

## Course 1.5

### **Forming and operating a village forestry core group and assessing the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level**

#### **Introduction**

The course is aimed at strengthening the capabilities of the:

- (a) PAFO trainers in training other forestry staff and villagers in forming and operating a village forestry core group and in assessing the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level;
- (b) DAFO extension workers in facilitating and providing assistance to villagers in forming and operating a village forestry core group and in assessing the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level;
- (c) Villagers in forming and operating the village forestry core group and in assessing the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level.

The lessons are designed to provide the participants with a better understanding of the importance of village forestry core group and how to form and operate it. The participants are introduced to the process and stages of organization building and development in village forestry and the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level.

#### **Contents**

The course consists of four modules:

**Module 1.5.1 *Village forestry core group***- In this module, the participants acquire a better understanding of the (a) rationale and importance of forming a village forestry core group (VFCG) and (b) the roles and responsibilities of the VFCG and its relationship with the village administration.

**Module 1.5.2 *Forming and operating a village forestry core group*** - The participants learn the step-by-step procedure in forming and operating a village forestry core group. They also learn the criteria commonly used by villagers in selecting the members of the village forestry core group.

**Module 1.5.3 *Organization building and development in village forestry***- The participants are introduced to the process and importance of organization building and development. The participants learn the different stages of village organization building and development and the factors to consider in selecting and forming a suitable organization for village forestry.

**Module 1.5.4 *Organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level***- The participants acquire a better understanding of the present village structures and the rights and duties of the village administration in forest management. The participants learn the requirements for forming a suitable organization for village forestry. They acquire knowledge and skills in assessing and selecting a suitable organizational option for village forestry at the FMU level.

## **Module 1.5.1**

### **Village forestry core group**

#### **Introduction**

The module is aimed at providing the participants with a better understanding of the rationale and importance of a village forestry core group (VFCG) including its roles and responsibilities.

#### **Contents**

The module consists of two lessons:

**Lesson 1.5.1.1 *Understanding the rationale and importance of a VFCG-*** In this lesson, the participants learn what a village forestry core group is and its rationale and importance.

**Lesson 1.5.1.2 *Understanding the roles and responsibilities of a VFCG-*** The participants acquire a better understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the village forestry core group and its relationship with the village administration.

## **Lesson 1.5.1.1**

### **Understanding the rationale and importance of a village forestry core group**

#### **Objective**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to explain the rationale and importance of a village forestry core group (VFCG).

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion and group work

#### **Time**

45 minutes

#### **Process**

1. Based on their initial understanding of village forestry, ask the participants to discuss the rationale and importance of a village forestry core group.
2. Summarize the important points of the discussion and fill the gaps in participants' understanding by giving a brief lecture using the learning notes.

#### **Learning notes**

##### **What is a village forestry core group?**

- A village forestry core group (VFCG) is a small and informal grouping of villagers selected by the villagers or appointed by the village administration. The VFCG is comprised of a group of villagers (5-10 persons) who are selected by the villagers or appointed by the village administration based on criteria agreed upon by the villagers. It is small in composition and simple in operations. The VFCG represents the villagers and works closely with the state forestry staff in planning, implementing, and managing initial village forestry activities in the village.

##### **What is the rationale and importance of a village forestry core group?**

- Village forestry requires a partnership between state forestry staff and organized villagers in planning, implementing, and managing village forestry activities in the village. The villagers have no practical experience on how to organize themselves for doing such activities.
- The village administration is responsible for all development activities in the village. The VFCG is responsible for village forestry activities and is accountable to the village administration. Checks and balance is established and accountability can be easily determined.
- The VFCG is an initial organizational arrangement and is part of a long-term learning process. The organization for village forestry evolves as the villagers learn to know more about village forestry operations and their requirements.
- The VFCG is an improvement of the existing village structure where village forest related responsibilities are handled by only 2-3 village forest volunteers. The VFCG has clear roles and responsibilities including simple operating rules approved by the village administration.

## **Lesson 1.5.1.2**

### **Understanding the roles and responsibilities of the village forestry core group**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson the participants should be able to:

1. Explain the roles and responsibilities of the village forestry core group
2. Discuss the relationship between the VFCG and village administration

#### **Time**

One hour

#### **Process**

1. Based on their initial understanding of village forestry, ask the participants to discuss the roles and responsibilities of the village forestry core group and its relationship to the village administration.
2. Summarize the important points of the discussion and complement this with a brief lecture using the learning notes.

#### **Learning notes**

##### **What are the roles and responsibilities of the village forestry core group?**

- Under the overall supervision of the village administration, the VFCG works with the state forestry staff in planning, implementing, and managing initial village forestry activities in the village.
- The VFCG organizes and lead the conduct of PRA work in the village jointly with state forestry staff.
- It prepares a simple action plan on village forestry to be approved by the village administration.
- It reports progress on the implementation of the VFCG action plan to the village administration and villagers.
- It organizes the formation of village forestry working teams (e.g. village land use mapping teams, village forest inventory teams) and mobilizes villagers for collective work in village forestry.
- It administers initial funds (if any) to support the implementation of the village forestry action plan and is accountable to the village administration and villagers.
- It maintains records relating to village forestry, e.g. minutes of meetings, reports, maps, letters, plans, and other documentation.
- It organizes meetings and disseminates information on village forestry.
- It undertakes preparatory work for the establishment of appropriate organizational arrangement (e.g. VFC, VFA) for village forestry and proposes organizational structure, rules and regulations, operating systems and procedures, etc., for approval by the village administration and villagers themselves.
- It hands over all village forestry records, funds and responsibilities to the elected officers of the organization for village forestry.

**What is the relationship between the VFCG and the village administration?**

The village administration is responsible for all development activities in the village (including forestry) and is accountable to the district authorities. The VFCG is selected by the villagers and/or appointed by the village administration. Thus, it is accountable to the village administration on village forestry activities. The village administration oversees and supervises the operations of the VFCG. The VFCG operating rules and action plans are approved by the village administration.

## **Module 1.5.2**

### **Forming and operating a village forestry core group**

#### **Introduction**

The module is aimed at providing the participants with the knowledge and skills in forming and operating a village forestry core group.

#### **Contents**

The module consists of two lessons:

**Lesson 1.5.2.1 *Forming a village forestry core group***- In this lesson, the participants learn the procedures for forming a village forestry core group. The participants acquire a better understanding of the criteria commonly used by villagers in selecting the members of the village forestry core group.

**Lesson 1.5.2.2 *Operating a village forestry core group***- The participants learn the procedures for operating a village forestry core group. The participants are provided with knowledge and skills in (a) formulating simple VFCG rules and operating procedures and (b) preparing a simple VFCG action plan (6-12 months).

## **Lesson 1.5.2.1**

### **Forming a village forestry core group**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to:

1. Discuss the procedures in forming a village forestry core group
2. Enumerate the criteria commonly used by villagers in selecting the VFCG members

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion

#### **Time**

One hour

#### **Process**

1. Based on their initial understanding of village forestry and the responsibilities of the VFCG, ask the participants to discuss the procedures in forming a village forestry core group using the following guide questions:
  - a. How many members will compose the village forestry core group?
  - b. What are the criteria for selecting the VFCG members?
  - c. Who will select or appoint the members of the VFCG?
2. Summarize the important points of the discussion and fill the gaps in participants' understanding by giving a brief lecture using the learning notes.

