

ISG Secretariat: Room 209-210 Building A9 - 2 Ngoc Ha, Hanoi - Tel: (84-4) 733 6610 - Fax: (84-4) 733 6624
Email: isgmard@fpt.vn - Website: <http://www.isgmard.org.vn>

Issue No. 34 - May 2006

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*Information and experience equal knowledge,
please share your knowledge with us!*

**Avian Influenza Ministerial Meeting
Concludes with Release of Action
Plan**

Da Nang, Viet Nam, May 5, 2006 - APEC Ministers have adopted an Action Plan that will strengthen the ability of Member Economies to detect and respond to outbreaks of Avian Influenza in the Asia-Pacific.

At the conclusion of the meeting that was attended by Ministers and Senior Officials from Agricultural and Health Departments from around the APEC Region, Ministers endorsed the "APEC Action Plan on the Prevention and Response to Avian and Influenza Pandemics."

Covering five specific areas, the Action Plan lays down directives and requirements that will now be implemented at a domestic level by APEC Member Economies.

Viet Nam's Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development and Co-Chair of the ministerial meeting, Mr. Cao Duc Phat, said Ministers recognize that the only way to defeat the threat posed by an Avian Influenza Pandemic is to work across sectors and across borders.

The five areas covered by the Action Plan are:

- Multi-sectoral cooperation and coordination on avian and pandemic influenza
- Establishing best practices and common approaches to risk communications
- Mitigating negative effects of avian influenza on agriculture and trade
- Working with the private sector to help ensure continuity of business, trade and essential services
- Strengthening regional and international cooperation

The full text of the Action Plan is available for download at www.apec.org
Ministers will conclude the Ministerial Meeting tomorrow with a tour of poultry production facilities in Central Viet Nam.

For further information contact:
 Christopher Hawkins on +61 433 810 844 or
 E-mail: ch@apec.org
 Michael Chapnick on +65 9247 5751 or E-
 mail: mc@apec.org
www.apec.org

Source: ICD-MARD

Preparation for “Biogas program for the animal husbandry sector of Vietnam”

Hanoi, 27 April 2006 - Following the success of the “Support Project to the Biogas program for animal husbandry sector in some provinces of Vietnam” which was funded by the Netherlands Government with a non refundable ODA grant of 2 millions Euro, had been implemented since March 2003 and had successfully completed on 31 January 2006 in 12 project provinces, MARD and SNV Vietnam officially signed the MOU which is the common commitment to implement the project as planned for the year 2006 and develop the project proposal for the Project Phase II proposal in 2007-2010. Deputy Head of the Mission, Head of International cooperation Development, The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Hanoi, Ms. Andy – Regional Director of SNV Asia Pacific cum SNV Vietnam, Vice Minister Bui Ba Bong, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and representatives of related ministries, agencies and organisations were attended the ceremony.

In the first phase, the project had completed the technical and financial supports for the construction work of 18,000 biogas plants, exceeding the initial set target of 10,000 biogas plants. In general, the quality of biogas plants under the project is very good and highly appreciated by users and local authorities.

Currently, MARD in cooperation with SNV Vietnam, developed the Project Document for Phase II which will be implemented in 2007-2010 assisting for the construction of 180,000 biogas plants in 58 provinces. Total investment for the project is about Euro 66 million, which is broken down as follows:

- ODA fund of the Dutch Government: Euro 4.8 mil. ;
- Soft loan Euro 17.6 mil. ;
- Financial contribution of the project provinces: Euro 5.8 mil. ;
- Investment of household: Euro 38 mil.

For more information, please contact Ms. Ha Thi Thanh Van, Expert of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development at:
 Tel: 04-843 6812; or hvan.htqt@mard.gov.vn

Source: ICD-MARD

Vietnam to pour \$677.2Mln into Flood, Storm Prevention in 2006-2010

11 April 2006 - The Government of Vietnam will pump VND10.7 trillion (\$677.2 million) into constructing and repairing flood and storm prevention systems in the 2006-2010 period.

