



Focus

ISG Management Information System



The function of ISG forum is not only shown at the annual ISG Plenary Meeting and Steering Board meetings held four times each year, but also in the expected outputs of the management information system with various types of information collection and dissemination that ISG is establishing and developing. The system will operate in many forms, from the collection of information from standard questionnaires sent to programs, projects and donors to regular provision of standard reports to stakeholders, or unusual reports on request, publishing quarterly news letters and a Website in service of development.

In December 2000, ISG Secretariat already sent questionnaires on ongoing projects to over 200 agencies under MARD. In February 2001, the questionnaires were sent for the second

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Development Forum

A New Mechanism for ODA Co-ordination

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The International Support Group (ISG), under the management of International Cooperation Department (ICD), has so far sped up the activities in accordance with the work plan approved by ISG Steering Board at the end of 2000, receiving much attention from Government agencies, international organizations, and the community of donors.

Under the framework of the Plan of Action to implement the recommendations by the Consultative Group Meeting for Vietnam in 2000 chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, one of the three issues that MARD will have to report to the Consultative Group Meeting

this year (in June and November 2001) is "to reinvigorate the International Support Group (ISG) in MARD, strengthening the coordination of donor-funded support".

The activities that have been undertaken include:

1. Establishment of Thematic Ad-hoc Groups (TAG):

ISG Steering Board approved the establishment of the two Thematic Ad-hoc Groups with activities that satisfy the current need.

a. TAG 1: *International Agro-economic Integration and Policy:*

After the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) of TAG 1 had been reported at the first meeting of ISG Steering Board, several meetings with the participation of representatives from ICD, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Policy,

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NDM Partnership:

NATURAL DISASTER MITIGATION FOR CENTRAL OF VIETNAM

In late 1999, exceptionally heavy rains fell in seven provinces in Central Vietnam with the result that much of Central Vietnam was heavily flooded and inundated. There was considerable loss of life, damage to property, and disruption of livelihood.

After this severe flooding, Vietnamese Government officials and members of the International Donor community began consultations on measures to be taken to reduce losses suffered when flooding and other natural disasters strike Central Vietnam. These consultations led to the conclusion that a strategic partnership to mitigate natural disasters in Central Vietnam was needed.

In order to attain a better understanding of this natural disaster problem, two missions were sent to the Central Provinces to conduct background studies and needs assessments. In January 2000, a Fact-finding Mission went to the area. This mission assessed the situation and recommended that a broader-based mission made up of national and international experts conduct a more wide-ranging study. In May 2000, a Multi-donor Mission visited all of provinces in Central Vietnam affected by the 1999 floods. The Mission was requested to investigate mitigation measures for all types of natural disasters including floods, storms, and droughts. Mission findings were documented in a Multi-donor Mission Final Report issued in September 2000.

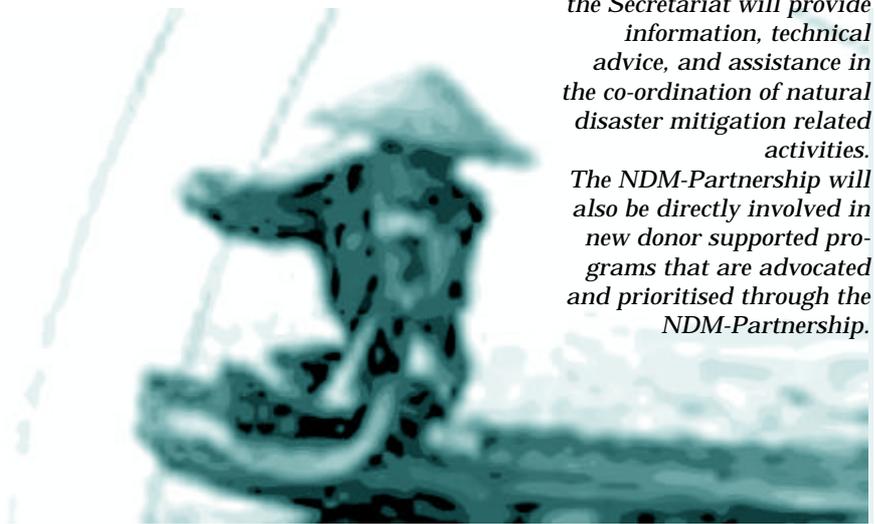
These findings identified programs and projects that should be implemented to mitigate natural disasters in Central Vietnam.

