

## Summary of the Results of Evaluation Study

<b>I. Outline of the Project</b>	
Name of Country: The Socialist Republic of Vietnam	Project Title: Northwest Rural Development Project in Vietnam (NORRD)
Issue/Sector: Local Governance	Cooperation Scheme: Technical Cooperation Project
Office In-Charge: JICA Vietnam Office	Total Cost: 392 million yen
The Project Period: August 2010– June 2015 (five (5) years)	Partner Country’s Implementing Organization: Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) of Dien Bien Province, Dien Bien District, Tuan Giao District, and Muong Cha District
	Related Institutions (Japan): Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forest of Japan
<p><b>1-1. Background of the Project</b></p> <p>With the population of 89,710,000 (2013), GDP per capital of USD 1,300 (General Department of Statistics, 2011) and under the “Doi Moi” (renewal) Policy that leads to the vigorous economic growth with the application of market-economy mechanisms, the economical gap between urban and rural areas tends to be expanded. And the reduction of this gap has become as a major problem for the sustainable development of Vietnam. In the four provinces in the Northwest of Vietnam, including Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La and Hoa Binh provinces, about 80% of local population is attributed to ethnic minority groups and the rate of poor household accounts to about 50% (2010). This is a focal area for hunger eradication and poverty reduction.</p> <p>In these four provinces, the agriculture sector of Dien Bien Province (hereinafter DB Province), which is generating 37% of the provincial GDP and creating job opportunities for 79.9% of local people, is regarded as the key economic sector with the annual growth rate of about 5% (average rate 2000 - 2005). Major agriculture products are rice, maize and soy bean with the total production of 145,000 tons, 67,000 tons and 15,000 tons respectively in 2009. Rice, in particular, is not only consumed in Dien Bien Phu City, but also in Ha Noi and exported to Laos. As the brand of Dien Bien rice is famous and highly preferred by Vietnamese consumers for its prominent taste, its price is high. However, except Dien Bien District (hereinafter DB District) of DB Province with favorable irrigation conditions, the productivity of rice cultivation in other districts in Dien Bien Province is lower than the mean productivity nation-wide<sup>1</sup>. Due to the lack of irrigation facilities, the land available for double rice cropping per year is limited and rice productivity is low as comparing with that of national scale. In addition, in the districts with the scarcity of flat land, the clearance of forest for shifting cultivation with maize and cassava as the major crops for self-consumption affects the environment. The role of local government authorities in supporting agricultural production is limited due to the shortage of state budget, human resource and capacity as well.</p> <p>In this context, the Government of Vietnam has requested the Government of Japanese technical cooperation project for strengthening of agriculture so that it could be a key sector of the Northwest region.</p> <p>Following the request of Japanese technical cooperation project and with the agreement of the Government of Vietnam and JICA, the project on “Northwest Rural Development Project in Vietnam” (herein after ‘the</p>	

<sup>1</sup> For example, maize production in Dien Bien is 2.3 tons/ha against the national average of 3.9 tons/ha and soybean is 1.3 tons/ha against 1.5 tons/ha.

Project') has been implementing aiming at institutional strengthening and facilitation of rural development through improved cultivation, post-harvesting, sales approach and improvement of irrigation system and institutional arrangements for management of irrigation structures, rural development capacity building for local authorities such as provincial, district and communal people's committee and relevant local agencies, civil-society organizations and agro-related enterprises.

The Terminal Evaluation Survey was conducted by the joint evaluation team to review the achievements and progress of the Project using the five evaluation criteria to make recommendations for the remaining period of the Project and extract lessons learned for similar JICA projects in the future.

## **1-2. Project Overview**

**(1) Overall Goal:** The rural development in Dien Bien Province is promoted.

**(2) Project Purpose:** The rural development in the pilot districts is promoted through strengthening the system, as district government being the core thrust force, to improve the production, post harvesting and marketing of market-oriented agricultural products.

