Lessons learnt from developments in Bai Bang and Vietnam

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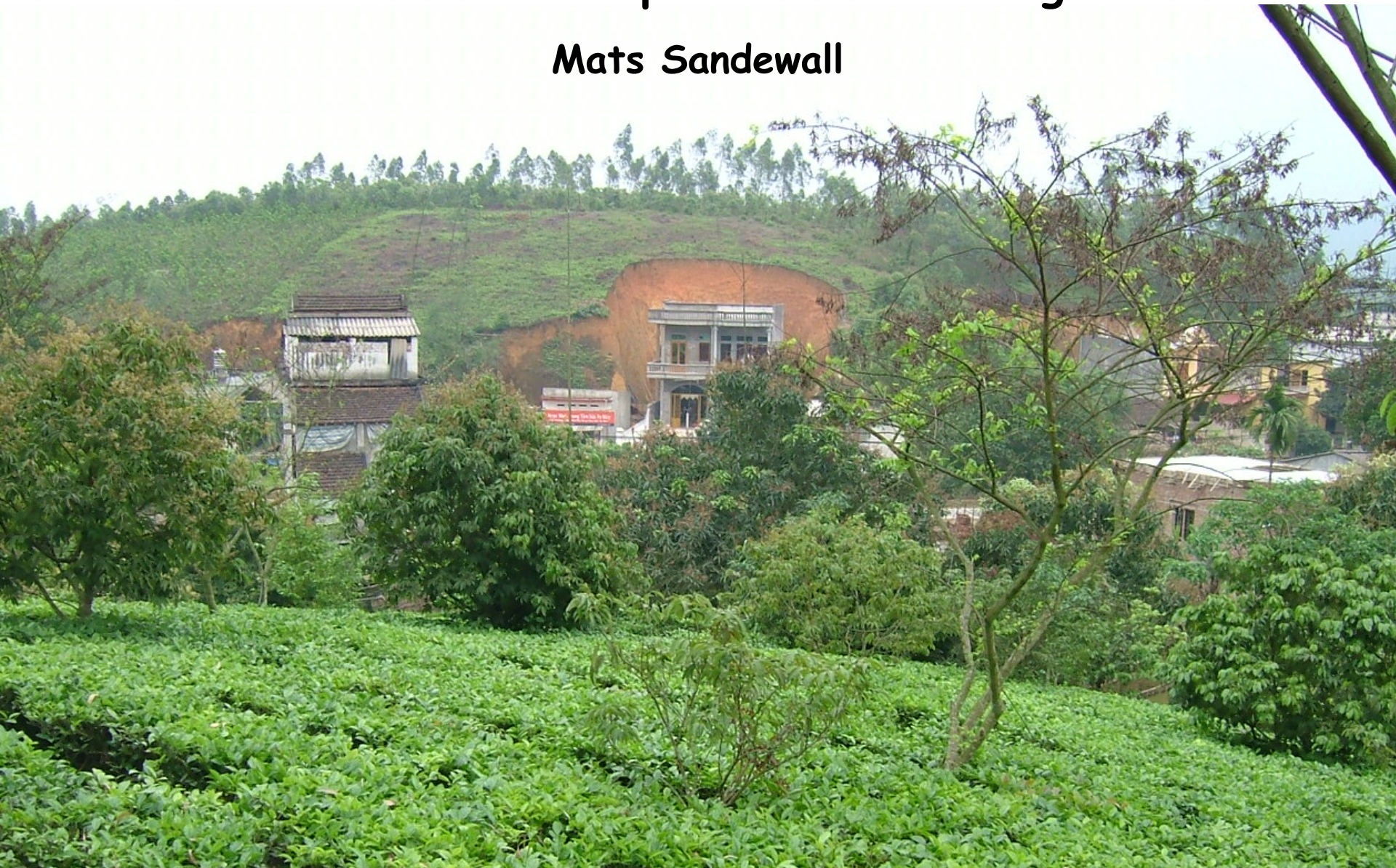
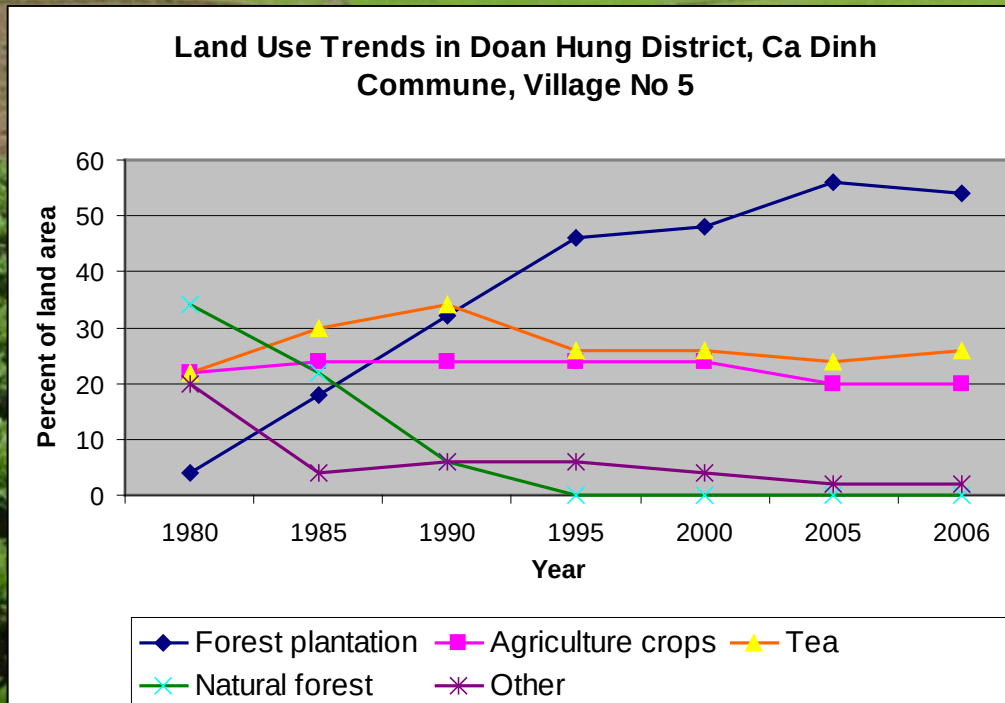