Disaster mitigation encompasses a range of measures, including disaster preparedness, disaster warning capabilities, response-, relief-, rehabilitation measures, as well as structural and non-structural programs. To implement these disaster mitigation measures, an institutional framework is needed. The Natural Disaster Mitigation (NDM) Partnership can fill this role and create an opportunity for Government and Donors to work together to solve the most pressing development problem in Central Vietnam: How to mitigate the natural disasters that prevent sustainable development in one of the poorest regions of the country.

The NDM-Partnership will be involved in ongoing donor supported programs in the Central Provinces which deal with natural disaster mitigation issues.

In ongoing and future donor funded programs, the Secretariat will provide information, technical advice, and assistance in the co-ordination of natural disaster mitigation related activities.

The NDM-Partnership will also be directly involved in new donor supported programs that are advocated and prioritised through the NDM-Partnership.



NDM-Partnership Priority Programs and Projects

It is the intention of the signatories to the NDM Partnership MoA that the projects and programs implemented under the NDM-Partnership are consistent with the priorities of the Government and donors

Government and Donor Priorities

Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Disaster Preparedness and Response

Environmental and Natural Resources Management

Administration Reform, Co-ordination, Capacity Building, and Governance

Rural and Urban Infrastructure

Corresponding NDM-Partnership Programs

Relocation Planning and Development
Dykes, Irrigation and Drainage Systems
Sandy Area Development
Water Supply and Sanitation
Aquaculture, Fisheries, and Agriculture Resources
Agricultural Extension

Disaster Preparedness
Flood and Inundation Mapping
Natural Disaster Agriculture and Property Insurance
Coastal Facilities

Environmental Sustainability
Flood plain Management and Modelling
Watershed Management and Reforestation

Provincial Disaster Management Planning
National Disaster Management Planning
River Basin Organisations
Port Authorities
River Basin Master Planning

Rehabilitation of Existing Reservoirs and Dams
Construction of New Reservoirs and Dams
Rural Infrastructure
River Flow Capacity Improvement
River Bank Erosion Protection
Salinity Dams and Dykes
Coastal Structures

The Memorandum of Agreement on the Preparation of a Partnership Support Program for Vietnam's Five Million Hectare Reforestation Program (5MHRP) was signed in December 1999, by Vietnamese Government and international donors, including non-governmental organizations. The Agreement now has 19 signatories.

5 MHRP Partnership

The 'Appraisal Phase' under going

Several donors are into a new planning cycle for projects and programmes. This presents an opportunity for co-ordination, co-operation and co-financing in a Partnership.

During an initial 'Review Phase', which started at the beginning of 2000, three Task Forces composed of national and international experts reviewed:

- (i) the current status of the 5MHRP;
- (ii) Vietnam's forest policy, strategy and institutions; and
- (iii) forest sector investment and assistance needs and partnership structure.

In addition, an Asian Development Bank-supported Technical Assistance (ADB TA) prepared a study on the policy and institutional framework for forest resource management in Vietnam.

Next, a 'Synthesis Phase' took place to integrate the outputs of the three Task Forces and the ADB TA in order to

- (i) prepare a unified report and summary that contains a strategy for medium term forest sector development in the framework of the implementation of the 5MHRP;
- (ii) define, in relation to this strategy, the scope of a Government-Donor Partnership supporting the sector and to draw recommendations for the revision of the 5MHRP; and
- (iii) review national institutional capacity to implement the 5MHRP (taking into account the Partnership scope) and identify procedural and other management constraints.

At the end of the Synthesis Phase, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) presented the 3rd draft of its Forestry Sector Development Strategy 2001-2010, which outlines six national development programs, the 5MHRP being one of them. A comparison between the Forestry Sector Development Strategy and the Synthesis Report has

shown that there is a high degree of agreement with regard to both the problem analyses and suggested development strategies or solutions. The Forestry Sector Development Strategy now forms the umbrella for the FSSP.

