

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: MKAE

TA No. and Name TA 3831–VIE: Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development			Amount Approved: 450,000	
			Revised Amount: N/A	
Executing Agency Viet Nam Women's Union Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Implementing Agency)	Source of Funding: TASF	TA Amount Undisbursed \$12,620.00	TA Amount Utilized \$437,380.00	
Date			Completion Date	
Approval 1 February 2002	Signing 13 March 2002	Fielding of Consultants 1 June 2002	Original 31 March 2003	Actual 29 February 2004
			Closing Date	
			Original 31 March 2003	Actual 26 November 2004
Description				
<p>In Viet Nam, agriculture is becoming feminized rapidly. Between 1993 and 1998, male farmers decreased by 0.3 percent per annum, while female increased by 0.9 percent. Women contribute more hours of labor to cultivation, livestock breeding, agricultural processing, and marketing of agricultural produce. Despite this, women continue to face institutional and legal barriers to key resources, including land, financial services, extension services, and skills training, which limit and constrain their involvement in rural development. It is crucial that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) develop and implement a gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation plan to ensure that policies, programs, and projects be designed to address gender concerns and meet sectoral goals. Support for building the capacity to mainstream gender would assist MARD to meet its own development goals for the sector and further contribute to improved implementation of ADB-financed projects that are designed to be gender-inclusive.</p>				
Objectives and Scope				
<p>The objective of the TA was to assist the Government to institutionalize gender-responsive policy development, planning, program design, and implementation in MARD, in accordance with the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women in Viet Nam by 2010 and its National Plan of Action 2000–2005 approved by the Prime Minister in January 2002. More specifically, the TA provided assistance for MARD to formulate a gender mainstreaming strategy in the agriculture and rural development sector and its implementation plan.</p> <p>The TA is divided into two parts. Part A assisted MARD to develop and formally adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation plan. Part A had three sub-components: (i) formulation of the gender strategy using a participatory process; (ii) formulation of an implementation plan for the ministry and for key line departments within MARD with baseline sex-disaggregated data, targets, milestones, and gender indicators; and (iii) capacity building to mainstream gender in MARD primarily through the participatory process in formulating the strategy and action plan. Part B assisted the Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU) to conduct action research and participatory workshops at the provincial, district, and commune levels on gender issues in agriculture and rural development to feed into the MARD's strategy development process. Part B had two sub-components: (i) participatory workshops to identify key concerns, needs, and aspirations of women in the sector; and (ii) preparation of gender training materials and capacity-building programs tailored for agriculture and rural development.</p>				
Evaluation of Inputs				
<p>A TA Fact-finding mission was fielded from end September to early October 2001. Terms of reference were comprehensive. Two separate groups of the consultants worked for MARD and VWU, led by a Team Leader/Gender and Organizational Specialist. The TA provided about 25 person-months of international and 37 person-months of domestic consultants' services. MARD provided 3 counterpart staff including one TA Co-Director and VWU provided 3 counterpart staff including one TA Co-Director during the TA implementation. All counterpart staff worked on a part-time basis. The consultants' team generally maintained good working relationships with EA and IA.</p> <p>The TA was initially requested to assist MARD in preparing its specific gender strategy and implementation plan. During the TA fact-finding mission the Government assigned VWU as the executing agency (EA), and MARD, as the implementing agency (IA). Coordination between EA and IA, while deemed difficult in the beginning, went fairly smoothly after both parties fully understood the expected outputs of each component. MARD and VWU have different organizational mandates and stakeholder groups, so their complementary roles as IA and EA have strengthened the content and quality of the Strategy. The performance of the consultants was generally satisfactory except for one domestic consultant and one international consultant. The contract of one domestic consultant was terminated immediately after the midterm review, as her skills and competency was found not meeting the work requirements. The replacement consultant performed excellent. One international consultant became ill at critical stages of the TA and could not perform as expected. Despite these incidents, as a team, the consultants generally worked harmoniously.</p> <p>A total of six missions, including an inception, three review, and two special TA administration, were fielded. Administration of the TA was carried out adequately with support and monitoring of Social Development and Gender</p>				

Officer and Finance and Administration Officer of VRM. The project officer attended inception, midterm, and final review workshops, all of which invited broad stakeholders including donors. The TA provided two notebook computers, three printers, one portable printer, and one digital camera. All equipment was transferred to EA and IA at the end of the TA. Inputs from EA and IA were generally satisfactory. However, busy work schedule of the MARD TA Co-Director sometimes caused delay in the implementation schedule. Prolonged time was spent for major decision-making.

