

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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**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 established 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

\$ 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 ADB and AFD.

At the meeting, Asia Development Bank (ADB) and France Development Agency (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 value the implementation progress and efficiency of rural infrastructure projects implemented in Vietnam.

According to the Project Management Unit, thanks to good loan utilization, the number of sub-projects increased by 70% in comparison with the plan, in which the number of irrigation sub-projects increased by 44%, transportation, clean water and public utility sub-projects increased by 32%, 42% and 21% respectively.

By the end of 2003, 70% of transportation sub-projects and 87% of irrigation sub-projects have been transferred to localities, which has contributed to the sped poverty reduction and improved living standards of the people.

Source: MARD

\$ 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 May 10th to 27th 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 restocked 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

"2004 International Rice Year" in Vietnam launched

Hanoi 31st May 2004 - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, in cooperation with Foods and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), officially launched the "2004 International Rice Year" in Vietnam. The selection of 2004 as international rice year had been proposed and/or approved by 44 countries based upon the common declaration, which defines rice as the main food for more than half of the world population, and of important role in poverty reduction and struggle against malnutrition as well as in food security.

According to the Deputy Minister Bui Ba Bong, Vietnam, in the time to come, needs to increase the outputs from cultivation land, increase incomes for rice growers and better protect the ecology system of rice areas for sustained development. Presently, rice exports of

Vietnam are maintained at the rate of 3.5 - 4 million tons per year.

Source: MARD

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 within 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.

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Source: SFDP

Regional Meeting of National Water Sector Apex Bodies: Leadership in Water Governance

The meeting was held at the Hilton Hanoi Opera Hotel on 18-21 May 2004. View the following:

- [List of Participants](#)
- [Program](#)
- [Speeches, Papers and Presentations](#)
- [Field Visit Guide](#)

Background

National water sector apex bodies have been established in several countries in Asia to guide national water sector reforms to achieve sustainable water management. These bodies are well placed to demonstrate leadership in improving water governance, both in the management of water resources and the delivery of water services.

ADB's water policy "**Water for All**" highlights the need for better water governance, and emphasizes the role of national water sector apex bodies to achieve this. ADB has to date provided technical assistance for the establishment and/or capacity building of the national water sector apex bodies in Sri Lanka, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

ADB also supports its developing member countries through regional technical assistance projects for Promoting Effective Water Management Policies and Practices, financed from ADB's **Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector**. One of the components of the TA supports comparative analysis and exchange of experience in water governance in the region, including the effectiveness of national water sector apex bodies, river basin organizations, water utilities, regulatory bodies, and other water institutions.

ADB's program for comparative analysis of national water sector reforms will start with the regional meeting of national water sector apex bodies. ADB will organize the meeting in collaboration with the Office of the National Water Resources Council in the Ministry of

Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting are to exchange information and experience on the work of national water sector apex bodies in the region identify priority needs and opportunities for networking, capacity building, and research among the apex bodies

For more information, please contact Ellen Pascua - Water Policy Adviser at: epascua@adb.org

Or click here:

http://www.adb.org/Documents/Events/2004/Leadership_in_Water_Governance/default.asp

Source: ADB

Help Shape ADB's Public Communications Policy

Updated: 14 May 2004

ADB invites comments on its **draft Public Communications Policy (PCP)** which will supersede ADB's current information and disclosure policies approved in 1994.

The PCP was developed on the basis of a review of ADB experience, international good practice, as well as the input of internal and external stakeholders. About 70 sets of comments were submitted in response to ADB's solicitation of public views on its information and disclosure practices. Read the **comments received** by ADB, including an explanation of how those comments have been addressed in the draft PCP.

The proposed policy marks a comprehensive overhaul of ADB's approach to public communications with new emphases on explaining ADB's work, proactively sharing operational information, seeking feedback, and demonstrating development results. The draft PCP substantially expands the range of documents and information made available to the public.

Between late April and July, ADB staff will discuss the draft in **face-to-face meetings** with stakeholders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in 12 cities. Written comments and

feedback at the consultation meetings will be given serious consideration in the preparation of a second draft, which will also be made available for public comment.

ADB has prepared a **timeline for the disclosure of project-related documents** as a tool for critiquing the draft PCP.

It is expected that the PCP will be submitted to the Board of Directors for consideration during the second half of 2004.

ADB welcomes written comments on the draft PCP. These should be submitted to disclosure@adb.org by 28 May 2004. Comments received will be posted on this web site.

