

**Project title: Promoting ethnic minorities participation in medicinal plant conservation.**

**Project duration:** 10/2022 to 7/2023

**Geographical area of the project:** Thuong Lo Commune, Nam Dong District, Thua Thien Hue Province.

**Project idea:**

## 1. Background

Thua Thien Hue province has abundant medicinal plants with 1,126 species, and 117 families belonging to 4 kinds of plants with medicinal value. These medicinal resources are mainly concentrated in the forest areas of Nam Dong and A Luoi. Thuong Lo is one of communes of Nam Dong district located in the buffer zone of Bach Ma National Park. The total forest area of commune is at 9,183.77 hectares (accounting for 89.21% of total natural area) and the percentage of forest cover is about 90%, where there is availability of medicinal species such as *Coscinium fenestratum*; *Fibraurea tinctoria*; *Heterosmilax gaudichaudiana*; *Tacca integrifolia*; *Peliossanthes teta*; *Rauwolfia verticillate*. Thuong Lo commune is home to 341 households of which 93.5% are ethnic minority ones. The commune population is at 1,230 people who have forestry dependent livelihood activities. Harvesting medicinal plant is a traditional practice of these households, which the plants are both used to treat diseases and market for households' income. Resources of medicinal plants in Thua Thien Hue in general as well as in Thuong Lo commune, in particular, are being severely reduced, and some rare species have been identified as endangered such as *Acanthopanax trifoliatum*, and *Anoectochilus setaceus* Blume, *Ardisia silvestris*, *Fibraurea tinctoria*, *Rauwolfia verticillate*. The underlying cause of this decline in medicinal plant resources is the lack of participation of local communities in the conservation of medicinal plant resources. The main barriers limiting community participation include: (i) people are not fully aware of the role and importance of

biodiversity conservation as well as the conservation of medicinal plant resources; people and communities lack technical knowledge on sustainable development and harvest of medicinal plants; (ii) The community does not have the capacity to initiate and promote conservation actions.

The project " Promoting ethnic minorities participation in medicinal plant conservation" will be carried out in Thuong Lo commune, expected from October 2022 to July 2023. The project is to contribute to the conservation of medicinal plant resources by promoting people's participation in conservation work, with three specific outputs: (1) Raise people's awareness of the role and the importance of conserving biodiversity as well as conserving medicinal plant resources; (2) Improve the technical capacity of people and communities on management, development and sustainable use of medicinal plant resources; (3) Promote community actions to conserve medicinal plants, especially rare and endangered species. Accordingly, the project's activities include 03 groups: the communication group builds people's awareness; the training, technical support group improves technical capacity for people and communities; and a group implements community actions including rare medicinal plants collection, storage and propagation, guard patrol, etc. The project will be implemented with at least 600 people from 330 ethnic minority households, of which at least 30% are women, and 50% are young people

## **2. Main purpose and expected results:**

### ***2.1. Main purpose***

- a) Main purpose: Contributing to the conservation of medicinal plant resources by promoting the participation of local ethnic minority communities.
- b) Specific objectives of the project:

- Raising awareness for the ethnic minority community of the role and importance of biodiversity conservation as well as conservation of medicinal plant resources.
- Improve technical capacity for ethnic minority people and communities on management, development and sustainable use of medicinal plant resources.
- Promote the implementation of community actions to conserve medicinal plants.

### ***2.2. Expected results:***

- Result 1: At least 600 ethnic minority people (at least 30% are women) who understand the role and importance of BD and conservation of medicinal plants with supportive attitudes.
- Result 2: 300 people (at least 40% are women) who are members of Community Forest Management Boards (CFMBs), Village Women's Unions, Village Youth Unions have access to knowledge about management, development and sustainable use of medicinal plants; Among them, at least 200 people apply this knowledge and effectively implement conservation activities for medicinal plants.
- Result 3: At least 5 species of endangered medicinal plants at risk of extinction in the locality are collected, stored and propagated and planted in the area of 2,350 ha of forest where the distribution of medicinal plants is managed, well protected and sustainably harvested.

### ***2.3. Target groups and ultimate beneficiaries (disaggregated by gender):***

The direct beneficiaries of the project are 600 people from 330 ethnic minority households in Thuong Lo commune, Nam Dong district. These are households participating in 16 forest management communities and groups, including at least 250 women.

In addition, staff of Agriculture and Rural Development Department, district forest ranger, district Agricultural Technical Center, and commune officials in charge of commune agriculture and forestry will benefit from the knowledge, methods and experience provided by the projects.

