

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES/ETHNIC MINORITIES
AND
POVERTY REDUCTION
VIET NAM

Environment and Social Safeguard Division
Regional and Sustainable Development Department
Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines
June 2002

© Asian Development Bank 2002

All rights reserved

Published June 2002

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the authors
and do not necessarily reflect those of the Asian Development Bank.

ISBN No. 971-561-441-8

Publication Stock No. 031002

Published by the Asian Development Bank
P.O. Box 789, 0980 Manila, Philippines

FOREWORD

This publication was prepared in conjunction with an Asian Development Bank (ADB) regional technical assistance project for *Capacity Building for Indigenous Peoples/Ethnic Minority Issues and Poverty Reduction*, covering four developing member countries (DMCs) in the region, namely, Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Viet Nam. The project is aimed at strengthening national capacities to combat poverty and at improving the quality of ADB's interventions as they affect indigenous peoples.

The report was prepared jointly by Ms. Huynh Thu Ba, Ms. Duong Bich Hanh, and Mr. Bui The Cuong, ADB consultants based in Viet Nam, under the guidance of Mr. Roger Plant, leader of the consultants team. The findings contained herein are the result of several activities under the technical assistance, including a provincial workshop in Kon Tum on 31 May–1 June 2001, and a national workshop in Hanoi on 17–18 September 2001. Extensive fieldwork and consultations with government representatives and indigenous peoples were also undertaken. The findings of this study were shared at a regional workshop held in Manila on 25–26 October 2001, which was attended by representatives from the four participating DMCs, nongovernment organizations, ADB, and other finance institutions. The program was coordinated and supervised by Dr. Indira Simbolon, Social Development Specialist and Focal Point for Indigenous Peoples, ADB. The assistance of Mr. Jay Maclean in editing and of Ms. Anita L. Quisumbing and Ms. Lily Bernal in production is acknowledged with thanks.

The publication is one of a series of documents produced by the project. They comprise four country reports (on Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Viet Nam, respectively), a regional report covering these four countries, and the proceedings of the regional workshop which resulted in recommendations for a regional action plan for indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities. In addition, a regional report on the subject in Pacific DMCs was prepared under a separate consultancy.

It is hoped that the information in this publication series on the issues and concerns of indigenous peoples/ethnic minorities will help guide national governments and other development partners in improving future interventions to recognize, promote, and protect the rights of these peoples.



ROLF ZELIUS

Chief Compliance Officer and
Deputy Director-General
Regional and Sustainable Development Department

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project was implemented in Viet Nam by the Committee on Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) through a Steering Committee headed by Mr. Trinh Cong Khanh, Director of the Department of Mountainous Areas. Other members of the Steering Committee were Mr. Nguyen Hai Huu, Director of the Department of Social Security, and Mrs. Le Thi Thong, Vice-Director, Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Mr. Nguyen Lam Thanh, senior expert of the Department of Mountainous Areas, was the secretary of the Steering Committee.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to CEMMA and the Steering Committee for facilitating the field research and providing valuable comments and suggestions. We are also grateful to local authorities at all levels as well as the commune residents in the research sites for their support and assistance. Our warmest thanks go to Mr. Roger Plant, consultant team leader, and to Dr. Indira Simbolon and Ms. Anita L. Quisumbing of ADB for their responsible and effective assistance. Generous cooperation and input were given by the participants of the provincial and national workshops.

Huynh Thu Ba, Duong Bich Hanh, and Bui The Cuong

CONTENTS

Foreword	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Abbreviations and Currency Equivalents	vii
1. Introduction	1
2. Ethnic Minorities of Viet Nam: An Overview	5
Definition and Classification	5
Ethnicity and Demography	8
3. Law and Policy Framework and Main Government Programs	9
Basic Policy Principles	9
Evolution of Ethnic Policy during the 1990s	10
Major Policies and Programs for Ethnic Minorities	10
4. Key Issues in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas	17
Poverty	17
Environmental Degradation	17
Changes in Ownership of Forests	18
Impact of Development Interventions	19
5. Poverty and Ethnic Minorities	27
General Issues	27
Quantitative Aspects	28
Perceptions of Poverty from Case Studies	30
6. Asian Development Bank Experience	37
ADB Country Strategy and Program, 2002–2004	37
Central Region Livelihood Improvement Project	38

7. Strategic Issues for a National Action Plan	41
Classification of Ethnic Groups	41
Information and Research	42
Overall Policy Framework	42
Responding to the Needs of Ethnic Minorities	43
Implementing Poverty Reduction Projects for Ethnic Minorities	44
Role of the Asian Development Bank	45
 Bibliography	 47

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
CEMMA	-	Committee on Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas
CSP	-	country strategy and program (ADB)
GDP	-	gross domestic product
NGO	-	nongovernment organization
VBA	-	Viet Nam Bank for Agriculture
VBP	-	Viet Nam Bank for the Poor

CURRENCY EQUIVALENTS

Currency Unit	-	Dong (D)
\$1.00	-	D15,106 at the end of 2001

The value of the Dong has eased over the period described in this report. Following are exchange rates per dollar since 1996.

End-1995	-	D11,025
End-1996	-	D11,050
End-1997	-	D11,175
End-1998	-	D13,892
End-1999	-	D14,024
End-2000	-	D14,541

In this report, "\$" refers to US dollars.