

Press Review 7 /2013 - Vietnam, Water and Sustainability Research,

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No	Title	Date	Source	Region	Catalogue	Description
1	City budgets \$3.3b for climate change plan	1/7/2013	VN News	HCM	Climate Change	HCM City has earmarked VND70.54 trillion (US\$3.3 billion) for 36 projects to mitigate the effects of climate change, which is expected to severely affect the city.
2	Funds provided for disaster risk effort	2/7/2013	VN News	Vietnam	Environment	UNDP and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) are assisting Viet Nam in disaster risk management, particularly in risks related to climate change.
3	Underground water supplies protected	3/7/2013	VN News	HCM	Water Resources	The municipal administration plans to reduce and ban exploitation of underground water in phases beginning in 2015, in order to protect its natural water sources and minimise environmental pollution.
4	Pollution worsens in Dong Nai River	4/7/2013	VN News	Dong Nai	Pollution	Pollution in the Dong Nai River, mostly from thousands of factories, continues to affect the water supply to residents and farmland in HCM City and surrounding provinces.
5	Facelift for ageing industrial zone	9/7/2013	VN News	Dong Nai	IZ	Companies in the 320-hectare Bien Hoa IZ1 have asked the Government to come up with a detailed plan on the zone's shift to an urban trade-and-services area
6	Industrial stench hits angry Phu Tho residents	11/7/2013	VN News	Phu Tho	IZ	Residents close to an industrial park in northern Phu Tho Province have to wear face masks when they go to sleep to keep the stink of deadly wastewater out of their nostrils.



V-D Office for Water and Sustainability Research

Vietnamese – German Office for Water and Sustainability Research

Funded by MOST and BMBF

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7	Quy Nhon begins clean up after oil spill	11/7/2013	VN News	Binh Dinh	Environment	The administration and residents of Quy Nhon City in central Binh Dinh Province have been collecting oil from a spill that appeared in Quy Nhon seaport last Sunday.
8	Wastewater from seafood firms pollutes fish farms	12/7/2013	VN News	Da Nang	Wastewater	Wastewater discharged by 15 seafood processing companies in Son Tra district have caused heavy losses to more than 70 seafood farmers.
9	Townspeople complain of factory smoke	13/7/2013	VN News	Phu Tho	Pollution	Pollution from a porcelain factory has raised concerns among residents in the northern province of Phu Tho Town.
10	Illegal sand miners plague Dong Nai	16/7/2013	VN News	Dong Nai	Environment	Illegal sand exploitation by local residents and authorities along the Dong Nai River has increased rather than diminished in the last decade, despite efforts to ban it.
11	Da Nang seeks new measures to protect precious water resources	27/7/2013	VN News	Da Nang	Water Resources	Danang needed to assess the quality of its water resources and reserves to build a strategy to protect the resources in the context of climate change, experts said at a workshop on July 26.
12	Floods, landslides blight northern VN	29/7/2013	VN News	North VN	Environment	Local authorities in many provinces in northern Viet Nam are suffering from flooding and landslides caused by prolonged heavy rain and are working to cope with the situation.
13	Norway, Japan to fund forestry projects	30/7/2013	VN News	Vietnam	Others	VN will receive US\$30 million from the Norway to conduct the second phase of the National UN-REDD Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.



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1. City budgets \$3.3b for climate change plan

HCM City has earmarked VND70.54 trillion (US\$3.3 billion) for 36 projects to mitigate the effects of climate change, which is expected to severely affect the city.

Based on assessments of the impacts, HCM City will have action programmes in various phases to ensure they do not impact development.

It will focus on developing an energy-efficient economy as a cornerstone of its efforts to combat climate change.

It will also rely on international co-operation to take measures against climate change.

Scientists fear HCM City will be one of 10 worst-hit cities in the world in case of climate change.

2. Funds provided for disaster risk effort

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) are assisting Viet Nam in disaster risk management, particularly in risks related to climate change.

With a budget of \$5 million, the Institutional Capacity Building for Disaster Risk Management project aims to help the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Viet Nam Red Cross and the Viet Nam Women's Union enhance their disaster risk management capacity.

It will also support the country's natural disaster management centre and provincial-level committees of flood prevention in making their plans and implementing and supervising community-based disaster risk management programmes.

