

Internal Ex-Post Evaluation for Technical Cooperation Project

conducted by Vietnam Office: November 2016

Country Name	The Project on Capacity Development of Participatory Agricultural and Rural Development for Poverty Reduction in the Central Highlands
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	

I. Project Outline

Background	<p>Viet Nam had achieved great progress in poverty reduction in the past years. However, high poverty rates still remained in most disadvantaged areas and especially amongst ethnic minority groups including Central Highlands. There had been various poverty reduction and rural development conducted by the government of Viet Nam. However, in many cases the community just played the role of recipients, which governmental agencies or consultant agencies played the role of main project implementers. The government agencies' planning capacity with consideration to ethnic minority group and budget were insufficient; as a result the implementations were not effective and efficient enough.</p>												
Objectives of the Project	<p>Through (i) developing people and people's organizations' capacity of project planning for their livelihood improvement, (ii) implementing training for local authority officials on participatory rural development, and (iii) implementing rural development activities, the project aimed at developing participatory rural development approaches for ethnic minority (project purpose level), and thereby disseminating community-driven development approaches introduced by the project in poverty area of Viet Nam (overall goal level).</p>												
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Overall Goal: Community-driven development approaches introduced by the Project are disseminated in order to improve livelihoods in poverty area of Viet Nam. Project Purpose : Participatory rural development approaches for ethnic minorities are developed through the capacity building of the local authority officials and people in the target areas with special attention to women and the illiterate. 												
Activities of the Project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Project site: Lo Pang and Kon Thup communes, Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province (Target hamlets: 15 hamlets in 2 communes) Main activities: (1) The project develops people and people's organizations capacity of project planning for their livelihood improvement, (2) the project implements training for local authority officials on participatory rural development, (3) The project supports people and local authority officials to implement rural development activities, and (4) Experiences of the project are shared with other areas. * The models for participatory rural development approach are: (1) Participatory Planning Approach Model, (2) Participatory Agriculture Extension Model ((i) Regionally adaptable "Sustainable Livestock Agriculture Model", (ii) Agricultural extension model applying characteristic of ethnic minority utilizing "Key (model) farmer", (iii) Agriculture extension model by "Farmer Field School", (3) "Social Preparation" Model for minorities (Women's voice collection, "Life Skill Class" for women and the illiterate, and Public Service as Entry Point), (4) Participatory Infrastructure Model (Decision-making and planning based on villagers consensus, Clarification of the role and responsibility between villagers and local authority, Participatory operation and management) Inputs (to carry out above activities) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Japanese Side</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Vietnamese Side</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. Experts: 10 persons</td> <td>1. Staff allocated: 47 persons</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Training in Japan: 23 persons, Third country training: 14 persons</td> <td>2. Land and facilities: project office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Facilities and equipment: Vehicles, motorcycles and others</td> <td>3. Local cost: allowance, project activity fee, training and other expenses</td> </tr> </table> 					Japanese Side	Vietnamese Side	1. Experts: 10 persons	1. Staff allocated: 47 persons	2. Training in Japan: 23 persons, Third country training: 14 persons	2. Land and facilities: project office	3. Facilities and equipment: Vehicles, motorcycles and others	3. Local cost: allowance, project activity fee, training and other expenses
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Ex-Ante Evaluation	2008	Project Period	January 2009 – January 2014	Project Cost	379 million yen								
Implementing Agency	Gia Lai Province People's Committee (PPC), Mang Yang District People's Committee (DPC), National Institute of Agricultural Planning & Projection (NIAPP)												
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries												

II. Result of the Evaluation

1 Relevance
<Consistency with the Development Policy of Viet Nam at the time of ex-ante and project completion> The project was consistent with Vietnamese development policy both at the time of ex-ante evaluation and project

completion. Five-year socioeconomic development plan 2006-2010 prioritized Central Highland area for poverty reduction. The government had implemented National Target Program for Poverty Reduction (NTPPR) (2006-2010) and Program 135¹ for infrastructure development for the most disadvantaged communes in areas where ethnic minority groups live and mountain areas. At the time of Project's completion, the project approach was consistent with National Target Program for New Rural Development (2011-2020) and Program 135 for communes in extreme/poor conditions.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Viet Nam at the time of ex-ante and project completion>

The project was consistent with the needs for poverty reduction and community based development approach both at the time of ex-ante evaluation and project completion. At the time of ex-ante evaluation, the government of Viet Nam had implemented poverty reduction projects in the areas where ethnic minority groups live, but had faced problems in effectiveness and sustainability. Therefore, the necessity to introduce a community based development approach was high. At the project completion, the number of the poor minority people in the two communes and Mang Yang District remained high though its poverty rate had been gradually improved.

<Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy at the time of ex-ante evaluation>

The project was consistent with Japan's ODA policy as Country Assistant Program for Viet Nam drawn up in 2003 regarded the "livelihood and social improvement" as one of the priority areas. Organization of farmers and infrastructure development were regarded as important support areas under the "livelihood and social improvement".

<Evaluation Result> In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

<Status of Achievement for Project Purpose at the time of Project Completion>

The project purpose was achieved by the time of project completion. More than 50% of the local authority officials in the target area recognized that the project approaches had more advantages than the previous approaches (indicator 1), more than 50% of the households who participated in the project activities recognized that their livelihoods were improved (indicator 2), and MARD acknowledged participatory rural development approaches developed by the project applicable by holding a workshop (indicator 3).

<Continuation Status of Project Effects at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

After the project completion, the project approaches have not been newly applied systematically. However, some techniques and facilities transferred by the project have been still utilized, and participatory rural development approach takes root in Lo Pang and Kon Thup communes. For example, participatory planning approach has been applied by officers and utilized for a new project: Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project (CHPoV) funded by International Development Association (IDA)². Key (model) farmers are still applying the techniques learned by the project such as cattle shed building and cattle dung collection and ground cover plan, and the number of villagers who have replicated the introduced method is increasing after the project completion. Thanks to the health training, now most of women understand the significance of safety when delivering their baby at district/commune health stations rather than delivering at their house. In case of nutrient improvement for children, mothers now know how to cook rice soup for their child when their child is ill, or do not want to eat rice. However, many of participants of literacy class do not practice frequently and seem to forget what they learned from the literacy class they attended. Most of small-scale infrastructure developed by the project, mainly water supply system, has been continuously used by villagers. It was difficult for the households to answer whether or not their livelihoods improved.

<Status of Achievement for Overall Goal at the time of Ex-post Evaluation>

Overall goal is partially achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. The project was designed in a manner that the local community takes part from planning stage of small-scale infrastructure, livelihoods improvement, health, and education. In order to encourage the local people to do so, the project provided training and established models so that the people can learn from the model with hands-on practice opportunity. MARD considers these lessons suitable for New Rural Development Program and Poverty Reduction for ethnic minorities in mountainous areas and have tried to reflect to the programs such lessons learnt as: Assigning communes to conduct rural development planning and collect local people's voice in the planning; in constructing rural roads, the Government provides support only for such material as cement, sand, stone, local people donate their land and labor; the construction of rural infrastructure should be decided basing on people's needs and priority is given to those items of higher needs; in terms of agricultural production, the government provide support for technical matter and infrastructure, the local people organize by themselves; Budget structure applied in the Program is: Central budget : 40%, local budget 30%, private sector: 20% and people's contribution: 10%; Local people participate in all stages of construction.

Agricultural techniques have been extended into 9 communes of Mang Yang district by staff from division of agriculture of DPC. And information sheet on model and guidebook on introduction of agricultural components developed under the project are used in disseminating the agricultural techniques. On the other hand, after the project completion, there is no chance for DPC to introduce the project results and approaches to other districts because of the lack of financial source to organize workshop or conference for disseminating project results.

MARD held a workshop to share the experience of the project after the project completion as well as distributed the project's document of rural development experiences. At the same time, MARD applied parts of project's participatory approach into a Circular guiding the support for production under Program 135.³ In the last stage of the project, it was

¹ Program 135 is a program, based on the Prime Minister's Decision No.135/1998/QĐ-TTg, to support infrastructure investment and development of production in the special difficult communes, frontier communes, safety communes, and the specially difficult villages

² The project is implemented from 2014 to 2019 in 130 communes of 26 very difficult and poor districts in 4 provinces of the Central Highland including Gia Lai Province.