Evaluation of Outputs

Results, Outputs, and Targets

The TA has achieved its objectives by producing major results and outputs identified in the original TA Framework.

Part A: MARD

(i) Gender Strategy in Agriculture and Rural Development to the Year 2010 was issued as the Decision of MARD Minister No. 4776 QD-BNN/TCCB, dated 28 October; (ii) Gender Plan of Action in Agriculture and Rural Development to the Year 2005 (POA) was issued as the same decision above; (iii) MARD's capacity to implement gender-mainstreaming strategy has generally increased. In end 2003 MARD included some of the targets identified in the Gender Strategy in its planning and policy, and that gender perspectives have been included in the curriculum of agricultural schools of MARD. One of the performance indicators, "Reports contain information on gender gaps" requires a longer period to monitor, which will be carried out by the Planning Department.

Part B: VWU

(i) The Gender Strategy and POA contain specific information on gender gaps regarding access to key resources and public services, labor, and decision-making positions. Selected statistics on gender in agriculture is appended to the Strategy; and (ii) Increased understanding and capacity has been demonstrated and observed by the review missions. VWU is committed to continue gender mainstreaming in agriculture training. VWU developed training curricula and materials for gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development, available in Vietnamese and English. The quality of the documents is high which can be utilized by other parties.

Institution Building and Training

A highly participatory approach utilized in the TA aimed to increase MARD's internal capacity for mainstreaming gender in its operations. Stakeholder consultation provided MARD counterpart staff opportunities to directly observe and learn the gender-based constraints and needs in the agriculture and rural development sector through "learning-by-doing." However, consultation tended to be very large "meeting-style" activities and often there was little time for meaningful debate and inputs. Due to the existing limited institutional capacity in strategic planning coupled with the time and efforts of the MARD counterpart staff mostly being concentrated on the formulating the strategy and POA, there was insufficient opportunity to develop a core of highly qualified trainers within MARD. On the other hand MARD counterpart staff's awareness of and knowledge on gender issues, through the consultation and drafting process, has certainly increased. Capacity building initiatives for VWU staff at the central, provincial and district levels as well as staffs of both VWU and government staff in four selected provinces were effective and successful. This was largely due to the vertical "line of command" within VWU, coupled with the allocation of significant time from counterparts. The TA had helped to establish a core group of resource persons familiar with concepts of gender analysis in project planning and design in each locality where the training had been conducted.

Overall Assessment and Rating

The TA is successful as it produced all expected results and met the targets.

Major Lessons Learned

Different organizational mandates of VWU and MARD eventually contributed to gathering inputs from a broad range of stakeholders, through the participatory consultation process. The initial draft of the Strategy and POA was prepared as individual sections first in Vietnamese by the members of the Working Group and subsequently translated into English. While this process warranted the ownership and built capacity of the members, the approach was lengthy and often required significant inputs from the TA consultants' team to address deficiencies. Extensive attention to the "process" and "consensus-building" tended to dilute the focus on the "implementation" of what had produced. It is crucial to seek strong and catalytic leadership for "actions." The Strategy and POA should be viewed as "living" documents, to be modified and adapted as changes occur within MARD, with POA objectives eventually being institutionalized into MARD's mainstream operations and culture. The Strategy and POA can best be adapted and "mainstreamed" to promote the systemic changes at the provincial, district or commune levels, where the real impact on the lives of rural women and men can be expected.

Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions

It became clear that MARD has limited resources available to support the Strategy and implement POA in 2004-2005. There were serious demands on its available funds in the immediate future. MARD will have to find the funds for this from outside the state budget. Pilot efforts to introduce the Strategy and POA should be considered by ADB and other donors supporting the projects in the ARD sector at the provincial, and possibly district levels.

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Designation

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