According to the agriculture ministry, the project has a target of building a strategy and mechanism to support the implementation of multilateral agreements as well as work out effective measures to reduce natural disaster risks and adapt to climate change.

The project is being implemented in Ha Noi and 20 other provinces and cities until 2016.

3.Underground water supplies protected

The municipal administration plans to reduce and ban exploitation of underground water in phases beginning in 2015, in order to protect its natural water sources and minimise environmental pollution.

A source from the city's Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) said the city's decision had been made in line with a water supply development plan from now to 2025 approved by Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung.

The city would mainly use water from available river systems including Dong Nai and Sai Gon, and limit the exploitation of underground water, the source said.

The city would be allowed to tap about 100,000 cubic metres per day from the river systems.

To implement the new plan, the municipal natural resources department will co-operate with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's Water Sources Planning and Investigation Agency in the Southern Region to draw a map that will identify places where underground water exploitation will be banned or reduced significantly.

From now until 2015, the city will ban exploitation of underground water at 13 old inner-city districts and the Vinh Loc and Tan Tao industrial parks.

Between 2016 and 2020, the city will expand the ban to all remaining districts except 12, Hoc Mon and Cu Chi, and the Tan Binh, Binh Chieu, Linh Trung 1 and 2 industrial parks.

Between 2021 and 2025, the ban will be implemented in District 12 and Tan Thoi Hiep and Tan Phu Trung industrial parks.

Nguyen Hoai Nam, deputy director of the DNRE, said excessive exploitation of underground water in recent years had caused several bad impacts including serious depletion and pollution.

"The city's ban on the exploitation and use of underground water resources is aimed at protecting the country's natural resources and encouraging enterprises to use diverse water resources instead," Nam told the Nguoi Lao Dong newspaper.

"The ban will be carried out in several phases," Nam said.

Late last week, the natural resources department met with the leadership of industrial parks in the city to inform them about the city's plan to restrict and stop underground water exploitation.

Nguyen Van Nga, head of the department's Water Resources Management Division, said at the meeting that according to initial estimates, 48 units in eight industrial parks and

export processing zones were licensed by the city administration to exploit 34,270 cubic metres of water per day.

The Vinh Loc, Tan Thoi Hiep, Linh Trung 1 and 2 industrial parks had been granted licences to exploit underground water since they each need more than 3,000 cubic metres a day, but had no other supply source yet, Nga said.

IP representatives at the meeting said they were worried about the city's decision to ban exploitation of underground water resources. They suggested that the city should just limit, not ban the use of the underground water.

A representative of the Tan Binh Industrial Park said the Sai Gon Water Supply Corporation's water supply as well as water quality was still unstable.

"Will the company compensate buyers for losses caused by insufficient water supply," he asked.

Nam said that his department would consider the opinion of water users, and make adjustments to the underground water use plan if deemed necessary.

4. Pollution worsens in Dong Nai River

Pollution in the Dong Nai River, mostly from thousands of factories, continues to affect the water supply to residents and farmland in HCM City and surrounding provinces.

The river supplies water for about 12 million people and about 1.8 million hectares of cultivated land around HCM City and 11 surrounding provinces.



The river is polluted by untreated waste water from millions of households and thousands of factories. Hydroelectricity generation, irrigation and other activities have also contributed to the pollution.

In downstream areas below the Tri An Hydro-power Reservoir and Dau Tieng Reservoir to the river's mouth, water is heavily polluted in many areas, according to southern Dong Nai Province's Environmental Observation Centre.

While water quality has declined, water shortages have occurred during the dry season, making residents in four districts in Dong Nai Province struggle hard to find water for daily use and production.

Le Viet Hung, director of the province's Department of Natural Resources and Environment, said the Dong Nai River's Section 3 exceeded permissible levels for the quantity of pollutants, including organic substances, iron and bacteria.

Lam Thi Thu Suu, a coordinator of the Viet Nam Rivers Network, said Dong Nai River in particular, as well as many other rivers in the country, had been over-exploited for hydro-power plant operations.

Discharged pollutants in downstream areas have also caused severe pollution in the river.

Experts have urged each province to collect and treat waste water before releasing it into the river.

