

Internal Ex-Post Evaluation for Technical Assistance under Finance and Investment Account

conducted by Viet Nam Office: December, 2019

Country Name	Project for Strengthening of Tay Bac University for Sustainable Rural Development of the Northwest Region
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam	

I. Project Outline

Background	According to the “The Five-Year Social Economic Development Plan (2006-2010)”, the Government of Viet Nam was going to cope with the poverty alleviation of the people in the Northwest region. For that purpose, the plan set the priorities on rural development of the region and vocational training of ethnic minorities in the region in collaboration with research and training institutions. In this context, as a core university in the region, Tay Bac University (TBU) was expected to play a key role for sustainable rural and regional development through a collaboration of education and research activities. However, since the Departments of Forestry, Agronomy and related faculties were newly established in 2004, the capacity of TBU, especially the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry (FAF) had some weaknesses in terms of research studies and teaching methods.		
Objectives of the Project	Through capacity development of TBU-FAF in terms of teaching methods and research studies as well as strengthening the outreach activities in the Northwest region of Viet Nam, the project aims to improve the capacity of TBU-FAF for rural development of the Northwest region, thereby enabling TBU to become a leading local capacity builder and to play a key academic role in rural development. 1. Overall Goal: Tay Bac University becomes a leading local capacity builder and plays a key academic role in rural development of the Northwest region. 2. Project Purpose: Capacity of Tay Bac University for rural development of the Northwest region is strengthened.		
Activities of the Project	1. Project Site: Son La Province (with neighboring provinces in the Northwest region) 2. Main Activities: As for TBU-FAF, (1) Capacity development in terms of teaching methods, (2) Capacity development in terms of research studies, (3) Skills improvement for outreach programs 3. Inputs (to carry out above activities) Japanese side: Vietnamese side: 1) Experts: 1) Staff allocated: 48 persons (Long-term) 4 persons, (Short-term) 10 persons, 2) Facilities: Office spaces for experts (Local experts) 14 persons 3) Local Expenses 2) Trainees received: 15 persons 3) Equipment: Equipment for training /researches 4) Local Expenses		
Project Period	February 2011 – December 2014 (Extended period: March 2014 – December 2014)	Project Cost	(ex-ante) 240 million yen, (actual) 217 million yen
Implementing Agency	Tay Bac University (TBU) under the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET)		
Cooperation Agency in Japan	Kyushu University (and other Japanese universities)		

II. Result of the Evaluation

< Special Perspectives Considered in the Ex-Post Evaluation >

Indicators of the Overall Goal:

The terminal evaluation of this project found that the Overall Goal Indicators designated in the project framework were not feasible in terms of data collection and thus proposed two alternative indicators. This ex-post evaluation used those alternative indicators to verify the achievement status of the Overall Goal as they are more feasible to measure the targets. Since it was not confirmed whether the proposed alternative indicators were officially approved, the ex-post evaluation regarded them as Supplementary Information 1 and 2 to examine the achievement of indicator 3 “Number of research activities for rural development of TBU is increased by 60%”. Furthermore, this ex-post evaluation added another Supplementary Information 3 to assess the achievement of indicator 4 “Prestige of TBU among local people in the region is increased”. Both of indicator 1 “Percentage of FAF graduates who get job after graduation is increased” and indicator 2 “Percentage of governmental officials working in rural development area in the Northwest region who have a university degree of TBU is increased”, were not verified due to the lack of feasibility in data collection.

I Relevance

<Consistency with the Development Policy of Viet Nam at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion >

At the time of ex-ante evaluation, this project was consistent with “The Five-Year Social Economic Development Plan (2006-2010)”, which stated that the Vietnamese Government was going to cope with the poverty alleviation of the people in the Northwest region. For that purpose, the plan set the priorities on rural development of the region and vocational training of ethnic minorities in the region in collaboration with research and training institutions including TBU. The government put its emphasis on strengthening the capacity of TBU which can play a key role for regional development of the Northwest region. At the time of project completion, the project was consistent with the development policy of the country, “Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2011-2020)” which stated ‘to create conditions for faster development in areas with difficulties, especially in Northwest provinces’.