#### **Learning notes**

##### **What are the procedures in forming a village forestry core group?**

**Step 1** After the villagers have confirmed their willingness to participate in village forestry, the idea of forming a village forestry core group is introduced. Discuss the importance of forming the VFCG and its roles and responsibilities including its relationship with the village administration and villagers.

**Step 2** Based on the VFCG roles and responsibilities, ask the villagers to develop a set of criteria for selecting the members of VFCG.

**Step 3** Ask the villagers to select VFCG members in accordance with the criteria they have developed (preferably 5-10 members depending on the area coverage, population size, and socio-cultural diversity of the village).

**Step 4** The VFCG will elect among themselves a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary and a treasurer (as needed).

**Step 5** The village administration confirms the VFCG officers and members and informs the district forestry office of their names.

**What are the criteria commonly used by villagers in selecting the VFCC members?**

- Hardworking and energetic
- Respected by the villagers
- Not too rich... not too poor
- Not too young...not too old
- Can read and write
- Can communicate effectively with villagers
- Honest
- Healthy... not sickly
- Intelligent
- Not drunkards
- Have experience working in forest



## **Lesson 1.5.2.2**

### **Operating the village forestry core group**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to:

1. Discuss the procedures for operating a village forestry core group
2. Formulate simple VFCG rules and operating procedures
3. Prepare a simple VFCG action plan (6-12 months)

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion

#### **Materials**

Handout on sample of a VFCG action plan

#### **Time**

Three hours

#### **Process**

1. Ask the participants to discuss their own understanding of the procedures for operating the village forestry core group.
2. Summarize the important points of the discussion and fill the gaps in participants' understanding using the learning notes.
3. Based on their initial understanding of village forestry and the roles and responsibilities of the VFCG, ask the participants to discuss and reach consensus on simple VFCG rules and operating procedures using the following guide questions:
  - a. What are the goals and objectives of the VFCG?
  - b. How will the VFCG be operated?
  - c. How will the VFCG members share work? Who will lead the VFCG? Who will keep VFCG records? Who will keep VFCG funds (if any)?
  - d. How often will the VFCG meet? VFCG only? VFCG with village administration? VFCG with village administration and villagers?
  - e. How long will the VFCG exist?
  - f. How will initial funds (if any) be managed by the VFCG? Who will be accountable for the funds? To whom will the VFCG be accountable to?
  - g. What actions will be taken on non-active VFCG members?
  - h. What decisions relating to village forestry can be made by the VFCG? By the village administration? By villagers?
  - i. What is the relationship of the VFCG with the village administration, other village groups, villagers and state forestry staff (e.g. decision making, coordination, control)?

4. Based on the consensus reached, ask the participants to write simple VFCG rules and operating procedures.
5. Based on their initial understanding of village forestry and the roles and responsibilities of the VFCG, ask the participants to discuss and reach consensus on a simple action plan that will guide the implementation of initial village forestry activities using the following guide questions:
  - a. How will the action plan on village forestry be prepared, implemented, monitored, and evaluated by the VFCG?
  - b. Who will approve the VFCG action plan?
  - c. What are the contents of the action plan?
  - d. What are the initial village forestry activities to be included in the action plan?
  - e. What is the duration of the action plan? (6-12 months)
6. Based on the consensus reached, ask the participants to prepare a simple VFCG action plan.
7. Review the outputs and suggest improvements (as needed).

## **Learning notes**

### **What are the procedures in operating a village forestry core group?**

#### **Step 1 *Training of village forestry core group***

- a. Conduct a training needs assessment for the village forestry core group.
- b. Design and conduct training courses for VFCG based on the results of the training needs assessment.

#### **Step 2 *Formulating simple VFCG rules and operating procedures***

The VFCG reviews its activities, roles, and responsibilities and formulates simple rules and operating procedures for approval by the village administration. Some examples of these rules are: (a) delegation of authority; (b) records keeping; (c) meetings; (d) reporting; and (e) organizing and mobilizing villagers for village forestry work.

#### **Step 3 *Preparing and implementing a simple VFCG action plan***

- a. Together with the state forestry staff, the VFCG reviews the initial activities in village forestry and prepares a simple action plan covering the period of 6-12 months. The action plan includes the VFCG activities, schedule, and persons responsible. (See handout for a sample of VFCG action plan)
- b. The VFCG presents and discusses the action plan with the village administration and villagers for approval.
- c. The VFCG implements the approved action plan.

**Handout no. 1.5.2.2.1 - Sample format of a VFCG action plan**

Name of village: \_\_\_\_\_

Activities	Target Goal	Month/Year _____												Persons Responsible	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		

Prepared by:

\_\_\_\_\_

VFCG

Approved by :

\_\_\_\_\_

Village Chief

## **Module 1.5.3**

### **Organization building and development in village forestry**

#### **Introduction**

The module is aimed at providing the participants with a better understanding of the process, importance, and stages of organization building and development. The participants learn the factors to consider in organization building and development for village forestry.

#### **Contents**

The module consists of two lessons:

**Lesson 1.5.3.1 *Understanding village organization building and development***- In this lesson, the participants are introduced to the process, importance, and stages of village organization building and development.

**Lesson 1.5.3.2 *Factors to consider in organization building and development for village forestry*** - The participants learn the factors to consider in organization building and development for village forestry.

## **Lesson 1.5.3.1**

### **Understanding village organization building and development**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to:

1. Explain the process and importance of organization building and development
2. Discuss the different stages of village organization building and development

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion

#### **Time**

Two hours

#### **Process**

1. Discuss with the participants their own understanding of organization building and development using the following guide questions:
  - a. What is organization building and development?
  - b. Why is organization building and development important?
  - c. What are the stages of organization building and development
2. Summarize the output of the discussion and fill the gaps in participants understanding by giving a brief lecture using the learning notes.

#### **Learning notes**

##### **What is organization building?**

Organization building involves, among others, the establishment of structures with goals and objectives, roles and responsibilities, rules and operating procedures, and a simple action plan.

##### **What is organization development?**

Organization development (OD) is a process that takes off from an organization that is already showing signs of maturity. OD guarantees the sustainability of the organization by installing and institutionalising tested rules and operating procedures that will either consolidate or expand the organization's operations. The organization links with similar organizations in other villages (i.e. inter-village forestry committee, group of VFCs or VFAs, etc).

## **What are the stages of village organization building and development?**

### ***Stage I- Group formation***

- This is the initial stage of organization building and development, when villagers realize the need to organize and work together to address issues or problems that could not be handled individually. Addressing these issues or problems requires setting up a structure designed to coordinate the activities. Initially, few capable villagers are identified and trained to improve their capability in building up a suitable organization (i.e. core groups).
- The core group members start to set up ideas on what the group wants to achieve and these are expressed in its goals and objectives, structure, simple rules and operating procedures, action plan, etc. Because of the core group's enthusiasm, there will be the tendency to address many problems at once and members will not be able to easily focus on a specific issue or problem. This stage is normally described as a "stormy" stage. The group's goals and objectives may still change as the group proceeds to implement its plans. The group aims to be effective in implementing planned activities and will eventually focus on a single issue or problem. The structure, rules and operating procedures of the group are loose and informal and membership is limited.

