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Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Viet Nam Women's Union*

TA 3831

Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan for Agriculture and Rural Development

Inception Report

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*DRAFT
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I. Introduction & Background

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved a one-year technical assistance (TA) grant to assist the government to develop a gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation plan in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in accordance with the national Plan of Action 2 (POA2) of the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW). The technical assistance will provide capacity development assistance to MARD for the formulation of a gender mainstreaming strategy and sustainable implementation plan for mainstreaming gender considerations into its strategies, policies, programs and project at all levels and stages of its operations.¹

As outlined in the TA Report, the TA is divided into two parts –Part A of the TA assists MARD to develop and adopt a gender mainstreaming strategy and implementation action plan. Part B of the TA assists the Vietnam Women’s Union to conduct action-research and participatory workshops at the provincial, district and commune levels on the proposed gender strategy and action plan and to feed into MARD’s strategy development process. A practical learning by doing approach will be used to develop the outputs and to strengthen the gender mainstreaming capacity of both MARD and VWU senior leadership and technical staff.

VWU is the executing agency for the TA and MARD is the implementing agency. A Steering Committee with representatives of both VWU and MARD will be set up to oversee implementation of all TA activities. The Project’s TA Director is the Deputy Chairperson of CFAW- MARD. The TA consultants are located in both agencies – MARD and VWU – for carrying out the respective components. Close coordination and cooperation between the two agencies will be maintained with overall coordination provided through the Team Leader with guidance from the TA Steering Committee. Counterpart staff are assigned by both agencies to work closely with the TA team for the respective components. Both MARD and VWU have provided assurances that counterpart staff will be assigned to the Project and office space, furnishings, utilities (including local communication) and workshop facilities will be provided for the consultants during the period of the TA.

On 3 June 2002, an international consultant began work in the capacity of Team Leader and Technical Advisor for Gender and Organizational Development, based in MARD, and prepared this draft inception report. The TA activities in the first month focused on: (1) identification and selection of the domestic consultants and identification of counterpart staff; (2) finalizing the working norms between the TA team, MARD and VWU; (3) meetings with key stakeholders and experts concerning gender in MARD and VWU; (4) review of key documents; (5) development of draft detailed workplans, activity schedules, timelines, and staffing; and (6) preparation of the inception report.

Identification and selection of domestic consultants required significant time from the Team Leader to review resumes, conduct interviews, review the scope of the TA and consultants’ specific responsibilities, clarify working norms and facilitate introductions among the project partners. Recruitment of full time consultants as initially planned for in the TAR, proved to be difficult and, after an extensive search and interview process, two part time (50%) domestic consultants were contracted for both MARD and VWU. Additional part time specialist consultants may be hired on an as-needed basis for specific activities under the TA and in accordance with budget allocations. Identification, introduction and orientation of national counterparts also presents several challenges. National counterpart staff assigned to work on a project maintain their departmental responsibilities and, hence, the availability of full time national counterparts proves to be difficult. The TA Project Director has been actively involved in the start-up of the TA, but continues to maintain a full time departmental portfolio with related project assignments. Key counterparts at MARD and VWU assigned to this TA continue to maintain multiple

¹ Asian Development Bank TAR VIE 34367-01 January 2002

assignments for both government and project job responsibilities. MARD has designated a part time mid-level expert as the day to day counterpart staff and VWU has assigned several mid-level staff to participate in selected TA activities. A TA Project Team has been established and includes all international and domestic consultants, all national counterpart staff and project support staff. It is important to note that while several additional counterpart staff have been identified as key to achieving the objectives of the TA, their availability to fully participate in TA activities has been limited. In addition, communications among international consultants and national counterparts is challenged due to limited english language skills of counterpart staff and limited vietnamese language skills of international consultants.

Discussions and development of the working norms between the TA team, MARD and VWU included a review of specific TA responsibilities, day to day communications; schedules of meetings; coordination of TA activities; reporting requirements, budget procedures and financial mechanisms and clarification of roles, responsibilities, inputs and expectations as outlined in the TAR and MOU. Weekly meetings will be held by each of the TA partner “sub-teams” (at MARD and at VWU) to review project activities and provide updates to the TA Project Director; monthly meetings are held by the full TA Team. To date, two full TA team meetings have been held including an orientation meeting and a workplan review meeting. Development of detailed budgets and understanding of financial procedures has required numerous consultations among the project partners and ADB TA staff. To date, project financial norms have been proposed based upon UN, EU and MARD norms, ADB experience and local market rates. A draft budget for Quarters I and II, based upon the draft workplan, has now been developed for final review by the TA Director and a request for an advance for QI activities will soon be submitted to ADB.

Activities to date have also included ongoing meetings with key stakeholders and experts concerning gender in MARD and VWU (see list of key contacts in Appendix II). In general, the discussions confirm that gender mainstreaming in MARD is a complex, challenging and long term objective and the development of a strategy and plan is currently limited by capacity at MARD and VWU. While both donor and MARD representatives express commitment and support for gender mainstreaming, MARD representatives openly acknowledge the need for further assistance and training in understanding of gender mainstreaming strategies and the development and implementation of gender-equitable policies, programs and monitoring and evaluation systems. As a first step, strategic thinking and planning skills must be strengthened and key leadership identified and developed. The need for quantitative and measurable data on gender equity and its relationship to development was frequently cited by both donor and government contacts.

Discussions also reveal that there is significant opportunity for coordination and linkages among the ADB TA and other donor and government activities in MARD, particularly with the UNDP supported PAR, the ASPS, the FSSP and the CPRGS. Several bilateral donors and NGOs who have been actively working on gender integration in MARD have expressed interest in a working group for MARD’s technical staff to facilitate gender mainstreaming in long term sectoral partnership programmes. Documentation of the current status of women in leadership positions in the MARD system was also recommended.