Additionally, VND500 billion (\$31.64 million) will be set for enhancing capabilities in early natural disaster warning and rescuing works in the phase.

The information was released at a meeting to sum up flood and storm prevention in the 2001-2005 period, which was held on April 3 in Hanoi.

Addressing the event, Standing Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung stressed a crucial need to actively prevent natural calamities and timely surmount the aftermaths of the disasters.

Over the past five years, Vietnam experienced 17 storms, eight low tropical systems, 26 floods and 54 flash floods nationwide.

Natural catastrophes killed and swept way at least 1,857 people, destroyed 1.3 million ha of crops, sunk 2,700 ships, damaged 1.6 million houses and washed away 8,000 bridges and irrigation works. Total losses were estimated at VND13.5 trillion (\$854.43 million).

In 2005 alone, the natural calamities killed 399 people and caused damages valued at up to VND5.8 trillion (\$364 million) nationwide.

In an effort to minimize human and property damages, VND26 trillion (\$1.64 billion) will be poured into the construction of 99 works of water reservoirs, nearly VND6.8 trillion (\$430.37 million) into 50 flood control works in the Mekong Delta region, and VND1.9 trillion (\$120.25 million) into 75 storm shelters for ships.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Defense on March 31 issued an instruction with an aim to urge relevant agencies and forces to tighten control over and prepare well for natural disaster prevention and rescuing works.

Source: Disaster Management Working Group - Viet Nam NDM-Partnership Secretariat

Hanoi Pumps \$2.13Mln into Dyke Restoration in 2006

Hanoi, 24 April 2006 - The capital city of Vietnam has injected VND33.7 billion (\$2.13 million) into the restoration of local dykes and canals in 2006 so as to better prepare for the coming flood season [July-September]. The Management Board of Dyke and Canal Restoration Projects under the municipal agriculture and Rural Development Department has divided the capital into 22 bids.

So far, the northern economic hub has completed upgrading five major dykes along the Red River and the Duong River.

The city has also paved the roofs of canals in Thanh Tri and Gia Lam districts with a total 1,000 cu.m of concrete whilst concreting many dyke surfaces totaling 7,000 cu.m.

Source: Disaster Management Working Group - Viet Nam NDM-Partnership Secretariat

China, Thailand, Vietnam and FAO Receive US\$7 Million For Livestock Waste Management in East Asia Project

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2006 – The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved a Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant of US\$7 million for the Kingdom of Thailand, the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to support livestock waste management.

The Livestock Waste Management in East Asia Project will support a comprehensive approach to reduce the significant environmental and health damage from increasingly concentrated livestock production in the three participating countries. The project will integrate technological solutions, policy development and implementation, as well as capacity building and regional connections. Its global environment objective is to reduce livestock-induced, land-based pollution and environmental degradation of the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.

The Project will provide technical and financial support to China, Thailand, and Vietnam for demonstration of livestock waste management technologies; policy and strategy development; and project management and monitoring. The FAO will be responsible for the implementation of regional support services over a five-year period.

Source: WB

Workshop on Programmatic Approach and SWAp

Hanoi, Wednesday 3rd May 2006 - MARD-Sida Cooperation Programme (MSCP) jointly with MARD International Support Group (ISG) organised an orientation workshop on programmatic approaches, with a special focus on Sector Wide Approach (SWAp). The workshop was opened by Dr. Le Van Minh, General Director of ICD, MARD, who mentioned to the Hanoi Core Statement (HCS) pointed to MSCP as an example of a programme in line with the HCS. Dr. Minh also confirmed MARD's commitment to programmatic approach as a tool to increase aid effectiveness.

The workshop covered introduction to SWAp such as, concepts, definition, implications, differences between project and programmatic approaches, and new aid modalities based on harmonisation and alignment. The workshop also covered preconditions for applying programmatic approach such as planning, monitoring and reporting, financial management and budgeting and programme management. As part of the introduction, representatives from Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) made a presentation of the background and main features of the HCS.

