

**Focus**

Renovation of planning process for the 5-year plan 2006-2010

From the beginning of March 2005, in order to renovate the planning methodology and process for the formulation of the five year plan 2006-2010, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) has consulted with donor community. On the 18th March, 2005, MARD, via ISG forum, held a Consultation Workshop to broadly get comments and recommendation from the donor community. At the Workshop, the community presented a joint donor statement to the planning process in MARD (please read the statement in page 3)



Dr. Cao Duc Phat, Minister of MARD expressed his agreement to the 11 key points raised in the Joint Donor Statement. In this context the Minister specifically emphasized the following:

➔ MARD agrees with the need to

create an overall Vision for the ARD sector and the need to create linkages between the FYP, sub-sector plans, and sub-sector and thematic strategies and regulatory frameworks. The FYP must be considered as an instrument to realize these various plans and strategies.

➔ MARD appreciates that the Plan should function as an action plan for the sector as a whole and for all stakeholders, and consequently that the Plan should seek to prioritize interventions and link objectives to specific programs, institutional implementation mechanisms and resource allocation. The Plan should be practical, applicable and realistic. MARD will therefore instruct individual departments to review their proposed programmes, actions, indicators and resource projections to ensure that resources available are used efficiently to achieve the objectives and targets set out in the plan.

➔ MARD agrees that the Plan, so far, has mainly focused on pursuing the growth objective through

Review of the Policy Advisory Briefing Process within the ISG framework

This report provides a review of the initial experiences from developing a Policy Advisory Briefing (PAB) as part of ISG Work Plan (WP). The assignment has resulted in three "outputs". These include i/ a review report; ii/ a draft guideline for preparing PABs; and iii/ an example of what PAB might look like.

Methods

In order to carry out this evaluation

different documents (ToR for different functions in ISG, the ISG Work Plan, the draft from the first PAB, minutes and notes from different meetings and events in ISG and a fair number of other relevant documents, studies and publications) have been studied.

Meetings and interviews have been a significant part of the work as well. These meetings and interviews included both different MARD as well

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Revision of functions and responsibilities of departments in MARD

22nd March 2005: Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development issued Decision 17/2005/QĐ-BNN to revise and supplement functions, responsibilities and organisational structure of departments and agencies under the Ministry.

According to the Decision, regulated departments and agencies include

Departments of Planning, Science and Technology, International Cooperation, Agriculture, Plant Protection, Animal Health, Agro- forest product processing and salt industry, Forestry, Forest Protection, Water Resources, Dyke Management and Flood Control, Construction Management, Office of the Ministry and National Centre for Agriculture Extension.



Following are some examples:

Department of Science and Technology:

function amendment, "to assist the Minister to implement the state management function in the field of IT application and development of the sector".

International Cooperation

Department: function amendment, "Take the leading role in formulation of strategies, programs and plans, policies, monitoring, supervising and synthesis in the field of international integration, management of Official Development Assistance (ODA), International Non-Government Organisation (NGO) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the agriculture and rural development sector to submit to the Minister for approval.

Department of Agro - forest product processing and salt industry: function amendment, "Quality management of agricultural products in the process of preservation and processing.

Department of Water Resources: function amendment, "to implement the state management functions on rural water supply and sanitation".

Detailed information of the Decision, can be obtained at <http://www.mard.gov.vn> and/or at <http://www.isgmard.org.vn> ♦

Source: ISG Sec

Renovation of planning process...

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agricultural development, and that the Plan needs to pay more attention to the social and environmental Plan objectives (pillars). More attention to this balance has been paid in the forestry sub-sector, less so for land and water. MARD will therefore ask its departments to specify measures towards securing sustainable use of natural resources and social inclusion (empowerment) and poverty reduction in the Plan. This would be in line with the renovation process and is about enabling farmers to make their own choices and encourage the people to participate in the development process, work with MARD and work with each other. The Plan should more clearly reflect this social inclusion

issue, and MARD hopes to receive support from international partners to defining how to pursue this pillar.

