



WWF and IKEA are working together on forests, cotton, water and climate to protect landscapes and enhance biodiversity.



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## FACT SHEET: FORESTS – GREATER MEKONG

# Greater Mekong: resilient supply chains, communities and forest landscapes

The forests of the Greater Mekong provide a habitat for incredible wildlife and support the livelihoods of millions of people. But the Greater Mekong is experiencing some of the highest rates of deforestation and degradation in the world. Threats include agricultural expansion, unsustainable land-use planning and forest management, extractive industries, and trade and policies that prioritize short-term gains over the long-term value of natural capital.

Over the last decade, WWF and IKEA have been working together to transform practices on the ground and source sustainable forest products. From rattan to bamboo to timber, the partnership has supported sustainable forest management across 78,874 hectares in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam. In Viet Nam for example, 19,754 hectares of natural forests and plantations managed by cooperatives, plantation companies and communities are certified according to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard. Today, we are building on these successes to expand sustainable forest management models nationwide by transferring best practices, know-how and experience to others. Our approach with smallholder cooperatives in Viet Nam was also successfully replicated with rubber smallholder plantations in Thailand and resulted in the first FSC latex smallholder group certification in the country.

## WHAT WE PLAN TO ACHIEVE BY 2023

- Expand and strengthen sustainable forest management and certification standards across 83,337 hectares – including 32,470 hectares of FSC-certified natural forests and plantations
- Improve legality and traceability in sustainable timber supply chains, allowing for better linkages to export markets in the EU, US and Japan
- Empower more communities (177 targeted communities and smallholder groups) to become stewards of the forest and develop sustainable forest livelihoods
- Improve knowledge-sharing and dissemination, leading to more government support for sustainable forest management and forest-based livelihoods and training for the next generation of forest landscape managers



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## WHAT WE'RE DOING

### Expanding sustainable forest management

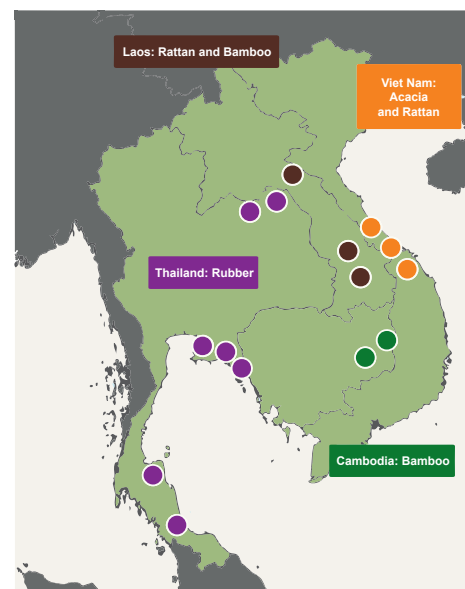
In collaboration with communities, governments, businesses and other partners, we are supporting sustainable forest and plantation management to improve the resilience of forest landscapes. FSC certification provides a benchmark for responsible management, while also offering market incentives for producers to improve their forest management practices. As well as maintaining existing FSC certified forests and plantation areas, we are looking to expand certification by providing capacity building, sharing knowledge and good practices, and demonstrating the benefits of certification. We also advocate for national sustainable forest and plantation policies.

- In Cambodia, the partnership focuses on responsible management of bamboo forests with the aim to increase FSC certified areas of bamboo by 10,000 hectares and protect more than 15,000 hectares of natural forest landscapes.
- In Viet Nam, we work with rattan and acacia timber companies. We successfully demonstrated the economic and environmental benefits of FSC certification for acacia smallholder plantation cooperatives. This model has been recognized by the government and is now being replicated nationwide.
- In Thailand, our work revolves around sustainable rubber plantations and certification of 2,700 hectares, including developing and disseminating guidance to make FSC certification accessible to smallholders.
- In Laos, we are supporting communities to sustainably harvest rattan and bamboo in 31,500 hectares of natural forest, which is generating jobs and incomes for local people.

### Strengthening value chains

As well as improving forest practices on the ground, we help develop a sustainable value chain for both timber and non-timber forest products harvested from natural forests, and timber from plantations. We support 177 small and medium enterprises (SME), processors and companies in Thailand, Viet Nam, Laos and Cambodia to meet the requirements of traceability systems for legal, sustainable products. We are also connecting producers with local and international markets, including IKEA suppliers, and supporting smallholders and communities to retain more profit locally. In both Laos and Cambodia, we are supporting 54 Indigenous communities to improve primary processing of rattan and bamboo and market handicrafts. In Viet Nam, through the FSC smallholders association, we are supporting 81 groups and cooperatives to establish business partnerships with processors and exporters.

## PROJECT LOCATION







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## Empowering communities

Supporting communities to act as stewards of forest land and obtain benefits from sustainable forest livelihoods is at the heart of our work. We have helped establish 18 community protected areas in Cambodia, where local people are patrolling against illegal logging and poaching, and aim to set up four more. We continue to build on the success of our rattan and bamboo project in Laos, which has significantly improved incomes for local people who participate. In Viet Nam, building the capacity of FSC acacia cooperatives has improved smallholder incomes and benefited the wider community. It also caught the attention of local and national government, who are looking at replicating this model throughout the country. We're also supporting women and men to benefit from other sustainable livelihoods, including agroforestry and harvesting of non-timber forest products such as fruits and nuts, barks and fibres. By better understanding the needs of local communities, we can help represent their views to policymakers and decision-makers and uphold their rights, particularly on issues related to securing land tenure. Our aim is that more than 19,000 local people will benefit from these projects.

## Sharing knowledge

We are creating a local, publicly accessible digital knowledge platform where we can share experiences from the partnership, knowledge, best practices and lessons learnt so they can be replicated at scale. At the regional level, in collaboration with universities and research institutes, we are setting up an online conservation-based intelligence platform to help monitor deforestation and degradation of landscapes, land-use changes linked to specific commodities, supply chain risks and commodity concession areas. This will help to analyse future trends in land use and trade policies to develop proactive solutions. Likewise, partnerships with government agencies, supply chain companies and civil society organizations are vital for collating, disseminating and acting on this knowledge. We are further looking at strengthening links with universities on sharing regional and national data and information, so that this work becomes self-sustaining and has a greater impact.



## For more information

[wwf.se/ikea/forest](http://wwf.se/ikea/forest)

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