### ***Stage II- Group consolidation***

- At this stage, the core group starts to set up formal structure, rules and operating procedures that facilitate routine activities. These may take the form of a formal structure with by-laws, membership policies, rules and regulations, standard operating procedures, record and financial management systems, plan of activities, etc. (e.g. village forestry committee, village forestry association).
- A set of officers is elected and mobilized. Membership is gradually increasing.
- The "stormy" stage now leads to a "norm" stage that is characterized by villagers trying to set up written and/or unwritten standards of performance, rules, procedures, etc., for membership to abide by.
- This stage is also characterized by villagers continuously devising better ways and means to achieve the organization's goals and objectives.

### ***Stage III- Group expansion***

- The organization becomes self-reliant and firmly entrenched in the village as it strives to perpetuate itself. Membership becomes extensive.
- Efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and viability are the standards for achieving organizational goals and objectives through a well-established mechanism of project planning, implementation and management, including participatory monitoring and evaluation.
- Organizational structure is formalized and stable.
- As the need arises, the organization links with similar organizations in other villages (inter-village forestry committees, group of VFCs/VFAs, etc.).

## Lesson 1.5.3.2

### Factors to consider in organization building and development for village forestry

#### Objective

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to explain the factors to consider in forming a suitable organization for village forestry.

#### Methods

Lecture-discussion

#### Time

One hour

#### Process

1. Ask the participants to discuss their own understanding of the factors to consider in forming a suitable organization for village forestry at the FMU level.
2. Summarize the output of the discussion and fill the gaps in participants' understanding by giving a brief lecture using the learning notes.

#### Learning notes

##### **What are the factors to consider in organization building and development for village forestry?**

Since the villagers own the organization for village forestry, the criteria to be used in forming it must be developed and agreed upon by villagers themselves. The following factors and guide questions serve as guidelines in forming a suitable organization for village forestry at the FMU level:

- a. It is based on the felt need of the villagers to organize themselves.

##### Guide questions:

- What do villagers mean when they say, “organize themselves”?
- Why is there a need for villagers to organize themselves?
- What are the purposes of villagers in organizing themselves?
- Are the existing village organizational structures adequate or inadequate to plan, implement, and manage village forestry activities? Why?
- Is there a need to organize an organization for village forestry? Why?
- What is the villagers' understanding of an organization for village forestry?

- b. It builds upon existing village organizational structures.*

##### Guide questions:

- How will the organization be formed in relation to the existing village structures?

- Will it be a separate organization or an integral part of the existing village organizational structure(s)? Why?
  - How does the organization on village forestry relate to the existing village administration and other village organizations?
- c. *It is simple in structure and transparent in operation with internal checks and balance.***  
Guide questions:
- How do the villagers want the organization to be in terms of its structure and its operation?
  - How do villagers describe a simple organizational structure and transparent operation with internal checks and balance?
  - Why do villagers want the organizational structure and operation to be simple and transparent with internal checks and balance?
- d. *It has clear organizational goals and objectives.***  
Guide questions:
- What do villagers mean by clear organizational goals and objectives?
  - Why is it important to have clear organizational goals and objectives?
- e. *It builds upon the initial work of the village forestry core group.***  
Guide questions:
- What will happen with the village forestry core group and its activities when the organization is formed?
  - How will the village forestry core group relate to the organization?
- f. *It gives due consideration for a single village and a village cluster or group (village forest management area).***  
Guide questions:
- What is the difference in forming an organization involving a single village and a village cluster or group?
  - How will the organization be formed in a single village and in a village cluster or group?
- g. *It gives due consideration to ethnic, traditional, and other cultural variations.***  
Guide questions:
- How will the organization be formed in relation to differences in terms of ethnic grouping, traditions, and other cultural beliefs and practices (if any)?
- h. *It is officially recognized by the Government and has the right to enter into contracts.***  
Guide questions:
- Why is it important for the organization to be officially recognized by the Government?
  - How will the organization be officially recognized by the Government?
- i. *Its common bond of membership is residential (meaning that the membership of the organization is only for qualified residents of a village or village cluster or group involved in village forestry).***  
Guide questions:
- Who should qualify to become members of the organization? Why?



## **Module 1.5.4**

### **Organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level**

#### **Introduction**

The module is aimed at providing the participants with knowledge and skills in assessing the options for organization building and development in village forestry and in assessing and selecting a suitable organizational option for village forestry at the FMU level.

#### **Contents**

The module consists of two lessons:

**Lesson 1.5.4.1 *Understanding the present village structure-*** In this lesson, the participants acquire a better understanding of the present organizational structure of the village and the rights and duties of the village administration in forest management.

**Lesson 1.5.4.2 *Assessing organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level-*** The participants acquire knowledge and skills in assessing and selecting a suitable organizational option for village forestry at the FMU level.

## **Lesson 1.5.4.1**

### **Understanding the present village structure**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to:

1. Discuss PRA results on a Venn diagram
2. Explain the present village structures
3. Enumerate the rights and duties of the village administration in forest management

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion

#### **Materials**

Decree no. 102 of the Prime Minister dated July 5, 1993, Forest Law 1996, PRA results on Venn diagram, large brown sheets of paper, marker, and masking tape

#### **Time**

Two hours

#### **Process**

1. Form the participants into groups by village. Ask each group to: (a) review and analyze the existing organizational structure in their respective villages using the PRA results, i.e. the Venn diagram; and (b) discuss the roles and relationships of different groups or organizations in the village and the rights and duties of the village administration in forest management. Ask each group to present their outputs to the whole training group.
2. Summarize the group presentations and complement it with a lecture-discussion using the learning notes.

#### **Learning notes**

##### **What is the present organizational structure of the village?**

The organization and administration of villages in the Lao PDR is defined under the Constitution of the country and Decree No. 102 of the Prime Minister dated July 5, 1993.

Lao village

Under this decree, a village is established in any geographical area where there are more than 20 houses or more than 100 people living together without ethnic and/or religious discrimination. If the houses are less than the number fixed under this decree, it has to be annexed to an adjacent established village. The establishment and demarcation of a village is approved by the chief of the province upon the recommendation of the chief of the district having territorial jurisdiction over the proposed village.

## ***Organizational structure of the Lao village administration***

### ***Chief of the village (Naiban)***

Under this decree, a chief of the village administers the village assisted by one or two deputies depending on the size of the village. The villagers directly elect the *naiban*. A duly designated representative of the district chief supervises the election process. The chief of the district submits the election result to the chief of the province for confirmation. The *naiban* has a term of office of two (2) years and receives compensation from the State.

The *naiban* and his/her deputies, with the assistance of the committees, administers, and coordinates the implementation of all political, economic, and socio-cultural activities in the village. The *naiban* is authorized to issue, in the interest of the village, rules and regulations not contrary to existing laws and customs. The *naiban* also informs higher authorities of the overall situation, problems, and progress of development work in the village.

