

ISG NEWSLETTER

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT - INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION DEPARTMENT

VOL 2. 2004

Focus

CPRGS Implementation in rural sector

I- Major lessons learnt

1. CPRGS is not a new concept. In the rural sector, CPRGS is a growth strategy centered on the poor and disadvantaged areas.

2. GoV and MARD will implement CPRGS by integrating it into socio-economic development plans at sector, sub-sector and local levels but not through a separate program or project.

3. Implementation of CPRGS focuses largely on improving planning and budgeting at all levels, moving away from focusing on inputs to poverty reduction and growth outcomes with monitorable indicators and specific policy and resource allocation measures. Due to the new, diversified and complex natures of this task, agriculture and rural development sector has to conduct the integration of CPRGS into its 5-year and annual plans step by step "learning by doing".

4. Issuing and implementing suitable policies that create favorable and equal conditions for farmers and different economic sectors to together develop and contribute to poverty reduction are also important measures.



Integration of objectives of The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) into the planning process at all levels was one of the main subjects discussed at the Mid-Term CG Meeting for Vietnam, held in Vinh from 16-17 July 2004. Follows are key issues abstracted from MARD's report delivered at the Meeting.

5. CPRGS implementation requires efforts from all levels of the GoV, civil society, communities and the poor. Donors' cooperation and collaboration are necessary and very important. Thus, close cooperation and effective coordina-

tion are critical.

II- Main challenges

1. Maintaining agricultural production rate of 4.5% and poverty reduction in rural area at the rate of 2% per year is a great challenge. From 1993 to 2002, the poverty rate in rural area has reduced 50% but the rate is gradually slowing down to 2.1% per year for period 93-98, and 1.2% per year for period 98-2002 especially poor such areas as Central HighLands, Northwest and Northern Central regions.

2. Integration and WTO Accession:

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Advisory briefings on streamlining CPRGS

ISG has been supporting MARD in preparing Advisory Briefings with consultations made to relevant MARD Departments and donors' organizations. The first Advisory Briefing entitled "Streamlining CPRGS into MARD rural development strategy" is under preparation with

several comments from interested donors. On 17 May 2004, a request and questionnaire (which will serve as inputs for the Advisory Briefings) were sent to MARD Departments. ISG Secretariat has synthesized the recommendations and classified them into groups of issues, and sent it to the

ISG Steering Board members for comments and suggestions in an effort to ensure the good quality of the Advisory Briefing in the next preparation.

Furthermore, ISG Secretariat also requested ISG Steering Board members to provide institutional/policy expertise in an effort to (i)

analyze the inputs from the Advisory Briefing and the comments from donors to find out what are the policy implications, and (ii) prepare a comprehensive report, including recommendations to MARD Minister and donors in terms of institutional and policy issues. It is intended that if the consultant is available from late July/early August 2004, the draft of final report can be completed by mid-August 2004. ♦

Source: ISG Secretariat

Anti-Disaster Partnership Launches New Initiatives to Reduce Risk in Central Viet Nam

Known as the most disaster prone region, with high poverty rate, central Viet Nam suffers from almost all types of natural disasters with annual floods being the most severe. The unprecedented floods in late 1999 alone claimed 800 lives and more than 300 million USD economic losses. These natural shocks can erase decades of hard-won development and further entrench poverty and inequality. They represent a major obstacle to the achievement of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals in a country like Viet Nam, where 70% of the population is exposed to water related disasters.



Ha Noi -7 June 2004 The Natural Disaster Mitigation Partnership (NDM-Partnership), a coalition of Government, donors and NGOs, launched two new initiatives to reduce disaster risk in Binh Dinh province and Da Nang city in the central Viet Nam.

The total budget of USD 2.6 million is supported by the Governments of the Netherlands, Luxembourg and UNDP, with the Government of the Netherlands contributing the major part of the funding. Both projects aim at reducing the risks of annual floods, droughts and other natural disasters by upgrading flood control infrastructure, such as dykes and sluices in these localities together with developing local capacity.