➔ However, emphasis on agricultural development, trade and plant protection and veterinary safety will be maintained as these issues are critical in order for Vietnam to obtain early accession to WTO.

➔ MARD agrees with the need to strengthen the linkages between sub-sectors and between the ARD sector and other sectors/Ministries and will prioritize on this issue before submitting the draft Plan to MPI by the end of March. MARD will also continue coordinating its FYP input with MONRE, MOST, MOLISA and other relevant

Ministries, agencies.

➔ The Plan should be linked to Public Administrative Reform process and emphasise decentralization of authority to ensure active engagement of the provinces and people. The decentralization effort must be accompanied by support as well as and supervision from the Central to ensure that provinces and people have capacity to implement the plan within the framework of Plan objectives.

➔ MARD agrees it is essential that the Plan is based on strong analysis as this is required to justify action choices. MARD has therefore asked its Agricultural Economic Institute to lead a review and improvement of the analysis contained in the

current version of the Plan. Other institutes will also get involved.

➔ MARD intends to adopt the logical framework methodology and will therefore instruct its departments and DARDs to apply this format. ICD will therefore facilitate donor support to helping departments to apply the logical framework in their respective plans. MARD will furthermore liaise with MPI to ensure that this new format and approach will be applied in the final plan. MARD appreciates and welcomes donors' involvement in this process, specifically and immediately by strengthening the capacity of key planners at all levels of the sector.

➔ MARD will continue the close consultation with its international partners and will invite donors and the consultation Task Force to provide inputs to the sub-sector plans (e.g. forestry, agriculture, irrigation, etc.). ♦

Donor Joint Statement to the 5-Year Plan (2006-2010) of agriculture and rural development sector

We would like to express our appreciation to you, Minister Cao Duc Phat, for the cooperative and open way in which you and your Ministry have engaged with us in considering the Five Year Plan (FYP). It is not an easy task to reform the planning process for such a major and diverse Ministry. We applaud the initiatives that you are taking.

We support your efforts to establish a more strategic, transparent and result-oriented FYP - one based on sub-sectors rather than departments, one that incorporates social and sustainability goals, and one with added emphasis on consultation with stakeholders, including the donors.

We have prepared a report that synthesises our detailed comments on the draft FYP. We would like to present that to you for your consideration. We believe that the Synthesis Report contains suggestions and comments that will assist MARD and MPI to clarify how this planning reform could be institutionalised in the sector's regular management activities. We believe that renovation of the planning process needs to be sustained throughout the entire planning and management cycle.

There are a number of points that we consider would strengthen the planning process. We would like you to consider these:

1. Firstly, the FYP should establish a stronger overall *long-term vision* for the future direction of the agriculture and rural development sector at large. This vision would help anchor other elements of the plan and should be based on genuine and thorough scenario planning and analysis.

2. We consider that the FYP should be based on market-oriented growth, sustainable natural resource management and empowerment, and especially include provision for *specific targeting* of priority programmes towards poor people and regions, and outline application of *equitable and participatory approaches*.

3. There is also a need to create *better linkages* between, on the one side, the overall objectives and targets and, on the other, priority programmes, resource allocation, definition of



- Mr. Joe Thwaites, Ambassador, Australian Embassy
- Mr. Peter Lysholt Hansen, Ambassador, Royal Danish Embassy
- Mr. Gerben de Jong, Ambassador, Royal Netherlands Embassy
- Mr. Jan-Olov Agrell, Minister for Development Cooperation of the Swedish Embassy
- Mr. Klaus Rohland, Country Director, The World Bank
- Mr. Bradford Philips, Country Director, Vietnam Resident Mission, Asian Development Bank
- Dr. Markus Cornaro, Ambassador, Head of Delegation, European Commission

institutional delivery mechanisms and indicators for measuring success. These linkages are critical and would allow assessment of real needs at the sub-sectoral level. It is also critical to align public spending and institutional setting. We are confident that the proposed logical framework will help clarify the internal logic of MARD's FYP and its component activities.

4. While the overall goals support poverty and sustainability concerns, the FYP in its current form does not provide clear direction as to how these goals and concerns are to be addressed in priority programmes. This is a critical missing element.