**(3) Outputs:**

- 1) The method and approach for cultivation, post harvesting and marketing of agricultural products as paddy, soybean, maize etc. are improved in the Pilot Districts.
- 2) Water resource distribution and irrigation infrastructure management are improved in the Pilot Districts.
- 3) The capacity for rural development of local government (provincial, district and commune people's committees) is improved.

**(4) Target Areas:** Dien Bien District, Tuan Giao District, and Muong Cha District in Dien Bien Province

**(5) Implementing Agency:** DARD

**(6) Inputs:**

Japanese Side

Japanese Side: 392 million Yen

Long-Term Experts: 3 persons

Equipment: 5.72 million yen

Short-Term Experts: 23 persons

Local Operation Cost: 122 million yen

Consultation Mission: 2 persons

Training in Japan for Counterpart Personnel: 20 participants

Vietnamese Side

Total 25 officials consists of 7 members in PPMU and 18 members in DPMU as the counterpart personnel, including the Director General of DARD (Project Director), and Director of Department of Agriculture Cultivation (Project Manager)

Office and facilities were provided as Project Office in DARD at Dien Bien, and office space at District People's Committee for meetings in three pilot districts

<b>II. Evaluation Team</b>		
Vietnamese Side	Mr. Tran Kim Long, Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Mr. Nguyen Anh Minh, Bilateral Cooperation Division, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	
Japanese Side	Mr. Takeaki SATO , Visiting Senior Advisor, JICA Headquarters Mr. Shingo MATAI, Tohoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office, Ministry of Agriculture of Japan Mr. Satoshi YAMAMOTO, Formulation Advisor, JICA Vietnam Ms. Kazuko Shirai, Kaihatsu Management Consulting, Inc.	
Period of Evaluation	January 27 – February 15, 2015	Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation
<b>III. Results of Evaluation</b>		
<b>1. Project Performance</b>		
<b>1-1. Achievement of Outputs</b>		
<p>Since the Mid-term Review conducted in March 2013, the Project has implemented its activities without notable delay and issues, and achieved the goals of three outputs as follows:</p> <p><b>The Output 1 relating to agriculture development is achieved, while one Objectively Verifiable Indicator (OVI) is expected to be achieved by the end of the project period as following evaluation results;</b></p> <p>Among 226 model farmers who answered the questionnaire, more than 60% of them indicated their improvement in all the issues listed in the improvement plan. The improvements were identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The improvements are found in pest &amp; disease control, seed handling and production, decreased amount of seed and pesticides, and frequency of transplanting.</li> <li>➤ Through training by the Project, usage, amount and balance of fertilizer were improved.</li> <li>➤ Through technology transfer on seed, farmers’ seeding technique was improved that leads to reduction of seed amount.</li> <li>➤ The Project plans to explain the Agriculture Guideline/Manual to non-target communes in the target districts.</li> <li>➤ The Project plans to conduct training on post-harvest and marketing for DPMU members.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Output 2 relating to irrigation and water management is achieved, and unachieved OVI is expected to be achieved by the end of the Project as following evaluation results;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The activities indicated in the improvement plan have been implemented in all the pilot sites.</li> <li>➤ Water Users’ Group (hereinafter, ‘WUG’) was established in all the 6 pilot sites, and each WUG made an improvement plan<sup>2</sup> for water management to conduct construction with participatory manner in some parts. 73% of farmers in the pilot sites recognize that their water management is largely improved.</li> <li>➤ The constructions in all the 6 pilot sites completed in January 2015, however, farmers in some pilot sites need to wait to confirm the effects of irrigation facilities until the next rainy season in May 2015.</li> <li>➤ The Project plans to explain the Water Management Guideline/Manual to officers and staff in charge of water management in all communes in 3 pilot districts.</li> </ul>		

<sup>2</sup> Activities are: establishment of regular meeting and setting regulations, maintenance of canals, etc.