Members of the TA Team have also conducted a review of key documents, including those noted in the TAR and consultant TORs. The recently approved NCFAW POA2 and the CPRGS provide both guidance and opportunities for input and follow up from the TA Team. Additional documents on Personnel Management are currently under review by the TA Team.

Development of the draft workplans commenced in July at both MARD and VWU. The TA Team received an orientation and brief overview on the development of workplans using a logical

framework approach. MARD and VWU “sub teams” were then assigned to develop draft plans which were to be reviewed by the TA Team. This task proved to require significant support and work from the TA consultants and the development of coordinated and realistic workplans, activity schedules, staff assignments and budgets to achieve the objectives of the TA continues to date and will be reviewed at the Inception Meeting.

A draft inception report was submitted for comment to ADB and members of the TA team (July 8, 2002) and revised (August 8, 2002). The report shall be distributed to invited participants one week prior to the Inception Meeting.

II. Update on MARD & Viet Nam's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) and the MARD five year plan of Action

Signed by the Prime Minister in May, 2002, the CPRGS is the government's action plan for implementing Viet Nam's 10 year socio-economic development strategy and five year plan while coordinating the use of Official Development Assistance (ODA). Annual plans passed by the National Assembly will govern implementation of the CPRGS.

Within MARD, a Working Group was formed in response to the release of the first draft of the CPRGS in November 2001. Fourteen officials from seven MARD departments, along with representatives of international donors, reviewed the draft document and provided comment to MPI. The final CPRGS document incorporated many of the inputs of the MARD Working Group and the gender inputs of MARD were presented in the context of sub sector development goals and were subsequently integrated into the CPRGS gender section.

The MARD Working Group is expected to stay active throughout the implementation of the CPRGS². During the July -December 2002 period, the Working Group is expected to develop an action plan and implementation strategy for MARD to assist with the implementation of the CPRGS. As an activity under the TA, the project team plans to provide technical assistance to the action plan teams, specifically for tracking gender dis-aggregated data (see ISG Plenary Meeting Minutes, June 2002).

Consistent with Viet Nam's national development goals, MARD's five year plan for the 2001-2005 period emphasizes agricultural growth, specifically with the purpose of ensuring national food security, increasing export products and commodities and increasing rural incomes. Gender equity as a cross cutting-theme in achieving these objectives is not explicitly noted in the Plan.

III. Update on NCFAW, CFAW MARD & Gender Mainstreaming in MARD

The National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW) Plan of Action 2 (POA2) was officially approved by the Prime Minister in January 2002 (Decision No. 19/2002/QD-TTG). The POA2's overall objective is to *"improve the quality of women's material and spiritual life, as well as establishing the conditions necessary for women to experience their fundamental rights, and to fully and equally participate in and benefit from all aspects of political, economic, cultural and social life."* POA2 outlines 5 specific objectives related to achieving women's equal rights with indicators of achievement. Of specific relevance for this TA, the POA2 calls for *"the productivity of rural women workers to increase to 75% by 2005 and 80% by 2010.....and for 80% of women headed households to have access to loans from poverty reduction programmes..."*

² MARD CPRGS Working Group Report, May 2002

POA2 calls for the line Ministries (including MARD) to develop five-year and annual action plans aimed at achieving the objectives of the strategy for the submission to the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and to organize the implementation of these plans. It calls on ministries to incorporate gender equality into long and short term plans and to integrate activities of the POA2 into relevant national target programmes and strategies. Annual reports must be submitted to MPI and the Chairperson of NCAFW. Under POA2, each CFAW (ministerial, provincial, district and commune) will receive training on the implementation of POA2.

CFAW-MARD was established in 1996 (Decision No. 257 NN/TCCB/QD) in response to the signing of the CEDAW. The specific duties defined for the Committee include: (1) providing policy advice (2) prepare action plans related to the advancement of women (3) monitoring implementation; and (4) implementation of such policies and plans. CFAW-MARD has 20 members and includes representation from five of the seven "Vu" departments: Organization & Personnel; Policy; Finance and Accounts and International Cooperation. Additional units represented include the Institutes of Water; Agricultural Technical Sciences in the South; Management Board of Forestry Project; Viet Nam Coffee; Trade Union, Youth Union and Communist Party and the MARD Administrative Office. Four of the 20 members are men, including the President and chair of the standing committee, Vice Minister Nguyen Thien Luan. In addition, an estimated 80 CFAW entities were established throughout various MARD - departments, Institutes, research centers, schools, etc.; however, these CFAWs exist without explicit mandates or resources.

MARD documents³ outline commitments to support the CFAW activities and to provide the basic support to its operations. However, as a committee, CFAW MARD historically has had no permanent staff support or annual line budget. Recently, however, CFAW-MARD prepared an action plan for the period July-December 2002 and received budgetary support estimated at 59,000,000 VND (approximately \$3800 USD) from MARD.