5. In addition, the FYP should define *relative priorities* between priority programmes. This would greatly enhance the document's potential as a

management tool for prioritisation of effort and resources in the implementation phase.

6. The FYP has a strong agriculture basis but other sub-sectors need to be covered adequately and *cross-sectoral linkages* needs to be established. MARD and its departments should promote cross-sector collaboration in the rural space as a whole, consistent with its mandate.

7. The FYP should also reflect *existing priorities and commitments* embedded in current national and MARD-level action plans, strategies, legal frameworks and in international conventions signed by Viet Nam. In this context care needs to be taken that the FYP, the sub-sector strategies (e.g., forestry), and the underlying sub-sectoral work plans, are all internally consistent and reflect agreed priorities and outcomes.

8. In addition, the FYP should clarify *what services* MARD and its network intend to deliver to rural people in view of the market-oriented directions and the emphasis on increasing decentralisation.

9. Many of us are seeking further information from MARD on the evidence-based planning and prioritisation that it has undertaken, which so far is not evident in the FYP. What is the *analytical foundation of the FYP* and what are the gaps to be covered in view of dramatic changes in drivers of rural growth?

10. We also suggest that *implementation capacity* should also be considered in greater detail. This will be applicable at all levels. The FYP should include a critical assessment of how this is to be addressed.

11. We believe that the FYP will be better based, more comprehensive and of greater relevance if it were based on even more *transparency and consultation*, particularly at the sub-sectoral and sub-national levels, to allow the full range of stakeholders opportunities to give more substantive contributions. These stakeholders include the private sector, provinces and civil society.

Finally, Minister Phat, we look forward to continuing to work closely with you and to providing support to achieve this outcome. ♦

Monitoring and Evaluation Section



■ Conducting semi-structured interviews with beneficiaries of the Irrigation Improvement Project in Da Nang

Case Study: Impact Evaluation in the Irrigation Rehabilitation Project

As part of its monitoring and evaluation (M&E) Proposal to Vietnam - Australia monitoring and evaluation strengthening project (VAMESP) II, MARD proposed that a pilot evaluation be implemented to assess the impact of the World Bank financed Irrigation Rehabilitation Project in two provinces. Following intermediate-level training in evaluation practice during January 2005, the core team from MARD and Central Project Office (CPO) prepared an evaluation logframe and developed a detailed evaluation plan in February 2005, before organising local logistics with DARDs in Nghe An and Danang Provinces.

The purpose of the pilot evaluation was to build capacity of MARD/CPO participating officials in impact evaluation and identify lessons learned to support continuous improvement of investments

in the irrigation and water resource management sector. The criteria used for the pilot evaluation were Impact, Effectiveness and Sustainability. Methods used for the evaluation included direct observation, document review, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and goal attainment scaling. Simple field tools relating to each of these methods were used by the core team implementing the evaluation. Field work over 2 weeks in March 2005 included interviews and focus group meetings with 400 project beneficiaries. The preliminary results include evidence that project beneficiaries perceive that the project contributed to poverty reduction. However, beneficiary perceptions of the impact on irrigation infrastructure were mixed and this needs further analysis of the data to understand the different perceptions.

Working on the VAMESP II Pilot Evaluation, core team members from MARD/CPO gained valuable experience in the planning and implementation of field work

as well as the design and reporting of impact evaluations. Their work will be produced as two case studies for broad communication to other VAMESP II stakeholders as well as participants in the evaluation and other interested stakeholders.

M&E Manual Update

During the last 3 months, VAMESP II has completed revision of the English version of the M&E Manual. The translation and conversion to CD-ROM is underway and it is anticipated that the revised M&E Manual will be launched in May 2005 in 8 modules:

Module I: Executive Summary - M&E for ODA Investments in Vietnam

Module II: Introduction to monitoring and evaluation

Module III: Monitoring practice

Module IV: Evaluation practice

Module V: Glossary of M&E terms used in Vietnam

Module VI: Training resources for M&E in

Vietnam

Module VII: Methods for M&E in Vietnam

Module VIII: Tools for M&E in Vietnam

Harmonised Quarterly Progress Monitoring Tools

The 5 Banks and Like Minded Donors Group (LMDG) have worked with Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) with the support of VAMESP II to develop and trial harmonised quarterly progress monitoring tools. These tools are designed to meet the needs of government agencies and donors, so that PMUs need to prepare only one quarterly progress report for their projects.