### 3. Specific action plan for project implementation

Time	Description of activities	Indicators	Name of implementing unit
	<b>Description</b>		
	<p><b>Activities to accomplish goal 1:</b> Raise awareness for the ethnic minority community about the role and importance of biodiversity conservation as well as conservation of medicinal plant resources.</p>		
<p>April 2, 2023</p>	<p><b><i>Activity 1.1 Conduct surveys on the distribution of indigenous medicinal plants in community forest areas.</i></b></p> <p>The purpose of this activity is to determine the distribution of precious medicinal plants that are at risk of degradation in the forest areas of the community. A survey team will be established with 10 people: 2 CRD staff, 1 technical consultant, 1 Nam Dong district ranger in charge of the forest area in Thuong Lo commune, and 1 assistant officer. agriculture and forestry in Thuong Lo commune, and 5 representatives of the community forest management group. This survey team will receive prior guidance on identification of medicinal plants, survey techniques and survey routes, and safety issues during survey</p>	<p>1 report on the results of the review in which at least 5 medicinal plants are at risk of extinction.</p>	<p>CRD staff, consultants and community</p>

	implementation.		
2 - 5/2023	<p><b><i>Activity 1.2 Prepare a manual for the identification of rare and endangered medicinal species.</i></b></p> <p>This document will help people identify rare and precious medicinal plants for management and protection. The document will provide real images collected from activity 1.1 along with specific descriptions but simple and easy to understand for people to easily use. Expert knowledge and experience in medicinal plants and botanical taxonomy will be invited to develop this document.</p>	1 manual was compiled and distributed 400 volumes. At least 90% of ethnic minority households have access to this handbook.	Local CRD staff, counselors and elderly people
2- 5/2023	<p><b><i>Activity 1.3 Dissemination of awareness about medicinal plants</i></b></p> <p>This activity will be combined with the activity through integration with local tree planting and biodiversity day events. The project will integrate to propagate biodiversity through the cultivation of medicinal plants in combination with activities 3.3 and 2.</p> <p>Nam Dong district's annual program is the tree</p>	2 propaganda waves, each session has about 70-100 people, of which 30-50 are women	Nam Dong District Forest Protection Department

	planting festival in February and biodiversity day in May.		
	<b>Activities to accomplish goal 2:</b> Improve the technical capacity for ethnic minority people and communities on management, development and sustainable use of medicinal plant resources.		
10-11/2022	<p><b><i>Activity 2.1: Organize training on BD conservation knowledge and medicinal plants for key groups</i></b></p> <p>The project will organize 1 training course (2 days/course) to provide knowledge to the core members of CMBs, village Women's Unions so that they have enough knowledge to disseminate to local people. The content of the training course focused on providing knowledge related to biodiversity, guiding monitoring, evaluation and data entry into forms for monitoring related to biodiversity. After being trained, these core members are responsible for disseminating BD conservation knowledge to households participating in community forest management.</p>	1 training material, 1 training class 25 students in which at least 10-15 are female	CRD officer, consultant
11-12/2022	<p><b><i>Activity 2.2 Organizing knowledge dissemination sessions on biodiversity conservation and medicinal plants for households participating in CFM.</i></b></p> <p>The aim is to help local people understand about</p>	11 popular sessions 330 people representing ethnic minority	CRD officers and the community

	<p>biodiversity conservation and medicinal plants, thereby effectively participating in conservation work. The project will support to organize 11 knowledge sharing sessions on biodiversity conservation for 330 households participating in community forest management in Thuong Lo commune. Representatives of Community Forest Management Boards and Village Women's Unions who have been trained in activities 2.1 and 2.2 will disseminate information with the support of CRD staff.</p>	<p>households, of which at least 30% are women</p>	
2-3/2023	<p><b><i>Activity 2.3 Organizing technical training on planting and caring for medicinal plants</i></b></p> <p>The project will organize a 2-day training course at the community nursery to equip the knowledge of propagation techniques by cuttings and growing medicinal plants for the management team of indigenous seedling gardens so that they can apply and propagate successfully. It is expected that there will be 20 students (of which at least 30% are women). This is a group member managing the community native plant nursery and community members. The training content focuses on tree collection techniques: breeding, propagation; planting and care techniques;</p>	<p>1 training document 1 training class 20 practitioners, of which at least 30% are women.</p>	<p>CRD staff, consultants and community</p>
	<p><b>Activities to accomplish goal 3:</b> Promote community actions to conserve medicinal plants.</p>		

