

## In Unity there is Strength...

*Local honey producers see the importance of group effort to improve production in Nam Dinh province, Vietnam.*



Local honey bee group in Nam Dinh organize regular meetings with other members to update and share themselves on their experiences in honey production.

### Background

Aside from building capacity of farmers around Xuan Thuy National Park in Nam Dinh, Vietnam, a local honey group was organized and has strengthened its organization which attracted more members from other communes. From its humble beginning of 11 members, the group has expanded to 18 members covering the Giao An, Giao Thien, Hong Son and Hoanh Thuan communes.

Previously, members of the group had never collaborated with other farmers. Management guidelines developed were not realistic and could not create strong connection among the members. Also, the group never had a clear action plan to develop. The number of bee

cages and working facilities were insufficient and in bad condition. However, this situation has changed after the honey-bee group received support from the Wetlands Alliance through CORIN-Asia and the Commune People's Committee.

### Honey Group Breakthroughs

Through technical assistance, the honey bee group has established guidelines of cooperation which is practiced and followed by the members. Among the accomplishments of the honey bee group include:

- Setting up a management board including coordination of all activities of the group.
- Organized regular meetings every three months to share experiences and encourage each other.

- Team work to move bee cages to the mangroves and other flowering areas. This led to strong cooperation among the members compared to their individualistic approach in the past.
- Strengthening the group's Local Initiative Fund (LIF) based on individual contributions, membership fees, and visitors' donations. Currently the group has contributed 20 million VND to the LIF. The fund could also be used to lend members at a low interest. Income from interests was used to purchase tools and equipment for honey production.

### The Road Ahead

With the growth of its membership, the group proposed to expand production around the park particularly along the mangrove areas in this period. Xuan Thuy National Park has more than 3,500 hectares of mangroves which serve as an important resource for local honey production. This gave opportunity for the group to utilize the area for honey production while at the same time managing and conserving the mangroves.