Using international best practice, the tools are developed in Excel and designed to enable data extraction for portfolio monitoring in line agencies such as MARD and national ODA management agencies such as MPI. Seven VAMESP II stakeholder projects have recently started using the harmonised quarterly progress monitoring tools to report progress for Q1 2005, with another 25 new or recently started projects financed by the 5 Banks about to do the same in Q2. VAMESP II is providing capacity building and on-the-job support for the regular monitoring activities that provide data for the quarterly progress reports. In addition, MPI has recently established an M&E Resource Centre and Help Desk that will help projects and line agencies with their M&E needs. Selected projects and line agencies are developing organisational and functional arrangements to provide an interim institutional framework for operation of pilot monitoring systems. Lessons learned from these pilot systems will be used to inform the process of regulatory review for ODA monitoring and evaluation in Vietnam during Q3 2005. ♦

Source: VAMESP II

Using web based application to monitor and evaluate projects

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is in the development process of a web based monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system to manage ODA funded projects. The system will be developed by International Cooperation Department (ICD)-MARD with the support of Vietnam-Australia Monitoring and Evaluation Strengthening Capacity Project (VAMESP) and some other donors through ISG framework. In the time to come, MARD will pilot this system on big loan projects funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) within the water resources sector. Preliminary, ICD, Central Project Office (CPO) of Water resources projects and VAMESP decided to select Vietnam Water Resource Assistance Project funded by the World Bank (VWRAP - WB3) for piloting. After the piloting period, ICD intends to have a regularly operated M&E system to monitor foreign funded projects of the sector with the following specific objectives:

- Clarify the focal points to be responsible for providing information in service of management, monitoring and evaluation.
- Standardize at the sectoral level targeted information and data needed to be regularly monitored and gathered;
- Establish a web-based compatible database with proactive (and compulsory) participation of M&E officers of all concerned parties.

The M&E system can be described as followed:

- There will be a separate page for each project on ICD website, which will be launched soon.
- Project information will be updated by the Project Management Unit monthly and whenever new information is produced;
- Comments and evaluation of concerned state management agencies (ministries, provincial administrations);
- Comments and evaluation of donors;
- Comments and evaluation of partners and beneficiaries.

With the above-mentioned objectives, the system would have the following benefits:

- Transparency and publicity.
- Timeliness.
- Harmonization (consistent format, using the harmonised format of the five banks, and structure of reports).
- Clear assignment of responsibilities.
- Beneficial to comparison (direct information from defined sources are put in the same place)
- Useful for developing sectoral synthesis reports and macro analysis reports.
- Helpful for cooperation between management agencies.
- Helpful for experience sharing between projects.

For more information please contact ISG Secretariat. ♦

Source: ISG Sec

Issuance of Framework Strategy on development of PIM in Vietnam

Hanoi, December 30, 2004 - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development published an announcement issuing the Framework Strategy on development of PIM in Vietnam, including the Road map for OPIM implementation in Vietnam.

Full texts of the Announcement and the Strategy, and the Road map (in Vietnamese and English) are now available on ISG web site at [http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Information Service/Legal docs/Legaldoc.asp](http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Information%20Service/Legal%20docs/Legaldoc.asp) ♦

Source: ISG Sec

News in brief

➤ **New poverty reduction program in Viet Nam targets women and ethnic minorities** - About 70,000 poor households in 841 rural villages will benefit from a new poverty reduction programme in two provinces in Viet Nam. The US\$38.7 million decentralized programme will be largely financed by a US\$ 24.1 million loan and a US\$ 630,000 grant from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

The program will operate in the remote, northern provinces of Ha Giang and Quang Binh, which is home to more than 15 different ethnic groups. One of the key aspects of the Decentralized Programme for Rural Poverty Reduction in Ha Giang and Quang Binh Provinces is supporting the creation of self-help groups that will enable poor people to identify their own development needs and empower them to participate in local institutions.