<p>2- 6/2023</p>	<p><b><i>Activity 3.1 Launching the collection of medicinal plants</i></b></p> <p>The purpose is to preserve precious medicinal plants at risk of extinction. Combined with forest patrols, the project organizes the collection of medicinal plants. Each collection consists of 10 participants, there are</p> <p>At least 5 species of medicinal plants are collected and stored in the community's native plant nursery.</p>	<p>4 collections</p> <p>There are at least 5 types of medicinal plants that are cultivated and preserved</p> <p>40 members participated in the collection</p>	<p>CRD staff, consultants and community</p>
<p>June 2, 2023</p>	<p><b><i>Activity 3.2 Propagation of medicinal plants at community nurseries</i></b></p> <p>Five medicinal species after being collected in activity 3.1 will be planted in an existing community nursery in Thuong Lo commune. From these, CRD's experts will guide 6 core members who are responsible for managing the nursery to propagate plants. Some other medicinal plants will be taken care of to keep the seed source at the community nursery.</p>	<p>600 seedlings are propagated from medicinal plants</p>	<p>CRD technical staff, 6 members are assigned to manage the community incubator</p>
<p>October 2022- April 2023</p>	<p><b><i>Activity 3.3 Implement the movement of planting/zoned medicinal plants under the forest canopy</i></b></p> <p>Community nurseries will provide seedlings for planting under the forests of the communities. It is expected that there will be 2 campaigns to plant</p>	<p>2 times of planting trees/zoned, 300 plants/time. 30 members</p>	<p>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development /Agricultural</p>



	<p>medicinal plants, integrated into the annual tree planting festival and biodiversity day, chaired by the District Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. There will be 30 representative members of the community forest management team participating in each planting session, of which 10-15 members are women.</p>	<p>(10 women)/batch</p>	<p>Service Center of Nam Dong district, community group</p>
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#### 4. Sustainability of the project

##### *4.1. Sustainability of the project:*

*Linking biodiversity conservation and income to create motivation for project beneficiaries to maintain the operation of the model after the project ends:* Beneficiary households' participation in the propagation of 5 species of medicinal plants as described above not only creates a source of seeds for biodiversity conservation but also creates income opportunities through providing products to organizations, programs, and projects.

*Applying a participatory approach as a prerequisite for the maintenance and development of medicinal plant nurseries:* Currently, in Thuong Lo commune, there are 16 communities participating in forest protection management, and each group has its own operating regulations. At the same time, the operation of the community incubator also has related regulations. One of the interventions of the project is to increase the participation of these 16 groups in combination with inheriting the regulations related to community incubator management, which will create a positive effect in the management and use of the incubator. community to maintain the operation of this model

*Mobilizing the participation of stakeholders as a basis for replicating the conservation model of medicinal plants:* During the implementation process of the project activities, the participation of stakeholders including the district Department of Agriculture and Rural

Development, the district agricultural technical centre is mobilized, thus introducing and coordinating with the above units to maintain and replicate the model after the project ends. In addition, communication products, manuals, and documentation from project activities will serve as a basis for sharing knowledge with communities inside and outside the commune implementing the project. Through this, the community has better access to knowledge related to the sustainable harvest and use of medicinal herbs, contributing to biodiversity conservation.

*Combining capacity building and practice on conservation of medicinal plants:* Collection of medicinal plants and planting technique, combined with capacity building for ethnic minority communities in sustainable management, harvest and use. Ethnic minority communities in Thuong Lo commune, those who participated in the training in activity 2.1 will be responsible for sharing experiences and seeds for neighboring communities, thus increasing the area of medicinal herbs in Nam Dong district, contributing to the conservation of biodiversity in the district.

### ***4.2. Risks and solutions***

<b><i>Possible risks</i></b>	<b><i>Possibility</i></b>	<b><i>Impact on project activities</i></b>	<b><i>Mitigation solutions</i></b>
Extreme weather	Medium	Big	Forecasting for timely response.
Limited community participation	Unlikely	Big	Perform well the initial propaganda of the project so that the community can see the positive impacts and the value of participating in the project
Herb garden dying out	Medium	Big	Planting at the right time, selecting seeds to ensure growth and high adaptability

Pests	Unlikely	Medium	Regularly check and take timely preventive measures.
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### **5. Contribution to thematic areas of VB4E:**

The project aligns with VB4E's Biodiversity Conservation theme.

### **6. Total budget:**

- 489.189.750 VNĐ (fund already granted)
- 300.000.000 VNĐ (mobilize additional fund for maintain project activities)

*Please contact the coordinator at [VB4EAlliance@gmail.com](mailto:VB4EAlliance@gmail.com) for more information if you are interested in project idea.*