### ***Village committees***

The *naiban* is assisted by three (3) committees in the administration of the village. Each committee is comprised of three (3) members and is headed by either the *naiban* or his/her deputies. These committees and their responsibilities are as follows:

- *Economic Committee*. Coordinates all activities, groups, and organizations relating to agriculture, forestry, veterinary, business, and other income generating activities in the village; collects information and maintains statistics on crop and livestock production, business, income, and other economic activities in the village; collaborates in the collection of taxes (e.g. land tax) and other contributions from villagers.
- *Public Order and Safety Committee*. Maintains peace and order in the village.
- *Socio-Cultural Committee*. Mobilizes collective effort in the construction of social infrastructures such as schools, roads, temples, irrigation canals, health clinics, and other facilities; promotes the protection of historical and cultural places within the village; organizes traditional and cultural festivities in the village; and promotes cleanliness and healthy ways of living amongst villagers.

### ***Village groups***

The village is divided into groups or *nouays*. Each *nouay* is comprised of 10-15 families and is headed by the chief of the group designated by the *naiban*.

### ***Village organizations***

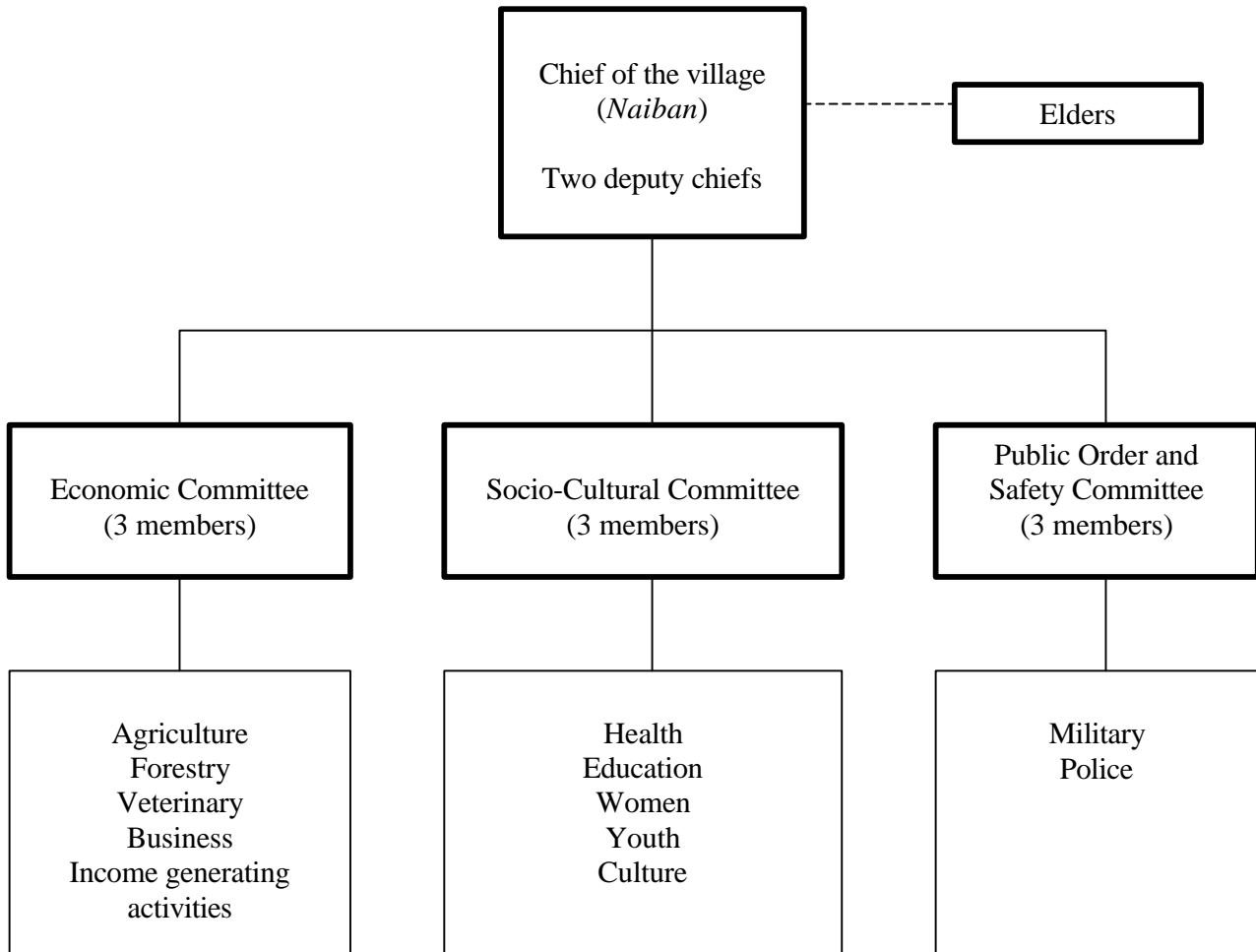
There are legally established organizations such as the party organization (*nouay pak*), social (mass) organization (e.g. women and youth unions), and others existing in the village. These organizations operate in accordance with their respective by-laws and in conformity with existing village rules and regulations. (See handout on the organizational structure of the Lao village administration.)

## **What are the rights and duties of the village administration in forest management and conservation?**

Under the 1996 Forestry Law, the village administration is included in the organization for the management of forest and forestry activities (Section V- Article 59). The rights and duties of village administration in forest management are spelled out under section 63 of the 1996 Forestry Law, as follows:

- Organizes the implementation of decisions and orders from the district agriculture and forestry office (DAFO) concerning forest, forest land, and forest activities
- Organizes the allocation of village forest and forest land to individuals and organizations within the village for them to manage, protect, conserve, and use this land efficiently according to agreements, plans, and regulations approved by the DAFO
- Informs and educates villagers on the importance and value of forest and forest land, watersheds, and the natural environment
- Monitors changes in the conditions of forest, the environment, and the operation of forestry activities in the area of the village and report these to the DAFO
- Mobilizes villagers to manage forest and forest land within the area of the village
- Develops specific village regulations for the management, protection, and conservation of forest, watersheds, wildlife, and the environment appropriate to the actual conditions of the village
- Organizes sedentary livelihoods for villagers aimed at limiting and ending tree felling, damage to forest, and protecting and conserving the environment to allow the regeneration and development of forest and forest resources
- Permits villagers to fell trees within the village in accordance with existing forestry laws, rules, and regulations
- Monitors and prevents any hunting or sale of wildlife in violation of existing regulations
- Leads the prevention of harmful activities affecting forest resources, watersheds, and the environment such as tree felling, forest fires, and other activities, which damage forest resources, wildlife, and water resources

**Handout no. 1.5.4.1.1 - Organizational structure of the Lao village administration**  
(as per Decree No. 102 of the Prime Minister dated 5 July 1993)



## **Lesson 1.5.4.2**

### **Assessing organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level**

#### **Objectives**

At the end of the lesson, the participants should be able to:

1. Discuss and assess the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level
2. Discuss the requirements for forming an organization for village forestry at the FMU level

#### **Methods**

Lecture-discussion

#### **Materials**

Handouts on the structure of organizational options for village forestry at FMU level:

1. village administration with village forest volunteers
2. village administration with a village forestry core group
3. village administration with a village forestry committee
4. village administration with a village forestry association

Handout on the organizational structure of a VFA

#### **Time**

Three hours

#### **Process**

1. Form the participants into groups (by village). Ask each group to identify and discuss the different organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level such as:
  - Option 1 - Village administration with village forest volunteers (VFFs)
  - Option 2 - Village administration with a village forestry core group (VFCG)
  - Option 3- Village administration with a village forestry committee (VFC)
  - Option 4 – Village administration with a village forestry association (VFA)

Use the following guide questions in discussing each of the above options:

- a. What are the roles and responsibilities of the organization for village forestry (VFF, VFCG, VFC, VFA, etc.) and village administration in regard to the planning, implementation, and management of village forestry activities?
- b. What is the relationship between the organization for village forestry and the village administration in regard to village forest management?
- c. Can the village administration and organization for village forestry effectively manage the village forestry activities in the village? Do they have enough time, manpower, organizational efficiency, and other needed resources?
- d. Can accountability and checks and balance be properly established?
- e. For a village cluster or group, how will the village administration and the organization for village forestry be organized to manage village forestry activities? Who will be responsible for organizing them?