Over the years, CFAW MARD has also received support from international donors for specific projects and activities. As noted in the ADB's TA and Viet Nam Gender Briefing Paper 2002-2005, in the period 1999-2001 CFAW-MARD was supported by a Technical Working Group (TWG) established with support from donors including the Royal Netherlands government and the Embassy of Finland. Under the auspices of TWG-CFAW, numerous "sub-projects" were also supported by international donors including research projects, development of training materials and policy analysis. While TWG proved to be a valuable resource of gender expertise for MARD, it did not establish the necessary institutional linkages needed to facilitate capacity building and mainstreaming of gender in MARD. With the completion of two years of donor support to the TWG, and the resulting cessation of TWG activities, there is now a new gender "gap" in MARD.⁴

In May '02, NCAFW launched the national POA2 along with guidelines to the CFAWs for development of CFAW plans of action for the period to 2005. First drafts of the plans are due July 31. The ADB TA Team Leader requested and received approval for an extension (to September 30, 2002) for submission of the final POA so that the TA Team could assist CFAW MARD with development of their POA to 2005. Additionally, both the NCAFW POA2 and the NCAFW/UNDP/RNE project target increasing capacity of the CFAWs through training and development of gender guidelines. However, CFAW MARD will continue to have limited capacity in the near future to develop gender mainstreaming

³ MARD Proposal for Support to Technical Working Group on Women Advancement and Gender Integration in Agriculture and Rural Development. May 2000

⁴ See Final Report, Midterm Evaluation of the TWG, September 2001

plans due to lack of resources, limited gender mainstreaming technical expertise and the limited linkages with key MARD departments, institutions and provincial DARDs.

IV. Update on Public Administration Reform in MARD

MARD has been in a continuous process of reform as part of national Public Administration Reform (PAR) since its establishment in 1996 from the merging of three separate ministries. For the 2005-2010 period, MARD's PAR framework follows the national framework and identifies four focus areas to be strengthened: *institutional systems and standards, organizational structures, human resources and public finances*. MARD is currently receiving support from UNDP for selected PAR initiatives: organizational restructuring; human resource strengthening and modernization of public administration and the development of an information technology strategy. In July, the UNDP PAR MARD Project commenced a participatory, action-oriented training initiative to translate MARD PAR priorities into objectives, outputs, activities and input requirements. This action planning exercise will be completed by mid September. The MARD-ADB TA Team Leader and UNDP PAR Advisors have identified several strategic opportunities for mainstreaming gender as part of ongoing PAR in MARD. An immediate priority will be for the ADB Project TA Team to provide gender mainstreaming TA to the MARD PAR Planning Teams, specifically the Team on Human Resource Strengthening (Human Resource Management and Development).

In addition, as this phase of the UNDP support is scheduled to end in February 2003, UNDP is currently drafting Phase II project documents and, again, strategic opportunities exist for gender to be integrated into MARD's PAR priorities and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) systems.

V. Update on Sector Partnership Programmes

While gender awareness and integration of gender issues within the MARD institutional structure have, to date, been largely compartmentalized with the CFAW-MARD, several large, multi-year donor supported programmes include gender equity as a cross-cutting development goal and offer opportunities for gender mainstreaming to be a part of the programme impact. In addition to capacity building through a learning by doing approach among existing MARD staff (who rotate through project offices and MARD departments) these large partnership programmes can provide quantitative and qualitative data that can be gender dis-aggregated and assessed for their contributions to achieving MARD's 5 year development goals. The DANIDA funded Agricultural Sector Program Support (ASPS) and the Royal Netherlands government support to the 5MHRP (5 million hectare re-forestation programme) of the Forestry Sector Support Programme offer two such opportunities in MARD.

The ADB TA Team will include MARD national and international project staff in assessments and participatory workshops in key selected sector partnership programmes to both assess gender mainstreaming capacity within MARD and to identify gender gaps in existing MARD policies, programs and systems. In addition, as part of the assessment of gender equity within MARD's Human Resources system, this constituency will also be included in the rapid gender assessment of the Ministry.

VI. TA Activities to Date & Follow Up

As noted above, TA activities have focused on identifying and establishing strategic linkages with key ongoing initiatives in MARD:

- ◆ PAR—the TA Team has initiated discussions with key counterparts in MARD and the PAR project staff and proposed TA for mainstreaming gender in PAR, including a series of training to selected PAR planning teams. The team has reviewed the PAR planning process and Phase II implementation proposal and provided feedback to project staff. Technical support will be provided to ensure that proposed reforms in human resource management and development are gender sensitive. Domestic consultants and national counterpart staff are working with PAR staff to review additional opportunities for TA to PAR initiatives in MARD, specifically in the Department of Organization and Personnel.
- ◆ Gender Assessment in MARD—the TA team has conducted a preliminary review of the institutional structure of MARD and drafted survey tools for a gender assessment of MARD's leadership.
- ◆ Review of the CPRGS and MARD's five year plan for the 2001-2005 have been conducted and discussions with key MARD staff have been held to determine opportunities for providing TA to MARD's action plans for implementation of the CPRGS. The Team Leader attended the ISG Plenary Meeting (see minutes) and provided comment on the CPRGS gender components. A follow-up activity under the TA will be to establish linkages with the policy development process to ensure that gender is explicitly addressed in reaching agricultural development goals and that M&E systems track gender dis-aggregated data.
- ◆ CFAW MARD and the POA for the period 2002-2005—the TA Team has worked with members of CFAW MARD and reviewed the NCAFAW POA2, including guidelines for developing the CFAW MARD POA. The Team Leader requested and received approval for an extension to the deadline for submitting the CFAW MARD plan in order to allow for TA to be provided to CFAW MARD in the development of the POA. An initial series of trainings and workshops are proposed for CFAW MARD including planning skills, gender mainstreaming and development of the CFAW MARD POA.
- ◆ Partnership programmes—several project staff at MARD have requested support for integrating gender in programme and project activities (a role of the former TWG). While limited TA has been provided to date, the TA will include partnership programme technical staff from MARD in workshops and trainings offered under the TA.
- ◆ Promoting gender mainstreaming through the ISG has been discussed and several follow activities were suggested including the establishment of an ad-hoc theme group.