<Consistency with the Development Needs of Viet Nam at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation and Project Completion >

At the time of ex-ante evaluation, this project was consistent with Viet Nam’s development needs in the agriculture research and technology development as described in “Background” above. At the time of project completion, there were continuing needs to further improve the capacity of TBU-FAF for rural development of the Northwest region.

<Consistency with Japan’s ODA Policy at the Time of Ex-Ante Evaluation>

Under the “Country Assistance Program for Viet Nam (2009)”, Japanese government committed to support the four priority areas, one of which is “Improvements in Living and Social Conditions and Corrections of Disparities”. For the purpose of achieving sustainable socio-economic development and the creation of an equitable society, the cooperation was focused on the improvement of basic social services as well as regional development and improvement of living conditions with special importance attached to the northern mountainous regions, the central highland region and the Mekong Delta region.

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, the relevance of the project is high.

2 Effectiveness/Impact

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

By the project completion, the project achieved its purpose: “Capacity of Tay Bac University for rural development of the Northwest region is strengthened”. It was confirmed that all three Indicators set for the Project Purpose achieved their targets. The revised curriculums of all five courses in FAF were approved by TBU management and adopted from the school year of 2013-2014 (Indicator 1). The fact that twenty research papers were published on domestic scientific journals proved the capacity enhancement of research activities (Indicator 2). As for the outreach activities, techniques generated by such activities were transferred to respective target farmers (Indicator 3).

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

After the project completion, the project effects have continued. All of five curriculums have continuously been used. In order to reflect current situations, those curriculums have been revised accordingly. Since 2017, the number of papers appeared on scientific journals has increased partly because the TBU Magazine was authorized by MOET as a publication, and there have been more opportunities to cooperate with foreign institutes and universities. The techniques transferred through outreach activities have been continuously applied by farmers as well.

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

It is observed that the project has achieved its Overall Goal, i.e. “Tay Bac University becomes a leading local capacity builder and plays a key academic role in rural development of the Northwest region”. Approximately 93% of techniques that were developed by project’s research groups have been used by the target farmers (Supplementary Information 1). Seven thematic research activities relevant to rural development of the region have been conducted (Supplementary Information 2). TBU has engaged in numerous activities to support local business incubation and farmers’ training, besides higher education, in coordination with local government and business organizations in the area. As a result, TBU has officially been recognized as a leading capacity builder as well as a key academy in rural development of Northwest region, from Provincial People’s Committee (PPC), the university accreditation entity, MOET and the Ministry of Information and Communication and Central Propaganda and Training Commission, etc. (Supplementary Information 3).

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

Some ripple effects were identified during the ex-post evaluation study. Target farmers have continuously transferred the peach implantation techniques to neighboring farmers who have cultivated the same kind of peach (Mong’s peach). The techniques on growing plants for animal feedstuff have helped farmers prepare feedstuff for animals in a proactive manner via a fermentation method. According to the Statistics Year Books, the income per capita for Son La Province increased by 19.4%, from 2015 to 2017. One possible contribution by TBU could be the transfer of the research results via outreach activities as well as provision of qualified human resource to improve the value-added agricultural products in the region, such as mushroom, coffee etc. Four graduates of TBU-FAF jointly established the company specializing in planting mushroom from the agricultural residues such as the core of corns, straws. With a total area of 4,000 square meters, the company has produced 130 tons of mushroom per year and sold them with the price of VND 35,000 per kilogram since 2014. The production scale has been expanding since then.

<Evaluation Result>

Therefore, the effectiveness/impact of the project is high.