The main result of the workshop besides a general orientation of SWAp was that it provided the team conducting a SWAp Capacity Assessment with the basic framework. This framework will now be developed into an action plan for the MSCP with the assistance of short-terms consultants and a piloting team consisting of staff from key MARD departments, partnership and institutions.

In total the workshop was attended by some 50 people from MARD, MPI and partnerships.

Source: MSCP-TA Component

ODA resources management and implementation Workshop

In the framework of ODA effectiveness enhancing activities, Ministry of Planning and Investment in cooperation with the World Bank organized an international seminar on ODA Project Management and Implementation during two working days from 18 to 19 May 2006 in Ho Chi Minh City. The seminar was conducted under support of the Comprehensive Capacity Building Program (CCBP).

The objective of the seminar is: (i) to provide participants to the seminar with international experiences on the role of the Government, ministries and ministerial-level agencies on project management and implementation at all levels; (ii) to create conditions for participants to study and exchange ideas on application of international experiences to their practical works.

Participating to the seminar includes representatives from China, United Kingdom, Malaysia and Poland as well as representatives from international donors in Vietnam, ministries, ministerial-level agencies, some localities and some project management units.

The seminar is co-chaired by the Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment and the Country Director of the World Bank Hanoi Office.

Source: CCBP

ADB's New Country Director for Viet Nam Takes Office in Hanoi

Hanoi, 3rd April 2006 – ADB's new Country Director for Viet Nam Ayumi Konishi assumes office.

Based at ADB's Viet Nam Resident Mission (VRM) in Hanoi, Mr. Konishi will be responsible for setting the priorities for ADB's assistance programs to Viet Nam. He will take lead in preparing ADB's results-based country strategy and program for Viet Nam in close consultation with government agencies, development partners, and civil society and non-government organizations. He will also oversee the implementation of ADB's current loan portfolio in Viet Nam, consisting of 34 projects totaling about US\$2.25 billion. Mr. Konishi will continue to work in harmony with the Government's agencies and development partners for

improved Greater Mekong Subregion cooperation.

Mr. Konishi's appointment to Viet Nam comes at an opportune time as the Government of Viet Nam pursues integration into the global economy and with the pending accession to the World Trade Organization.

A Japanese national, Mr. Konishi, is a graduate of Oregon State University, US (1981), and Waseda University, Japan (1982), and has a masters degree from New York University, US, in Economics (1985). Mr. Konishi served the UN from 1982 in various capacities before joining ADB in 1988.

Mr. Konishi was intensively involved in developing a major assistance to Thailand during the Asian Economic Crisis in 1997 and then was assigned as ADB's principal desk officer for Indonesia between 1998 and 1999 for similar work. In 2000, he was appointed Programs Manager of Programs Department (East) and supported ADB operations in the People's Republic of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, and Philippines. From 2002 to present, Mr. Konishi served as Director, Governance, Finance, Trade Division of the Southeast Asia Department.

Source: ADB

Viet Nam's Economic Growth to Hold with Pro-Private Sector Reforms

Hanoi, 6th April 2006 - Fueled by surging private investment and strong domestic demand, Viet Nam's economic performance continues to be robust, with growth accelerating above 8% in 2005, according to a major report released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Viet Nam is expected to maintain high economic growth of around 7.8% for 2006 and 8% for 2007.

The Asian Development Outlook 2006 (ADO), an annual ADB publication that forecasts economic trends in Asia, said the overall growth rate in Asia was 7.4% in 2005, slightly lower than in 2004.

The overall growth of Asia was led by the People's Republic of China, India, Pakistan, and Viet Nam. Southeast Asia grew 5.5% in 2005, above the average of the previous five years, but easing slightly from rapid 6.3% growth in 2004. The growth in Southeast Asia is expected to be stable at 5.5% in 2006

before accelerating modestly to 5.7% in 2007.