³ Following the Circular guiding, since 2016, Program 135 is designed as component of National Target Program for Poverty Reduction, which has implementation mechanism that encourages the participation of the local people.

proposed by the project to organize a dissemination seminar to other districts but the proposal was not accepted by Gia Lai Provincial People's Committee with the reason that the Project's scope is within the two communes of Mang Yang District only so there was no chance for the Project to introduce the Project's results to other districts in the same province

<Other Impacts at the time of Ex-post evaluation>

No land acquisition and resettlement occurred under this project, and no negative impacts on natural environment were observed.

<Evaluation Result>

The project achieved its project purpose at project completion, as the local authority officials recognize the advantages of the project approach, the livelihood of the households improved and MARD acknowledge the project approach was applicable. The situation has partially continued after the project completion. The overall goal was partially achieved as it is stated that participation of local communities from planning stage has been reflected to National Target Program for New Rural Development and Program 135 and MARD has tried to incorporate some lessons from the Project to the said programs. Therefore, effectiveness/impact of the project is fair.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Project Purpose) Participatory rural development approaches for ethnic minorities are developed through the capacity building of the local authority officials and people in the target areas with special attention to women and the illiterate.	1. More than 50% of the local authority officials in the target area recognize that the project approaches have more advantages than the previous approaches.	<u>Status of achievement: Achieved</u> (Project Completion) According to the study conducted during the project (March 2013), all of interviewed 18 officers ⁴ raised some strong points on the approach, indicating their recognition of more advantages of the project approach than previous ones.
	2. More than 50% of the households who participated in the project activities recognize that their livelihoods are improved.	<u>Status of achievement: Achieved (Continuation status: unconfirmed)</u> (Project Completion) Based on the survey conducted by the project, 85.3% (186 among 218 interviewees) recognized that their livelihoods improved. (Ex-post Evaluation) The interviewees (57 interviewees) were not able to compare the status because they did not exactly remember the situation before the project.
	3. Agencies in charge of National Target Program for New Rural Development acknowledge participatory rural development approaches developed by the Project applicable.	<u>Status of achievement: Achieved</u> (Project Completion) - NTP-NRD master plans in two target communes were developed based on the Manual for Guiding Participatory Formulation of Planning for Agro-forestry and Fishery Production Development at Commune Level. - Guideline of Participatory Agricultural and Rural Development for Poverty Reduction (report summarizing lessons learned from the Project) were developed. - MARD and JICA held a workshop for disseminating the project results where the guidelines were used.
(Overall Goal) Community-driven development approaches introduced by the Project are disseminated in order to improve livelihoods in poverty area of Vietnam.	1. The lessons learned from the Project are supplemented into the "National Target Program for New Rural Development".	<u>Status of achievement: Partially achieved</u> (Ex-post evaluation) - Participation of local communities from planning stage has been reflected to National Target Program for New Rural Development and Program 135.

Source : JICA internal documents, questionnaire survey and interviews with counterparts.

3 Efficiency

Although the project period was as planned (ratio against the plan: 100%), the project cost slightly exceeded the plan (ratio against the plan: 102%). In order to respond to villagers' needs, some community development activities were supplemented. Therefore, efficiency of the project is fair.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

There are established policies which secure the effects of the project to continue. Resolution 80/NQ-CP of 2011 provides new directions for sustainable poverty reduction for 2011-2020, aiming at raising the living conditions for the poor, first of all those in mountainous and ethnic minority areas. Program 135 supports the infrastructure investment and the production promotion for communes with special difficulties for the period of 2012-2015 and 2016-2020 focusing on building

⁴ 18 officers were consisted of 1 (out of 6) Project Management Unit member, 7 (out of 11) Supporting Group members at district level, 6 (out of 16) Rural Development Group (RDG) members in Lo Pang commune, and 4 (out of 14) RDG members in Kon Thup commune.

infrastructure, developing production and capacity building for local authorities.