<http://www.adb.org/Disclosure/translate.d.asp>

Source: ADB

Conference on Scaling Up Poverty Reduction: A Global Learning Process

Purpose

The Conference will present lessons from a nine-month global learning process and bring together development practitioners to share experiences learned from poverty reduction initiatives worldwide. Hosted by the Government of the People's Republic of China in Shanghai, the Conference is being sponsored by the World Bank in cooperation with other multilateral and bilateral donors.

Objectives

Participants will draw lessons from case studies, and reports of multi-country interactive dialogues, field visits, and videoconferences done over a nine-month period with a view of replicating or "upscaling" best practices in order to further poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Expected Outputs

ADB will participate through a high level delegation. President Chino will deliver a keynote address at the Conference. ADB will highlight the Asia-Pacific region's lessons in poverty reduction as well as its own rich experience drawn from operations in its developing member

countries. ADB experiences will focus on the infrastructure and health sectors as examples.

[Participants](#)
[Resource Speakers](#)
[Workshop Documents](#)
[Contact](#)

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Source: WB

Feasibility study on setting up rural telecenters is now available

The UNDP and Royal Netherlands 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.

For more information please contact PAR in MARD project – VIE/02/016
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Source: PAR in MARD Project

Making the most of market chains: challenges for small-scale farmers and traders in upland Vietnam.

This is the title of a new publication written by Le Thi Phi, Nguyen Van Duong, Nguyen Ngoc Quang, Phan Lac Vang, and edited by Elaine Morrison and Sonja Vermeulen. The publication is published by IIED in 2004.

"Market development is key to raising the living standards of people who live in Vietnam's uplands. Policies and development programmes to help farmers improve production and processing of forest and agricultural products will always be limited without parallel support to marketing. This study shows that efforts to assist farmers (and harvesters of natural produce) to get better and more reliable prices need to take into account full market chains - not just what happens at the "farm gate". Market opportunities and prices are constrained by factors that affect traders first, with knock-on impacts on producers. Constraints range from heavy burdens of formal and informal taxes to a basic lack of information in villages and district market places. Policy solution lie not in drawing up new policy statements, but rather in better implementation of the many very positive policies that already exist to support poor upland residents. Fundamentally, better implementation may require some deep-rooted changes in the culture of government and development agencies, to support the individual and group initiatives that small-scale farmers and traders are developing for themselves".

Copies of this report in English and Vietnamese are available at:
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Source: Non-timber Forest Product Research Centre

Seminar to exchange experiences in 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 - Education - 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 shortage. 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 will be synthesized by the Organization Board and will be sent to participants together with the final seminar report.

(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.

Please contact ISG Secretariat to get the Minutes of the Meeting for more detail.

Source: ISG Sec

"Buon Ma Thuot Coffee Trading Floor" to operate by the end of 2004

The project "Coffee Trading Floor established in Buon Ma Thuot City" is being implemented, says Mr. Nguyen Van Lang, Chairman of Dak Lac Provincial People's Committee. The two transactions at the market include: immediate transaction and later-delivery transaction (periodical transaction).

The trading floor will be established in two phases: First, a focal trading floor will be established to facilitate immediate transactions for consumption of coffee produced by the Central High Land and the country as a whole. Then a periodical and international-natured trading floor will be formulated with an aim of stabilizing the market, orienting production, linking production with market and increasing the value of exported goods.

Prices of exported goods at the trading floor will be produced through public biddings of international nature. At the later phase, pepper, cashew nuts, rubber and other products will be consumed at the trading floor in addition to coffee at the first phase.

Source: Lao Dong Newspaper

The Philippines will organize another bidding to buy 190,000 tons of rice

Philippines is likely to organize the third bidding to import more rice. Mr. Gregorio Tan, Deputy Director of National Foods Agency (NFA) says that at present only around 15,000 out of 310,000 tons of rice imported according to the Government programme are in hand of farmers.

Mr. Tan says that the permission for imported rice volume for domestic consumption was out of force in April but no recommendations to date for increased imported rice volume have been made.

The Philippines National Foods Agency imported 460,000 tons of rice from Vietnam and Thailand in the first bidding. According to the schedule, it is expected that the agency will import another 190,000 tons of rice. However, time for the third bidding has not been confirmed. Philippines will import 810,000 tons of rice this year.

Source: VietNamNet