The Synthesis Phase is followed by a 'Formulation Phase' from March 1 - May 31, structured into four main activities:

- (i) Preparation for the Joint Formulation;
- (ii) Logical Framework Exercise;
- (iii) Steering Committee Meeting; and
- (iv) a Joint Formulation of a Forestry Sector Support Program.

During the Preparation, defined terms of reference for the Joint Formulation; suggested team members; drafts of time schedule, draft donor interest matrix, list of categorized ongoing and pipeline projects, a glossary of key terms; and a structure and format for a document data base to be maintained by the Partnership Secretariat will be prepared. In the Logical Framework Exercise a group of national and international specialists prepared an indicative logical framework with eight specified results. At its March 23 meeting the Partnership Steering Committee aimed to adopt the Synthesis Report and the results of the Logframe Exercise and provided guidelines for further planning with regard to the scope of the Partnership program, phasing of the Partnership program, and confirmation of knowledge gaps and need for additional studies.

With these decisions and guidelines the Steering Committee will set the stage for the Joint Formulation, which shall result in a set of basic principles and operating guidelines (in the form a code of conduct),

The Formulation Phase is to be followed by an 'Appraisal Phase', in which the formulated framework is appraised and possibly adjusted and approved by individual donors and organizations and government during the period from the end of May until the middle of September and to be finalized by the signing of an Implementation Agreement, currently scheduled for September 14. This will constitute the switch from preparation to implementation.

The objective of the Partnership is to "reach agreement on a formal Partnership which will lead to a shared Sector Support Program for effective and efficient implementation of the 5MHRP on the basis of agreed policies, strategies, priorities and principles of implementation"

"The ISG process should encourage partnerships between MARD, other concerned ministries, NGOs, and donors..."

TAG 1:**International Agro-Economic Integration and Policy**

For all developing countries, trade liberalization through measures such as the implementation of commitments under the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) or the APEC Early Voluntary Sectoral Liberalization Scheme (EVSL), and other bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements always have twofold impacts: on the one hand new opportunities for trade and development are offered, yet on the other hand there are immediate as well as long-term difficulties to be faced and overcome. This is especially true for developing countries with large, primary-production dominated agricultural economies like Vietnam. This is because under the AFTA framework the agriculture and rural sector of Vietnam has to complete reduction of its tariffs to the 0 - 5% range for agricultural products by 2006. The APEC deadline for agricultural trade liberalization is 2020 for developing countries. Moreover, the WTO has required its members and applicant countries to commit to schedules for market opening, the cutting down of domestic protection and agricultural export subsidies, and the harmonization of sanitary and phyto-sanitary (SPS) as well as product quality standards.

In order to evaluate the impact on Vietnamese agricultural and develop policy recommendations to take advantage of opportunities and minimize negative aspects, a Thematic Ad-hoc Group on International Agro-Economic Integration and Policy was set up under the ISG with 3 Sub-Groups:

Sub-Group I:**Capacity strengthening and policy****Sub-Group II:****Trade liberalization and investment****Sub-Group III:****Technical harmonization****Activities in 2001**

Capacity Strengthening and Policy <i>Handbook on guidelines for Vietnam's agricultural integration into regional and global trade</i>	US\$11,200
Policy study and recommendations -Case Studies <i>Effects of trade liberalization on selected agricultural sub-sectors: Global Trade Analysis (GTA) Model to estimate impacts of WTO on Vietnam's Agriculture Sector</i>	US\$9,000
Trade liberalization and investment <i>- Evaluation of the implementation of CEPT/AFTA on Vietnamese agriculture and its impacts to agricultural production and social life - lessons and experiences learnt</i> <i>- Research on the relevance of agricultural policies within WTO framework to serve negotiations</i>	US\$5,000 US\$5,000
Technical harmonization <i>- Propagation of ASEAN Halal food guidelines in order for Vietnam to infiltrate into ASEAN Halal food markets</i> <i>- Strengthening capacity of plant quarantine staff in preparing for WTO negotiations and fulfilling obligations set in the WTO-SPS agreement</i> <i>- Training courses on ASEAN standards for good manufacturing practices (GMP) for ASEAN vaccines and accreditation criteria for animal vaccine testing laboratories</i>	US\$5,000 US\$ 3,000 US\$ 3,000

