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**Title:** Cinnamon production in Yen Bai: how high-value non-timber forest product commodity chains interact with ethnic minority livelihoods in northern Vietnam

**Abstract:** Hmong and Yao ethnic minority groups, many of them residing in the Vietnam northern uplands, rely on semi-subsistence practices to build sustainable livelihoods in the margins, while adapting to new market opportunities, socialist state's agricultural transition, and market integration policies. A range of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have become increasingly important elements in the livelihoods of some of these minority households. One such NTFP is cinnamon (*Cinnamomum cassia*), a high-priced NTFP on the global market, now increasingly being grown by ethnic minority farmers in Vietnam's northern province Yên Bái. Despite the sizable potential cash influx from this NTFP for local livelihoods, surprisingly little research has been conducted on cinnamon commodity chains originating from these uplands, especially at the production nodes. Drawing conceptually from livelihood studies and commodity chain literatures, I intend to answer the question: how is the cultivation of cinnamon integrated into ethnic minority livelihoods in the Vietnam uplands? Preliminary results from my research reveal significant maneuvers in livelihood practices including a transition from semi-subsistence livelihood practices to cash-crop oriented agriculture. Moreover, some farmers are beginning to position themselves at other nodes along the cinnamon commodity chain. The impacts of such changes are only just beginning to be revealed.

**Keywords:** livelihood studies; cinnamon; cash crop farmers; commodity chains.