Achievement of Project Purpose and Overall Goal

Aim	Indicators	Results
(Project Purpose) Capacity of Tay Bac University for rural development of the Northwest region is strengthened.	Indicator 1: At least one of the current five curriculums in FAF is approved by TBU management.	Status of the Achievement: <u>achieved (continued)</u> (Project Completion) • Revised curriculums of all the five courses in FAF were finalized and approved by TBU management and adopted from the school year of 2013-2014. (Ex-post Evaluation) • All of five curriculums, such as the bachelor course on “Agronomy”, “Animal Husbandry”, “Silviculture”, “Plant Protection” and “Natural Resource and Environment Protection” have continuously been used since the project completion. In order to reflect current situations, those curriculums were revised twice in 2016 and in 2017 by applying the methodology acquired through the project.
	Indicator 2: Number of publications of research paper by FAF on scientific journals is increased by 50%.	Status of the Achievement: <u>achieved (continued)</u> (Project Completion) • Before the project implementation in 2011, approximately 10 research papers per year were published on the TBU’s internal scientific journal. In the year of project completion (2014), it was confirmed that twenty (20) research papers were published on domestic scientific journals, achieving the target increase by 50%. (Ex-post Evaluation) • The number of papers has increased since 2017 partly because the TBU Magazine was authorized by MOET as a publication, and there have been more opportunities to cooperate with foreign institutes and universities. Some papers of TBU-FAF have been published in English in foreign magazines in