They said that a project to protect the Dong Nai River basin, approved by the Government in 2007, needed to be implemented as soon as possible.

The project, to run until 2020 at a cost of VND2 trillion (US\$95 million), targets solving pollution problems at 90 per cent of factories located along the river by 2015.

It also aims to have waste water treatment systems at all industrial parks, export processing zones and hi-tech industrial zones along the river by 2020.

Experts said provinces should also develop measures to control illegal deforestation and protect the river's ecological system.

Factories, industrial parks and hydro-power plants should no longer be built in the river's upstream areas, they said.

The affected provinces are Dak Nong, Dak Lak, Lam Dong, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Dong Nai, Binh Phuoc, Binh Duong, Ba Ria–Vung Tau, Long An and Tay Ninh.

5. Facelift for ageing industrial zone



A corner of the Bien Hoa Industrial Zone 1 in the southern province of Dong Nai, which is scheduled to be moved to another area within the province. The relocation will be completed in the next 10 years

Companies in the 320-hectare Bien Hoa Industrial Zone 1, the country's oldest industrial area, have asked the Government to come up with a detailed plan on the zone's shift to an urban trade-and-services area.

Discussing a relocation plan with members of the National Assembly's Committee for Science, Technology and Environment yesterday, most of the companies in the 51-year-old IP said the plan should move the most polluting enterprises first.

Ten years from now, at least 107 factories in the zone will be moved to the newly built Giang Dien Industrial Zone in Trang Bom District, and other industrial zones in Dong Nai Province, including Nhon Trach No 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The move is being done because of the increasing levels of pollution in the area from discharged waste water and emissions from factories in the ageing industrial zone.

Phan Van Binh, general director of Nhat Nam Joint-Stock Company, which makes furniture in the industrial zone, told the deputies that he was aware of the pollution in the Dong Nai River caused by nearby factories.

"We have to restart every thing when relocating our factories, so we need at least two years to reinstall facilities before the final deadline," he said.

"With enough time, we will try to keep our customers and skilled labour," Binh told the NA deputies. "Money for building new factories is a serious matter. We need a large sum of money to do so. Workers may lose their jobs as some factories have to be removed from the city."

Binh said the Government should offer tax exemptions and incentive loans for businesses to relocate enterprises and offer support policies for workers. A private agency should be hired to evaluate the effectiveness of the conversion, he added.

Bui Manh Hoa, chairman of Bien Hoa Foodstuff Mechanical Joint-Stock Company, which covers 4.7ha in the industrial zone, said he would move his factory out of the city if the Government created good conditions and policies for his workers.

"It will take my company at least one and a half years to remove. During that time, our revenue will fall, so tax exemptions should be offered for three to five years," Hoa said.

He said the Bien Hoa Sugar Joint Stock Company has developed a plan to relocate the factory out of the city by 2022.

The company's leaders said they supported the Government's decision to convert the industrial zone into an urban trade-and-services area so that pollution on the river could be limited.

However, Bien Hoa's leaders said the company does not contribute to pollution as their factory uses advanced technology from Japan.

Nguyen Van Loc, general director of the company, said he was worried about the effect on his workers.

"If the factory is not required to move, it will not cause pollution here," he said, adding that his workers "were surprised after hearing the information about relocation."

Vo Tuan Nhan, deputy chairman of the Committee for Science, Technology and Environment of the National Assembly, said he supported the relocation project, but acknowledged that it would require huge resources.

"After listening to three enterprises in the industrial zone, I see that they are really worried. Relocating a factory to another place is not a simple issue. I agree with their opinions," Nhan said.

The deputy suggested that Dong Nai Province continue to tackle the pollution issue in the area and urged the local authority to consult enterprises in the zone.

According to Bo Ngoc Thu, director of the province's Dept of Planning and Investment, the zone, which provides jobs to more than 26,000 workers, was built in 1963. Its outdated technologies contribute to air and water pollution.

In recent years, the contamination on the Dong Nai River, which runs through 12 provinces, has risen to alarming levels due to waste water and emissions discharge, affecting 20 million people.

Thu suggested that the Government offer special policies, including a 100 per cent tax exemption for four years and a 50 per cent tax exemption for the following nine years.