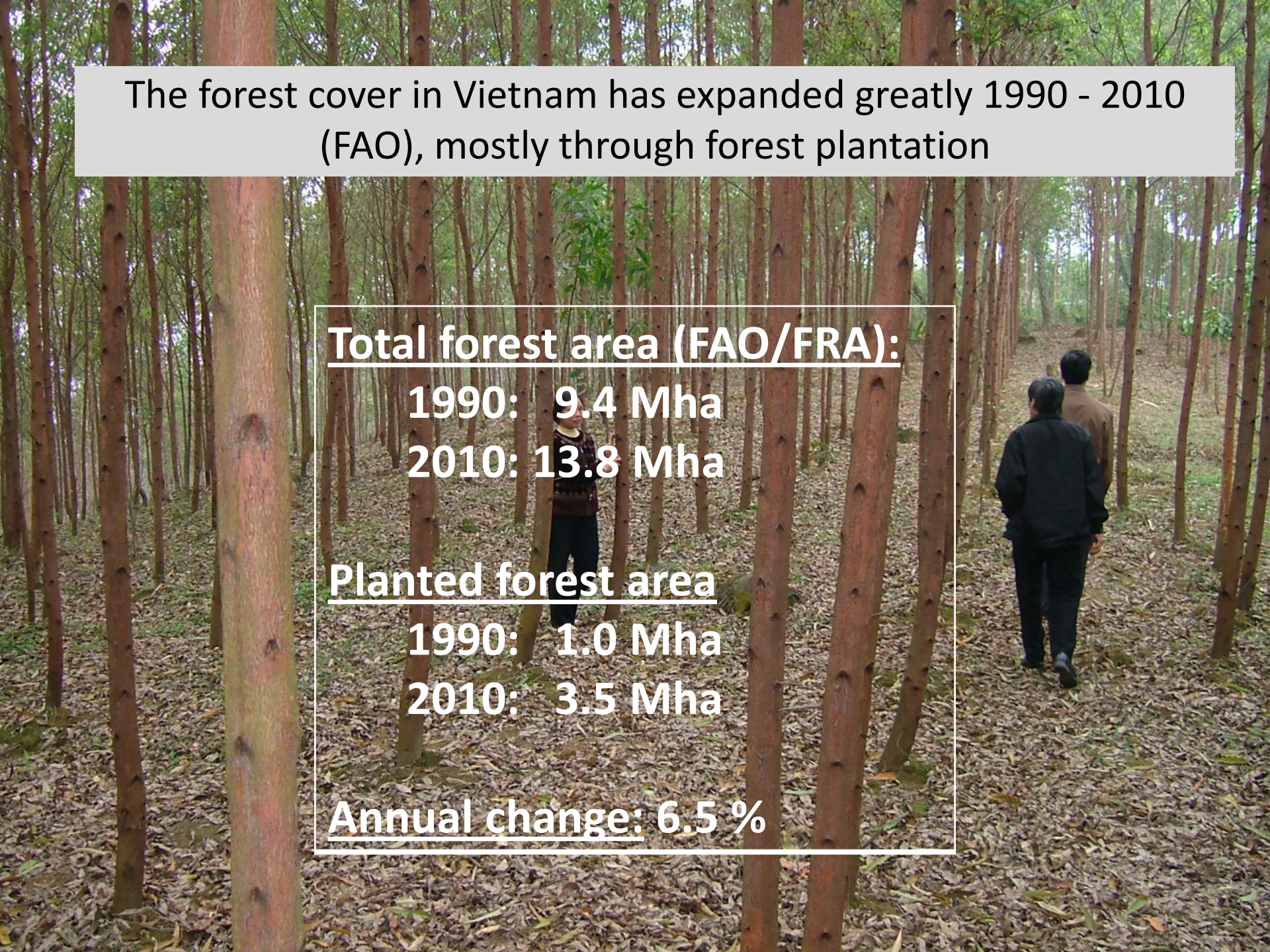
When do farmers invest in tree planting ?