		2018, such as “Asian Journal of Research in Agriculture and Forestry” and “Tropical Agriculture and Development”.																		
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		Note: The data for 2019 is as of July, and the figure in parenthesis includes the research papers that are to be published in the year.																		
	Indicator 3: At least one specific technique developed by outreach activities is applied by the farmers.	<p><u>Status of the Achievement: achieved (continued)</u></p> <p>(Project Completion)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A total of eleven research groups were formed. Farming techniques generated through outreach activities by the three groups (named as Chicken Breed Research Group, Peach Research Group and Animal Feeds Research Group) were transferred to respective target farmers. <p>(Ex-post Evaluation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The techniques transferred through outreach activities have been continuously applied by the farmers as shown below. According to the questionnaire and interviews with TBU, identification skills of disease symptoms and medication methods transferred through outreach activities by the Chicken Breed Research Group have been highly appreciated by the farmers because they worked very well. Planting skills transferred by the Peach Group have had some impact on some households, but they have not spread widely. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Contents of techniques (name of research group)</th> <th>Year of subject technique applied for the first time</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Peach planting skills (Peach Research Group)</td> <td>2012</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Planting animal feedstuff plants for fermentation (Animal Feeds Research Group)</td> <td>2013</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Identification skills of disease symptoms (Chicken Breed Research Group)</td> <td>2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Medication methods (Chicken Breed Research Group)</td> <td>2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Identification skills of diseases (Coffee Research Group)</td> <td>2014</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Contents of techniques (name of research group)	Year of subject technique applied for the first time	1	Peach planting skills (Peach Research Group)	2012	2	Planting animal feedstuff plants for fermentation (Animal Feeds Research Group)	2013	3	Identification skills of disease symptoms (Chicken Breed Research Group)	2014	4	Medication methods (Chicken Breed Research Group)	2014	5	Identification skills of diseases (Coffee Research Group)	2014
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<p>Indicator 3: Number of research activities for rural development of TBU is increased by 60%.</p> <p>(Supplementary Information 1: Techniques that are developed by the project's research groups are being used by the target farmers in at least 70% of the research group cases.)</p>	<p><u>(Ex-post Evaluation) achieved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total of fourteen (14) techniques have been developed by eleven (11) project's research groups. Thirteen (13) of them have been used by target farmers, achieving the target value (70%). Approximately 460-500 farmers have applied the techniques till the time of ex-post evaluation. The period of application in the table below shows the officially set period. It was confirmed by the interview at the ex-post evaluation that many of techniques have been still applied. <table border="1" data-bbox="544 241 1513 1070"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Research Group</th> <th>Techniques developed by Research Group</th> <th>Number of Farmers Applied</th> <th>Period of Application*</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td rowspan="3">1</td> <td rowspan="3">Yam</td> <td>1. Making compost in households</td> <td>2</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Propagation of Yam from stems</td> <td>2</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Planting and nurturing Yam</td> <td>4</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">2</td> <td rowspan="2">Chicken Breed</td> <td>4. Raising chicken</td> <td>20-30</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Raising chicken during the pre-laying period</td> <td>20-30</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">3</td> <td rowspan="2">Mac Khen</td> <td>6. Propagation from Mac Khen's seeds/cuttings</td> <td>5</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Monoculture afforestation and regeneration under a canopy of natural forest</td> <td>1</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Coffee</td> <td>8. Investigation and pest control measures</td> <td>300</td> <td>2014-2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Rau Sang</td> <td>9. Propagation of Rau sang by seeds</td> <td>30</td> <td>2013-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>Peach</td> <td>10. Grafting techniques for Mong's peach</td> <td>30</td> <td>2011-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Local Rice</td> <td>11. Applying high-quality local rice varieties to cultivation in the Northwest region</td> <td>30-50</td> <td>2014-2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>Animal Feeds</td> <td>12. Planting and taking care of some grass species in the Northwest region</td> <td>20</td> <td>2013-2014</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Mushroom</td> <td>13. Production and consumption of several varieties of edible mushrooms</td> <td>1 farmer 1 company</td> <td>2014-2019</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>Biodiversity</td> <td colspan="3">14. It is a basic research to create a precondition for the coming researches. Not yet transferred to farmers.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>Native Cucumber</td> <td colspan="3">15. The research was stopped in the process as the lecturer in charge has moved to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Research Group	Techniques developed by Research Group	Number of Farmers Applied	Period of Application*	1	Yam	1. Making compost in households	2	2011-2014	2. Propagation of Yam from stems	2	2011-2014	3. Planting and nurturing Yam	4	2011-2014	2	Chicken Breed	4. Raising chicken	20-30	2011-2014	5. Raising chicken during the pre-laying period	20-30	2011-2014	3	Mac Khen	6. Propagation from Mac Khen's seeds/cuttings	5	2011-2014	7. Monoculture afforestation and regeneration under a canopy of natural forest	1	2011-2014	4	Coffee	8. Investigation and pest control measures	300	2014-2019	5	Rau Sang	9. Propagation of Rau sang by seeds	30	2013-2014	6	Peach	10. Grafting techniques for Mong's peach	30	2011-2014	7	Local Rice	11. Applying high-quality local rice varieties to cultivation in the Northwest region	30-50	2014-2019	8	Animal Feeds	12. Planting and taking care of some grass species in the Northwest region	20	2013-2014	9	Mushroom	13. Production and consumption of several varieties of edible mushrooms	1 farmer 1 company	2014-2019	10	Biodiversity	14. It is a basic research to create a precondition for the coming researches. Not yet transferred to farmers.			11	Native Cucumber	15. The research was stopped in the process as the lecturer in charge has moved to Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.		
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<p>Indicator 4: Prestige of TBU among local people in the region is increased.</p> <p>(Supplementary Information 3: TBU is officially recognized among the universities in Vietnam as a leading local</p>	<p><u>(Ex-post Evaluation) achieved</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a leading capacity builder as well as a key academy in rural development of Northwest region, TBU has engaged in numerous activities to support local business incubation and farmers' training, besides higher education, in coordination with local government and business organizations in the area. In consequence, TBU has earned the following recognitions. <p>1) <u>Recognition from governmental organization - PPC</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014, TBU became a board member of the Science and Technology Consultation Board of Son La Province which has the responsibility to give consultation to Son La PPC during the process of identifying the annual scientific and technological assignment at the provincial level in all sectors 																																																																								