In addition, the Team Leader conducted numerous introductory meetings with key stakeholders, participated in gender and MARD related meetings and working groups and attended selected trainings and workshops relevant to the TA. In general, and as noted throughout this report, mainstreaming gender in MARD will be a complex and long term process. Awareness of gender mainstreaming and the capacity to mainstream gender is currently limited within MARD and further complicated by the NCAFAW mandate. The content of workshops and trainings offered under the TA must be tailored to specific target groups and reflect current knowledge, commitment and capacity. Recent changes in MARD leadership and the lengthy decision making processes of government institutions will provide additional challenges. The TA workplans and timeframe will need to be reviewed and discussed at the Inception Meeting. Development of a strategy and plan for mainstreaming gender may be an ambitious goal in the planned time frame for the TA. A list of key contacts and meetings attended is attached as Appendix II.

Since the start up of the TA and recruitment of the TA team, the priority activity has been the participatory development of the detailed TA workplan, activity schedule and staffing plan. This has been a time consuming process. A draft workplan and activity schedule is provided in Appendix III. Additional work plan development sessions were held throughout the month of July; it is expected that a final workplan and activity schedule will be reviewed during the Inception Mission. In addition, detailed quarterly workplans will be developed by and for each of the MARD and VWU Teams.

A second priority in months 1 and 2 has been coordination with the UNDP project VIE/98/004-- PAR support to MARD. Several meetings and briefings have been conducted among consultants and counterparts from both projects. Preliminary recommendations include: provision of TA to the PAR planning teams at MARD, specifically the HR team; consideration of a formal coordination mechanism between ADB TA and UNDP PAR; advocacy for a gender mainstreaming component for Phase II implementation; and a review of gender equity in the IT pilot component. As noted above, technical assistance and participatory workshops will be provided to selected PAR Planning Teams working on key reforms, e.g. HRD, HRM, through the August-September period.

VII. Comments on the TA

MARD

ADB's TA aims to facilitate mainstreaming gender in MARD through support for the development of a gender mainstreaming strategy and plan and capacity building for MARD senior leadership and technical staff. In addition, the results of capacity building, action research and data collection at the provincial and grassroots levels conducted with the Viet Nam Women's Union will be fed into MARD's strategy development process.

Given the current situation in MARD, the ADB TA can achieve greatest impact through:

1. ***Casting a broad, strategic net for capacity building--*** Development and approval of a MARD gender mainstreaming strategy and action plan and capacity building within MARD must target key, strategic focal points in the MARD system. This includes, but is not limited to CFAW-MARD. Key line, operational and technical departments must be targeted as well as key Institutes, Management Schools and selected DARDs at the Provincial or District level. Gender mainstreaming must be expanded beyond the purview of the VWU and CFAWs.
2. ***Establishing strategic linkages--***Linkages with current, ongoing and pipeline strategic initiatives that are reforming MARD's institutional structures, procedures or programs must be established and the ADB TA should provide technical assistance to mainstream gender and establish indicators with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Additionally, linkages should be made with selected key sub-sector partnership programmes where gender mainstreaming has been identified as a cross-cutting program priority and commitments can be made to mainstream gender from formulation stage to M&E.
3. ***Working at both the national and grassroots levels--***While the ADB TA for both development of the gender mainstreaming strategy and plan and gender capacity building initiatives will primarily focus on the Central Ministry level, with input from the provincial and district levels, implementation of gender responsive policies and activities that achieve sectoral development goals will occur at the lower levels, e.g. DARDs at provincial, district and commune levels. As a result of the assessment and participatory workshop activities of

the TA at the lower levels, and with additional input from the VWU community based research workshops, the ADB TA Team should document findings and develop recommendations to mainstream gender at lower level administrative units of MARD and to identify and/or recommend gender mainstreaming best practices at the community level.

4. ***Supporting intensive, relevant, gender mainstreaming awareness raising and training for targeted groups of key leaders***--Within MARD, there are few individuals who demonstrate leadership and expertise in the fields of gender mainstreaming, gender and institutional change and gender responsive development planning. Gender initiatives, to date, have been delegated to the VWU members and selected CFAW MARD members. As noted in the Terminal Evaluation of VIE/96/011, the placement of trained gender specialists in key ministry and provincial departments would provide an important resource to focus on gender within the specific sector. Moreover, the termination of TWG in MARD further eliminated the only "in-house" resource available for providing "gender expertise" to MARD staff. As the ADB TA Team identifies strategic focal points, positions and persons in MARD, consideration should be given to providing additional inputs to develop future specialists and leaders.

Viet Nam Women's Union (VWU)

Under the ADB TA, the VWU will assist with identification of the key issues for women in agriculture and rural development at the grassroots levels and present these findings to MARD. In addition, the TA aims to strengthen VWU's capacity, especially in mainstreaming gender in the agricultural and rural development sector. To maximize its impact, the ADB TA to VWU should:

1. ***Work closely with NCFAW and VWU to ensure that capacity building efforts are complementary and builds upon the earlier work of NCFAW under POA to 2000;***
2. ***Ensure that VWU's activities under the TA are well defined, relevant for MARD local and national constituencies and that findings are fed into the MARD strategy development process. Research activities must be designed and conducted with representatives of target groups in specific sub-sectors of agriculture and rural development.***

Implementation Arrangements & Comments on Cooperation and Understanding among ADB TA, MARD & VWU

Both MARD and VWU have provided office space and assured provision of basic equipment, local telephone and office supplies. Each national partner institution has also identified counterpart staff to work with the project TA teams. In MARD, the TA Project Director has provided support and participated in all TA Team Planning Meetings; a part time (50%) secretary and a part time Expert from DOP (30%) have been seconded to the TA project. At VWU, a Project Leader has participated in all planning activities and several part time counterpart staff from the Research and International Relations Departments have been seconded to the project. Due to the cessation of the TWG in MARD, as noted above, the MARD TA Team will need additional MARD counterpart staff to effectively implement the TA.

