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News

VRG encourages its members to implement the Environmental Impact Assessment of the projects in Laos and Cambodia

04/09/2018

The Viet Nam Rubber Group (VRG) has received requests from its partners to clarify the situation of the rubber plantation investment in Laos and Cambodia.

First of all, the Viet Nam Rubber Group confirms that VRG's members do not destroy forests, do not exploit forest products. They only cultivated rubber on areas that have been licensed by the Cambodian Government.

Investment on the areas already licensed by the Cambodian Government

The rubber planting projects of VRG's Member Companies in the Kingdom of Cambodia are in the planned areas approved by the Cambodian Government for the conversion of industrial crops development.

The process of concessionary land allocation in the Kingdom of Cambodia is very strict and through series of surveys, assessments and evaluations by relevant Ministries and the State Concession-Granting Council and relevant local authorities. Through these assessments and reviews, areas of national park, reserved forest, thick forest, semi-thick forest, riparian areas, community forest, sacred forest, cultivated land of local people are removed from the concession area. In addition, during the implementation of the concession-granting process, there is the participation of the central inter-branch missions of the Cambodian Government, who go to the concession lands to work with the provincial and district authorities, communes and people in the project areas as well as enable them to raise their voice on their rights and cultivated land if relevant. After the State Concession-Granting Council approves the concession-granting dossier, the Land-Managing Ministry, on behalf of the Government, will sign the economic concession contract as authorized and assign the demarcation landmark to the investors.

On the basis of the economic concession contract, the investors still have to carry out many other stages and procedures for the granting of permits according to other regulations before officially clearing the land for planting rubber trees. Investors must comply with the master plan and the annual plan approved by the competent authority of the host country when preparing rubber land; in addition, it is constantly monitored by the authorities of the state.

In addition, in the new planting process, for the allocated areas, the Member Companies have made satisfactory compensation for the crops of local residents as agreed and do not encroach on land of people outside the project areas.

Currently, the Member Companies of the Viet Nam Rubber Group have put into harvesting a part of rubber plantations and employed local people with an average of about 11,107 local people; the income of workers in the project areas is higher than the minimum requirement of 170 USD per month in Cambodia. In the coming time, when the rubber harvesting areas increase, the companies will recruit more local labors.

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In addition to the development of rubber in Cambodia, Member Company of VRG always perform well social security to support people in the project areas and adapt to local requirements, the results are as follows:



No	Activities	Cambodia	Laos	Total
1	Total numbers of local workers	7,419 people	3,688 people	11,107 people
2	Number of hospitals and medical stations	18	4	22
3	Number of houses for workers	2,579	37	2,616
4	Number of schools	12	1	13
5	Electrical lines serving companies	54.55 km	21.06 km	75.61 km
6	Road system serving the local people of the project areas	904.75 km	329.5 km	1,234.25 km
7	Number of religious buildings	6	1	7
8	Number of gratitude houses	1	51	52

ENTERPRISES

Environmental protection activities

At present, the Member Companies of the VRG in Cambodia have carried out the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports to meet the requirement of the Cambodia laws, some projects are waiting for the Ministry of Environment in Cambodia to approve.

The objective of the Environmental Impact Assessment is to assess the impacts of the projects on the natural, human and social conditions within the scope of the project activity. From that point, adjustments are made to the balance of natural factors such as climate, water, soil, vegetation and animals, creating a sustainable ecological environment. At the same time, economic developments must ensure that social security is developed sustainably.

The key issues of Environmental Impact Assessment are natural, human and social factors:

- Water sources: The development of the project must ensure that no vegetation is changed in the rivers and large streams to ensure that the flow of water is not depleted. The economic activities of human beings must ensure that they do not pollute water sources.
- Soil: Timely planting rubber trees that cover bare areas, planting vegetation covered by legumes to prevent erosion and improve soil fertility, appropriate fertilizer application increases soil fertility.
- Vegetation and animals: balance the ecological environment, preserve the species of plants and animals to be protected in the project areas, take measures to enrich the rare species of animals and plants or possibly extinction.
- Human: The project development must ensure that people in the project areas and neighboring areas benefit from the projects, creating jobs, raising incomes, and improving human life in all aspects: culture, social security and health care.
- Social welfare: Economic development must be associated with the development of infrastructure such as roads, schools, health clinics, workers' houses, temples, pagodas.

Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and WWF Vietnam

The Viet Nam Rubber Group has been actively cooperating with some NGOs such as in collaboration with PanNature Vietnam, Oxfam Vietnam and UN-REDD+ Vietnam to survey some Member Companies of the VRG in Laos and Cambodia to develop and apply the "Voluntary Guideline for Vietnamese Outward Investment in Agribusiness". The Viet Nam Rubber Group is also cooperating with other NGOs to consult the VRG on the re-issue of the FSC certificate.

The Viet Nam Rubber Group has cooperated with the Viet Nam Rubber Association and WWF Vietnam to survey some Member Companies of the VRG and to consult relevant organizations as well as rubber enterprises to develop the Handbook for "Sustainable Management of Rubber Plantations in accordance with International Forest Certification Standards", the Handbook will be applied to all Member Companies of the Viet Nam Rubber Group for the purpose of implementing socio-economic and environmental development. The Handbook can be referred directly to the content on the website

https://vnrubbergroup.com/media/phattrienbenvung/2018_So%20tay%20quan%20ly%20rung_24-07-2018_FINAL.pdf or <http://vra.com.vn/tin-tuc/domestic-news/vra-publishing-the-handbook-guideline-for-sustainable-management-of-rubber-plantations-in-accordance-with-international-forest-certification-standards.10762.html>

Currently, Viet Nam Rubber Group and Viet Nam Rubber Association are cooperating with the Vietnam Timber & Forest Product Association (VIFORES) and Forest Trends to study the supply

chain of Viet Nam rubber industry to propose relevant policies for sustainable rubber development.

Policy on sustainable development of the Viet Nam Rubber Group

The Viet Nam Rubber Group has announced the commitment to sustainable development of the rubber industry on the official website with the following criteria: sustainable development accompanied by responsible social and environmental activities, comprehensive cooperation, investment in social security facilities to support people and transparency of information activities (refer to information at https://vnrubbergroup.com/media/phattrienbenvung/camketphattrienbenvung_en_final.pdf).

The Viet Nam Rubber Group and the Viet Nam Rubber Association are encouraging members to register for the Sustainable Natural Rubber Initiative initiated by the IRSG (which many tyre companies and rubber suppliers have already participated in).

No new planting of rubber for future concessions in Cambodia and Laos

The Viet Nam Rubber Group re-affirms no plan to invest neither more in rubber plantations in Cambodia and Laos since 2015 nor any plans to develop concessions in Laos and Cambodia in the future.

Source: Viet Nam Rubber Group

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VRA: Publishing the Handbook "Guideline for sustainable management of rubber plantations in accordance with international forest certification standards"	26/07/2018
List of "Reliable Exporters" 2017 for Rubber Sector selected and published by Ministry of Industry and Trade (Viet Nam)	19/07/2018
Rubber industry eyes sustainability	19/06/2018
Vietnam Rubber Group to sell 25% stake worth US\$563 mn	02/10/2017
World Rubber Summit 2017- 'Orderly Growth for a Healthy Industry'	13/03/2017
Indian rubber output falls to the lowest in around two decades	31/05/2016
ATMA has grave concerns over historic low rubber production	31/05/2016
World rubber demand set to grow 4% annually	31/05/2016
Global pneumatic tire market – opportunities and forecasts 2014 – 2022	31/05/2016
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