Tenure security
Sustainable market opportunities
Financial and political stability
Households with capacity to invest
Policy that favors investments
Institutions and organisation in place
Sufficient infrastructure
Good examples
Access to new knowledge and technology

Rapid land use and livelihoods changes followed economic and institutional reforms in Vietnam and forest policy changes 1987-93.

Reforestation by households first occurred in areas around Bai Bang, later in other parts of Vietnam





The forest cover in Vietnam has expanded greatly 1990 - 2010 (FAO), mostly through forest plantation

Total forest area (FAO/FRA):

1990: 9.4 Mha

2010: 13.8 Mha

Planted forest area

1990: 1.0 Mha

2010: 3.5 Mha

Annual change: 6.5 %

Many households have very small plots (Doan Hung site)

Forest Area	No of households
No forest land	35 hh (32%)
0.01-0.25 ha	12 hh (11%)
0.26-0.50 ha	29 hh (27%)
0.51-0.75 ha	13 hh (12%)
0.76-1.00 ha	11 hh (10%)
1.01-2.50 ha	6 hh (6%)
2.50-5.00 ha	2 hh (2%)

Forestry contributes 10-20% of households' cash incomes in studied villages

- **Different patterns for different income categories,**
- **"Less poor" and middle income farmers have (relatively) benefitted most from the plantation**

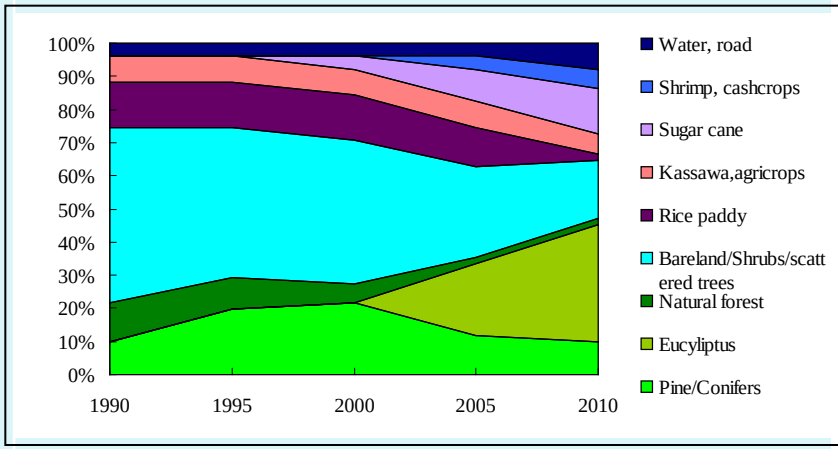
Although the landuse transformation into forest in Vietnam has been effective, the current forest management is not equally good

- Policy focus has been more on expanding the forest area than promoting management of the area established
- While some areas are producing well in terms of wood and commodities many of the plantations are producing very modestly.
- Some areas have market access but many areas do not.
- Households (esp the poor) cut stands early in need for immediate cash return. Rotation for many Acacia plantations is 3-5 years.
- Little species diversity (Acacia for wood chips now dominating).
- Households do not earn so much and biodiversity declining.