Under these projects, the participating localities and the Dyke management and Flood control of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will work together to upgrade disaster control infrastructure and build community capacity for disaster risk reduction. "These new initiatives mark an important shift away from traditional disaster control to more effective disaster risk management. The focus on the link between disaster risk and poverty reduction are fundamental for truly sustainable development," noted Jordan Ryan, UNDP Resident Representative.

Mr. Ryan called for mainstreaming disaster risk into development planning, saying that making disaster risk reduction more explicit in the local planning also enables a more broad-based participatory decision-making process. "Disaster risk is not inevitable. On the contrary, it can be managed and reduced

through appropriate and collaborative development actions where central and local government, the donors and community act together." he said.◆

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Establishment of Trust Fund for Forests (TFF)

The Vietnamese Forest Sector has been trying its best to orientate towards a sector-wide approach instead of a project approach since 1999. For implementing this process, under the guidance of the Government and with the support of the related ministries, in cooperation with the international partners, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has made every effort to set up the Trust Fund for Forests (TFF). The established TFF will be financially supported by international donors in order to implement the Forest Sector Support Program and government's programmes for the forest sector, including the 5 Million Hectare Reforestation Project.

Objectives of the TFF include: (i) aligning ODA support more closely with the agreed priorities identified in the FSSP framework; (ii) improving the poverty targeting of ODA support to the forest sector, consistent with the CPRGS; (iii) harmonizing aid to the forest sector and reducing transaction costs on Gov; and (iv) supporting a transition towards a sector wide approach to ODA support in the forest sector.

The bilateral partners committed to supporting the TFF and have reached a consensus on utilizing funds to cover the agreed priorities identified within the FSSP framework.

Obtaining permission of the Prime Minister, on June 23, 2004, in Hanoi, representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Vice Minister Bui Ba Bong, and representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, the Embassy of Sweden, and the Embassy of Switzerland signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish the TFF, and committed financial support for the TFF. More international partners will sign the MOU to join the TFF at a later date.◆

Source: FSSP CO

Feasibility study on rural telecenters

The UNDP and Royal Netherlands Embassy funded project VIE/02/016 for Public Administration Reform (PAR) in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is supporting the Ministry to strengthen its institutional and human resources to support public administrative reform. Among measures utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for institutional improvements, MARD has conducted a feasibility study to explore the use of ICTs to improve agricultural extension services to farmers. The feasibility study aimed at developing telecentre models for a pilot project. Rural telecentres will be designed to provide farmers with agricultural information services that are

effective, responsive, pro-active and sustainable, and which will result in improved incomes for farmers from their farming activities. Telecentres typically contain ICTs, with Internet access, and are operated by knowledgeable staff who are able to mobilise information resources that farmers can use effectively. The telecentres would be networked and assisted by a central information help desk facility responsible for cultivating productive partnerships among information supplying institutions.

The feasibility study took the form of a structured field survey of 20 selected communes in the North, Central and Southern regions of Viet Nam, alongside a review of national and international experiences with rural ICTs.

The feasibility study recommends a proof-of-concept pilot sub-project, under the existing PAR in MARD, to establish 17 rural telecentres in communes to serve the information needs of farmers and to stimulate agricultural reconstruction and productivity at the grass roots.◆

Source: PAR in MARD Project

For more information please contact:

PAR in MARD project - VIE/02/016

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Vietnam Agriculture has made important achievements

The Conference "Transforming agricultural structure - improving land use effectiveness to reach the goal of developed farming household farms and fields with the production value of at least 50 million VND/ha/year" has taken place in Hanoi during April 16th and 17th.

According to the assessment carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the transformation of production structure has produced great social and economic results and ensured the continuous increase of agri-forestry and aquaculture GDP at a relatively high speed, from almost 3% in 2001 to more than 4% in 2002 and 3.2% in 2003. Cuu Long River Delta is the region with high transformation speed and the agricultural pro-

duction value increases from more than 20 million VND/ha in 2000 to 28 million VND/ha in 2003. The Red River Delta comes after with the average agricultural and aquatic production value of 37 million VND/ha in 2003.