In Viet Nam, economic growth helped reduce the country's poverty rate from 58% in 1993 to 19.5% in 2004 (measured in terms of the national poverty standard). However, ethnic minorities generally have a high incidence of poverty. Various social indicators, such as education levels and infant mortality, have also improved, reflected in an increase in the country's ranking in the United Nations Development Programme's human development index.

Viet Nam's GDP growth is projected by ADO to consolidate at around 8% in the next 2 years. The momentum for domestic demand is likely to be maintained through sustained growth in FDI inflows, private remittances, and tourism receipts. Inflation will moderate to about 5-6% over 2006 and 2007, the report adds.

Viet Nam made further improvements in its business environment. Official recognition of the private sector's contribution to economic activity is increasingly explicit, improving the prospects for further reforms toward a market-based economy. In 2005, the National Assembly passed a Unified Enterprise Law and a Common Investment Law, designed to boost private investment by reducing administrative barriers to business development. Efforts to improve the business climate have helped generate strong growth in both domestic private investment and FDI.

On the external trade front, the Government is pushing ahead in its bid for entry into WTO. It is assumed that Viet Nam will join WTO within the next couple of years, possibly in 2006. AFTA and WTO commitments are likely to support the introduction of new technology, increased productivity, and the development of a more competitive economy.

For more information please visit ADB's website at:
<http://www.adb.org/VietNam/default.asp>

Source: ADB

Can service delivery to farmers be improved?

The agriculture sector accounts for about 20% of Vietnam's GDP and the farming community represents 70% of the total population. It is with little doubt that the

agriculture sector and the farming community are key pillars to the development of Vietnam. The question is how can we serve this community better.

Project PAR in MARD VIE/02/016 mobilized a research team to study the needs and obstacles faced by public service providers (PSPs) in the agricultural sector. In particular, identifying the barriers that prevent high quality service delivery.

9 public service providers (PSPs) were selected for the study: Irrigation Department, Agriculture Extension, Vet Department, Cooperative & Rural Development, National Seed Company, Planning Department, Office of MARD, Science & Technology Department and Plant Protection Department. In total 330 respondents, of which 32.4% respondents are women, were interviewed at provincial, district and commune level of Ha Giang, Ha Nam, Quang Nam, Dac Lak and Vinh Lo. The provinces were selected because the 9 PSPs were represented adequately across the eight agro-economic zones.

The study was conducted through face-to-face interviews and focus groups with 188 leaders and cadres of PSPs and 142 farmers to confirm the critical needs of PSPs.. Both quantitative data and qualitative responses were obtained and that some qualitative responses were converted into quantitative format for analysis.

The overall service delivery score is rated as 66.2 upon 100 (66.2%). It reflects an average performance in service delivery.

15 service delivery factors based on Balridge Quality Standards categorized under Office Facility, Management Capacity and Service Delivery were considered. The classification of Management Capacity was ranked the highest with a score of 68%, followed by Office Facility and Service Delivery both at 65%. Of the 15 individual service delivery factors, Leadership Competence ranked the highest (71.8%) and the lowest is After-service Support (59.6%).

Source: AI

For more information, please contact VIE/02/016 project at:
Tel: 080 43 097
Email: vie02016.vn@undp.org

Source: PAR in MARD project

Poverty Reduction in an orientation of Sustainable Development

Hanoi 4th May 2006 - Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs and Communism Magazine organized a seminar on hunger alleviation and poverty reduction in an orientation of sustainable development in Vietnam.

Solutions mapped out from the seminar are continuing to raise the awareness of all levels from the central to grass-roots level on hunger alleviation and poverty reduction; socializing resources for this mission including budget, community, enterprise, international assistance and credit; planning and managing resources as well as undertaking monitoring and evaluation of hunger alleviation and poverty reduction activities in an open, democratic and transparent manner.

Poverty reduction program from now to 2010 sets out the goal of reducing the poor ratio under the new standard from 26% in 2005 to 15% in 2010; improving living standards of poor households, minimizing the gap of incomes and living standards between urban and rural areas, between plain and mountainous areas, between the rich and poor household groups.