A few tree species dominate, for some species like pine, timber/wood is not the only product (Quang Ninh 2013)

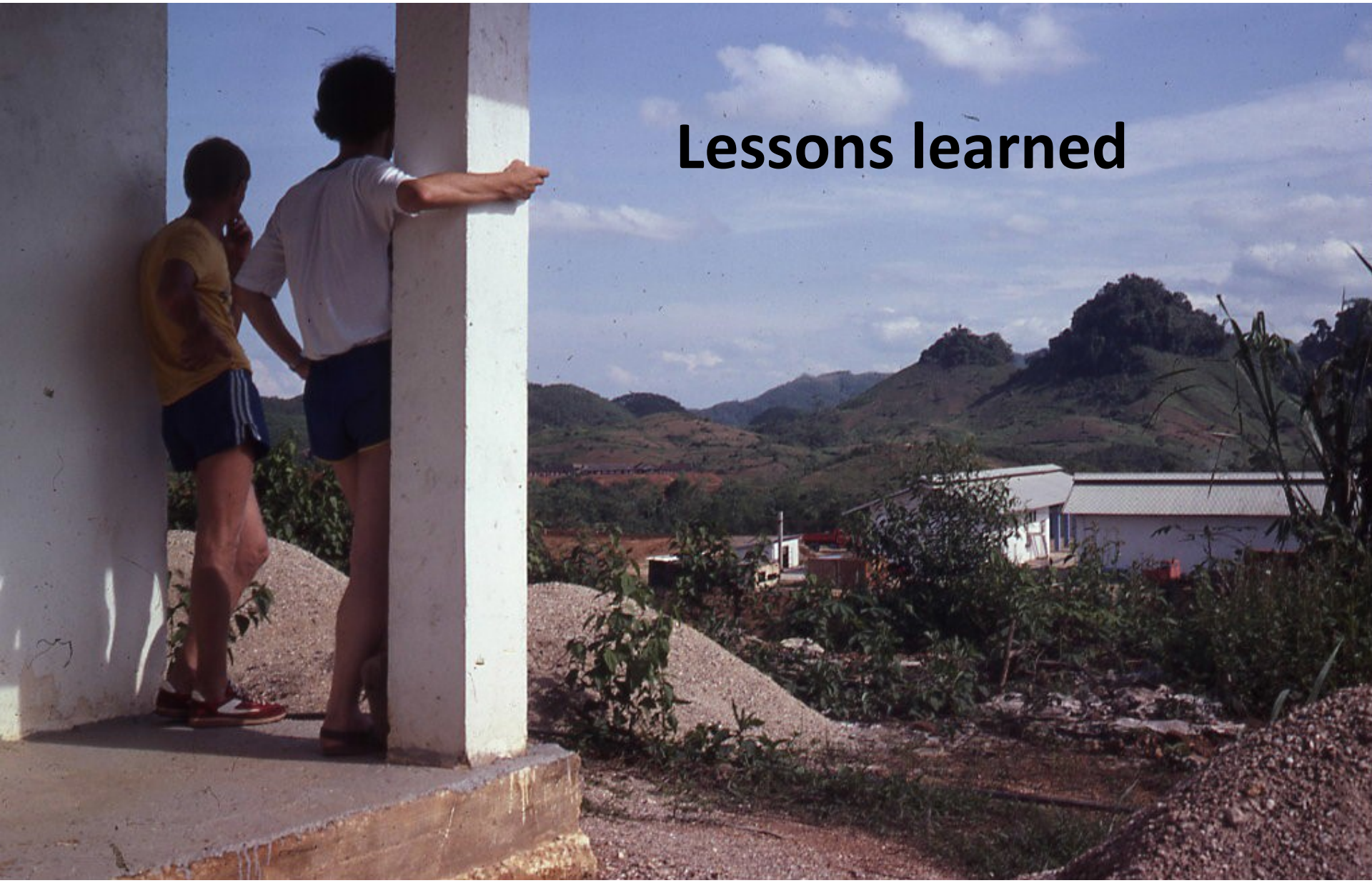
Observations in Guang Xi - a forest industry region in Southern China

- Many poor households with low forest productivity, some rich ones with capacity to invest
- Young people move from rural to urban areas. A few return and invest. Increasing income gaps.
- Land acquisition of companies and industries through local government bureaucracy - farmers discontent.
- Pride (surprise) that previously barren land can be reforested.
- Economic growth is prioritised ahead of environmental concern. Farmers worried about water supply/quality and biodiversity in connection with extensive Eucalyptus plantation.



