Technical Assistance Final Report

Project Number: 38238 (TA 4452)
26 November 2004

Vietnam: Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan in Agriculture and Rural Development
(Financed by the Gender and Development Cooperation Fund)

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Report on the Implementation of the Technical Assistance
TA 4452-VIE: Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan in Agriculture
and Rural Development

II. INTRODUCTION

1. Background:
Vietnam, like many countries globally, is making great efforts to eradicate hunger, reduce poverty and ensure equal rights for both men and women. The Communist Party and the Government of Vietnam have considered gender equality an important factor of the development period, as well as regard gender mainstreaming as a requirement of the Government’s management, in order to guarantee that every activity of all governmental departments will meet the demands and expectation of the society and development benefits are equally distributed between men and women.

To implement the commitment of the Government on gender equality, the Prime Minister signed the decision approving the National Strategy on the Advancement of Women to 2010. Carrying out this national strategy, the Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development signed Decision dated October 28th 2003 approving the Gender Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development to 2010 and the MARD’s action plan on gender to 2005. The strategy’s objective is coordinating and improving efforts from all levels and departments of government, all social organizations and all the citizens in gaining gender equality for agricultural and rural area which is easily affected and mostly consists of poor people especially female labour force - the first priority of the National Strategy for Advancement of Women.

The gender strategy for agriculture and rural development set the objective of integrating gender equality methods into policies, programmes, projects as well as other agricultural and rural services, harmonizing gender equality target with
the sector’s socio-economic objectives. The overall ideology of this gender strategy is to achieve gender equality as well as raising rural women’s role in our national industrialization and modernization period. That achievement will result in high quality and effective human resource placement, pushing up the sector’s integration speed in order to reach the development objectives set forth in the Socio-economic development strategy in Agriculture and Rural Development for the period 2001-2010.

Assisting MARD in implementing the gender strategy and action plan, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has provided a technical assistance project aiming at supporting MARD to achieve objectives stated in the action plan as specifically:

1. Strengthening MARD’s commitment to implementing gender equality in developing and improving its institutions on Agriculture and Rural Development.

2. Strengthen the capacity of gender mainstreaming for planners, decision makers, managers and public service providers at all levels of MARD related departments and agencies.

Following up the technical assistance project TA – 3831 (VIE) finished in 2003, the implementation of MARD’s gender action plan was funded through the technical assistance project TA – 4452 (VIE).

2. Project’s objectives:

In order to assist the Government in achieving objectives targeted in the action plan: integrating gender in MARD’s policies, programmes and plans so as to achieve gender equality and socio-economic benefits, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has funded MARD in the gender plan of action in agriculture and rural development TA – 4452. In more details, ADB will cooperate with the MARD in completing 2 out of the 3 objectives of the gender action plan as specifically:

(i) Strengthening MARD’s commitment to implementing gender equality in developing and improving its institutions on Agriculture and Rural Development.
(objective number 1) and (ii) Strengthen the capacity of gender mainstreaming for planners, decision makers, managers and public service providers at all levels of MARD related departments and agencies (objective number 2).

3. **Project Executive Agency:**
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

4. **Project office address:**
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
Number 2, Ngoc Ha Street, Ba Dinh District, Hanoi.

5. **Project budget:**
Total TA budget: 315,000 USD, includes:
- ODA budget: 250,000 USD (grant).
- Counterpart’s budget: 65,000 USD (in kind).

6. **Implementation period:** 12 months from January 2006 to December 2006.

7. **Consultancy services:**
Consultancy expert duration: 26 person months, of which:
- International experts: 04 person months for gender and human resource experts, 02 person months for statistic analyzing experts.
- National experts: 12 person months for project manager, 04 person months for agriculture extension experts, 04 person months for short-term training experts.

8. **Project’s outputs:**
Annual plans of the MARD with sex-disaggregated indicators and M&E systems.
Integrating gender into public services supplying (content and providing).
Designing training framework, documents and training manual on gender mainstreaming for public officials, training school’s lecturers of MARD, as well as service providers.

Provide gender training for organizations and agencies of different functions.