Poor households under new poverty standard are those with the average income per capita below VND 200,000/month in rural areas and under VND 260,000/ month in urban areas.

The poor household ratio (under the old standard) has reduced sharply from 2.8 million households (17.2% of the population) in 2001 to 1.1 million households (less than 7%). These figures show that 340,000 households escape from poverty each year. Under new poverty standard, there are 4.6 million poor households in Vietnam, accounting for 26% of the population.

Source: VNA

Farming economy spurs

After six years (from February 2000) implementing the Resolution of the Government on development of farming economy, farms have grown rapidly quantitatively and diversively in production forms, which have contributed considerably to job creation and poverty reduction in rural areas.

Presently, there are nearly 150,000 farms covering an area of more than 900,000 ha in Vietnam. Number of farms increases approximately 6% annually. Farming economy is developed under different types such as agricultural cultivation farms accounting for 55.3%, husbandry farms accounting for 10.3%; aquaculture farms representing 27.3%; forestry 2.2% and integrated production and business farms accounting for 6.9%.

Development of farming economy has created tens of thousands jobs contributing to reducing pressure caused by unemployment and underemployment in rural areas. Farming economy has contributed to effective exploitation of the water surface, wild land, inshore and coastal areas, etc, bringing advantages of each locality into full play and developing concentrated production zones.

Development of farming economy, however, are not linked with projection, and land use of each locality. Most of farms are established spontaneously which are lacking of inter-linkage. Therefore, potential of irrigation, transportation, electricity, communication and market system has not been made full use of.

In order to develop farming economy in a sustainable and effective orientation, in the time to come, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will continue to undertake unified implementation of some solutions on land projection; human resource development; encouraging households, individuals and organizations of all economic sectors to invest more in development of farming economy; encouraging enterprises to sign product consuming contracts for production farms; planning and constructing rural markets and transaction centers in service of agricultural product consumption in those areas where a large number of farms are located.

The State will continue to invest in development of bio-technology to develop high quality seedlings and products and to research and apply advanced technology in cultivation, processing and preservation of agricultural products, firstly for vegetables and fruits produced in specialized cultivation areas; encouraging cooperation in application of advanced technology in agriculture.

Source: MARD

List of legal documents related to Agriculture and rural development sector issued in April 2006

By the Government

1. Decree No. 37/2006/ND-CP dated on April 4th 2006 by the Government specifying in detail the Trade Law on trade promotion activities

By the Prime Minister

2. Decision No. 94/2006/QD-TTg dated on April 27th 2006 by the Prime Minister on approval of the public administration reform master plan for the period 2006 - 2010
3. Decision No. 81/2006/QD-TTg dated on April 14th 2006 by the Prime Minister on approval of the National Strategy on Water Resources up to 2020

By Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

4. Decision No. 23/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 3rd defining functions, tasks and organizational structure of the Plant Resources Center
5. Directive No. 24/2006/CT-BNN dated on April 7th 2006 on strengthening the implementation of three decreases and three increases program
6. Decision No. 25/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 10th 2006 on special

registration of some plant protection medicines into the list of plant protection medicines which are permitted to be used in Vietnam

7. Directive No. 26/2006/CT-BNN dated on April 10th 2006 on prevention and control of yellow dwarf and virus stunted diseases affecting the summer-autumn crop in the Mekong River Delta
8. Decision No. 27/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 21st 2006 defining functions, tasks and organizational structure of the Vegetables and Fruits Research Institute
9. Decision No. 28/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 21st 2006 defining functions, tasks and organizational structure of the Agricultural Genetic Institute
10. Decision No. 29/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 21st 2006 defining functions, tasks and organizational structure of the Vegetable and Food Plants Institute
11. Directive No. 30/2006/CT-BNN dated on April 21st 2006 on strengthening the capacity and renovation of statistic works
12. Decision No. 31/2006/QD-BNN dated on April 27th 2006 on promulgation of the list of plant protection medicines, which are permitted, restricted to be used or prohibited in Vietnam.