Bồ-khai Value Chain at Ba Bể National Park, Vietnam

Presenter: Phạm Văn Nam
Vice Director, Ba Bể National Park
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Where does BBP works in Ba Be AHP

• In 7 villages, approx. 20 households/village.
• Total 110 households
• Main biodiversity functions of Ba Be NP:
  • Core zone 10,048 ha, included 2 districts/7 communes/781 households/3,595 inhabitants;
  • Buffer Zone 25,309 ha, ~ 20,000 inhabitants;
  • Most of the park’s area covered by primeval forest on limestone mountains ecosystem. Diverse fauna and flora (~ 553 vertebrates species and 1,268 vascular plants, with many species are threaten and have medicinal or food values)
Main implementing partners

• Biodiversity Conservation Agency (MoNRE): Project National Focal Point
• Ba-Bể’s district, and relevant communes’ level, People’s Committee: Co-implementing partners.
• Provincial’s Agro-Forestry-Fisheries Quality Assurance Department: Technical guidance for farmers in planting Bồ-Khai in accordance with good agricultural practices standard; survey and access the plantation areas and issue certifications.
• Ba-Bể District’s Agro-Forestry Department: Provide technical supports for farmers in the plantation of Bồ-khai.
• Sang Hà Cooperative: Recruit members, develop safe plantation areas, finding market connection for products.
• Ba-Bể NP Management Board: Implementing project (assign staff for surveys, selection of households, provide technical guidance for the plantation, cultivation and harvesting of Bồ-khai.
• Consultants: Provide trainings for farmers in plantation, cultivation, harvesting, business planning, approaching market, and in selling of products.
• Tày ethnic minority’s households: Develop model in accordance with the guidance of technical supports staff/experts, and of Sang Hà Cooperative.
Selection of Bồ-khai BBP Value Chain

Criteria:
- Focus on types of vegetation which are over-exploited, harvested unsustainably by local people;
- The value chain should need project supports in (i) providing sustainable plantation, cultivation and harvesting, and (ii) finding market connection and buyers of the products;
- Helps facilitate biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, create livelihoods, increasing income for farmers.

Steps
- 2015 assessment: Together with GIZ consultant survey all the communes within the core zone, and buffer zone, of Ba-Bê NP, including demographic, socio-economic and market data, as well as the types of species which are used by the local people and cultivated as food sources, or for medicinal purposes;
- Proposal development and administrative arrangements; field implementation in March 2017;
  • Tày ethnic minority has indigenous knowledge, experience and facilities in Bồ-khai plantation;
  • The stakeholders (Sang Ha cooperative, local households etc.) share same objective: protecting and sustainable exploitation of Bồ-khai plant.
Main activities – Bò-Khai value chain

- Disseminate project plan and participatory regulations/requirements, selection of villages and communes
- Survey and access necessary conditions (land, human resources, and the local people’s expectations/demands); selection of households for the VC development
- Establishment of nursery for seedling propagation for households
- Provide technical training/workshop (i) on plantation, cultivation, harvesting and preserving of products; and (ii) on development of value chain and business planning
- Conduct Bo Khai inventory in natural forest
- Organize plantation, and harvesting, groups; develop regulations for sustainable plantation and harvesting
- Training on good plantation/agriculture practices,
- Establish contracts between farmers and Sang Ha cooperative as business partner
- Design and printing of labels and packages
- Regular Monitoring and supervision
Main results and achievements

• Estimate demands, selected locations for Bồ-khai plantation in 3 communes (Cao Trãn, Khang Ninh and Quảng Khê).
  Total area ~ 8 ha.

• Established two nursery garden at two households in Khang Ninh, and Quảng Khê, communes

• Provide seedlings and on site technical support for participated households for improved Bo Khai planting and harvesting techniques
Main results and achievements

• Training on sustainable plantation, cultivation and harvesting, and field visit for 470 participants from the two communes
• Regulations for sustainable plantation and harvesting
• Training on good plantation/agriculture practices
Main results and achievements

• Developed organizational and operational structure for the cooperative.
• Provided support for the development of business plan and facilitated the contract signing process between producers (households) and buyers (Sang Ha Cooperative).
• Field visit for planters to learn from existing good practices.
• Support the establishment of/provided training on and issued certification for Good Agricultural Practices to Sang Hà Cooperative to increase the quality and value of the products

Successful cooperation with Sang Ha Cooperative as business partner
Main results and achievements

- Design and printed:
  - 2,000 leaflets on guidance for sustainable cultivation and harvesting of Bồ-khai;
  - 2,000 leaflets on introduction and promoting of Bồ-khai vegetable

- Supported Sang Hà Co-operative in building their brand name
- Safe Vegetable Certification for Bồ-khai production process.
Main results and achievements

• Inventory of Bơ-khai volume and harvesting yield in natural forest.
• Analysis to determine active ingredients composition and medicinal values
• Support 1 label printing machine, development of product logo and brand name for Sang Ha Co-operative
• 111 households in three communes participated in the plantation of Bơ-khai
• For participating farmers the Bơ-khai price increase from 25,000 VND/kg to 30,000 VND/kg due to increased quality.
• Sang Hà signed contract with project farmers to buy bo khai raw material with minimum 10% higher than the market price
Main Challenges

• Extreme weather (cold spells) affected the production of seedlings
• Some of project activities needed adjustment to fit better with the local conditions.
• Lack of experience in the development and implementation of this type of project delayed project deliverables and milestones.
• Assign detail tasks for each project staff, select experienced staff and keep the change in personnel to a minimum is critical for the project success.
• Project implementation time (2 years) is too short for the development value chain for biodiversity based products, more time is needed to fully evaluate the project results.
• The production scale and yield is not yet big enough to supply for other markets outside of the province.
• The lack of shipping means and methods for transporting fresh Bồ-khai vegetable (which is usually can be preserved for max 2 days) is a challenge to expand the products to other markets (e.g to Hà Nội, where in can be sold for VND 50,000-80,000/kg)
Conclusion

• Report and communicate with donors, and relevant overseeing agencies, when facing challenges during project implementation and adjust project implementation plan in a timely manner
• Foreseeing bad weather and have prevention/adaptation measures is important
• The objective to increase income for farmers should not be too ambitious when the project implementation time is limited, and especially when the plants did not give expected yields during the first years of implementation
• Instead of implementing a wide range of activities, should only focus on a limited number of key activities
• Need more research and technical solutions for preserving the vegetable to ensure it freshness and quality for longer period and far away markets
• The project scale should be big enough, with implementation period of at least 4-5 years, to fully facilitate the value chain production approach
• Location of nursery gardens and piloting households should have similar conditions to the natural habitats of Bồ-khai vegetable.
Conclusion

• Constant support from BCA-MONRE, from chief consultant and GFA office is critical for the success of the project
• Close collaboration between relevant stakeholders is a must in implementing project activities
• Provide training and building capacity for field officers and the participated farmers is very important
• Develop criteria for the selection of households to participate in project’s pilot activities
• The Bô-khai vegetable value chain developed has helped reduced the harvesting pressure in natural forest area, and replace this practice with the sustainable cultivation and harvesting of Bô-khai vegetable in farmed gardens
• The project is a success. Project objectives achieved: Livelihoods created, farmers’ income increased, biodiversity is conserved and sustainably used
• Experiences in BBP VC through this project has helped Ba Be NP to look for and develop other potential BBP VC
• The Bo Khai VC will continue through the established partnerships and take advantage of the state’s policies to expand further after this project ended
Thank you for your attention!