A TOT network on gender mainstreaming in MARD’s programmes and plans. The project will strengthen gender mainstreaming capacity at MARD and department level to be in line with their own functions and responsibilities.

In order to implement the project, MARD issued decision no. 3607/BNN-TCCB dated December 23rd 2005, establishing Steering Committee of the TA project “Action plan on gender mainstreaming in agriculture and rural development”, of which, Ms. Nguyen Thi Hong Loan is assigned as the project director.

The Steering Committee developed plan of action for the project with help from international and national consultancy experts. The detailed action plan was approved by MARD on March 28th 2006 (see the attached annex).

II. IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS

With the participation of international and national consultancy experts, the project has achieved the following results:

1. Output 1 - Annual plans of the MARD with sex-disaggregated indicators and M&E systems.
   - Collecting sex-disaggregated statistical data:
     + Reviewing and evaluating MARD’s plan of 2006 and 5-year plan in terms of gender.
     + Proposing some gender indicators at the workshop held on March 20th 2006 in order to monitoring MARD’s plan of 2006 and 5-year plan.
+ Training statisticians of MARD’s Informatics and Statistic Center on gender mainstreaming into establishment of statistical data system for agriculture and rural development.
+ Reviewing and submitting the sector’s statistical data system, including gender indicator for agriculture and rural development to MARD for approval and promulgation.

On September 14th 2006, the Minister of the MARD issued the Decision 71/2006/QD-BNN approving statistical data system for the agriculture and rural development sector, of which 14 indicators has been included with gender disaggregation.

Regarding to gender mainstreaming handbook for MARD’s departments:
+ Completing the draft handbook.
+ Collecting comments from the MARD’s departments.
+ Finalizing and editing the handbook’s translation.

2. **Output 2 - Gender mainstreaming into MARD’s public services provision - agricultural extension services.**

   Due to the health conditions of the extension expert, key activities for this output have not yet been implemented.

3. **Output 3 & 4 – Designing gender mainstreaming handbook for training schools and provide gender training for organizations and agencies entrusted different roles and responsibilities.**

   - Regarding to gender mainstreaming handbook:
   + Completing the draft TOT manual for teachers from management schools No1 & 2.
   + Conducting pilot training courses for teachers of the two management schools.
   + Collecting comments from the pilot courses for further revision and finalization.
- Gender training for MARD’s organization and agencies of different functions: 06 courses were initiated for Trade Union’s officials, teachers, DARD’ staff, and cooperative’s members from different regions of the country (see the attached annex).

4. **Output 5 - A TOT network on gender mainstreaming into MARD’s programmes and plans.**

+ In coordination with the PAR project under MARD to assist the Trade Union in drawing up a set of questions and guiding organization of the “Learning about gender recognition in agriculture and rural development” competition. Besides, the project also participated in some training activities on gender dissemination within the PAR’s implementation framework.
+ Contribute to the elaboration of the work plan of the Committee for Advancement of Women (CFAW).

Realizing that the ADB’s funding for the MARD in order to achieve the objectives set in the gender strategy and the action plan is essentially needed, after negotiating, MARD and ADB agreed to expand the TA 4225 project between the period from November 11th 2007 to December 31st 2007 so as to complete the pending outputs:

1. Add on fisheries part to the plan of action, according to the function and mission of the MARD after the amalgamation of MARD and Ministry of Fisheries. Simultaneously, revise, complete and submit the Gender mainstreaming Handbook to MARD’s leader for approval and publication.

2. Revise, edit and submit the Gender mainstreaming handbook to MARD leadership for approval, publication and integration into training curriculum of MARD’s school.

3. Conduct gender training courses for different target groups under MARD.
4. Complete the profile of MARD’s gender network.

5. Provide fund to maintain the WEB page of the Committee for Advancement of Women (CFAW) for 15 months (until the end of 2008).