Although the rice cultivation area of Vietnam in 2003 decreases in comparison with that in 2000 but rice productivity increases from 32.5 million ton in 2000 to 34.52 million ton in 2003.

In his speech at the conference, the Prime Minister clarified that agricultural and rural issues need to be handled comprehensively in the time to come and attentions should be focused on traditional villages and small and medium enterprises.◆

Source: MARD

The Collaboration for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Program is calling for Expressions of Interest from organisations and institutions to participate in the program implementation. According to the Program working plan, the Expressions of Interest will be short-listed in September 2004. Then, Expressions of Interest in the shortlist will be developed to full proposals.

CARD Program calling for Expressions of Interest

CARD Program is an Australian Government initiative, funded through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) contribute to the Outcomes expected from the Government of Vietnam's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS).

Total budget for the Program is A\$19.5 million to support research projects proposed by Vietnamese institutions in partnership with Australian institutions. Research projects include those in agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery.

There is an amount of additional support to facilitate development of research management systems in MARD.

The Program duration is 6 years.◆

Detailed information about the CARD Program can be found on www.isgmard.org.vn (related links-CARD Program).

CPRGS Implementation in rural sector

This challenge is reflected in aspects: strengthening capacity for governance and public services delivery; strengthening capacity for market orientation for enterprises; providing market information and knowledge to farmers. Roadmap and capacities serving integration of agriculture sector in general and accession to WTO in particular are being developed under the direction of MARD.

3. Increasing productivity and competitiveness: applying new technologies and strengthening governance capacity toward market oriented economy could improve productivity and competitiveness. However, mapping out priorities for investing, adjusting economic structure of the sector and provinces (macro level), adjusting business structure and products of enterprises (micro level) requires large capacity building and investment for state management agencies, public services providers, scientists, enterprises and farmers.

4. Creating off-farm jobs and incomes: This is a big issue of rural development that requires applying science and technology; changing economic structure towards an industrialized agriculture and rural areas, diversifying and developing rural industries; developing input and output services for production; developing financial services and labour markets in the rural area.

5. Natural Resources Sustainable Management: Rural development requires projections and policies on utilization and exploitation of land, water, forest and other natural resources. Therefore, there should be a long-term strategy for sustainable management and development natural resources.



The 10 year agriculture and rural development strategy for the period of 2001 - 2010 focuses on the achievement of three strategic goals:

1. Increased income in the rural sector by broad-based, sustainable and high quality growth.

2. Reduced income disparities, risks and vulnerability, and improved food security and social well-being of the poor.

3. Improved sustainability of natural resources in rural areas

6. Reducing vulnerability, especially in lagging behind areas: equitable development and narrowing poverty gap while increasing growth is not only required a reasonable public welfare and social security system towards poor people and poor areas but it is necessary to have a long-term pro-poor development strategy.

III- Plans for the future

In the long run, there are four focus areas for MARD's CPRGS implementation:

1. Monitoring and evaluation. The first job to be done is to link the three pillars (continued reforms, inclusive and sustainable development, good gover-

nance), each with their set of objectives, to a series of indicators for monitoring outcomes (e.g. increase in rural incomes or expenditures), outputs (for example, number of new technologies released to farmers), and inputs (public and private spending, policies).

2. Public spending. Implementation of the CPRGS means making sure that MARD's public investments and recurrent expenditures contribute to the three pillars that it has identified. First steps here include trying to assess the impact of past public spending on the three goals, and trying to analyze planned future investments for their ability

to contribute to these three goals (appraise them).

3. Policy Reform Measures. To reach the desired goals and targets, a number of policy reform measures are needed. But in order to know which policy measures work best for the three pillars and which ones do not work very well, more research may be needed to evaluate current policy measures. Topics for further research can be identified. Then, adjustments can be made, according to the findings of the research. The idea is to make sure that MARD's policy decisions make more use of good quality analysis of field data and also make more use of discussions with the rural poor to obtain their feedback on these policy measures. ISG's initiative to produce Advisory Briefings can support MARD in identifying the hottest issues confronted by Vietnam's agriculture and rural development sector.