Do Thi Thu Hang, chairman of Sonadezi, also a lawmaker, said her company had proposed several incentive policies for displaced companies, including full tax exemption for four years and 50 per cent for the following nine years.

Thu suggested that the Government set up a budget for land-clearance compensation and funds for incentive loans for companies that need to relocate. Removing the 50-year-old industrial zone will cost a total of VND20 trillion (US\$809 million), he said.

Bui Cach Tuyen, deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, said the Management Development Corporation for the Bien Hoa Industrial Zone (Sonadezi) should expand the waste water treatment system at Giang Dien Industrial Zone, where factories in Bien Hoa 1 Industrial Zone will be relocated.

Local residents, who live in and around the Bien Hoa 1 industrial zone, are pleased with the relocation plans.

Nguyen Thi Huyen Van, who has lived in the industrial area for more than 40 years, said the smell from sewage discharged from the factories every day was almost unbearable.

About 7,750cu.m of sewage are released each day from the industrial zone, and only 1,153cu.m are treated in waste treatment systems in the park.

Recently, chairman of the HCM City People's Committee Le Hoang Quan asked Dong Nai authorities to speed up relocation of the industrial zone.

"Pollution in the Dong Nai River has worsened to the point that water treatment plants in HCM City can't treat it. Waste water discharged from the industrial zone is one of the major pollution sources," Quan said.

By 2025, HCM City will need 3,700 million litres of water a day, and most of it is expected to come from the Dong Nai River.

"As a member of the Dong Nai River Basin Environment Protection Committee, HCM City supports the relocation of the industrial park to protect water resources," Quan said.

Most of the National Assembly members attending the meeting gave their approval to the project to convert the industrial zone to an urban trade-and-services area for the purposes of environmental protection and economic development.

According to the Dong Nai Province People's Committee, taxes collected from enterprises in the province have fallen sharply in recent years. Every year, the province collects an average of VND500 billion (nearly US\$24.04 million) in taxes from enterprises in the zone. The amount made up 1.5 per cent of the province's contribution to the State budget.

6. Industrial stench hits angry Phu Tho residents



Untreated water from Thuy Van industrial park in the province has turned paddy fields and lakes into barren land. It has also caused health problems in hundreds of households.—

Residents close to an industrial park in northern Phu Tho Province have to wear face masks when they go to sleep to keep the stink of deadly waste-water out of their nostrils.

Untreated water from Thuy Van industrial park in the province has turned paddy fields and lakes into barren land. It has also caused health problems in hundreds of households.

No waste-treatment system has been built to treat more than 1,000 cubic metres of water discharged directly into the fields each day despite local authorities and residents complaining about the problem for years.

Vu Manh Cam, chairman of Thuy Van Commune's people's committee, said the park had been in operation since 1997 but had never installed a waste-water treatment system.

He said that more than 30 hectares of once highly productive fields have now become an unofficial storage pond for the filthy waste.

And the billions of dong which farmers have invested in farming and aquaculture activities have been wasted over the past 10 years.

Nguyen The He, a farmer, said he had lost more than VND600 million (US\$28,570) because all of his fish had been poisoned by the deadly water.

Ta Quang Hai, head of Vinh Phu Village, said nearly 140 households were unable to carry out any agricultural production.

Hundreds of householders are also suffering from severe respiratory problems created by the acrid fumes from the sludge ponds.

Resident Dinh Chu Thuyet said the "terrible smell" of discharged water filled with the air of his and many other houses, especially on hot days. People even have to wear face masks when going to sleep, he said.

Residents count themselves lucky in that for the past four years, they have been able to access safe water supplies.

According to the provincial people's committee, a waste-water treatment project with a capacity to handle 5,000 cu.m of water a day has been approved since 2009. However, it claims there are some adjustments delaying implementation.

Authorities said they would boost inspection into the industrial area's factories to minimise the amount of untreated waste water discharged. Legal regulations, however, are firm - all factories must have a standard waste-water treatment system

The park is home to 34 companies and plants, both domestic and foreign-invested ones, that specialise in producing paper, foodstuff, oil and gas.