2. Summarize the discussion and give a brief lecture to complement the participants' understanding of the different organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level using the learning notes.

### **Learning notes**

It must be noted that many villages are already organized (i.e. village committees, groups, etc.) The villagers with the assistance of the state forestry staff undertake an assessment of these existing village organizations to determine if they are suitable and responsive to the needs of the villagers and to the requirements of village forestry. The decision to form a new organization for village forestry depends on the results of a thorough assessment of organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level.

#### **What are the requirements for forming an organization for village forestry at the FMU level?**

1. Thorough discussion of the organizational options for village forestry by villagers with assistance from state forestry staff, as needed.
2. Regulations and procedures for the formation and official recognition of organizations for village forestry.
3. Adequate training and extension support provided to villagers by state forestry staff.
4. Involvement and guidance of district authorities (i.e. District Chief, DAFO, etc.).

#### **What are some of the organizational options for village forestry at the FMU level?**

##### ***Option 1 - Existing village administration with village forest volunteers (VFFs)***

- Under this option, the village administration is directly responsible for the planning, implementation, and management of village forestry activities. The village administration prepares and approves simple rules, procedures and plans for village forestry and implements them through the village forest volunteers (composed of 2-3 persons or may be increased as needed).
- The village administration performs both the policy making and implementing functions. It form into working teams (composed of VFFs) to undertake specific village forestry activities in collaboration with state forestry staff. The village administration is accountable to the district authorities concerned.
- In a village cluster or group, the village administrations in the cluster jointly perform both the policy making and implementation functions of village forestry in the cluster or group. Working teams (comprised of VFFs from villages in the cluster or group) are organized to perform specific village forestry activities in the cluster or group. The rules procedures and plans governing village forestry operations in the cluster or group are jointly approved by the village administrations and villagers in the cluster or group.

##### ***Advantages***

- The existing village administration is established under the laws of Law PDR and has already a legal personality (Decree no. 102 of the Prime Minister dated July 5, 1993).

- The village administration has a legal mandate for the management of forests, forest lands, and forestry activities (New Forestry Law dated 11/19/96).
- Villagers are already familiar with the structure and operation of the village administration.
- This option is suitable in small villages where village forestry activities are traditional (e.g. forest protection against illegal logging, dissemination of information) and limited. Moreover, the organizing requirement for village forestry is minimal.
- It does not lead to proliferation of village organizations in the village that may cause confusion amongst villagers.

#### *Disadvantages*

- The village administration is responsible for the overall management and coordination of all political, economic, and socio-cultural activities in the village. Involving the village administration in the planning, implementation, and management of village forestry activities will require much of its time and effort.
- Project management can become messy and complicated, particularly when the village administration manages different village development activities simultaneously.
- It is not easy to establish internal “checks and balance” and to determine accountability.

See handout for the organizational structure of option 1.

#### ***Option 2 – Village administration with a village forestry core group (VFCG)***

- An informal village forestry core group (consisting of 5-10 people or increased as needed) is formed by the village administration and villagers. It is directly responsible for planning, implementing, and managing initial village forestry activities in collaboration with the state forestry staff. The VFCG elects a Chairperson, vice Chairperson, secretary and treasurer (as needed).
- Under this option the VFCG prepares simple rules, procedures and plans (short term) for village forestry and has these approved by the village administration and villagers. Said rules, procedures and plans are implemented by the VFCG. Working teams (e.g. village land use mapping teams, village cadastral survey teams, village PRA teams) are formed, as needed, to undertake initial village forestry activities in collaboration with the state forestry staff. The VFCG supervises the operations of these teams and is accountable to the village administration and villagers. The village administration is accountable to the district authorities concerned.
- In a village cluster or group, the village administrations in the cluster or group can jointly serve as the policy making body for village forestry. The VFCGs in the village cluster or group jointly implements the approved rules, procedures or plan for village forestry within the cluster or group. Working teams are formed consisting of villagers in the cluster or group and supervised by the VFCGs. The VFCGs are accountable to



the village administrations in the cluster and the latter are jointly accountable to the district authority concerned.

#### *Advantages*

- Option 2 has the same advantages as in Option 1.
- This option is suitable to villages where initial village forestry activities are being implemented. Villagers are still trying to learn how to effectively organize themselves for village forestry. The VFCG structure is loose and informal. Its rules, procedures and plans (short term) are relatively simple.
- It is easy to determine accountability and to establish internal “checks and balance”.

#### *Disadvantages*

- The village forestry core group as an informal group cannot respond and cope up with the increasing organizing requirements of expanding village forestry activities.
- Possible organizational conflict between VFCG and village administration may occur if properly planned and managed.

See handout for the organizational structure of option 2.

#### ***Option 3- Village administration with a village forestry committee(VFC)***

- A formal village forestry committee (consisting of 10-15 people or increased as needed) is formed by the village administration and villagers. It is directly responsible for planning, implementing, and managing increasing village forestry activities in collaboration with the state forestry staff. The VFC elects a Chairperson, vice Chairperson, secretary and treasurer (as needed).
- Under this option, the VFC prepares more elaborate rules and procedures and long term plans for village forestry which are approved by the village administration and villagers. Said rules, procedures and plans are implemented by the VFC. Working teams are formed, as needed, to undertake expanded village forestry activities in collaboration with the state forestry staff. The VFC supervises the operations of the teams and is accountable to the village administration and villagers. The village administration is accountable to the district authorities concerned.
- In a village cluster or group, the village administrations in the cluster or group can jointly serve as the policy making body for village forestry. The VFCs in the village cluster or group jointly implement the approved rules, procedures or plans for village forestry in the cluster or group. Working teams are formed composed of villagers from the cluster or group and supervised by the VFCs. The VFCs are accountable to the village administrations in the cluster and the latter are jointly accountable to the district authority concerned.

#### *Advantages*

- Option 3 has the same advantages as in Options 1 and 2.

- The village forestry committee is a formal group. The VFC has more elaborate rules and procedures and a long term plan for village forestry. The roles and responsibility of the VFC and its relationship with the village administration is clear.
- This option is suitable to small villages where the implementation of village forestry activities is limited and the requirements for organizing are minimal.
- It is easy to determine accountability and to establish internal “checks and balance”.