To date, the ADB TA Team, MARD and VWU have agreed upon the establishment of a TA Project Team. The members of the team include the TA Project Director, Project Leader at VWU, Team Leader, all international and national consultants, national counterpart staff, Project Assistant and Project Secretary. The team will meet monthly during the first week of each month to review the status of all

workplan activities and to provide briefings and updates, discuss technical assistance needs, review findings and recommendations and maintain communication and coordination. In addition, ADB TA Project and MARD have agreed to conduct weekly office meetings with national counterpart staff providing ongoing updates to the TA Project Director. It is expected that VWU will establish similar systems for day to day project oversight with the Team Leader and Project Assistant maintaining good communication between MARD and VWU.

Establishment of the TA Steering Committee, its membership and the committees' roles and responsibilities should be formalized during the Inception Mission including a first meeting of the Committee. It is recommended that ADB designate a representative to the Committee and also consider inviting a national and international representative from a MARD Partnership Programme to participate on the committee.

VIII. Comments on the TORs

The ADB TA 3831 TORs call for 1 full time international Technical Advisor/Team Leader, 2 part time international technical specialists, 2 full time national consultants and 12 person months of national specialists. Due to the difficulties in recruiting qualified full-time national consultants, to date two part time consultants (50% FTE) were recruited for MARD and one part time (50% FTE) consultant was recruited for VWU. While this arrangement will require greater coordination and oversight from the Team Leader, it provides greater flexibility for specific activities to be conducted by teams of national consultants working in partnership with national counterparts. Additional part time specialist consultants can be hired for specific workplan activities as needed.

The national consultants for MARD bring expertise in the technical areas of water, irrigation, agriculture, rural development and gender as well as thorough understanding of MARD organizational structures and processes. Additional guidance on MARD institutional structures and processes are provided by the TA Director. Training expertise will be supplemented by part time specialist consultants and the Team Leader with support from the Project Assistant. Due to a conflict in scheduling and delay in start up of TA activities, it is anticipated that the international institutional specialist will be available by mid-September. Several activities to assess institutional structures and systems are scheduled for August and will be implemented by national consultants with support from the Team Leader. As the TA progresses and specific training and capacity building activities are planned, the need for specific TA consultant expertise will be more specifically identified.

The national consultant for VWU brings significant expertise in gender, rural development, research and capacity building; the international consultant brings expertise in gender, organizational and human resource development and training. The strengths of the VWU counterpart staff will be assessed by the consultants early in the TA. It is expected that additional consultant expertise will be identified during development and implementation of the detailed workplan for VWU.

IX. Key Issues, Challenges & Constraints

- ***Context of Gender Equity in Viet Nam***

*"All is not as it seems with gender relations in Viet Nam."*⁵ While the success of improving the status of women in Viet Nam has been impressive and well documented, statistics say little about cultural

⁵ ADB Gender Briefing Paper 2001-2005 December 2001

contexts, social attitudes and the empowerment of women. Gender disparities continue to exist throughout the social and economic fabric of Vietnamese society. In MARD, as throughout Vietnamese society and the workplace, men expect to be senior to women; in MARD this social norm is compounded by the absence of women in any key leadership position.

In addition to the cultural context, the NCFW --in partnership with VWU--has consistently utilized a women's advancement approach in the development of national strategies and plans of actions. While clearly contributing to the achievement of improved status of women and the number of women in the national machinery, this approach has also contributed to the prevailing view of gender equity as a women's issue.

- ***The Institutional Context***

MARD is a large, complex institution created by the merger of three separate Ministries in 1996. It includes more than 36 Technical Units and Administrative Departments, 30 Training Schools, 300+ corporations, enterprises and companies, 2 Management schools and Universities and vertical linkages with 61 provincial Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARDs). Leadership throughout the Ministry is primarily male and gender activities are largely viewed as "women's issues" and under the purview of the Women's Union and CFAW-MARD. The autonomy of TWG and its project-oriented structure and operations limited the integration of gender awareness and expertise within the MARD system. While POA2 calls for capacity building of CFAWs, the status of CFAW MARD as an appointed committee, rather than as an organizational unit, presents limitations to its stature within MARD and may limit access to resources, staff and technical capacity. Furthermore, MARD's government budget allocation is reported to be significantly under-funded. Donors contribute significantly to sectoral development programmes and contribute more than \$2,000,000,000 USD through over 300 programmes and projects.⁶

While Public Administration Reform (PAR) initiatives, NCFW/CFAW-MARD, sub-sector partnership programmes and selected donor commitments will provide key strategic opportunities for mainstreaming gender in MARD, it must be noted that:

Mainstreaming gender is a long term process of organizational change and must be supported by political, administrative and legal frameworks. Changes include individual attitudes, values, knowledge and behaviors as well as institutional policies, programs, procedures, monitoring & evaluation systems and budget allocations. Development of the strategy and plan for MARD will be a challenge in the current institutional context and will require positioning gender mainstreaming in the context of current political, administrative and legal commitments. In addition, new commitments must be sought from key leadership and reinforced and expanded through targeted communications strategies and a new paradigm for the gender mainstreaming agenda. This is an evolving process of change in institutional culture.

- ***MARD-VWU --Coordination & Sustainable Mainstreaming of Gender Equity in MARD***

TA 3831 has been designed with two complementary components with both MARD and VWU conducting activities to contribute to the development of the MARD gender mainstreaming strategy

⁶ International Support Group, June 2002

and plan. To ensure that all activities are well coordinated and to ensure efficient use of resources and time, regular communication and reporting norms will be established and maintained by the Team Leader. Details of field activities, specifically the research workshops to identify "gender gaps" and provincial and district level capacity building trainings, should be agreed to by the Team Leader and TA Director to facilitate the integration of gender expertise and related activities into MARD institutions.