Activities in 2002

Capacity Strengthening and Policy <i>- Training on negotiation techniques with WTO member countries (simulation negotiation - training courses to be provided for all stakeholders on all related sub-sectors).</i> <i>- Workshops on specific issues such as implementation of the U.S. - Vietnam Trade Agreement: how to fulfill commitments and make use of opportunities; implications of AoA to Vietnam's agriculture; background knowledge on WTO (GATTs, TRIMs, TRIPs).</i>	US\$5,000 US\$5,000
Policy study and recommendations - Case Studies <i>- Effects of trade liberalization on selected agricultural sub-sectors</i> <i>- Global Trade Analysis (GTA) Model to estimate impacts of WTO on Vietnam's Agriculture Sector</i>	To be proposed later
Trade liberalization and investment <i>- Assessment of Vietnam's Investment policy in agriculture under globalization context</i> <i>- A case study on possible impacts of China's WTO accession on Vietnamese agriculture.</i>	US\$2,000 US\$5,000
Technical harmonization <i>- Training on SPS - risk analysis and assessment</i> <i>- Evaluation of the relevance between international standards on plant quarantine and local practical conditions of Vietnam to harmonize and apply those standards</i> <i>- Training on SPS - risk analysis and assessment for animal health</i> <i>- Training course on ASEAN practice for the commercial storage, transportation and handling of animal vaccines</i>	US\$ 5,000 US\$ 5,000 US\$ 5,000 US\$ 5,000



TAG 2:

A New Tool in Support of Water Resources Management

There is a common realisation by all partners in the development that ODA supported projects do not achieve the effects initially hoped for.

National stakeholders and the Donors have therefore requested a strengthening of co-ordination, which by all parties has been underestimated, and the national need is in this context a harmonisation of approach for the individual donor support, as found during the formulation of ISG.

It is a pre-requisite for a better co-ordination that there is a reduction of obstacles and overlap in implementation of ODA caused by poor background information for preparation, inadequate stakeholder communication during implementation, and poor information flow for dissemination.

Therefore, it is certainly justified to establish a mechanism to swift thematic support to the water resources management that sustain the co-ordination and the integration processes. This should include general monitoring of the ODA, better information sources, better information access and flow, and a proper dissemination of the information concerning experiences and lessons learned in the water resources management. The kind of information should include topics that are important for good integrated river basin development and sustainable operation to accommodate the water demands, based on water resources availability (hydrology and water quality) which is the core of water resources management in Vietnam

at present.

Problems to be addressed

TAG 2 addresses the thematic capacity problems concerning:

The risk of futile overlaps of donor activities, duplications in information/documentation, and bottlenecks in establishing support agreements and commitments if an overview is not established by monitoring/ observing regularly the support activities

Problems with access to translated and updated information and documents are a serious obstacle to the establishment of the needed overview. At first the general overview is needed for a general co-ordination and prioritisation of the donor support. This can be developed in more detail for critical issues eventually by the different projects,

which may easily through monitoring be able to follow up with detailed documentation and updating, as requested by the TAG 2.

The lack of access to information is not only a translation issue. First of all, the information is scattered in many places, both in national institutions, departments and in donor programmes/ projects. Secondly, communication and dialogue are difficult to accomplish to an even level between national institutions, donors, involved NGOs and other stakeholders. And the obstacle becomes more significant if the information is not easily retrievable for all partners in the development. Thirdly, it is very difficult to have an efficient updating of relevant information and activities without a proper information-database.

The lack of engagement of the relevant national departments involved in the water sector and their capable staff in the co-ordination is also an important problem to address by improved information and communication.

Lack of a co-ordinated publishing

capacity within the specific areas of work is hampering the dissemination of accomplishments and general overviews. The lack of use of lessons learned from the water projects is among other due to low dissemination. A web site facility could help the processes and support the decision making by providing better information to the public.

