AgroSpectrum ASIA
Envisaging Future | Updating Present

Vietnamâ??s Quang Ngai bets on forest carbon to build new green economy

21 August 2026 | News

Province targets around 10 million tons of carbon sequestration by 2030 as it moves beyond timber towards carbon credits, ecosystem services and a multi-value forest economy

Vietnam’s Quang Ngai province is placing a major bet on forests as an economic asset, targeting the absorption and storage of approximately 10 million tons of carbon by 2030 as part of a broader strategy to build a future forest carbon market. The target is embedded in a new resolution on sustainable forestry development through 2030, with a vision to 2035, which aims to reposition forestry from a predominantly timber-based industry into a modern, high-value sector generating revenue from carbon, ecosystem services, biodiversity, non-timber products and nature-based economic activities.

The strategy reflects a wider shift underway in forestry: forests are increasingly being valued not only for what can be harvested from them, but also for the climate and environmental services they provide.

From timber economy to carbon economy

Quang Ngai’s forestry strategy is built around the idea of a multi-value forest economy. By 2030, the province aims to maintain forest coverage at 60 per cent, plant 135,000 hectares of concentrated forests, plant 40 million scattered trees and

restore 3,000 hectares through zoning and natural regeneration.

The forestry sector also targets an emissions reduction of approximately 1.129 million tons of carbon, alongside the planned absorption and storage of around 10 million tons. Those targets could provide the foundation for Quang Ngai to participate in the emerging forest carbon market and create new revenue streams from forest protection, restoration and improved management.

The province's strategy marks a significant departure from a traditional forestry model centred primarily on timber production. Instead, the objective is to capture value from the full range of services forests can provide.

Carbon credits become part of the forestry business model

Quang Ngai plans to study and implement mechanisms and policies to support the supply of forest carbon credits while promoting greater private and community participation in forestry. The province is also looking at planted-forest insurance, stronger community forestry models and greater alignment with international requirements, including commitments linked to the Viet Nam-EU VPA/FLEGT Agreement and the European Union Deforestation Regulation.

The underlying strategy is clear: better forest management could create both environmental and financial returns. Protecting natural forests, restoring degraded areas, improving plantation quality and shifting from small-timber to large-timber forests could increase both long-term economic value and carbon sequestration potential. For a forestry sector facing increasing pressure to demonstrate sustainability and traceability, carbon could become an additional layer of value rather than a standalone environmental objective.

Technology will determine whether carbon becomes tradable
The challenge, however, lies in converting carbon potential into a marketable asset. Forest carbon credits require credible measurement, monitoring and verification. Quang Ngai is therefore planning to accelerate the use of digital technologies in forest management.

Digital maps of planting areas, along with GIS, AI, IoT and blockchain-based traceability systems, are expected to support greater data transparency and help establish systems for measuring and monitoring carbon sequestration. This infrastructure could become critical. A forest may store carbon, but without reliable data demonstrating how much carbon is being absorbed or retained, the environmental value cannot easily be converted into a credible carbon asset.

For Quang Ngai, the carbon strategy will therefore depend as much on measurement and data infrastructure as on tree planting itself.

More than carbon: building a multi-value forest economy

The province is also seeking to attract investment into afforestation, wood processing, medicinal plants cultivated under forest canopies, ecotourism and climate-resilient agroforestry. This diversification is central to the long-term strategy.

Rather than relying on a single source of forestry income, Quang Ngai is looking to build multiple revenue streams around the same natural asset. Forest protection can support carbon generation. Improved forest quality can support timber value. Biodiversity can support ecotourism. Forest ecosystems can provide opportunities for medicinal plants and other non-timber forest products.

The approach could make forest conservation economically more attractive by linking environmental protection with local development and community livelihoods.

The real test: turning carbon targets into carbon revenue

The 10-million-ton target is ambitious, but the bigger challenge will be translating sequestration potential into measurable and marketable carbon credits. That will require clear rules on carbon ownership, measurement methodologies, monitoring, verification and revenue sharing.

It will also require confidence among investors and buyers that the underlying carbon assets meet recognised standards. Quang Ngai's strategy nevertheless represents an important step towards integrating forestry into Vietnam’s broader green and circular economy.

The province is betting that forests can become productive assets without being depleted. By protecting existing forest areas, restoring degraded forests, improving plantations and reducing forest loss, Quang Ngai is attempting to build an economic model in which the value of keeping a forest standing increasingly competes with the value of cutting it down.

A new growth model for forestry

The longer-term ambition is to develop Quang Ngai's forestry sector into a competitive, high-value industry integrated into national value chains by 2035. Carbon credits could become one of the most important components of that transformation.

But the strategy's broader significance lies in its attempt to redefine forestry itself. The future forest economy envisioned by Quang Ngai is not limited to logs, wood products or plantation expansion. It includes carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, biodiversity, digital monitoring, ecotourism, agroforestry and community-based development.

If the province can establish credible measurement systems and convert its sequestration capacity into marketable carbon assets, its forests could become a new source of climate finance. Quang Ngai’s next forestry product may not be a piece of timber. It could be a verified ton of carbon.