A sustainable MARD Strategy and Plan for Mainstreaming Gender must come from within MARD, with the role and inputs of the VWU carefully administered, coordinated and timed. While every effort must be made to maintain coordinated TA, the institutional cultures and mandates of the two organizations will present challenges for promoting true mainstreaming of gender at all levels. Institutional and decision making relationships will be complex at the national, provincial, district and commune levels; hence specific roles in the TA activities must be carefully considered.

- ***Human & Institutional Resources***

Both capacity building and successful TA project implementation require that appropriate national counterpart staff are assigned to the TA project. While the initial and planning stages of the TA have benefited from the participation of the TA Director, with additional part time (30%) participation from one staff Senior Expert, it is anticipated that participation of additional high level staff will be required as the project moves into implementation of activities. Arrangements to second and assign staff to participate in projects is complicated, with project assignments often being added on top of routine responsibilities. Moreover, there is little or no remuneration or incentive for counter part staff, resulting in a dearth of staff interested or motivated to contribute significant time to project activities.

In addition, the scarcity of high level expertise and/or experience in strategic planning, development of vision-oriented strategies, SMART program planning, monitoring and evaluation systems, gender and organizational change, gender and development and participatory adult learning methodologies presents a challenge for the proposed timeframe of the TA. Implementation of project activities, especially participatory learning-by-doing workshops for strategy and plan development, will require a gradual, albeit steady, step-by step process and ongoing evaluation of results.

Lastly, the role of the CFAW-MARD must be carefully considered. Engaged in the development of its Plan of Action to the period of 2005, CFAW-MARD is both a resource and a risk. How a MARD gender mainstreaming strategy and plan of action can and/or should be linked, processed or differentiated from the CFAW POA must be carefully assessed as part of the planning and development process.

- ***Perceptions for the Future***

While the TA is for a one year "planning" grant and makes no commitments for the future, questions have been already raised regarding the TA and the feasibility of support for future implementation of MARD's gender strategy and plan. This query is to be expected, given the nature of planning grants, and is compounded by the experience with the TWG. National counterpart staff, CFAW-MARD and DOP and other key departments are inherently aware of the limitations of MARD's internal capacities--human, financial and institutional--to implement a gender mainstreaming strategy and plan. One year of limited, targeted capacity building will not generate sufficient expertise and institutional change needed for implementation. Clarification on the parameters, limitations, possibilities and expectations of the partners should be made clear during the Inception Mission.

X. Conclusions & Next Steps

The TA 3831 has had an encouraging start-up period. A team consisting of the TA Director, national consultants and counterparts and international specialists has worked together and developed a work plan that focuses on the assessment of the institution and the step-by-step delivery of participatory exercises to raise awareness to integrate gender equity into MARD's existing structure and systems. At the same, the ADB TA team has identified several strategic opportunities --both current and pipeline--to integrate gender equity into MARD activities, particularly public administration reform (PAR). It is a big task, however, in a large, complex Ministry with limited gender mainstreaming expertise or capacity to build upon.

Development of the strategy and plan will be an evolving process, commencing with the Inception Mission to formally articulate the expectations, roles and responsibilities of ADB, VWU and MARD. The Mission and accompanying meetings with key counterparts will be an opportunity for clarification of the required inputs from MARD and VWU; the linkages of this TA with Viet Nam's and MARD's national and sectoral development goals and the ADB Country Strategy for Viet Nam and the expected achievements of the TA period.

Appendix I.

List of Key Contacts and Meetings June / July 2002

I. MARD

Dr Nguyen Thien Luan, Vice Minister, MARD, Chair, CFAW/MARD
Mrs Nguyen Thi Hong Loan, TA Project Director, Deputy Director, DOP, Vice Chair, CFAW MARD
Mrs Chu Thi Hao, Deputy Director, Policy Department, Vice Chair, CFAW MARD
Mrs Pham thi Tuoc, Deputy Director, Planning & Projects, Vice Chair, CFAW-MARD
Mrs Pham Thi Hong, Expert International Cooperation Department, Member, CFAW MARD
Mrs Hien, Senior Expert, DOP, MARD
Mr Le Van Minh, Director General, International Cooperation Department, International Support Group (ISG)

II. VWU

Mrs Truong Thi Khue, Vice President
Mrs Nguyen Thi Oanh, Vice President
Mrs Phan Thanh Tram, Vice President, Research
Mrs Tran Thi Hoa, Deputy Head, Cooperation Relations

III/ UNDP PAR Project VIE/98/004

Mr Daniel Bollinger, Senior Technical Advisor
Ms Marjo Nevala Lofkvist, Associate Expert, PAR VIE/98/004
Mr Thanh, National Project Consultant

IV. NCFAW & UNDP/RNE/NCFAW Project

Mrs Tran Thi Mai Huong, Permanent Secretary
Ms Kristen Pratt, Senior Technical Advisor
Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy, National Project Manager
Ms Nguyen Thuy Hien, External Affairs
Ms Kate Gleeson, Project Assistant

V. Government of Netherlands

Ms Maaïke van Vliet, First Secretary, Gender & Health
Mr Nico Bakker, First Secretary, Water Management and Water Transport
Mr Wijnand van Ijssel, First Secretary, Forestry & Environment
Ms Nguyen Nu Hoai Van, Program Officer, Gender & Health
Mr Nguyen Van San, Program Officer, Forestry & Environment
Mr Ross Hughs, Staff Consultant, Forestry & Environment