The information demand is greatly increased by the substantial diversity of technical issues, and the great number conflicts of interest, which compromises the sustainability of interventions. And it is also increased by the increase in stakeholders from a more comprehensive institutional setting in water resources management, when this is supposed to be integrated with the river basin development plans.

Related issues for consideration under the implementation of TAG 2

An issue refers to the stakeholders' readiness to establish a partnership and how close such a partnership may become regarding communication and information sharing. There was evidence that stakeholders - Vietnamese as well as international donors - do not share information on pipeline projects/programmes. There seems to be a situation of competition between donors as well as between government agencies. The former is competing over good projects, the latter over funds.

In handling the ISG process during which MPI and MOF and donors are promoting an open exchange of information, ICD could be in the position to manage the collection and dissemination of data at central and local levels, in accordance with the Decree 87 and Decision 132. Therefore it should be considered to establish a permanent capacity in the ICD that improves the sustainable development process of the donor co-ordination. Eventually this will lead to a capacity to co-ordinate individual stakeholders in the national administration anyway.

The improved communication has contributed to a much more intensive dialogue and the use of lessons learned, from the beginning of planning until end of implementation. This has ensured an improved partnership among all stakeholders. (TAG2 Terms of References)

A New Mechanism for ODA Co-ordination

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Department of Planning and Projections, Department of Science, Technology and Product Quality, and some relevant Ministries and sectors, were held in order to complete the ToR and to discuss the coordination mechanism, personnel organization, and plan of action for TAG 1. Some donors such as Australia, Denmark, Sweden, FAO are very interested in this activity. The ToR and work plan of TAG 1 have already been approved by ISG Steering Board at the second meeting 8 May 2001.

b. TAG 2: Support Water Resources Management:

In 16th March 2001, the first meeting of TAG 2 was organized at MARD in an effort to prepare a better mechanism for the coordination of international support for the national water resources management. The draft ToR of TAG 2 was also introduced at that meeting. The representatives from MARD (ICD, Department of Water Resources and Hydraulic Works Management, Department of Flood and Storms Control), ADB, WB, UNDP, Netherlands, Denmark, Japan, UNICEF, Office of Government, Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment, Ministry of Finance..., participating in the meeting, agreed the establishment of TAG 2 under the framework of ISG process. The donors will provide financial and technical assistance, and information of international support in the field of irrigation and water resources management. Danish Embassy provided finance and expertise for the drafting of ToR and work plan for TAG 2.

The ToR has also been approved by the Steering Board at the second meeting 8 May 2001.

2. Development of database and information system in service of international cooperation:

a. Database on ODA projects:

The database on ODA projects under MARD management, assisted by REFAS, has no longer been updated since the end of 1998. ISG Secretariat received the current database from RAFAS project as of November 2000. REFAS also sent a

Vietnamese database expert to work at ISG Secretariat in order to support the processing of the database.

In December 2000, ISG Secretariat already sent questionnaires on ongoing projects to over 200 agencies under MARD. In February 2001, the questionnaires were sent for the second time to the agencies that had not replied. Also in February 2001, ISG Secretariat delivered the questionnaires on on-going and planned projects to donors and international organizations, in order to collect further sufficient information and compare the information of the projects. Several reports on List of ODA projects under MARD management have also been sent by ISG to MARD leader for steering information.

ISG Secretariat is constantly collecting information from the database of relevant ministries, localities, and donors for the development of a database on agriculture and rural development projects, *not only those under MARD management*. The database is compared to the one on rural development constructed by UNDP at the end of last year (2000) in order to have sufficiently-combined information.

The formulation of report formats in order to collect enough information of projects, avoiding the overlapping among functional agencies in MARD, is being carried out. This task is suitable to the unification of formats and re-organization of the statistics task being steered by MARD.

ISG Secretariat has compiled **the draft Code-numbering System** for the projects under MARD management, supporting the unified management over the process of preparation, submission, appraisal and approval of ODA projects. The draft code-numbering system has already been sent to Vietnam's agencies, donors and international organizations with an aim to collect suggestions/comments, and will then be submitted to MARD leader for consideration and issuance.