#### *Disadvantages*

- The village forestry committee cannot respond and cope up with the increasing organizing requirements of expanding and more complex village forestry activities in large villages.
- Possible organizational conflict between VFC and village administration may occur if not properly planned and managed.
- There is a potential danger of proliferation of formal organizations in the villages.

See handout for the organizational structure of Option 3.

#### ***Option 4 - Village administration with a village forestry association (VFA)***

- A more elaborate and formal village forestry association (consisting of functional committees and working teams) is formed by the village administration and villagers. It is a conglomeration of clearly defined committees, namely: the *village assembly* (highest decision making body); the *policy committee* (policy making body) and *management committee* (implementing body responsible for day-to-day operations). Other committees and working teams are organized to perform specific tasks, e.g. elections, education and training, and internal audits and inventory. See handout for the organizational structure of a village forestry association. The VFA is directly responsible for the overall planning, implementation, and management of expanding and complex village forestry activities. It is accountable to the village administration and the latter is accountable to the district administration concerned.
- In a village cluster, the VFA members in the cluster or group serve as the VFA general assembly (highest making body). The VFA policy and management committees are comprised of villagers from the cluster or group duly elected by the VFA general assembly. Working teams consists of capable villagers from the village cluster or group.

#### *Advantages*

- The village forestry association is a more elaborate and formal organization. The VFA has more elaborate rules and standardized procedures and a long-term plan for village forestry. The roles and responsibility of the VFA and its relationship with the village administration is clear.
- The structure of the village forestry association makes use of “committees” and blends well with the present village organizational structure.

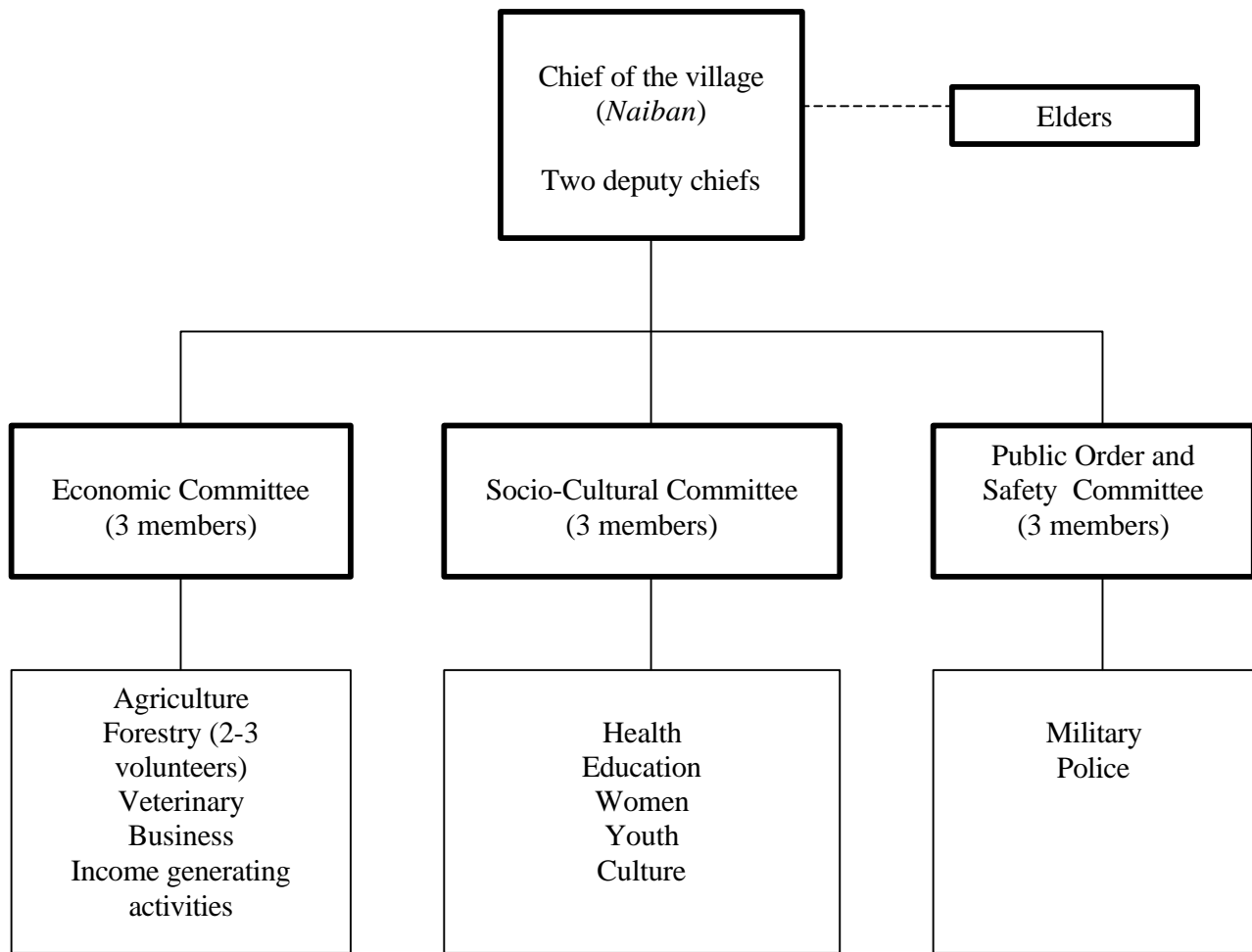
- This option is suitable for large villages where the implementation of village forestry activities is more complex and the requirements for organizing are high.
- It is easy to determine accountability and to establish internal “checks and balance”.