<Institutional Aspect>

There is no division in charge of expanding the participatory rural development at DPC. Supporting Group (SG) and Rural Development of Group (RDG) which were groups established for the implementation of the project, for whom the techniques were mainly transferred, are not existent anymore after the project completion. As members of SG and RDG are those staff under DPC or Commune People's Committee who work in rural development, although SG and RDG do not exist, their members still apply participatory rural development in their daily work such as plan formulation, implementation of new project/program. There is no mechanism for coordination between key farmers, women's unions and school for expanding the project approaches set by DPC. However, as explained in the effectiveness/impact, key farmers themselves apply the project approaches for their works. In addition, according to DPC, almost all divisions of DPC apply the participatory approaches and the trained personnel have been utilized in program/projects at DPC. Therefore, it is expected that project effects will be kept to certain extent. Information on the number of staff was not obtained.

On the part of MARD, MARD has appointed the Division of Poverty Reduction and Social Security to integrate the dissemination of the project results into policy formulation activities and field visits.

<Technical Aspect>

There is an established system to transfer the techniques in DPC. Key farmers have difficulties to transfer the techniques to other farmers, however, SG members are willing to help key farmers to transfer them, although supporting key farmers in technology transfer to other villagers is not their designated assignment. Water supply systems developed by the project are maintained by the villagers.

The dissemination of project results requires that rural development officers at all levels are trained, fully and officially, in participatory approach. Such a team of trained personnel has not yet been established by MARD due to lack of institutionalization and budget.

<Financial Aspect>

There are some financial sources for programs such as New Rural Development, Poverty Reduction, or Agricultural Extension. However, these sources are not enough to implement participatory rural development. On the other hand, there is financial support from IDA for the CHPoV. As for water supply systems developed by the project, the villagers are supporting the system financially.

<Evaluation Result>

Problems have been observed in terms of institutional, technical and financial aspects, and therefore, sustainability of effects of the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved its project purpose at the project completion as the local authority officials recognized the advantages of the project approaches, households recognized their livelihood improved and MARD shared the project approaches with other areas by holding a workshop. After the project completion, some activities have continued and the techniques transferred under the project are reflected in other projects. The overall goal was partially achieved as participation of local communities from planning stage has been reflected to national programs and MARD has tried practicing to incorporate some lessons from the Project to the said programs. As for sustainability, there are challenges in terms of institutional and financial aspects. As for efficiency, the project cost slightly exceeded the plan.

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be partially satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

<Recommendations for Implementing Agency>

When a farmer wants to introduce agricultural technique brought by the project, DPC needs to support members of Supporting Group (SG) and the key farmers to transfer it to farmer.

<Lessons Learned for JICA>

1. In this project, the beneficiaries recognized the necessity of the facilities and they participated in decision-making process of construction of the facilities, construction work, and operation and maintenance of the facilities. The beneficiaries themselves paid a part of the construction cost and they offered workforce in the construction process. Through this process, independency has been created among the beneficiaries. As a result, they continue using the facilities while repairing them. Beneficiaries' participation in the whole process of small scale infrastructure development will secure the sustainable use of the small scale infrastructure.
2. At the time of ex-post evaluation, although the project results are mostly maintained at project site and MARD tried to reflect into policy some of the lessons learnt from the Project, the actual dissemination to other areas is limited. This Project worked mainly with provincial and district authorities. Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has been involved as an executing agency who approves the project progress and annual plan. It would be difficult for MARD to understand thoroughly the project to formulate new policies based on the whole experiences of the projects they do not actually implement or to disseminate the project results to other areas. It is recommended that if JICA would conduct any interventions which involves policy making in the future, main counterpart agency will be a central ministry who is in charge of making national policies. On the other hand, coordination with agencies with key role in making policy (such as Office of the Government or Communist Party in Vietnam) is also included as a part of the Project's activities. The project by JICA have also been focusing on making models and guidelines/manuals. Within the scope of the project, there have been few activities to advocate the project results to central government, not only the line ministry but also to other related agencies such as Office of the Government, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Labor, Invalids

and Social Affairs and Communist Party and other donors. On one hand, it is because the project's counterpart is province. On the other hand, there have been few technical advisors (either Japanese or Vietnamese) representing the project who can voice the projects' results and experiences in policy dialogue and donor meetings. It is recommended that the advocacy part of this kind of project would be more emphasized.



Cattle shed in Dak Hla village



Water point in a primary school in Kon Thup village