**The Output 3 relating to capacity development of Government officers in the province is expected to be achieved by the end of the project period as following evaluation results;**

- Through regular meetings and training, PPMU members and DPMU members in 3 pilot districts gradually became to understand project's initiatives and outputs of experimental cultivation pilot, workshop, training, regular meeting, production of organic fertilizer, training in Japan, and guideline/manual.
- Training methodologies were improved in Sub-Department of Plant Protection and Agricultural Promotion Center (AEC).
- The Project plans to hold dissemination seminars to explain the action plan to non-pilot districts in DB Province during the process of official approval of the guidelines/manuals

### **1-2. Achievement of the Project Purpose:**

**The Project Purpose was achieved based on the following results;**

The Project conducted a questionnaire survey, and received responses from 226 households out of the target farmers of 785 households in 6 pilot communes in the target districts. According to the survey results, 99.1% of farmers increased their yield of paddy up to 15.5% on average. There were significant reduces in amount of seed, frequency of fertilizer, thinning out, and supplemental transplanting for paddy. As for soybean, all the model farmers in TG district improved yield, pest & disease control, usage of fertilizer, and seeding. The Project also conducted a survey on yield of maize and its economic effect in TG district. The result shows that revenue of farmers in TG District has been increased in comparison with traditional cultivation farm, even though expense was also increased.

### **1-3. Implementation Process**

The Joint Coordination Committee (JCC), as the highest decision-making mechanism of the Project, was held four times to date, including the latest JCC for an approval of result of the Terminal Evaluation on February 12, 2015.

As for the recommendations made by the Mid-term review team in March 2013, the Project has taken actions to improve their activities according to the suggestions, which contributed to improvement in capacity development of members of PPMU and DPMU as well as pilot farmers.

## **2. Summary of Evaluation by Five Criteria**

### **(1) Relevance: High**

The Project's objectives are consistent with the Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) and the Five Year Plan of Agriculture and Rural Development of DARD of the Vietnamese Government. The Project also is in line with the Country Assistance Policy for Vietnam of the Japanese Government.

The Project is in line with the needs of DARD, extension officers of district and commune, and farmers.

### **(2) Effectiveness: High**

The Project has been implemented smoothly after the Mid-term Review and all the outputs are expected to be achieved by the end of the project period. The indicator of the Project Purpose was already achieved. Therefore, the achievement of the Project is highly expected as a whole.

The logicity between the Project Purpose and three outputs is still valid at present, and those outputs contribute to an achievement of the Project Purpose.

### **(3) Efficiency: Relatively High**

The three outputs are almost achieved. Some outputs, such as dissemination of the Project to wider range of beneficiaries in DB Province after completion and deliver of guidelines/manuals, are expected to be achieved by the end of the project period.

An appropriate allocation of human resources was rather difficult for both Vietnamese and Japanese sides at the beginning of the project. However, those issues have been significantly solved since the Mid-term review.

### **(4) Impact: Relatively High**

#### **1) Prospect of Achievement of the Overall Goal**

The Overall Goal (Practical use of the Action Plan in non-target districts in DB Province, improvement of farming status in DB Province) is expected to be achieved to some extent. As one of the steps for future expansion of the Project, the cultivation calendar has been delivered to non-pilot communes in pilot districts. The Project also plans to disseminate the project's outputs to non-target districts.

#### **2) Impact on Policy**

The Project provided practical idea of implementation to develop a master plan of other province.

#### **3) Impacts on Environment, Economic and Society**

Soil condition has been improved, and agricultural waste is reduced in the field through the Project activities.

The livelihood of Hmong people also has shifted to paddy cultivation in pilot district. Several farmers also started to sell organic fertilizers after training of the Project. Improvement in irrigation benefitted to secure water in farmers' aquaculture ponds.

#### **4) Negative impacts**

There was no negative impact identified at the time of the evaluation.

### **(5) Sustainability: Medium**

#### **1) Policy Aspect**

It is expected that the Vietnamese government will continuously put a policy emphasis on an increase of agricultural production, improvement of ethnic minority group's livelihood in mountainous area through a poverty alleviation program.

#### **2) Institutional Aspect**

The Project has contributed to strengthening collaboration among the agencies such as PPD and AEC both at provincial and district level. These organizational relationships are expected to be continued after the project ends.