The project management team has assigned MARD’s departments to undertake specific activities and has gained the following achievements:

1. **Gender mainstreaming handbook:**
   - The Organization & Personnel Department circulated the handbook (drafted by Ms Bodil Warming – an international expert) to various departments for comments (OPD, Department of Planning, Department of Legislation, Department of International Cooperation, Department of Science and Technology, the National Center of Agriculture Extension, and MARD’s Party Executive Committee.
   - Edit and revise to match with Vietnamese expression and designing style.
   - Complete additional texts on fisheries and other appendixes giving instruction for departments of fisheries field and other departments whose functions and missions have been changed due to the new structure of MARD. Check, revise and complete the Handbook.
   - Conduct a workshop on December 18th 2007 and December 22nd 2007, in which representatives invited came from the former Committee for Advancement of Women (of the Ministry of Fisheries and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development), representatives form the leadership of MARD’s departments, the National Center of Agriculture Extension and the National Center of Fisheries Extension.
   - Present to the leadership of MARD for approval and publication.

2. **Training manual on gender mainstreaming in Agriculture and Rural Development:**
The Management School No.1 was contracted to revise and finalize the training manual for further submission to MARD’s training appraisal council for approval.

- The Management School No.1 collected comments of representatives from related departments and agencies including Department of Organization and Personnel, Department of International Cooperation, Department of Finance, Department of Planning, Management School No.1 and 2, National Academy of Public Administration and other functional agencies.
- Check, revise and complete.
- Submit to MARD’s Training Council for appraisal.
- MARD’s Training Council conducted a meeting on December 13th 2007 according to the regulation on publication of training manual (see attached copy).
- Revise the manual in accordance with the comments made by the Training Council.
- Present the training materials to the leadership of MARD for approval and publication.

MARD issued Decision number 4176/QD-BNN-TCCB dated December 26th 2007 providing permission for publication of the training manual (see attached a copy of the training manual).

The gender mainstreaming handbook and training manual have been edited, revised and published. The handbook will be circulated to DARD, MARD’s departments and agencies while the training manual shall be distributed to MARD’ schools for application for training teachers on gender mainstreaming.

3. **Conduct gender training courses for different target groups:**

As planned, the project will support financially to gender training courses for different target groups, including courses for departments' officials,
gender mainstreaming courses for planning officials and TOT courses for MARD’
schools. The training was carried out by Agriculture Management School No.1 for
the North and Agriculture Management School No.2 for the South.

4. Establish gender officials network profile in MARD:

In coordination with the CFAW, the project collected a list of members of
CFAW and gender network officials. Teachers from schools were trained and will
become gender trainers afterwards. The list consists of name, address and
telephone numbers, which is helpful to have close cooperation among the
network’s members.

5. Technical maintenance for the WEB page of the CFAW:

MARD has set up the CFAW’s WEB page which is connected to MARD’s
website. This website was set up in order to disseminate and improve gender
recognition for different target groups, announce activities for advancement of
women and other departments’ experiences, disseminate legal regulations on
gender equality.

However, the website is being tested for lesson learnt. With the ADB’s
fund, the Informatics and statistical center was contracted to ensure technical
maintenance.

6. Final review meeting:

The project’s final review meeting was held on December 31st 2007 at
MARD.

III. OVERALL EVALUATION

1. Advantages:
- To be appointed for implementation of this project, the Organization and
Personnel Department whose mandate on organization, personnel and training
management acts as a standing member of MARD’s CFAW. Hence, the Organization and Personnel Department closely instructs and provides guidance on elaborating the project’s plan to be in line with MARD’s priorities on gender mainstreaming into professional work, sector economic development plan of the current period.

- The project was implemented when a gender strategy to 2010 had been approved by MARD and MARD’s leadership had committed to improve gender equality through a plenty of programmes and projects.
- Close guidance of the leadership in addition to strong enthusiasm and cooperation of all departments and partners have become a confirmation for practical activities conducted in a participatory way.