Source: IFAD

➤ **Vietnam's largest project on forestry development inked**

Hanoi, 4 April, 2005 - the State Bank of Vietnam Governor, Mr. Le Thuy Duc and World Bank Country Director Mr. Klaus Rohland signed agreements for the US\$ 39.5 million Credit and grants of nearly US\$ 20 million in total for the Vietnam Forest Sector Development Project.

The main objective of this project is to achieve sustainable management of plantation forests and the conservation of biodiversity in special use forests in Vietnam.

Source: ICD- MARD

➤ **German Reconstruction Bank continues its support for Vietnam's forestry sector**

Hanoi, January 18th 2005, Vice Minister of MARD, Mr. Hua Duc Nhi and Mr. Klaus Mueller, Director of Representative Office of German Reconstruction Bank (KfW) in Hanoi signed a financial agreement for the project "Restoration and sustainable management of forests in provinces of Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, Binh Dinh and Phu Yen" (shortened as KfW6).

This project will be implemented in 9 years (2005 - 2013) with total

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News in brief

budget of 12.3 million Euros. Project KfW 6 is implemented with objectives of improving living standard of rural forest-dependent people through employment generation and income increasing in order to protect natural resources, harmonize water resources in the areas, of which forests are restored and neighboring areas, make regional air equable and increase bio-diversification.

Source: ICD-MARD

➤ MARD's Law and Ordinance development program to 2010

MARD has prepared Law and ordinance development program to 2010. However, implementation of this Program in an effective manner is still a big challenge. Therefore, MARD Legislation Department has just exposed the needs of the Ministry to seek support both in terms of technical and financial assistance as well as experience sharing from domestic and international donor community for implementation of the following contents:

1. Supporting legal works of the Ministry
2. Supporting Law and ordinance development program to 2010 of the Ministry
 - a. Developing Law on agriculture and rural areas
 - b. Upgrading Dyke ordinance and Ordinance on Animal Health into law
 - c. Developing Ordinance on Animal Foods, Salt Ordinance and Fertilizer Ordinance
 - d. Amending and supplementing Ordinance on exploitation and protection of irrigational works

Detailed information can be obtained at <http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Proposal/Proposals-e.asp>

Source: Legislation Department

➤ Agreement signed for grant to Develop rural infrastructure in Vietnam's deprived central region

Hanoi, 25th March 2005 - at the State Bank of Vietnam, Representative of Asian Development Bank, Mr. Bradford Philips, Country Director, Vietnam Resident Mission and Mr. Pham Hong Giang, Vice Minister of MARD signed the Agreement for grant to develop rural infrastructure

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Review of the Policy Advisory Briefing Process...

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as Donor representatives. A special brainstorming event was organised as well in order to solicit views and ideas on how the PAB process could be improved.

SWOT analysis of PAB

An attempt is made to summarise the observations in a SWOT analysis for the PAB and the PAB process (see the Box). The SWOT is characterised by more "views" under Strength and Threats reflecting that the PAB initiative is new and that "Weaknesses" has only been partly revealed. Many of the observations are addressed in the report, but as this represents the ideas and opinions of this mission, the ISG members may not agree with all of them. Chapter 4 and the SWOT analysis can then serve as a departure point for modifying and negotiating alternative approaches, if needed.

Main conclusions and recommendations

The main conclusions from the review of the PABs with implications for how to move the process forward are

- To expand the purpose to accommodate more of these different expectations in order to enhance the policy dialogue in line with the objectives of ISG.
- The PAB should be brief, but that more than one page needs to be allowed if a more meaningful summary should be produced. The drafts (if there are any) can be attached or provided to ISG members on request. The PABs should

however have a similar template regardless of policy theme, while these restrictions should not apply for any drafts prepared.

