

MARD ADB VWU TA 3831 VIE

## WORKSHOP REPORT & EVALUATION

“Developing Action Plan for MARD to 2005  
for implementation of the Gender Strategy for ARD”

May 5-9, 2003  
Hoi An,  
Vietnam

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## 1. Summary.

*The Gender Plan working group of MARD met in Hoi An for this 4 day planning workshop. The major workshop objective was to draft the MARD Plan of Action for implementing the ARD sector's Gender strategy within MARD.*

*This was the xth meeting of the working group, and the most significant piece of work undertaken by the group within this project. In recognition of this, a full facilitation team was provided for the group including the TA team leaders (Vietnam and international), a second international consultant, the three Vietnam TA's, interpretation and secretarial support. The working group was representative of XXXX units/departments of the Ministry.*

*All the working group members reported high levels of satisfaction with the workshop process and results. In the assessment of the facilitation team, it is likely that these high ratings partially reflected members' satisfaction with the opportunity to deepen their applied knowledge of planning concepts and process, rather than satisfaction with the workshop product itself - the draft Plan of Action.*

*The major criteria for evaluating the draft Plan are: its endorsement and adoption throughout MARD, and its implementation though to end-2005. While these are still future unknowns, there are definite areas for improvement of the Plan at the next consultation and redrafting steps.*

*This report has been prepared by the visiting international co-facilitator for the workshop.*

## 2. Workshop description

2.1. The objectives of the workshop were:

- To build working group skills in Action Planning, based on the MARD PAR planning tool.
- To produce a draft Plan of Action for MARD to the Year 2005, for implementation of the ARD Gender strategy within MARD.

*These objectives are drawn from both the project document (3831 VIE) and the brief of the Committee for the Advancement of Women within MARD. The objectives were formally endorsed by the Ministry.*

2.2. Workshop design

In line with these objectives, the workshop was designed as a one-day skills-building process, followed by a three-day plan-development workshop. A workshop schedule is attached as Appendix 1.

The first day consisted of a range of training inputs, individual work, and large group processing and feedback. The other days of the workshop were based on 4 facilitated "drafting groups" and large group sessions to gain group comments and agreement on the work of the "drafting groups". (Appendix 2 - Facilitation Plan).

Planning concepts and linkages were introduced incrementally to the Working Group either through formal presentations (Appendices 3&4) or through brief lecturettes/examples. The small groups which then applied the concepts/linkages to the drafting of the MARD PoA were individually facilitated and provided with task guidelines and application checklists ( Appendix 5). Each incremental stage of plan development was then summarised and processed in the large group.

The planning process designed for the group drew directly from the draft strategy for the ARD sector. The linkage was made by developing a set of Ministry objectives which cascaded from, and would contribute to, the draft sector objectives. Outputs, indicators, activities and inputs were then progressively developed by the working group. This allowed the workshop to directly build on the draft sector strategy. Linkages to the CFAW(MARD) Plan of Action were established through the whole group framing of Objective 5. Linkages to the MARD PAR Action remain to be established and clarified.

The design prepared by the facilitation team was largely adhered to. For one of the sessions in Days 2 and 3, the working group preferred to extend the large group discussion time. This did result in a consensus that small groups are the optimal method for plan development, but meant reduced time for the scheduling of activities in the draft Plan.

Each workshop day included 6.5 hours of session-time. The workshop design, and the commitment of working group members, ensured very high levels of participation and 100% attendance and punctuality throughout the workshop.

### 2.3 Workshop methods.

Some of the workshop design features were new to most members of the working group:

- starting with personal/experiential knowledge as a basis for generalisation/abstraction,
- the high levels of task delegation promoted by the facilitators, and seeking consensus only on the results of the small group work,
- the application of planning concepts,
- the application of planning as a process of "working backwards from the future".

The working group members and the facilitation team agreed that these were key features of the successful workshop design. Plan-development quality can only increase as officials become more familiar and practiced in working in these ways.

One critical area in which the workshop design did not assist the achievement of objectives was in the use of expatriate facilitators and interpreters. Immediate feedback and coaching to the drafting team was almost impossible. By the time agreed translations of the first draft objectives and outputs were available, the drafting groups were working on second and third drafts. Effective large group discussions required effective facilitation in Vietnamese, which the team did not have the capacity to provide.

### **3 Workshop outputs.**

3.1 Both group members and the facilitation team reported significant skills-development as a result of the workshop. No formal attempt was made to measure this. If future planning workshops are scheduled for this group, a simple definition/example questionnaire (on key planning concepts) would establish a baseline.

3.2 The major expected output of the workshop was a draft Plan of Action. It is suggested that two criteria are applied to the draft (8/5/03) :

- If most of the drafted activities are carried out by end-2005, will the Ministry have made progress towards a more gender-equitable provider of services ?
  - Can the existing draft be improved to guide more efficient use of inputs, stronger linkages between the levels of the Plan, and enhanced gender-equity outcomes ?
- The answer to both questions is "Definitely, yes".

As a planning process, this workshop took place within the much wider context of Public Administration Reform within the Vietnamese government. As a Gender-planning process, it took place within a still-emerging central issue for public service delivery. Both of these areas seek organisation and cultural transformations over the next decade or so. The working group thus took on a very significant challenge in developing a Plan of Action early in the Reform and Gender Mainstreaming processes.

The facilitation team views the current draft Plan as a "work-in-progress" and encourages future lead officials and technical advisors to do the same. The first Plan of Action is for the period to end-2005. A second Plan of Action (2005-2010) will be developed in mid-2005. The opportunity should be taken at that time to draw on both the developing expertise of the present working group members, and the learnings from implementation of this first Plan.

3.3. A third output has been the consolidation of the working group through an intensive 4-day, residential, planning workshop. The workshop has generated a group of middle managers, spread across the Ministry, who have both ownership and detailed knowledge of the Plan of Action.

### **4. Participant Evaluation.**

In the final workshop session, working group members and the TA facilitation team were asked to complete the following questionnaire. Follows a summary of responses.

How satisfied were you with the following aspects of the Workshop?	Rating by TA Team & Working Group									
	Poor		Normal		Fair		Good		Very good	
	TA (5)	WG (13)	TA (5)	WG (13)	TA (5)	WG (13)	TA (5)	WG (13)	TA (5)	WG (13)
Draft Action Plan developed by the WG at the workshop	1		1		1	1		10	2	2
Improvement in your practical knowledge of gender equality.			1		1	1	2	4	1	8
Improvement in your practical knowledge of a planning process.					1		4	6		7
Improvement in your practical knowledge of planning concepts					1	1	3	6	1	6
Facilitation of the workshop					1	1	4	5		7
Administration (logistics, materials, ...)						1	4	6	1	6

Both the questionnaire responses and Working Group comments in the week since the workshop point to a high level of satisfaction with the workshop. The TA team ratings are considerably lower against most of the criteria.

TA capacity-levels (in gender analysis, planning process and concepts) were demonstrably higher than those of the Working Group members - this partly explains the lower ratings on an "improvement" scale. Maybe there is also still a higher degree of Plan ownership amongst the TA team than amongst the Working Group - this would correspond to the lower TA satisfaction with the draft produced at the workshop. A useful additional criteria would have been "readiness to implement the PoA".

The questionnaire responses support the evaluative comments made elsewhere in this report. A full list of other participant responses is attached as Appendix 7.