A strong database will help ISG provide necessary information in service of MARD and donors in state

management and coordination of foreign sources.

b. Other information services:

ISG News Letter (quarterly) on regular activities of ISG process and coordination of international support was published with the first volume in January 2001. The maintaining of the news letter will offer convenience for the exchange of information among management agencies, donors and on-going projects. ISG process is trying its best to increase the quality of the news letter in terms of contents as well as form. Denmark is expressing its willingness to finance this task.

UNDP and REFAS in cooperation with ISG process are constructing a *website in service of the exchange of information of international support in the field of agriculture and rural development in general, and information of projects in particular*. Up to present, UNDP has made commitment to provide expertise for web design, host the website on UNDP server, offer financial assistance, and update information. The demonstration website will also be presented at this meeting in order for ISG Steering Board to suggest and approve. The contents and a mechanism for the management of information to be loaded on the web will be submitted to MARD for approval before being officially loaded on the Internet (tentatively in June 2001).

3. Preparation for the ISG Plenary Meeting

The Plenary Meeting of the donors for agriculture and rural development is proposed to be held at the end of May 2001. ISG Secretariat is accelerating the preparation for the meetings, with the hope that donors will propose contents for the agenda of the Plenary Meeting.

The progress and results of ISG meetings will be synthesized in the report to the Consultative Group Meeting in June and November 2001. ISG will prepare this report and submit to MARD leader before presented at the meeting.

4. Preparation for CG Meeting

Vietnamese Government has assigned MARD to report to the CG Meeting 2001 the reinvigoration of ISG in MARD, strengthening the coordination of international aid; the Five-Million Hectare Reforestation Partnership; and the Natural Disaster Mitigation Partnership in the Central provinces.

MARD to Introduce the Coding System for ODA Projects

I. Objective of the code-numbering system

The objective of the code-numbering system is to assist the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in monitoring and supervising the Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects/programs under its management, and those managed by other relevant Ministries relating to agriculture, forestry, water resources, and rural development, following the sequence of three steps:

- Registered to the list of priorities.
- Sent to donors for investment consideration.
- Managed in the implementation when funded.

II. Requirements of the code-numbering system

In order to reach the objective, the code-numbering system must satisfy the following requirements:

1. To be brief and easy to understand;
2. To possibly present the necessary information such as:
 - Sector of the project (agriculture, forestry, irrigation/water resources, and cross-sector);
 - Proposed time of the project (year of proposal)
 - Executing agency and management level of the project (MARD, other Ministries, and localities)
3. To be convenient for offering and managing the codes.

III. Proposed code-numbering system

The code is comprised of 10 characters, which are divided into 4 groups:

AAA-BB-YY-000

Explanation of the groups:

1. AAA: presents the executing agency of the project/program, specifically, AAA will be replaced by:
 - BNN: if the project under the management of MARD
 - CQK: if the project under the management of other Ministries
 - DPH: if the project under the management of localities (provinces/areas).
2. BB: presents the main sector of the projects/programs, specifically, BB will be replaced by:
 - NN: agriculture projects
 - LN: forestry projects
 - TL: irrigation and water resources management projects
 - HH: cross-cutting issues projects (cross-sector)
3. YY: presents the proposed year of the projects/programs, specifically, YY will be replaced by the last two numbers of the proposed year of the project.

For example:

98 - means the project is proposed in 1998.

Note: Actual on-going projects are still being coded by ISG Secretariat, based on the replied questionnaires so far collected. Further information will be added in accordance with the feedbacks from the next surveys (questionnaires regularly sent twice a year).

01 - means the project is proposed in 2001.

4. 000: presents the number of the projects/programs offered in each year.

