

## **Provincial Government Support Thanh Hoa, Viet Nam**

Thanh Hoa province, located in Northwest Vietnam, was identified as an important region in which to form a relationship with the Provincial People's Committee for several reasons. First, it is an ideal location for bamboo sector development due to the large volume of luong bamboo resources. Second, the province is home to a number of workshops and businesses which are key elements in the development of the market. Lastly, luong bamboo is considered one of the main income sources for people living in the mountainous regions of the province.

Currently the relationship with Thanh Hoa Province People's Committee is in the initial stages of development. A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed on 5 March 2009 between PI and the Provincial People's Committee. Both PI and the People's Committee have committed to co-operate, collaborate and complement each other in the development of the bamboo sector. The focus for our cooperation will be related to the development of a diverse, sustainable and competitive bamboo sector for the benefit of the poor farmers, workers and businesses.

Soon after the MOU was signed a delegation of 13 Thanh Hoa provincial department heads went on a PI funded benchmarking visit to Hai Duong, Vietnam in August of 2009. During the visit the participants were able to see the many different products that can be produced from bamboo. After the visit the provincial department heads and members of the Mekong Bamboo team debriefed on the great potential of the bamboo industry in Thanh Hoa Province.

A bamboo investment promotion day is scheduled to take place on 24 November 2009. The event will seek to introduce potential investment opportunities, discuss provincial policies that promote investment and to bring different parties together to encourage various opportunities in the bamboo industry. Participants include provincial authorities, the association of small and medium enterprises, other enterprises inside and outside of the province and representatives from luong bamboo related districts/communes.

Future projects and events for 2010 will include an in depth provincial policy review and plan to encourage investment, increased engagement with enterprises on new bamboo product technologies and the completion of a detailed bamboo resource inventory.