4. Rolling out the CPRGS to the provinces. At the provincial level, similar challenges exist. The most important thing is to make sure that more and better information is made available to policy makers on which policy measures and spending measures contribute most to the three pillars.

In the short run, there are four measures to be implemented:

1. Raising awareness of the CPRGS within MARD and provincial DARDs;

2. Finalizing the institutional arrangements within MARD to ensure that broad-based cross-departmental discussions and consultation within MARD will take place, and making sure there are clear communication lines to other ministries and provinces;

3. Evaluation of 20-year reform experience in agriculture and rural sector;

4. Integrating CPRGS into the sector's next 5-year socio-economic development plan. ♦

Source: MARD

Forestry Sector - Wide Approaches (SWAPs)

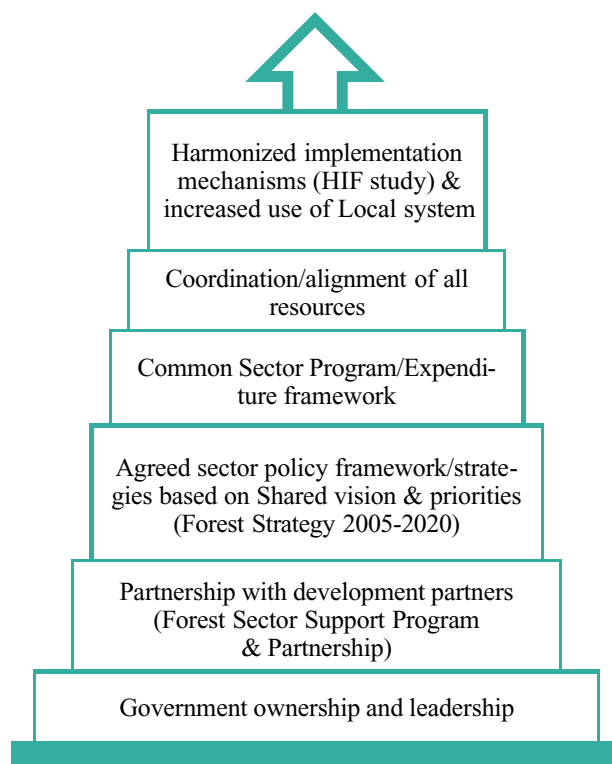
The Sector - Wide Approach (SWAPs) is rather a new concept in Vietnam. Briefly, a SWAPs is a "approach" to supporting a sector through a comprehensive programme, rather than a set of separate projects. For a SWAPs, both the Government and donors reach a consensus to comprehensively support the entire sector. Such approach aims at largely supporting policy development, policy implementation and validation among the sector or sub-sector. SWAPs can be financed in different ways. According to Ms. Chiyo Kanda, World Bank SWAPs expert:

"SWAPs is not an instrument for grant aid or lending. It does not imply or limit to particular financing modalities."

Based upon some SWAPs models being applied in

some countries, a modification of this diagram is shown below, with specification of Vietnam's elements added.

Discussions on current SWAPs application level in forestry sector as well as SWAPs application orientation in the future in Vietnam have been conducted. Accordingly, difficulties and challenges in applying SWAPs were referred. Ms. Susan Shen, a World Bank officer, affirmed that SWAPs is being applied in Vietnam's forest sector. FSSP is in the process of study HIF implementation but it is only focuses on central government and donor projects of Programme 661 and ADB, WB, JBIC, EU and KfW projects. There is no information related to local level. It is very difficult for donors to provide support without local information. Actually, there are many countries in the



world facing difficulties as getting SWAPs applied. With its own advantages, SWAPs can be gradually improved over time.