#### **3) Financial Aspect**

The budget of DARD in the last 5 years has been increasing, though future budget will be dependent on the national budget allocation to DB Province.

#### **4) Ownership of Target Group**

The Project's main target group (T/G) is extension officer at district and communal level. Their ownership was largely enhanced by the Project through provision of opportunities to take initiatives in developing training and materials since the Mid-term Review. District officers in charge of irrigation also changed their attitude to support participatory water management by raising farmers' awareness. These ownerships are expected to be sustained after the project period.

## **5) Technical Aspect**

The extension officers used to deliver general information to farmers with insufficient communication. The Project developed their extension capacity and communication competence through practical methods. Farmers are willing to keep contact with extension officers at present, and such strengthened relationship is expected to sustain.

### **3. Factors Promoting Better Sustainability and Impact**

#### **(1) Factors Concerning to Planning**

The revision of PDM was effective to make all the indicators suitable to farmers' level. The Project implemented its activities more smoothly with clear goals after setting the improvement plans for agriculture and water management activities.

#### **(2) Factors Concerning to the Implementation Process**

Training was designed based on the needs of farmers in each area, considering their agricultural challenges. Such a tailor-made approach contributed to farmers' application of technologies, which led to an increase of yield.

Monthly meeting of agriculture officers enhanced communication among them, technical knowledge and experience. The Project provided a variety of training, such as TOT (Training of Trainers) for inexperienced staff at district level, and farmer to farmer workshop for both targeted and non-targeted farmers.

The Project also supported WUGs based on a participatory water management in parallel to improving the irrigation facilities. The combination of institutional and infrastructure development succeeded in enhancing farmers' motivation.

### **4. Factors Inhibiting Better Sustainability and Impact**

#### **(1) Factors Concerning to Planning:**

After the Mid-term Review, there is no inhibiting factors concerning to planning.

#### **(2) Factors Concerning to the Implementation Process: N/A**

There is no inhibiting factors concerning to implementation process identified at the evaluation.

## **5. Conclusion**

The team confirmed that the Project has been implemented in line with the revised PDM without any tangible delay or problem, and progressed steadily to achieve the Outputs and Project Purpose. Therefore, the team concluded that it was reasonable that the Project would be terminated as scheduled.

## **6. Recommendations**

- (1) Provision of necessary budget for such as printing cultivation calendars, holding regular meetings, conducting training and supporting extension officers' activities by DARD after completion of the Project
- (2) Dissemination of Guideline/Manuals by the Project
  - Guidelines/Manuals (agriculture extension) should be explained to persons in charge of agriculture in Commune People's Committee (hereinafter CPC) in the pilot districts.
  - Guidelines/Manuals (participatory water management improvement) should be explained to irrigation staff in CPC and Irrigation Management Company (hereinafter IMC) in the pilot districts
  - Guidelines/Manuals mentioned above should be delivered to CPC and IMC in the pilot districts.

## **7. Lessons Learned**

- (1) There were some difficulties for smooth implementation of the Project at the beginning due to the limited number of Japanese expert in the field of cultivation/extension. The possibility of dispatch of the experts should have carefully been considered when project framework was designed.
- (2) The Project has held a monthly meeting, which was attended by agricultural officers at DPMU, extension officers at commune level, and Japanese experts. This meeting functioned as a place of practical learning, where they visited to each plot site and shared their experience from experimental activities. Communication among extension officers was also enhanced through the meeting. The instruction by Japanese experts to farmers in the plot changed passive attitude of extension officers to positive one.
- (3) The Project has developed the cultivation guideline/manual based on knowledge and experience from Japanese experts, existing training institutions and farmers. Through development of the manual, extension officers learned how to observe and maximize skills and technique of farmers, which contributed to building mutual trusts between the officers and farmers.
- (4) The above mentioned activities by the Project were identified as effective to enhance competencies of extension officers in Vietnam, where the training system has not been fully established yet. This can be applied to the other similar rural development projects.