*Disadvantages*

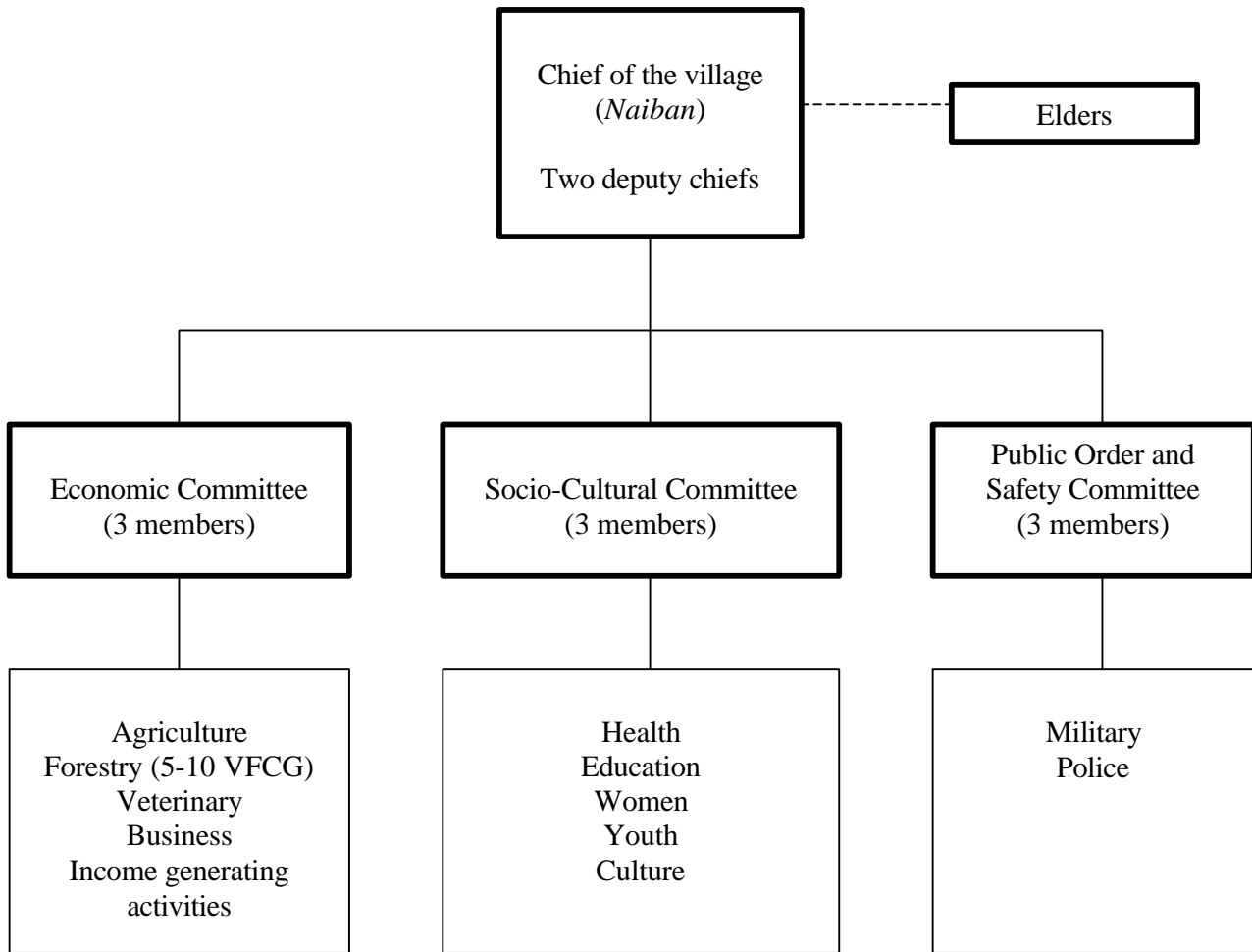
- Possible organizational conflict between VFC and village administration may occur if not properly planned and managed.
- There is a potential danger of proliferation of formal organizations in the villages.

See handout for the organizational structure of Option 4.

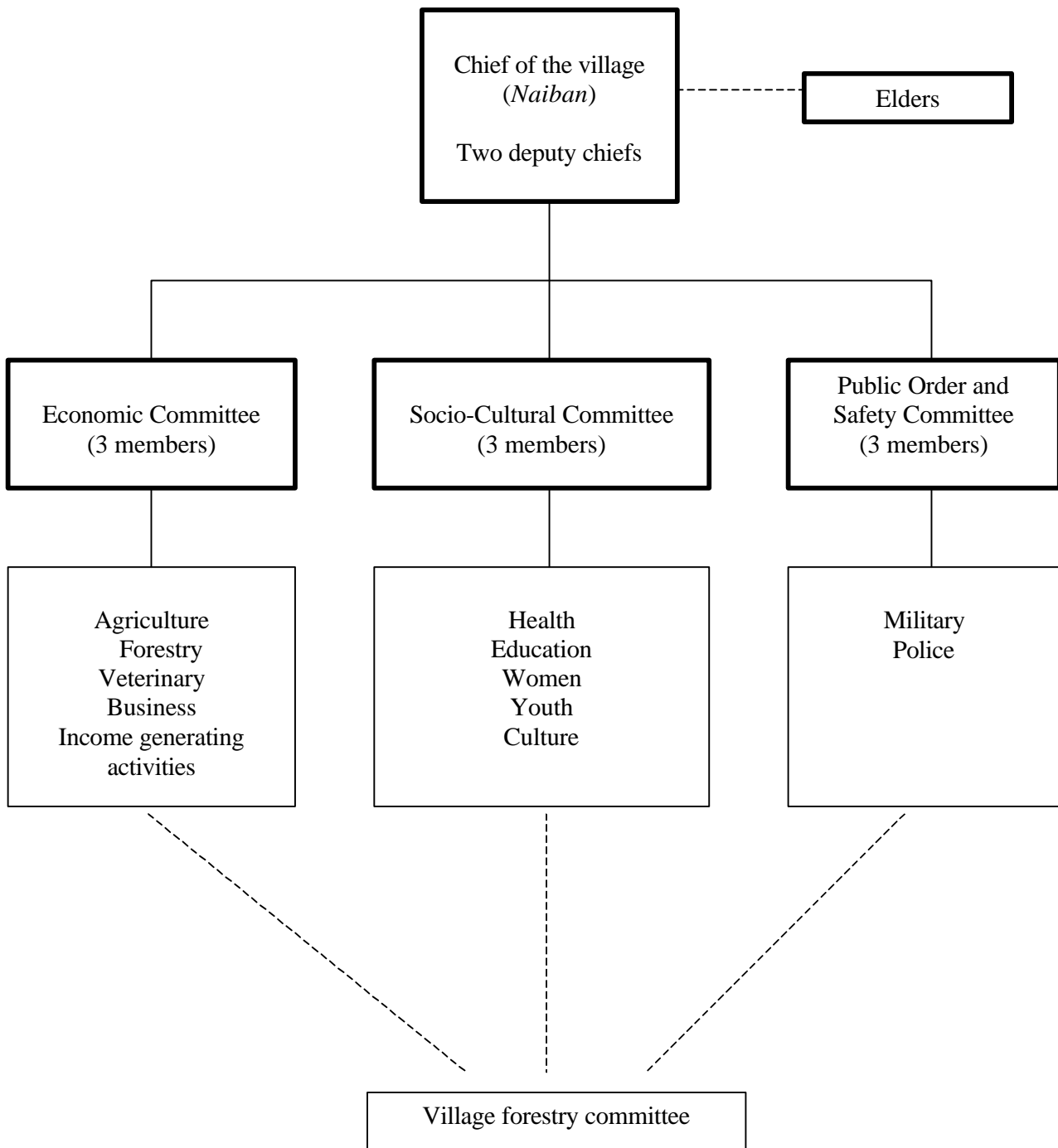
**Handout no. 1.5.4.2.1 Organizational structure for Option 1**  
**Village administration with village forest volunteers**