capacity builder as well as a key academy in rural development of Northwest region.)	<p>including agriculture. The board members include the provincial government, Cooperative Alliance and other research centers and academies.</p> <p>2) <u>Recognition from academies (other universities) in rural development:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through the accreditation carried out in 2019 by Thai Nguyen University, one of accreditation entities of university-level evaluation, TBU received recognition for its achievements in the field of human resource development as well as scientific research studies for the socio-economic development of Northwest region. <p>3) <u>Recognition from MOET and other organizations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015, TBU was approved by the Ministry of Information and Communication and Central Propaganda and Training Commission to publish Scientific Magazine thanks to the achievements in scientific research. In 2018, TBU was acknowledged by MOET receiving the Emulation Flag of MOET for the efforts in completing all assignments and the commitments in the school year 2017-2018.
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Source: Terminal Evaluation Report, Questionnaires and interviews with TBU, Evaluation Report made by Thai Nguyen University.

3 Efficiency

While the project cost was within the plan, the project period exceeded the plan (ratio against plan: 90% and 128%, respectively). Delays of some inputs, such as assignment of experts and installation of laboratory equipment were partly attributable to the extension of the project period. The Outputs of the project were produced as planned. Therefore, the efficiency of the project is fair.

4 Sustainability

<Policy Aspect>

The development policy of Viet Nam, “Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2011-2020)”, states the areas to be focused for development such as, “to create conditions for faster development in areas with difficulties, especially in the Northwest provinces.” As for the capacity development, increase in the ratio of trained human resources in agriculture and forestry has been targeted in the “the Master Plan on Development of Vietnam’s Human Resources (2011-2020)”, and improvement in the quality of human resources in the agriculture and rural development sector has been targeted for the period from 2014 to 2020 by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development under its “Decision No. 1323/QĐ-BNN-TCCB” dated 17 June 2014.

<Institutional Aspect>

There are five departments under TBU-FAF, which are “Agronomy”, “Husbandry and Veterinary”, “Natural Resources and Environment Management”, “Forestry” and “Applied Biology” with the total number of 44 lecturers. According to the interview with TBU, the current organizational capacities have not been sufficient to meet the higher demand of the society in rural development partly due to the lack of leading professors for the training and research activities. As for the number of enrolled students, it once increased by 33% in 2015 compared with the onset of the project in 2011. However, the number has gradually decreased ever since. The total number of enrolled students for 2019 has even decreased by 35.4% compared with the onset of the project. Possible reasons are that the government set the policy (from 2013 to 2022) to reduce the recruitment of teachers for pedagogy in order to adjust the surplus of graduates of pedagogy faculties that were accumulated under the previous policy. The recruitment of unskilled workers by large companies such as Samsung has also contributed for high school graduates to bypassing university in favor of work.

In order to cope with those problems, some attempts have been made by TBU, such as to further upgrade the capacity of lecturers by sending them to training courses, to make lessons at TBU more pragmatic so that graduates can practice them immediately at work, to rearrange the occupational categorization under TBU according to the needs of labor markets, and to recruit students from the Northern provinces of Laos, etc.

<Technical Aspect>

Among the counterparts worked for the project, 35 of them (73%) have still been working in training activities of TBU-FAF. The knowledge sharing among lecturers has been organized at regular basis through which young lecturers can acquire the teaching and research method. Lecturers have also been given various opportunities to study in and out of the countries to further strengthen their capacities. Almost all equipment provided by the project has been in use under adequate maintenance and repair. Knowledge sharing among students is mainly through class sessions and extracurricular activities organized by TBU such as seminars and contests etc.

<Financial Aspect>

According to the financial data of income, it is obvious that TBU-FAF is facing a financial difficulty because the income has been reduced drastically, especially in 2018. It is uncertain that the situation would improve in the short-term. Possible reasons are the government’s policy not to increase the number of lecturers in pedagogy faculties as well as actual reduction in the number of students enrolled in such faculties. Furthermore, the difficult situation of Provincial Budget has been reflected on the decreasing number of researches assigned by the Province and thus the decreased amount of their subsidies. TBU has tried to secure the funds from the international donors, local government by providing the diversified training activities on refreshing courses, such as training to local government staffs to update the knowledge and skills in related sectors.