7. Quy Nhon begins clean up after oil spill



Young people helped collect more than 3,000 packs of oil polluted sand along 7km of beach front.—Photo *baobinhdin*

The administration and residents of Quy Nhon City in central Binh Dinh Province have been collecting oil from a spill that appeared in Quy Nhon seaport last Sunday.

The spill from an unidentified source has spread over about 4ha, causing thousands of fish raised in pens died in coastal Hai Minh hamlet with initial losses reported to be over VND100 million (US\$4,760)..

Young people helped collect more than 3,000 packs of oil polluted sand along 7km of beach front.

Local authorities are trying to identify the source of the spill.

8. Wastewater from seafood firms pollutes fish farms

Wastewater discharged by 15 seafood processing companies in Son Tra district have caused heavy losses to more than 70 seafood farmers.

A dozen hectares of oyster and fish farms with an estimated crops amounting to 150 tonnes were almost wiped out due to poor quality water over the past two weeks.

The farms, situated in Man Quang Bay, are expected to lose at least VND20 billion (US\$900,000).

Although a wastewater treatment station for Tho Quang precinct seafood processing zone treats 3,000 cubic metres per day, the quality of the treated water is not high.

Farmers said the pollution continued day and night.

Nguyen Binh, 47, said he had to bury his fish crop in recent days. "I lost VND250 million (\$12,000) in just 10 days," he said.

"I have farmed grouper and red snapper for 10 years in the area, but it's the worst loss I've seen. I normally make a net profit of between VND60 million and VND70 million each year."

He added fish died due to lack of oxygen in the treated water.

Le Duc Bui, 67, from Nai Hien Dong Ward, said he had lost VND60 million (\$2,900) in the past two days. "Wastewater from seafood business stinks the bay," he said.

More than 700 people in the coastal district live on oyster and fish farming.

9. Townspeople complain of factory smoke



Pollution from a porcelain factory has raised concerns among residents in the northern province of Phu Tho's Phu Tho Town.—Photo *tinmoituong*

Pollution from a porcelain factory has raised concerns among residents in the northern province of Phu Tho's Phu Tho Town.

They say smoke and dust pollution from the Thanh Ha Porcelain JSC has been affecting the lives of nearby residents for two years.

Thanh Ha Porcelain JSC began processing old rubber tyres into industrial oil used to bake ceramic tiles in 2011.

Since then smoke and dust from the company's furnace has given rise to a wide range of concerns, including allegations from farmers that their crops have been affected.

Nguyen Xuan Diep, a local resident, said the pollution made the fish in a pond at his home died en mass, while 25 litchi trees in his garden could not produce fruit.

Residents have made official complaints to authorities at different levels, however, they have not received an official reply.

Deputy Head of the Phu Tho Town Natural Resources and Environment Division Phan Ngoc Thanh said dark smoke and dust spread out from the company's premises every day, but his department did not have the correct equipment to check the pollution levels.

A great amount of farm land in Thanh Vinh Commune lies unused as trees planted there did not produce any fruit.

"Due to limited competence of our staff, the division can only ask the company to reduce the pollution they create," said Thanh.

Last October, inspectors from the provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment took water and soil samples in the affected areas for tests, however Thanh said his department had not received the results.

"So far no report on how residents' health is being affected has been carried out by the provincial health sector, but in the long term people's respiratory systems will be affected by the pollution," he said.

Deputy Director of the Thanh Ha Porcelain Joint-stock Company Tran Trung Thanh said that smoke and dust from the company was caused by firewood in the oven, not from the rubber, thus it would not affect people's health.

In addition, the company has installed two devices to filter firewood dust to limit its effect, he said.

"The rubber is burnt in a pyrolysis oven which operates on a closed process, and thus dust cannot be released into the surrounding environment."

10. Illegal sand miners plague Dong Nai



Illegal sand mining is rampant along the Dong Nai River in southern Dong Nai Province, the country's longest inland river. It has caused many problems for local residents, particularly erosion which threatens their houses. — VNA/VNS Photo Van Khanh

Illegal sand exploitation by local residents and authorities along the Dong Nai River has increased rather than diminished in the last decade, despite efforts to ban it.

Recently, waterway police and officials from southern Dong Nai Province's Department of Natural Resources and Environment conducted an inspection of the 500-km river.

