regulations, herbal healers are entitled to solve problems relating to herbal forest actively. The case will only be brought to communal authority whenever the network is unable to solve.

DHC in Ba Vi commune set up mechanism for benefit sharing in addition to clear mechanism of operation and membership. They calculate and pay around 20% of the product (for instance, distilled liquid herb for nasal inflammation) to pay the owner of the wisdom. Besides, they make regular free health check and reduce treatment payment for the poor in the commune.

³ www.sanvatbavi.com.vn ; Email: sanvatbavi@gmail.com

Outcomes of the Networking Action

So far L-VTHEN created specific strengths for each region and the whole network, which help not only sharing within the network, but also socialize perception of traditional herbal wisdom and lobby for community land and forest rights. For instance, community herbal forest of Long Lan, Xiang Da or Nam Kha of Luang Prabang, Laos set up their own community regulation on forest protection; therefore it offered good foundation to set up inter-village regulation later. Herbal healers' group of On Oc village, Muong Lum commune, Yen Chau district, Son La province-Vietnam pioneered pilot model of setting up room for illness check and treatment for far boarding patients. H'mong elder healers of Long Lan in Luang Prabang, Laos, or Pho Cu, or Ta Can Ho village of Si Ma Cai district, Lao Cai province, Vietnam applied traditional customary laws on preservation of sacred and herbal forest. Sacred forest is strictly protected by local people, and no one dare to cut trees there. Whoever wants to collect some herbs in the forest, she/he has to offer joss-stick to worship forest spirits according to customary laws.

Study tour and experience sharing multiple herbal knowledge and herbal transferring to other area, on the other hand, new ideas, initiatives are accelerated and applied by different localities in a positive competitive manner. After each study tour each herbal healer take three or more species of herbs from study field to their home to plant, i.e. they contribute to enrich bio-diversity. Thanks to sharing and learning of such ceremonies as 'Nao Long', 'Nao Song' or 'Tong Xenh'⁴, elder Lambaylo (H'mong group) in Laos intended to organize a 'Nao Song' ceremony at a sacred forest, so that to preserve herbal resources on his 8-ha farm nearby Vientiane, Laos.

DHC of Ba Vi commune is a good example of herbal use for livelihood security and contribution to forest protection. During her speech to herbal healers from Si Ma Cai district, Ms. Trieu Thi Hoa said: "please do not prefer maize or peanut to destroy forest. If you obtain herbal knowledge, you may develop acacia and integrate herbs into. According to our experience, herbs may integrate to acacia forest. It will help you to improve your income rapidly. Forest bring livelihood to all, so it is really golden. We should not harm or make wound to forest. Whenever you improve forest, it will bring you happiness".

The network attained sound indicators thanks to consistent maintenance of herbal forest, herbal garden and knowledge. Mr. Leu Van Trong said: "8,000 ha out of 11,000 ha of Ba Vi national park was bare hill twenty years ago. Nowadays, this 11,000 ha is reforested. Clearing trees for cultivation, one may get 2.5 tons of rice per year. If we keep forest for herbal purposes, we may gain an equivalence of 5 tons of rice per year while forest is still maintained and our live is stable".

⁴ Traditional festivals of H'mong people aim to educate young generation, to strengthen traditional institution for natural resources management, forest protection and community administration.

Impacts of the Networking Action



Promotion of herbal knowledge for local healthcare and good cooperation between traditional knowledge and formal healthcare service are a strong point of Hanh Dich commune. Therefore, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Kieu, head of healthcare service of Hanh Dich commune was invited to national healthcare successful emulation conference. He said: "I go there not for reporting achievement. I want to do something to get benefit to the community. I would feel sorry if I could not complete sound responsibility of the

head of the healthcare service or merely do little support for herbal healers".

Recognition of herbal healers' contribution to achievement of healthcare service, Hanh Dich communal leaders and healthcare service offer regular support of VND 80,000 per month to herbal healers' network. Besides, the communal People's Council appealed a call to all villagers to get a support of 3 kg of rice per household per year.

Dealing with lobby strategy, Mr. Leu Van Trong (manager of DHC of Ba Vi commune) said: "the Government approved our local 280 species of herbs to be included in national herbal list. Our cooperative tries to work well, so that Dzao herbal wisdoms and prescriptions will be formally recognized as their intellectual property rights". The cooperative has built up its first image and broadened relationship with both domestic and foreign partners. "Whenever saying about herbs of Dzao people in Ba Vi, many agents and people even from France, America know and try to contact us. One French company offered a contract of purchasing thousands of tons of *Mo Trang* herb, but we have refused" (Mr. Leu Van Trong's information). That means the cooperative has recognized its own function and capacity clearly, that is suitable to its own situation.

Through maintenance and practice of herbal species, herbal knowledge, Ba Vi cooperative and its members helped local authorities, national park staff and policy makers to recognize the value of knowledge of this herbal resources, which contribute effectively not only to bio-diversity, but also diversity of culture and livelihood security of local people. Reply to a question raised by a staff from Institute of Science Technology that: "why don't you think of forest and rice cultivation?" Mr. Leu Van trong said: "Herbs are essential to our life. While such outsiders as national park harvest VND 10 billion per year from big-tree wood, our Dzao people can also harvest VND 10 billion from small herbal grass, bushes under those big trees. So who are more effective in forest protection?"

Networking of Action to 2010

Lesson learnt, experiences of herbal promotion, outcomes and impacts of the herbal network should be evaluated, studied and documented. The outputs of this activity will be used for Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and other formal vocational schools. With developed curriculum of herbal knowledge, we will determine values of herbs for strategic knowledge transformation from elders to younger generation in the future.

Process canvass in reality of herbal groups, not least H'mong herbal healers shows close combination, performance between traditional medicine network and community customary law. Through ceremonies of 'Nao Song', 'Nao Long' or 'Tong Xenh', community builds and spread customary law for conservation of forest generally and herbal sources in particular.

Cooperation with communal leaders, communal healthcare system supported remaining 6 remaining villages for community forest allocation to traditional herbal group will create pilot model as Hanh Dich is the first commune to achieve forest allocation to community. This will make good model for experience sharing and lobby for community rights in the future.

Pilot model of DHC of Ba Vi commune, Hanoi and herbal company of Ta Phin village, Lao Cai province should be thoroughly studied. Interaction between cultural value, traditional knowledge protection and herbal production, the approach to market, local stable livelihood, and bio-diversity is dilemma issues, which need further analysis and advice from SPERI. If this strategy is good, this will create good background for policy lobby for better community rights for watershed forest protection in Vietnam, Mekong region generally and herbal forest protection in each community particularly.