To enhance awareness of the potential of SWAPs for Vietnam's forestry sector, the

Forest Sector Support Program Coordination Office has held several workshops and trainings for civil servants at central and local levels.◆

Source: FSSP CO

Final evaluation of the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) Song Da

This 12-year technical project is funded by GTZ (German Technical Assistance) and implemented by Department of Forestry of MARD. SFDP Song Da has been in operation in the North - West of Vietnam (Son La and former - Lai Chau now called Dien Bien province) since 1993. In May 2004, MARD and GTZ jointly carried out the final evaluation of SFDP.

In the Workshop on Final Evaluation of SFDP held on June 01, 2004, participants from different government institutions and international

organizations and projects expressed their congratulations to project's achievement and success. "SFDP testifies demonstrated the effective support provided by the Government of Germany, profound technical assistance extended by GTZ to the forest sector of Vietnam, fruitful collaboration of line departments of the Vietnamese Government at central level as well as the immense contribution by concerned authorities and people of Son La and Lai Chau provinces", said Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Binh, Director of Forestry Department.

The Project has successfully developed participatory methodologies such as CFMP (Community Forest Management Planning), VDP (Village Development Planning), LUPLA (Land Use Planning and Land Allocation), PAEM (Participatory Agricultural Extension Methodology). With its human resource development strategy through implementation of thousand training courses, SFDP Song Da has effectively contributed to set up a technical background for investment projects in the North West mountainous of Vietnam.◆

Source: SFDP

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Impacts of WTO on North - West agro - products



On La - May 2004, Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA) and Vietnam Farmers Union (VNFU) organised a regional workshop on "Possible impacts of WTO on agricultural products in the North - West region of Vietnam". The workshop was supported by SNV Vietnam, VECO, and Oxfam GB.

More than 80 participants from related Ministries, Departments, Local Authorities, Civil organisations and international NGOs attended the workshop. The workshop's objectives were:

- To raise awareness of concerned organisations of opportunities and challenges of Vietnam's accession to the WTO, particularly of the possible impacts of WTO on agricultural products in the

North- West region through sharing information on international experiences and practices.

- To inform participants of Vietnam's Government's WTO preparation, macro-level policy development related to trade and agriculture.

- To build up measures to minimise negative impacts of WTO on agricultural products in the North West region and its farmers.

For many provincial stakeholders present at the workshop, it was the first time that they had learnt about the WTO and Vietnam's accession. The workshop provided them an opportunity to raise their concerns and to contribute constructive inputs to the members of the Government's negotiation delegation. The major conclusions of the

workshop are:

- There is a great need for awareness raising at provincial and lower levels about the WTO and its implications

- The Government should support provinces' preparation for WTO entry, especially for the poor and remote regions like the North West. Government's support could be directed to pro-poor policies, increasing investment, infrastructure development, and subsidies for poor farmers.

- Provincial socio-economic development plans should take into account WTO impacts on local agriculture: emphasis on the development of highly competitive agricultural products such as indigenous varieties of maize and rice, tea, anise, cinnamon; creating support programs and safety nets for poor

farmers. Other local actors such as producers, traders and INGOs should be involved in the policy-making process.

- There is a need for more research with regards to possible impacts of WTO on key products in various regions to be able to make informed decisions and necessary preparations to reduce negative impacts on food security and the agricultural sector.

- Policy dialogue between national (negotiation delegation and policy makers) and provincial stakeholders (affected sectors) should be promoted and strengthened.◆

For more information and workshop proceedings, please contact:

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The 8th Meeting of WTO accession negotiation of Vietnam

9 - 18 June 2004 - the 8th Meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) accession negotiation of Vietnam was held in WTO Head Quarter in Geneva, Switzerland. During the Meeting, both bilateral and multilateral meetings were conducted. A meeting among members that interested in agriculture sector was conducted prior to the multilateral meeting. At the multilateral meeting, which was held on 15 June 2004, the members as EU, Canada, the United States, Cuba, Australia, Argentina, Japan, South Korean, the Philippines... stated to support Vietnam to join WTO. These members highly appreciated Vietnam's efforts in preparing docu-

ments as well as making considerable progress in products, services and constructions quotations and development of action plans for implementation of multilateral agreements as Trade-related Investment Measures (TRIMs), Trade-related aspects of Intellectual property rights (TRIPs), Custom Valuation Agreement (CVA), Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).