2. **Disadvantages:**

- The project was launched in January 2006. At that moment, all related departments were busy due to Tet (New Year) holiday. 02 international experts started working right after the launching of the project. As the result, there were many difficulties in coordinating between international and national experts. Consequently, implementation activities were behind the schedule.
- International consultants worked in the project on short-term basis with a huge and complicated macro work load. On the other hand, those international consultants have not had profound knowledge about Vietnam especially on agriculture and rural development. As the result, they were not able to fulfill the assigned tasks at the end of the mission and did not produce handbook on gender mainstreaming into MARD’s activities. The use of international consultnat was not efficient.
- On the other hand, since national consultants were working intermittently, they were not active to coordinate with MARD’s stakholders. Consequently, some activities were behind the schedule. Due to the fact that timely replacement of a national consultant could not be made, as no qualified consultant available and time comsumming for piloting activities of extension services, the output 2 was not completed.
- Most of the project’s manager, coordinators, assistants and key person responsible for the project’s outputs are part-time members so as fail to arrange appropriate time for the project work. As the results, implementation quality and progress was affected.

When the project was restarted, the shortage of experience counterpart staff especially in financial management was the main constraint for TA implementation and completion. Although most of planned activities were completed by end 2007, the processing of advance and later liquidation took a long time after project completion.

3. **Impacts:**

*The project has assisted MARD in implementing some focal contents stated in the gender strategy. The project has brought the following positive impacts:*

- Training, exchanging and application of experiences and lesson learnt on gender equality improvement: experts coming from different countries shared their profound experiences on gender equality so as to assist MARD in applying these know-how in accordance with Vietnamese laws, culture and conditions.

- Satisfying MARD and the sector priorities so as contribute to promote gender equality. The existing technical and financial support has created favorable conditions for MARD to carry out some activities successfully, and obtain the set objectives.

- The developed handbook can be seen as a legal and sustainable basis for gender mainstreaming into agriculture and rural development: The Handbook provides guidance to mainstream gender into specific government management activities for MARD’s staff and officials. In addition to that, the handbook is also integrated into MARD’ schools for application.

- Strengthening capacity of MARD gender network’s officials: The organization of several training courses on gender mainstreaming and gender integration skills for teachers from the two management schools, and CFAW’s officials has helped to improve their capacity and skills on gender integration into
teaching methods and professional routine. As such, contribute significantly to gender equality promotion.
- Improving awareness on gender for civil servants, key officials of MARD by participating in different training courses.
- Maintaining, updating and providing information: The presence of CFAW’s official website created an important benchmark of the Committee’s performance. Regular update of necessary information is helpful for all the staff both inside and outside the sector to access to more regular comprehensive information so as to create links and new cooperation.

4. Lessons learnt:

- To make sure that the plan of action is feasible, meeting MARD’s demands on gender equality, the participatory planning approach can be seen as one of the decisive factors to the project’s success. In addition, close coordination and active participation of MARD’s departments and agencies helped ensure the right direction and high efficient operation of the project.
- Any issues emerged during operation need to be promptly discussed for appropriate solutions, avoiding incomplete outputs or lagging behind the deadline. With MARD’s macro oriented projects, it is important to recruit qualified professional International experts who are equipped with considerable practical experiences of Vietnam in general and of the sector in particular. It is crucial to arrange involvement of consultants after the project started so as to ensure efficient use of human resources. For national consultants, it is necessary to mobilize them in critical stage during the project life.

IV. CONCLUSION

In general, the TA 4452 has basically completed the project’s outputs. The achievement of the project’s objective was obtained thanks to the great efforts of the Steering Committee, close guidance and monitoring of CFAW as well as
active participation from various stakeholders, including the project’s consultants and staff.

The gender plan of action in agriculture and rural development is the only project of which all activities are related to gender mainstreaming targeting at CFAW. Therefore, the project has gained special attention of leadership from various levels under close and good cooperation with the ADB’s management and responsible officer.

The project’s achievements are believed to play an important role in improving gender awareness among the sector’s civil servants particularly among the key officials of all MARD's departments and agencies. Those achievements also help to improve gender mainstreaming skills and capacity for members of the MARD’s gender network and other professional specialists. A number of gender training manual and gender-disaggregated statistical indicators have been initially institutionalized for application.

We hope that even when the project closed, all of the achieved objectives will be maintained for further completion and dissemination to all MARD’s departments and agencies. On this basis, other agencies will do some research, studying for appropriate application of gender mainstreaming into their specialized functions so as to ensure efficiency, sustainability and significantly contribute to gender equality in agriculture and rural development.