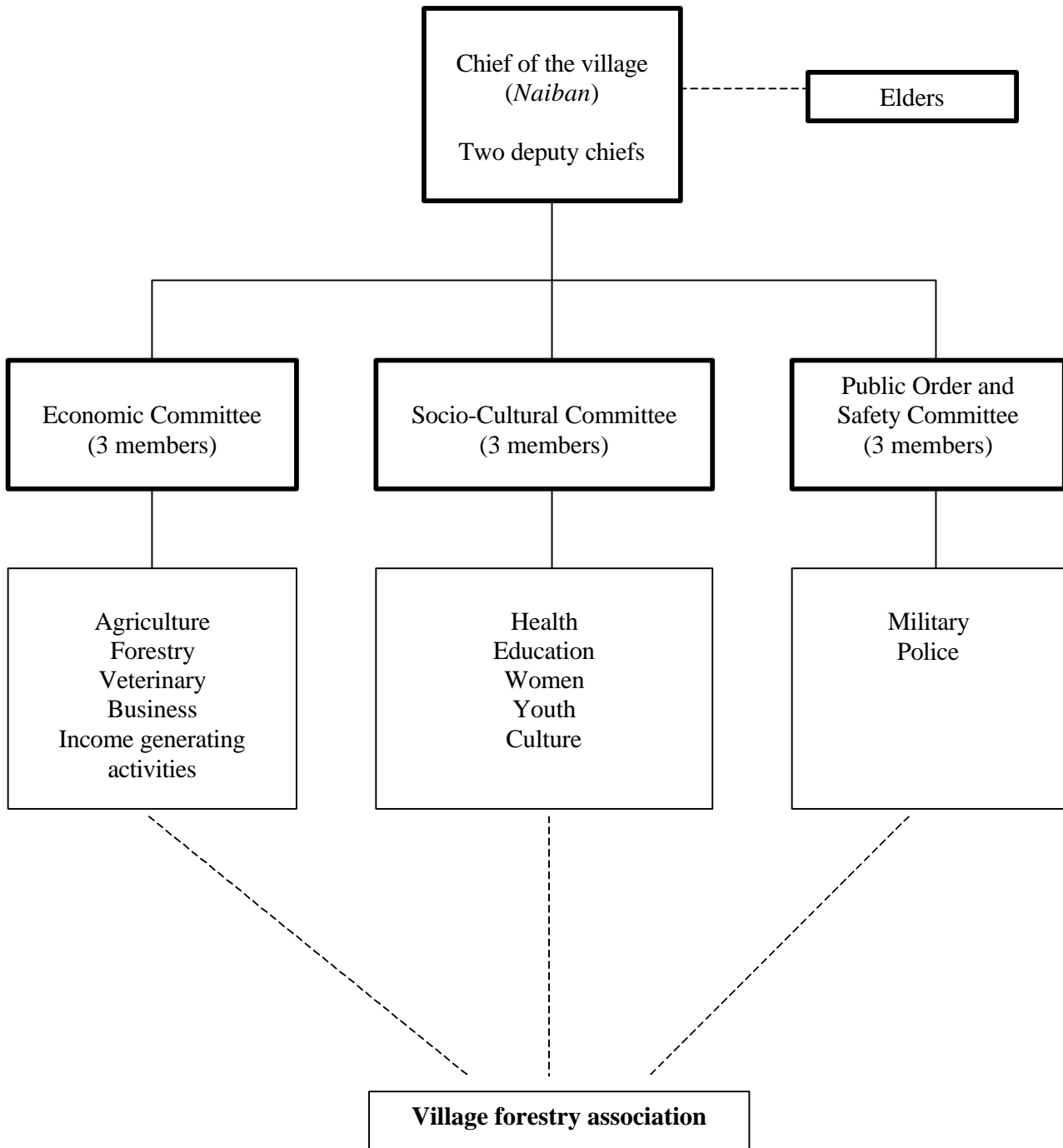
**Handout no. 1.5.4.2.2 - Organizational structure for Option 2**  
**Village administration with a village forestry core group**



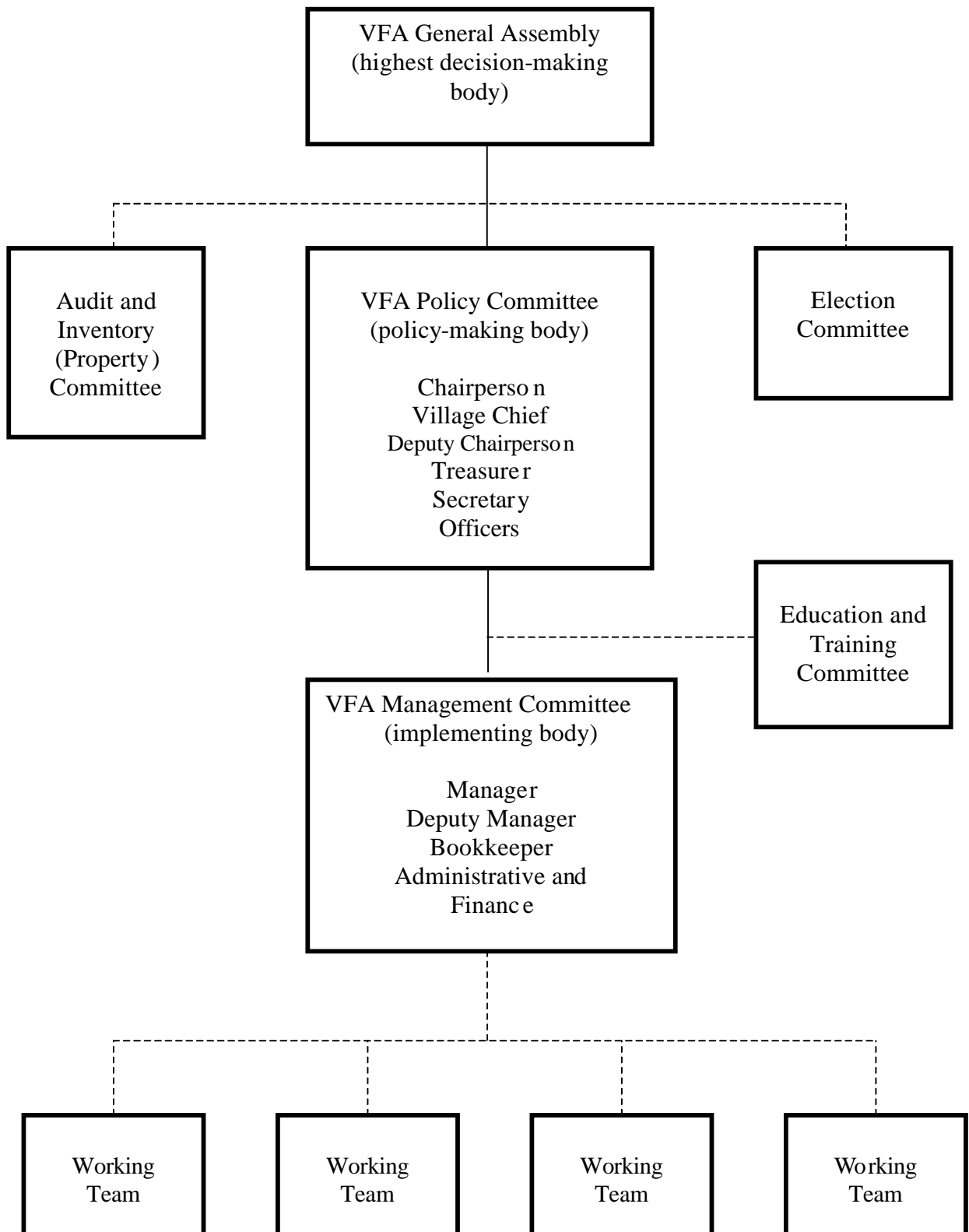
**Handout no. 1.5.4.2.3 - Organizational structure for Option 3**  
**Village administration with a village forestry committee**



**Handout no. 1.5.4.2.4 - Organizational structure for Option 4**  
**Village administration with a village forestry association**



**Handout no. 1.5.4.2.5 Organizational Structure of a Village Forestry Association**



[Back the Table of Contents](#)