Some examples:

a. Reforestation project in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri

BNN-LN-97-012

- Executing Agency/Management level: MARD

- Sector: Forestry

- Proposed year: 1997

- Project number: 012 (the 12th project in 1997)

b. Irrigation Rehabilitation project

BNN-TL-95-023

- Executing Agency/Management level: MARD

- Sector: Irrigation

- Proposed year: 1995

- Project number: 023

c. Quang Binh Food Safety project
DPH-NN-95-033

- Executing Agency/Management level: Locality (Quang Binh People's committee)

- Sector: Agriculture

- Proposed year: 1995

- Project number: 033

IV. Code Offering Method

1. For a proposed/pipeline project, the code will be offered in the following order:

a. The project to be submitted to MARD will be classified by the International Cooperation Department (ICD) and given a code as soon as it meets the required conditions. The List of the projects and their codes will be kept at the ISG Secretariat and the ICD Administrative Division in order for the MARD and ICD leaders and program officers to monitor, supervise and supplement information (see Appendix: Monitoring of ODA projects code)

b. After offering the code for each project, ICD will keep relevant agencies and donors informed to share the monitoring and supervising. ISG Secretariat is responsible for regularly updating the project codes in the database, and keeping all the project profiles.

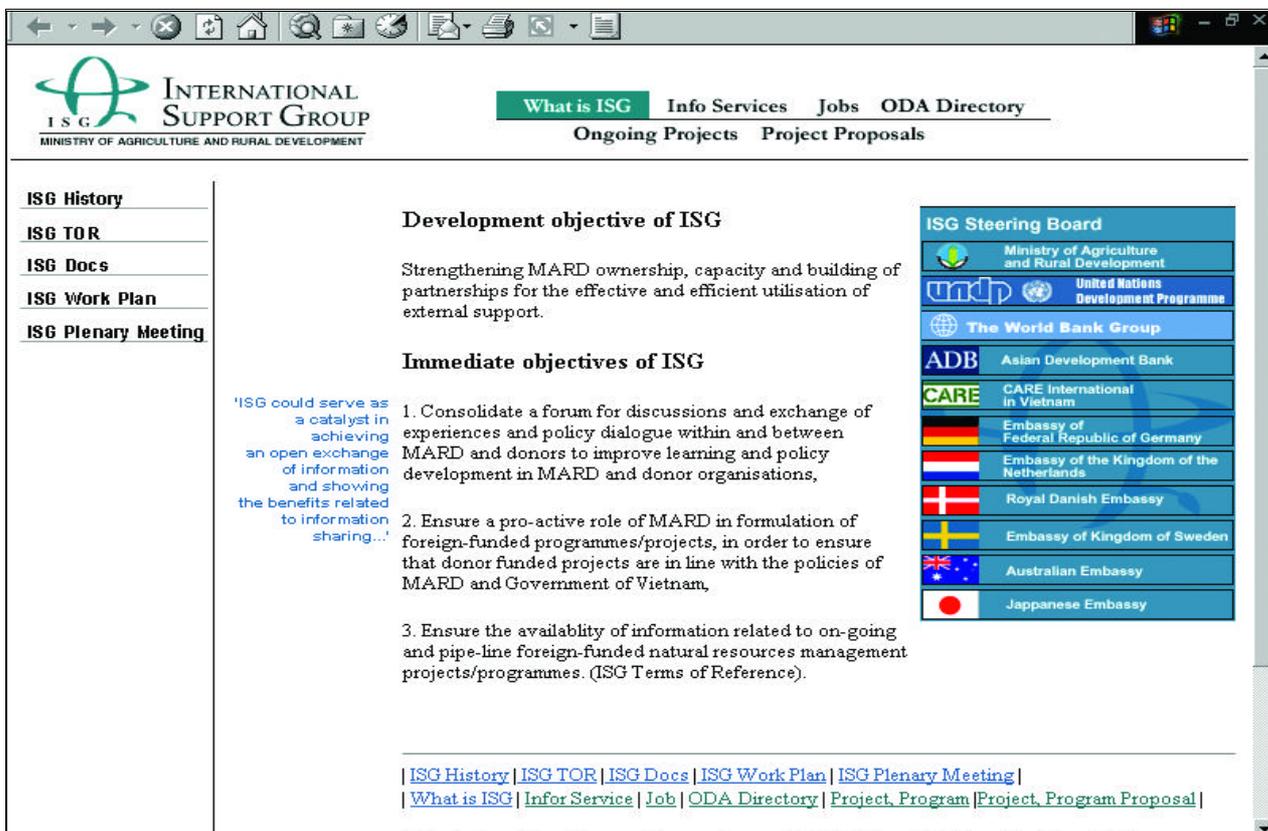
c. The code of each project will remain the same during the whole process of proposing, appraising, and implementing the project.