As Meeting documents were well prepared by the Vietnam delegation, most of the members attending the Meeting agreed to discuss the Draft Report prepared by the Working Party (WP) on WTO accession of Vietnam at the 9th

Meeting, which tentatively will be organized in December 2004 and proposed Vietnam to speed-up bilateral negotiation process.

At the Meeting among members that are interested in the agriculture sector, Australia, the United State, EU, Japan, South Korean, Argentina, Taiwan, Columbia... highly appreciated and strongly supported Vietnam in the preparation and revision of ACC 4 documents. These members also made comments and recommendations to help Vietnam clarify some points in the document.◆

Source: ICD-MARD

Information - Education - Communications in water supply and rural sanitation

During May 20th and 21st 2004, in Ha Long, Quang Ninh, Water Sector Programme Support (WaterSPS) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (The sub-component to support the implementation of the National Strategy on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation), in cooperation with the Center for Clean Water and Rural Environment Hygiene of MARD, organized a seminar to exchange experiences in Information - Educa-

tion - Communications in water supply and rural sanitation.

Participating in the seminar was around 60 representatives from MARD and the Center for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (CERWASS) at central and provincial levels, Farmers' Association of Dan Phuong District and international organizations including Danida, AusAID, UNICEF, WHO, CARE, Australian Children Fund (CCF). ISG representatives were also

invited to the seminar.

During two days of the seminar, participants discussed difficulties and obstacles in information, education and communications in water supply and rural sanitation. The 4 top difficulties, which were agreed upon at the seminar, are: (i) limited communication skills, (ii) lack of cooperation and coordination at both central and local level horizontally and vertically, (iii) lack of communication staff, and (iv) financial short-

age. To overcome the above-mentioned obstacles, a number of solutions to information, education and communications were raised and discussed at the seminar. The detailed results have been completed and now available on ISG website.◆

(For more information, please contact the CERWASS, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development).

Source: ISG Sec

Updated activities of TAG3

* **Hanoi, 19 May 2004** - ISG Secretariat organised the third regular meeting of TAG3 on Support the implementation of the CPRGS in agriculture and rural areas. The Meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Le Van Minh, Director General of ICD-MARD, and Mr. Pieter Smidt, Sr. Project Implementation Specialist, ADB Hanoi

Discussion at the meeting was focused on:

- Sharing information on effort made to CPRGS implementation, especially at the local levels.
- How to better facilitate CPRGS implementation at local levels.
- Collecting ideas/issues to improve work plan of TAG3 for 2004-2006
- Collecting comments on the draft out-line report of MARD at the Mid term CG Meeting which will be held in Vinh, Nghe An province on 16-17 June 2004;
- Activities related to the establishment of the policy dialogue platform at the provincial level.

* **July- August 2004** - Following to the field visits to five provinces (An Giang, Soc Trang, Tra Vinh, Thanh Hoa and Thai Nguyen) within the framework of the establishment of policy dialogue platforms, ISG Sec will cooperate with CECI and CDEEP to organise two training workshops to strengthen planning capacity toward result-based management and CPRGS integration for civil servants of DARDs in the five provinces. More information can be obtained from ISG Sec.◆

Source: ISG Sec

News in brief

* \$ 30 million for infrastructure construction in 23 provinces

Hanoi May 6th 2004 - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development held a Meeting to sum up the investment for rural infrastructure construction in the period 1998-2004 in cooperation with Asia Development Bank (ADB) and France Development Agency (AFD).

At the meeting, ADB and AFD committed to continue finance Vietnam around \$ 30 million during the period from May to December 2004 to implement rural infrastructure construction to support the poor in 23 difficult provinces and cities.