(Currency Unit: Viet Nam Dong)

Items	2015	2016	2017	2018
Income	3,236,440,000	2,645,880,000	2,252,040,000	1,435,440,000
(% change from the previous year)		(-18.2%)	(-14.9%)	(-36.3%)
- for training of lecturers	596,440,000	529,880,000	208,040,000	181,440,000
- for scientific research activities	2,640,000,000	2,116,000,000	2,044,000,000	1,254,000,000
Of which:				
From MOET (subsidy):	650,000,000	720,000,000	710,000,000	520,000,000
From TBU (tuition):	40,000,000	60,000,000	44,000,000	34,000,000
Others: (subsidy from Provincial Budget provided for provincial-level scientific researches / from other	1,950,000,000	1,336,000,000	1,290,000,000	700,000,000

organizations with the contracts on scientific technology transfer):

Source: TBU

<Evaluation Result>

In light of the above, some problems have been observed in terms of the institutional and financial aspects of the implementing agency. Therefore, the sustainability of the effectiveness through the project is fair.

5 Summary of the Evaluation

The project achieved the Project Purpose to strengthen the capacity of Tay Bac University for rural development of the Northwest region. The effects of the project have continued after the project completion. The Overall Goal for the Tay Bac University to become a leading local capacity builder and plays a key academic role in rural development of the Northwest region has been achieved. As for the sustainability, there are some problems in institutional and financial aspects but no problem in policy and technical aspects. As for the efficiency, the project period exceeded the plan.

Considering all of the above points, this project is evaluated to be satisfactory.

III. Recommendations & Lessons Learned

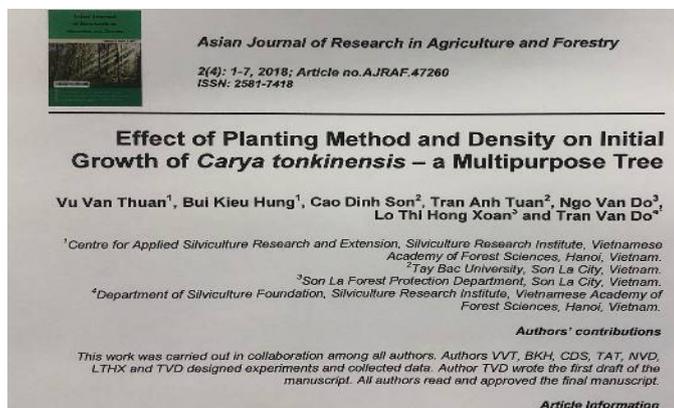
Recommendations for Implementing Agency: TBU

- In order to maintain the important position as a key academy in the field of rural development, it is recommended that TBU should be more active in establishing and strengthening collaboration with enterprises in the field of agricultural sector. TBU had made much efforts in making the program more pragmatic for practical use to attract students and encouraging outreach activities to expand their agricultural techniques. Since the sustainable development of the university requires the strong linkage with enterprises in order to obtain the support for employment, for internship opportunities for students as well as for joint research activities, TBU should be more active in building network with enterprises by establishing the Enterprise Relationship Division so that TBU can actively approach enterprises with professional and well-prepared manner.

Lessons Learned for JICA:

- The ex-post evaluation study has identified that the effects of the project have continued on TBU in the field of research and education. At the same time, the study also revealed some challenges that TBU has faced, which is partly due to the fact that the project might not have timely responded to the change of labour market in the Agricultural and Rural Development sector, so that it has not fully accommodated the students for the job opportunities. If the project aims to improve the industrial development of the target area through capacity development of higher education institutes, JICA should formulate the project by focusing on strengthening the linkage with communities and enterprises in the target area, while giving due consideration to the changing market needs.

(Photo)



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The plastic house introduced by the project has been in good condition and is ready for the experimental plantation in the new school year 2019-2020.