However, they met with resistance. Although illegal sand exploiters, after being detected by inspectors, rammed their boats against barriers or even resisted those who were on duty, no one was arrested.

Beside waste water discharged from nearby industrial parks and hydropower plants, the country's longest inland river has endured illegal sand exploitation for years, causing problems for local residents.

The river originates from the Central Highlands province of Lam Dong.

According to Nguoi Lao Dong (The Labourer) newspaper, local residents who have lost land to the river because of sand exploitation said they the situation was hopeless.

Farmers in Bien Hoa city's Quyet Thang Ward said their pomelo and mango gardens located along the river disappeared due to landslides. Vinh Cuu District's Thanh Phuoc ward has been affected as well.

Local residents said they no longer could rely on local authorities and had tried to stop the exploitation themselves. But the sand exploiters are aggressive and difficult to deal with, they said.

The province's police and officials from the local department of Natural Resources and Environment have held meetings about the problem over the last decade, but nothing has been resolved.

According to an official of the Natural Resources and Environment Department in Dinh Quan District, the problem is lack of manpower and equipment to catch the illegal sand exploiters.

Senior Lieutenant Colonel Luu Minh Tam, deputy head of Dong Nai's Public Security's waterway management, said he was pessimistic about the battle against the exploiters.

"The fight against illegal sand exploitation will end when there is no demand for construction. I hope to see more cooperation between the sectors," he was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

Some people who were not quoted said that informers tell exploiters in advance of upcoming raids along the river.

Vo Van Chanh, deputy director of Dong Nai Province's Department of Natural Resources and Environment, said the province would work with other agencies to strengthen inspections of the buying and trading of sand in the locality.

The HCM City section of Dong Nai River also faces sand exploitation.

Dao Anh Kiet, director of HCM City's Department of Natural Resources and Environment, who took questions from the members of the city's People's Council about the issue recently, said the city had worked with officials in Binh Duong Province to stop sand exploitation.

According to Kiet, city officials last year caught more than 40 boats in District 9 and six boats in Cu Chi District as they were dredging up sand from the river.

Land erosion caused by sand exploitation has narrowed land plots of local residents and even swept away several houses.

11. Da Nang seeks new measures to protect precious water resources

The central city of Da Nang needed to assess the quality of its water resources and reserves to build a strategy to protect the resources in the context of climate change, experts said at a workshop on July 26.



The Han River is a major source of water in the central city of Da Nang. Experts have urged the city to use water economically and effectively while raising public awareness of the role and importance of water resources to respond to the impacts of climate changes.

This is one of many long-term measures necessary to respond to severe droughts and increasing saltwater intrusion together with the impacts of other natural disasters that are threatening the city's water resources.

Da Nang should also incorporate water supplies into its socio-economic development plan and monitor both surface and underground water resources.

Experts suggested seeking international co-operation and support from NGOs to plant forests and develop water resources in upstream areas to help mitigate the impacts of climate changes.

A plan to use water economically and effectively and raising public awareness of the role and importance of water resources were also essential, they said.

The workshop also briefed participants of the risks and challenges caused by climate change for a project on the comprehensive assessment of Da Nang's water resources.

Covering an area of nearly 1.3 million square kilometres in total, Da Nang has underground water reserves of more than 231,000cu.m per day, but many areas of the city have started to show signs of depletion and salinity.

It boasts diversified surface water resources with a total flow of around 12.5 billion cu.m each year.

Water demand for daily use by local residents is projected to reach 210 million cu.m per year by 2020, and the figure for agricultural and industrial production is over 117 million cu.m.

On the occasion, a project funded by the Rockefeller Foundation was launched to help Da Nang assess the quality of its surface water resources and reserves.

12. Floods, landslides blight northern VN

Local authorities in many provinces in northern Viet Nam are suffering from flooding and landslides caused by prolonged heavy rain and are working to cope with the situation.



In Lao Cai Province yesterday, a 37-year-old man was swept away by a flood while trying to cross a stream in Liem Phu Commune, Van Ban District, according to the local authority. His body was retrieved the same day by local residents.

In Quang Ninh Province, prolonged rain for over two days created landslides around the dams in Ha Long City, causing local houses to collapse. As a result, many households had to be urgently evacuated to safer places.