Rural infrastructure project consists of 180 sub-projects with the total investment capital of \$ 150 million, which are financed by ADB and AFD and implemented in 23 poor provinces in the period 1998-2004. ADB and AFD representatives to the meeting highly valued the implementation progress and efficiency of rural infrastructure projects implemented in Vietnam.

* \$ 7.9 million for urgent rehabilitation of the poultry industry after the epidemic

Hanoi, 31st May 2004 - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will submit to the Executive Board of World Bank (WB) a project proposal for the rehabilitation of the poultry industry after the avian influenza epidemic with the total budget of \$US 7.9 million. The Board, tentatively, will approve the project in June 2004.

The project preparatory report was drafted by Foods and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and sent to Vietnam Government in mid April 2004. A joint working delegation of FAO and International Development Association (IDA) came to Vietnam from 10th to 27th May to early complete the report. 10 localities will be selected to take part in the project, which include key provinces such as Vinh Phuc, Ha Tay, Hue, Binh Dinh, Dong Thap and An Giang and thousands of households of which will be supported to have their livestock re-stocked and developed.

The project will be implemented from July 2004 to June 2006 with 4 components: strengthening diagnostic capacity, control and manage diseases and research virus which causes the poultry diseases; rehabilitate the poultry industry; information and public communications and project management.

Source: MARD

Establishment of policy dialogue platforms at provincial level

According to the ISG 2004 work plan, in the last April and May, ISG Secretariat cooperated with CECI to visit and work with Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in five provinces (An Giang, Soc Trang, Tra Vinh, Thanh Hoa and Thai Nguyen) in order to establish policy dialogue platforms at provincial level. One of the objective of the policy dialogue platforms is to support the DARDs to implement the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS).

ISG Secretariat and CECI introduced to the DARDs: (i) Brief introduction of the CPRGS, (ii) needs and purposes of the establishment of the policy dialogue platforms at the provincial level to serve the agriculture and rural development sector, (iii) introduction of supporting tools for policy dialogue. The DARDs also had chances to present their strengths and weakness in CPRGS implementation in the agriculture and rural development sector.

The policy dialogue platform is estab-



Fish cages village in Chau Doc - An Giang

lished to aim at strengthening capacity of coordination and information sharing among central and provincial levels with

the international donor community. Coordination and information sharing will be mainly carried out via ISG tools such as ISG website, Quarterly Newsletter, Monthly Briefing, TAGs Meetings. Depending on the conditions of the provinces together with the support from the on going projects in these provinces, ISG Secretariat and DARDs will co-organise face-to-face meetings between donors and the provinces.

In the time to come, ISG Secretariat will continue to seek opportunity to further cooperate with other partners, on going projects under the management of MARD as well as provinces, especially the FSSP, NDM-Partnership and Public Administration Reform in MARD project. Besides, ISG Secretariat will also strive to work with the donor community to facilitate the implementation of this initiative. In the short run, ISG will collaborate with CECI to form working groups at the provinces as proposed by CECI. At the same time, ISG Secretariat will cooperate with AusAID to feasibility study the development of policy dialogue platform models in advanced provinces.◆

Source: ISG Sec

An Giang Poverty Reduction Programme

An Giang is one of the provinces where planning for poverty reduction is streamlined into a general frameworks. "National target programme on poverty reduction and employment of An Giang in 2001-2005" approved by the Provincial People's committee in the decision No 1340/2001/QĐ-UB dated 16 August 2001 is a synthesis and inter-disciplinary programme under the socio-economic development strategy of the province. This reflects a result-based approach of planning, based on defined specific targets and capacity analysis of resources, and assigned tasks between agencies under province.

Economic growth basing on local advantages is a new approach for poverty reduction. An Giang has issued 9 Decision on investment encouragement (already replaced by Decision No 522/2002/QĐ-UB) to implement policies that encourage production to create valuable products and goods. These policies have impacted in:

- Rural infrastructure
- Agricultural production development toward commodities (cultivation, husbandry, aquaculture and post-harvest technologies)
- Jobs in flood season.
- Consuming farm-products through the contracts with farmers
- Human sources training.

Source: An Giang DARD/ ISG