VI. Agricultural Sector Programme Support (DANIDA)

Dr Ariff Qaraneen, Chief Programme Advisor

VII. CEG/AUSAID

Mr Graham Alliband, Facility Manager, Capacity Building for Effective Government (CEG) Facility

VIII. ADB

Ms Nguyen Nhat Tuyen, Gender Specialist

XI. FAO

Ms Satoko Ishiga, Gender & Nutrition Specialist

Mr Vu Ngoc Tien, Programme Assistant

Other Contacts

Ms Tran Thi Van Anh, Director, Viet Nam Center for Social Sciences & Humanities

Key Meetings (External)

ISG Annual Plenary Meeting

Donor Gender (GAP) Meeting

NCFAW Inception Meeting for Provincial Representatives

Appendix II

DETAILED ANNUAL ACTIVITY SCHEDULE June 2002-May 2003

Activities/Outputs	6/02	7/02	8/02	9/02	10/02	11/02	12/02	1/03	2/03	3/03	4/03	5/03
I. Project Management												
I. 1 Initiate TA with TA Project Director. Complete contracting of consultants, identification of counterpart staff and support, establish working arrangements in MARD and VWU.	XX											
I.2. Conduct introductory meetings with key contacts, review key documentation, conduct orientation meetings with consultants and counterparts and draft inception report and workplans.	XX	XX										
I.3. Preparation for TA Team Orientation & Planning Sessions and Review & Finalize DRAFT Inception Report and Workplans	XX											
I.4. Conduct TA Team Orientation and Workplan Planning Sessions		XX										
I.5. Complete Inception Report		XX										
I.6. Hold exploratory meetings with key stakeholders MARD CFAW, VWU, NCFAW, donors.	XX	XX										
I.7. Plan and conduct Inception Meeting		XX	XX									
I.8. Procure computer equipment (MARD, VWU)			XX									
I.9. TA Team Meetings	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
I.10. Weekly office staff meetings	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
I. 11. Maintain donor /key stakeholders coordination and contacts (ISG, GAP, etc.)	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
I. 12 Steering Comm. Meetings			XX			XX			XX			XX
I.13. Reports to ADB		XX				XX						XX
II. MARD Gender Strategy & Plan; Increased Capacity												
II.1 Assess MARD organizational structures, processes and institutional arrangements.		XX	XX									
II.2. Design learning by doing participatory workshop methodologies and training materials (adapt relevant existing NCFAW and ADB resources) for development of MARD gender strategy & plan.		XX	XX									
II. 3. Identify gender "gaps" in current MARD policies, plans and program delivery through participatory workshops.				XX	XX	XX	XX					
II.4. Develop the Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan (for mainstreaming gender in MARD).								XX	XX	XX		
Design training materials and workshop methodologies												
Conduct participatory workshops												
II.5. Conduct gender capacity training for MARD CFAW			XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
VWU Identify Gender Gaps in Ag/Rural Development; Increased Capacity												
III. 1. Assess gender training materials and methodologies currently being used by VWU (specifically relevant to sector).		XX										
III. 2. Design learn by doing training materials and workshops to identify key issues and gender gaps in agriculture & rural development (A&RD) programs (at VWU)		XX	XX									
III. 3. Conduct participatory workshops for senior and technical VWU staff at the provincial and district levels and men and women at the community level to identify key concerns in A&RD and document results /report for MARD				XX	XX	XX						
III. 4. Conduct workshops on mainstreaming gender in A&RD for VWU staff at the national, provincial, and district levels.							XX	XX	XX	XX	XX	XX
III. 5. Document results of workshops and present findings to VWU.										XX	XX	

Appendix III.
Detailed Work Plan MARD (DRAFT)

Key Outputs MARD (PART A)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is Developed & Adopted by MARD Implementation Plan of Action is Formulated and Approved Capacity to Implement Gender Mainstreaming Strategy is Increased 			
Activities	When*	Who	Outputs
1. Assess current MARD organizational structures, processes and institutional arrangements, including the current situation of gender equity in MARD.	August September October ~30 days	Team Leader, International Institutional Specialist & National Consultants & Counterparts	Written summary including overview of current situation of gender in MARD and recommendations for focal points of TA activities at national and provincial levels.
1.a. Prepare SOW (Scope of Work) e.g. assessment tools in english and vietnamese, questions to ask in interviews & surveys. Prepare lists of key documents to review.	3 days		Tools finalized, team members oriented and ready to conduct assessment.
1.b. Conduct review of documentation of MARD institutional structures and planning, budgeting and decision making systems, in consultation with PAR UNDP and GTZ REFAS Projects. Meet with key contacts.	3 days		Summarize in report
1.c. Identify institutional focal points at national, provincial and district levels (departments, personnel, existing planning processes relevant for developing strategy and plan) and conduct in-person interviews. Identify key personnel at all levels who can champion gender.	15 days ^a		Key focal points identified, key personnel, groups, decision-makers and processes identified for approval of strategy and action plan within MARD at national, provincial and district levels. Summarized in report. Field trip conducted.
1. d. Conduct rapid assessment of current gender situation in MARD.	3 days		Summarized in report.
1.e. Review findings. Prepare written summary of findings including recommendations for approval process. Conduct briefing workshop with TA team.	4 days		Written summary of findings and recommendations
1.f .Conduct briefing with CFAW MARD	1 day		CFAW capacity building exercise.
2. Design learning by doing participatory workshop methodologies and training materials (adapt relevant existing NCFW and ADB resources) for development of MARD gender strategy & plan. Workshop design and materials are different for each target group.	July August September ~50 days	Team Leader & TA Project Director, National Consultants, Training & Gender Specialists, Interpreters	Plans approved for Workshops at Central and Provincial Levels Including Content, Materials, Targeted Participant Group and Schedules
2.a. Prepare SOW (Scope of Work). Design	2 days		Tool tested and approved.