2. When the project starts its operation (since the signing date of the agreement), the in-charge program officer will be responsible for supplementing information. The project listed with a starting date of operation will be marked in the database as on-going project.

3. When the project ends (as planned), its closing date (if it completes in time) or time extending (if it is extended) will be clearly presented in column Note. The project will be classified as ended project in the database if it has a closing date. If the project is extended, then supplementing documents will be acknowledged by the ICD Administrative Office and sent to ISG Secretariat for updating further data, and the status of the project remains on-going.

A draft for discussion and comment

The ISG project implementation makes a major assumption that the parties are willing to openly exchange information. In this respect the ISG could serve as a catalyst in achieving an open exchange of information and showing the benefits related to information sharing.

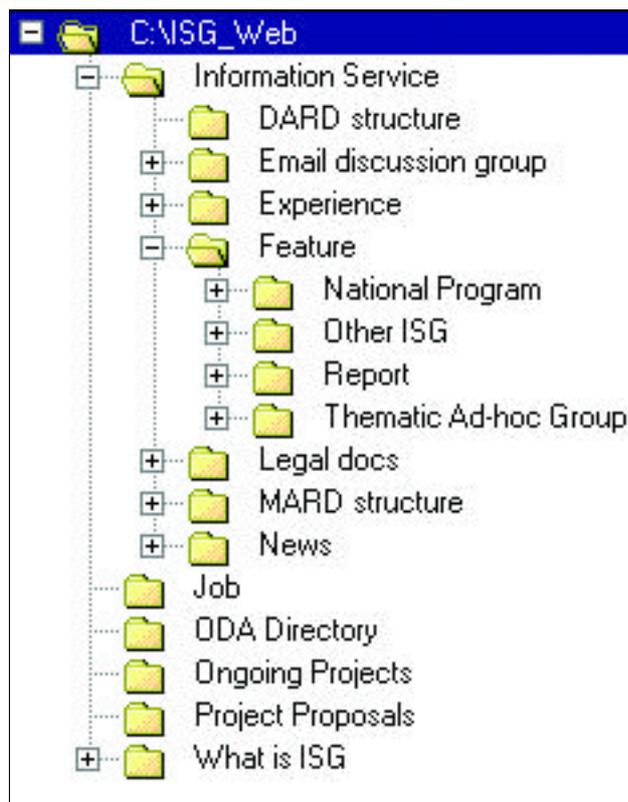


ISG Management ...

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time to the agencies that had not replied. Also in February 2001, ISG Secretariat delivered the questionnaires on on-going and planned projects to donors and international organizations, in order to collect further sufficient information and compare the information of the projects. Several reports on List of ODA projects under MARD management have also been sent by ISG to MARD leader for steering information. ISG Secretariat is constantly collecting information from the database of relevant ministries, localities, and donors for the development of a database on agriculture and rural development projects, not only those under MARD management. The database is compared to the one on rural development constructed by UNDP at the end of last year (2000) in order to have sufficiently-combined information.

The quarterly-published ISG News Letter (first volume in January 2001) will include carefully-sorted information of great importance relating to cooperation activities in the sector. ISG website, with the assistance from REFAS project and UNDP, besides the dissemination of development information, can possibly be a place where the comparison of data sources can be done, and can serve as a regular forum for the exchange of information in service of development assistance management. The demonstration website was presented at the ISG Steering Board Meeting 8th May 2001 for comments and approval. The contents and mechanism for management of information loaded on the web will be submitted to MARD leader for approval before



Above: ISG Front Page and Site Structure

officially loaded on the Internet (tentatively in June 2001).

ISG will contribute to the overcoming of the fault in information flow in service of development, since it will not only contribute its part to strengthening the link among MARD agencies, but to developing cooperation relations in management of foreign support with other ministries and donor community as well.