Why farmers plant trees (Bahar Dar, Ethiopia)

- Declining agriculture production
- High subsistence and market demand to produce trees for sale
- Improved policy environment
- Management aspects


Lessons learned

Lessons learned from Bai Bang and Vietnam

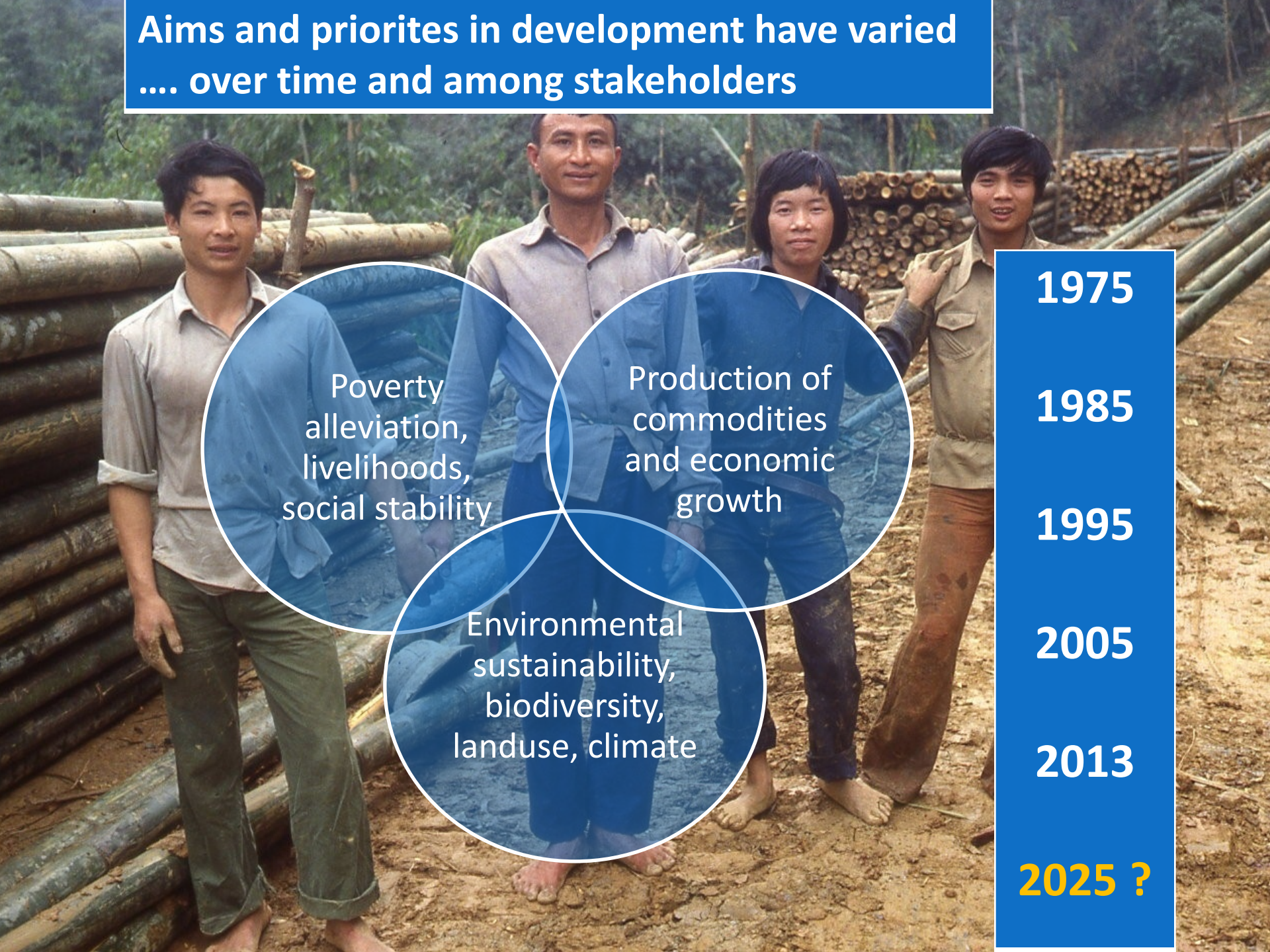
What is esp. important for societal development in forestry projects?

- ❑ Local people/farmers matter
- ❑ Government policies /regulatory framework matter
- ❑ Market matters
- ❑ Aid and external input matters (when long term)

- ❑ Every country situation is unique.
- ❑ At the same time trends are often similar.

”Bai Bang is one of the most unusual aid projects to be undertaken in the history of development cooperation” (A Leap of Faith, external project evaluation 1999).

Aims and priorites in development have varied …. over time and among stakeholders



1975

1985

1995

2005

2013

2025 ?

Thank you !