^a Field trip linked with 3.b. field trip
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workshop/training needs assessment (different for each target group) and identify sample constituencies at national and selected provincial levels. Review PAR TNA and report. Needs assessment conducted at national and provincial levels. Inclusive of assessment of current capacity to mainstream gender in MARD.	20 days		Training needs and capacity assessment report.
2.b. Review NCFAW and PAR training plans and materials.	2 days		Inventory of select training materials
2.c. Design workshops content and schedules in consultation with CFAW, PAR and TA team.	15 days		Workshops Designed for groups of constituencies
2.d. Finalize workshop tools and materials in both vietnamese and english.	10 days		Workshops tools and materials printed.
<i>3. Identify gender "gaps" in current MARD policies, plans and program delivery through participatory workshops.</i>	<i>July - January 40-60 days</i>	<i>Team Leader, Consultants, Counterparts, Training Specialists, Interpreters</i>	<i>Workshops Conducted for MARD Senior and Technical staff at national and provincial levels</i>
3.a. Prepare SOW (Scope of Work) , assessment tools and test.	3 days		Tools finalized in english and vietnamese
3.b. Plan and conduct gender training for selected PAR Training Teams (DOP) and provide ongoing technical assistance in development of action plans.	5 days		TA provided to DOP Planning Team
3.c. Using gender analysis approach, conduct rapid assessment of selected MARD sub-sector policies, plans and programs in key sub-sectors (e.g. agriculture, forestry, water, veterinary) and key Ministry plans (CPRGS and 5 year Plan) and institutional systems at national, provincial and district level and present findings in written report.	20 ^a		Field trip conducted Report written in english and vietnamese
3.d. Prepare briefing kits on gender gaps and incorporate with workshop tools and learning methodologies.	5 days		Briefs completed in english and vietnamese.
3.e Target constituencies for workshops at national, provincial and district levels. Finalize selection of target provinces and districts.	2 days		Workshop constituencies identified; number participants, number workshops, logistical contacts identified at national, provincial and district levels.
3.f. Revise/finalize workshops content and schedules in consultation with CFAW, PAR and TA team	3 days		Workshop schedule finalized and agreed upon.
3.g. Workshop facilitators/trainers selected including national counterparts. Establish strong linkages with CFAW .Practice session(s) conducted.	3 days		Facilitators/trainers prepared
3.h. Conduct first round of Workshops at national, provincial and district levels.	TBD		Workshops completed
3.i.. Prepare workshop report in english and vietnamese including next steps and linkages with development of strategy.	3 days		Report completed

^a See II.1.c

4. Develop the Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan (for mainstreaming gender in MARD).	January-May 55 days	Team Leader, TA Project Director, CFAW, Consultants	Gender Strategy & Implementation Plan is developed and approved
4.a. Design Round 2 workshops for groups of key MARD stakeholders (including CFAW). Prepare presentation of findings on gender gaps identified at national, provincial, district and community levels and initiate development of strategy and implementation plan.	5		Workshop plans, content and materials prepared.
4. b. Identify key target groups/constituencies/decision makers at district, provincial and national level.			Workshop participants identified.
4.c. Conduct Round 2 gender mainstreaming planning and development exercises in participatory workshops. Include development of plan for consensus building and approval process.	10		Workshops conducted.
4.d. Prepare workshop findings and recommendations in brief report including DRAFT strategy plan and implementation plan.	2		Report and draft strategy and plans prepared.
4.e. Conduct workshops with CFAW to review, revise DRAFT and develop process for approval by MARD.	2		Workshops completed.
4.f. Conduct stakeholder workshops to review/revise strategy and plan at national and provincial levels.	5		Workshops completed.
4. g. Prepare and conduct plenary to present TA findings and proposed strategy and plan at national and provincial levels (Should this include ISG, CFAW, other bodies?)	5		Plenary sessions completed. Strategy and plan approved.
4.h. Revisions with CFAW	2		Drafts revised
4. i. Submit to CFAW/ Vice Minister			Strategy and Plan of Action signed by Vice Minister
4.j. Preparation (4) and Conduct (1) Dissemination Workshop (with ISG?)	10		Workshop Completed
4. k Evaluation of TA and development of recommendations for Implementation TA/ Sustainability Plan	5		Final Report and Recommendations
5. Conduct gender capacity training for MARD CFAW	July '02 - May '03 50 days	Team Leader, Consultants in coordination with NCFAW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CFAW MARD members demonstrate increased knowledge & skills in gender mainstreaming - CFAW MARD POA utilizes a gender mainstreaming approach
5.1. Develop SOW (Scope of Work) and TNA Tool for CFAW members and review documentation on training activities in MARD.	2 days		SOW and tool completed.
5.2. Conduct participatory workshop with CFAW re ADB Workplan and solicit comments/feedback	2 days		CFAW-MARD provides comment to workplan.

5.3 Assist CFAW-MARD with development of POA to 2005 (for NCFAW) Final POA due September 30 to NCFAW	10 days		POA to 2005 developed and approved by CFAW-MARD
5.2 Assess capacity and TN of CFAW	3 days		TNA completed and findings summarized in written report.
5.3 Develop training plan, curricula and schedule	2 days		Training plans, schedule and curricula drafted. Training materials needs identified.
5.4 Implement trainings (number of ?) and conduct ongoing evaluations	~ 20 days		Trainings conducted.
5.5 Conduct qualitative & quantitative assessment of trainings and capacity of CFAW and document findings and with recommendations.	10 days		Report and Findings and Recommendations Completed
TOTAL TA DAYS	225 DAYS		

** Number of days are estimated for tracking part time consultant days by activity.