According to the Ha Long City People's Committee, dozens of households were more or less affected by the landslides caused by the heavy rain. Among them, four households were seriously affected and one home completely collapsed.

In Son La Province, many roads have been inundated by flooding, causing serious congestion.

One part of the National Highway 6 passing through the Chieng Mung Commune in Mai Son District, in particular, was completely submerged by water, creating traffic backups of nearly one kilometre that lasted for over two hours.

In response, the local authorities intervened by redirecting traffic along a new route.

Landslides had also blocked the way on three other roads in the province and causing heavy traffic congestion.

Damages from the flood and landslides in Son La are so far unknown, but the crops of many local households were reported to be seriously damaged.

Tuyen Quang Province is also considerably affected by the prolonged heavy rain.

In particular, the rain had broken the dams surrounding the Hoang Tan Reservoir in Ninh Lai Commune, Son Duong District, causing damage to dozens of hectares of crops and plants grown by the locals and killing thousands of poultry.

Local authorities in affected provinces are still working to cope with the consequences of flooding and landslide and prevent further damages.

13. Norway, Japan to fund forestry projects



Viet Nam will receive US\$30 million from the Government of Norway to conduct the second phase of the National UN-REDD Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation

Viet Nam will receive US\$30 million from the Government of Norway to conduct the second phase of the National UN-REDD Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation.

The support was marked by an agreement signed yesterday between the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Viet Nam has become the first of the 47 UN-REDD partner countries to move into the second phase of greenhouse gas reduction through improved forest and land-use management.

The National UN-REDD Programme to Reduce Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) would be a major pillar of Viet Nam's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the agriculture and rural development sector by 20 per cent by 2020, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat said.

REDD+ was considered a promising solution to help Viet Nam increase its overall forest cover to 45 per cent by 2020.

As one of the original pilot countries of the programme, Viet Nam has been on the frontline of global REDD+ activities for four years. The country has successfully piloted readiness work in a number of key areas, including supporting strong co-ordination among national stakeholders, developing a framework for measurement, reporting and

verification, and testing approaches for the free, prior and informed consent of ethnic minorities and other forest-dependent communities.

Phase Two will build on the REDD+ readiness work of Phase One, and start implementing Viet Nam's National REDD+ Action Programme in six provinces across the country, namely Lao Cai, Bac Kan, Ha Tinh, Binh Thuan, Lam Dong and Ca Mau.

During the next three years, the programme will help identify, negotiate, plan and implement land-use practices that are sustainable, climate-smart and adapted to local needs.

Additional financial incentives would be made available by the Government of Norway and other international partners for verified greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved through the programme, said UN Resident Co-ordinator in Viet Nam Pratibha Mehta.

She said that the event was a landmark for Viet Nam. "The Phase Two programme includes a clear way forward for Viet Nam to benefit in multiple ways, not just from this \$30 million programme. However, if Viet Nam is to make the most of the opportunities, Phase Two must deliver on time on all of its objectives," she noted.

Environmental service



Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction, through the Asian Development Bank, has promised to grant US\$1.5 million to help Viet Nam pay for forestry environmental services during the 2014-16 period.—Illustrative image/Photo *tinmoitruong*

The same day, the Japanese Fund for Poverty Reduction, through the Asian Development Bank, has promised to grant US\$1.5 million to help Viet Nam pay for forestry environmental services during the 2014-16 period.

The Vietnamese Government also contributed \$150,000 to the technical assistance project which will help work out the criteria for economic evaluation of environmental services at provincial level as well as the procedures for pilot programmes and the payments for forestry environmental services.

Speaking at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding yesterday, Deputy General Director of Viet Nam's Forestry Administration at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Vo Dai Hai said that Viet Nam introduced a policy on payments for forestry services in 2008 and had collected VND1 trillion (\$47.6 million) annually from these services.

However, it still faced with problems in carrying out the policies because of poor communications, inadequate staff and not enough individuals being allocated to forestry protection.

ADB country director Tomoyuki Kimura said that the bank would continue to promote green growth in Viet Nam including improving payments for forestry services. In 2010, Viet Nam introduced new regulations on payments for forestry environmental services, which took effect in 2011.