- Other actors than the MARD department heads should be involved in the preparation of PABs depending on the subject. The role of the ISG Secretariat should be modified, while the role of the ISG Steering Board should be more specified.

- The number of PABs and the proposed themes are reviewed with the dual purpose of being both useful for ISG as well as for developing and fine tuning the PABs both in terms of process and content.

- The articulation of policy themes be given more attention. This will help in categorising policy themes and therefore the process for developing them.

- To organise a special session to discuss different dimensions of policy in order to have a more shared understanding of concepts and terms.

- The value added of PABs when themes are selected and formulated can be enhanced if more attention is given for the aspects mentioned above.

- To allow different types of policy subjects as long as these are articulated to match one of a limited number of categorised purposes. This would still allow the methods for developing them to be streamlined to a considerable extent and also make it possible to have a limited number of template for presenting them. ♦

Source: ISG Sec

SWOT analysis of PAB and the PAB process

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The overall purpose of enhancing policy dialogue is recognised, but also the need to further develop the mechanisms for this (highlighted in the SWOT in the ISG Workplan 2004 - 2006). - There appears to be support by a clear majority of ISG members for the general idea of preparing PABs on a regular basis. - Enthusiastic and capable people staff the Secretariat. - High degree of commitment from the MARD leadership and from the Core Donor Group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purpose of the PAB as expressed in the WP and the expectations among stakeholders differs. - The process for development of PABs lack realistic routines to function properly. - The role of different actors in developing PABs has not yet been convincingly addressed.
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The expectations among ISG members could be further explored to strengthen initial momentum. - The PAB can serve the dual purpose of enhancing the policy dialogue as well as increasing the understanding of policy processes among all stakeholders in ISG. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The purpose, expectations and value added of the PABs has not been convincingly addressed in ISG. - The ISG members may not appreciate the need for the development of the PAB process as much as their enthusiasm for the PAB product. - The understanding of what constitutes the PAB has not been convincingly addressed. - The complexities of "policy analysis" are perhaps not fully recognised among ISG members.

Linkages between Farmers and Enterprises for Contract Farming Must be Improved

AN GIANG, 12 January 2005 - The linkages between farmers and enterprises for contract farming must be improved, a workshop on contract farming held by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in cooperation with An Giang University under the "Making Markets Work Better for the Poor" project was told.

The two-day workshop was attended by 70 participants from local departments; research institutes; farmers' organizations and collectives' unions; purchasers and processors from the

authorities to improve the linkages between farmers and enterprises by a number of policies, such as "four houses" coordination, farming collective development, processing and market oriented production reorganization.

The workshop suggested some solutions to limit the negative aspects of contract farming and to encourage farmers to participate in contract farming to get benefits from the agricultural value chain:

- Create a more favorable business environment to encourage both domestic



Mekong Delta provinces of An Giang, Can Tho, Tien Giang, Kien Giang, Dong Thap, and Vinh Long; donor organizations; private consulting firms; and domestic and international non-governmental organizations.

The workshop tried to derive potential policy messages and directions for future research from a series of case study presentations on the different dimensions of contract farming and group discussions on how to improve contract farming practices based on varied experiences.

Most of the participants agreed that contract farming is profitable for farmers, collectives and enterprises, resulting in benefits for the whole society.

However, farmers are still unfamiliar with contract farming despite the enactment of Decision 80/2002/QD-TTg on 24 June 2002 by the Prime Minister, which encouraged agrifood consumption through contract farming and local

and foreign enterprises to invest in agrifood trading. The participation of many enterprises in the market will create necessary competitiveness to fully exploit and increase farmers' production capacity

- Improve the legal environment, particularly articles on punishment of contract violations to improve contract performance

- Encourage and assist the development of farmers' organizations as a linkage channel between farmers and enterprises

- Encourage and create a favorable environment for enterprises and collectives coordination in improving product quality and establishing trademark for each commodity

The policy implications of these suggestions will be taken into consideration for a future study under the "Making Markets Work Better for the Poor" project. ♦

Source: ADB

News in brief

in Vietnam's deprived Central region with total value of 800.000 USD.

The main objective of this grant is to help the Government prepare a large project on rural infrastructure in the Central region of Vietnam to reduce rural poverty through improvements in rural infrastructure within six project provinces, namely Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Quang Nam.

Source: ICD- MARD

➤ Australia funds new agriculture research projects in Vietnam

Hanoi, 17th March, 2005 - Twelve new agricultural research projects have recently been approved under the first funding round of the new Collaboration for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) Program, with a combined value of AUD\$5.5m (about VND 69 billion), of which AUD\$3.5m (about VND44 billion) will be provided by CARD and the remaining funds supplied by the collaborating organisations in Australia and Vietnam.

The projects comprise a range of research activities which will help improve fruit and vegetable production, fish farming, irrigation, marketing and agribusiness services, forest plantation, control of cattle diseases, and after harvest methods.

Source: AusAID

➤ Joint GoV-Donor Review of Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Health in Viet Nam

Hanoi, 11-12 April, 2005 - the Joint GoV-Donor Review of Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Health in Viet Nam held the second and also the last workshop.

At the workshop, participants focused on giving comments and recommendations on Current situation of rural water supply and sanitation sector Report as well as eleven recommendation documents of the Review Team to the RWSS sector in the time to come. Establishment of a partnership between Government and donors to support the coordination and management of the rural water supply and sanitation sector were also presented by the Review Team at the workshop.

For more information please visit ISG website at: <http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Information%20Service/Report/Report.asp#water>

Source: ISG Sec

Ethnic Minorities and Gender Issues in Agricultural Extension

The study "Ethnic Minorities and Gender Issues in Agricultural Extension" has been carried out by the subgroup on Agricultural Extension for the Poor and the Ethnic Minority Working Group in 2004.

The study aimed to:

- Review agricultural and forestry extension policy in the light of gender equality and ethnic diversity
- Analyse factors that hinder women and ethnic minority farmers the access to, the participation in and the



- benefits of extension activities
- Document experiences from various projects and

programs (government, donor, INGO) on extension in relation to gender equality, ethnic diversity

- Recommend changes in policies and practices concerning mainstreaming gender equality and ethnic diversity

women and ethnic minority farmers

- Provide a legal framework and assistance in establishing voluntary farmers association for promoting technology transfer, input delivery and outlet organisation, in particular for women and ethnic minority farmers.

- Increase farmers' decision in extension planning by allocating part of the funds to them

- Strengthen the linkages between farmers, extension services and research in order to generate appropriate technologies and integrate local knowledge and experiences

- Focus extension activities to market opportunities with special attention for access of and benefits for women and ethnic minority farmers

Main recommendations drawn up from the findings of this study are to:

- Emphasize poverty reduction and social equity in the mission of the extension system and assign clear roles and responsibilities of the different types of extension services providers (public, private) in this respect

- Emphasize the extension agent's tasks of providing livelihood management advise and of facilitating farmers' problem solving

- Enhance the participation of women and ethnic minority farmers in planning, implementing and monitoring extension activities

- Focus extension messages and transfer methods more clearly to

For more information or a copy of the report, please contact Nico Janssen (nico@snv.org.vn) or Joep Slaats (slaats.boeni@hn.vnn.vn)◆

Source: Oxfam GB

District level Coordination Forum

Nghe An, 7 to 8 April 2005 - Quy Chau District People's Committee, Nghe An Province organized a coordination seminar for projects and programs which are implemented in the district territory.

This seminar is a coordination forum for projects, programs and partners at the district level. With the objective of discussion, sharing experience and coordinating development activities taking place in the district territory, the forum will not only help projects avoid overlap and duplication but also help projects closely coordinate with each other in rural development activities.

It is expected that the coordination forum will clearly define the role and responsibilities of concerned parties and at the same time highlight weakness as well as working fields and localities which are still open and need to be invested. Therefore, the forum will support district leaders in formulating socio-economic development strategies and especially appealing for investment projects to the district.

For more information please contact

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Source: MSRD project