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HIGHLIGHTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT/REVIEW (p 1) | 2. NEW PROJECTS FOR THE SECTOR (p2) |
| 3. ODA PERFORMANCE (p4) | 4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (p5) |
| 5. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION (p5) | 6. EXPORT PERFORMANCE (p5) |
| 7. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (p7) | 8. MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS (p8) |
| 9. NEW PUBLICATIONS POSTED ON ISG WEBSITE (p9) | 10. COMING EVENTS (p9) |
| 11.. LIST OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS ISSUED IN JULY 2007(p10) | |

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

1. POLICY DEVELOPMENT/REVIEW



Update on the implementation of National Target Program on Rural Clean Water and Environmental Sanitation.

Hanoi, June 2007: MARD completed and submitted the National Target Program on Rural Clean Water and Environmental Sanitation period 2006-2010 for approval, established the Program Steering Committee and has been preparing for the formulation of Secretariat Office for the implementation of the program. A national week on rural clean water and environment sanitation was held. The Ministry coordinated with the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and Training to develop the mechanism to implement the National Target Program.

MARD steered the development of technology models and decentralized the management of rural water supply and sanitation structures; piloted the multi-function technology of integrated waste treatment (in Ninh Binh province); developed the model of environmental sanitation in combination with the production of organic fertilizer from agricultural and household wastes (in Thua thien Hue province).

MARD did steer the related agencies to inspect the management of rural clean water and

environmental sanitation structures under the National Target Program, to make assessment on their efficiency, to propose recommendations and to report to the Ministry for solutions. The provinces were guided to develop special projects for the special difficult areas which are in serious shortage of water, especially for Northern mountainous provinces.

Source: MARD

Newly issued legal documents regarding ODA

The Prime Minister on 27 June 2007 signed Decision 94/2007/QD-TTg approving the Action Plan for implementation of the plan “Orientations for mobilization and utilization of the ODA period 2006-2010”.

This plan was approved earlier in the Decision 290 /2006/QD-TTg dated 29 December 2006. The full-text of these two important decision are available on ISG website. English versions will soon be posted.

Approving the planning of cashew-nut sector by 2010 and the orientation to 2020

MARD issued the Decision 39/2007/QD-BNN approving the planning for development of the cashew-nut sector by 2010 and the orientation to 2020.

The planning promotes the development of cashew-nut areas in the advantageous condition

areas, especially in the gray land areas in the Central Highlands, South East region, South Central Coastal region; focusing on extensive planting and replacing the old variety with the new one, productivity and high quality one; upgrading processing technology and equipments towards deep modernization and processing to increase production's value and efficiency.

MARD set out some targets by 2010 as follows:

- The nation-wide cashew-nut area: 450,000 ha; harvesting area: 360,000 ha.
- Average productivity: 1.4 ton/ha; high productivity area: 2.0 ton/ha
- Output of raw cashew-nut: 500,000 tons.
- Total processing capacity: remaining the current level of 715,000 tons/ year
- Volume of raw cashew-nut to be processed: 625,000 tons, of which 125,000 tons are imported.
- Volume of cashew-nut bean: 140,000 tons.
- Turnover of export: 670 mil. USD

And the orientation by 2020 as follows:

- The stable area of cashew-nut: 400,000 ha
- Turnover of export: 820 mil. USD

The Decision also sets forth major measures on planning and developing stable material areas, scientific technology, investment, and consumption and trade promotion and production organization.

(Extracted from Decision no. 39/2007/QĐ-BNN)

Prime Minister approving the proposal on development of the agro-forest product-processing industry in agricultural and rural industrialization and modernization up to 2010 and orientations towards 2020

On 18th May 2007: the Prime Minister signed the Decision 69/2007-TTg approving the proposal on development of the agro-forest product processing industry in agricultural and rural industrialization and modernization up to 2010 and orientations towards 2020, which was submitted by MARD.

The proposal states that the development of processing industry must connect with the transition of agriculture and rural economic structures in conformity with the agriculture and rural industrialization and modernization process; and specifies that the development of agro-forestry products is to stick to the domestic and international markets and material areas in order to develop comparative advantageous products and competitiveness on the base of mobilizing all resources and economic sectors.

The proposal's overall objective is "to develop high competitive processed commodities; to increase products' added value which create a base to promote the development of agro-forestry

development; to create more job opportunities and increase farmer's income; to produce high quality products, ensure food safety and industrial hygiene, increase local and international competitiveness"

The targets are set as follows: annual growth rate: 10.7% by 2010 and 11.7% by 2020, total export turnover of agro-products: USD 11 bil. by 2010 and USD16.5 bil. by 2020.

In order to implement the proposal effectively, the Government also specifies the main measures in terms of planning, developing material areas, science, technology, consumption, trade promotion, continued innovation and reorganization of agro-forestry, land policy.

(Quoted from Decision 69/2007/QĐ-TTg)

2. NEW PROJECTS FOR THE SECTOR

ADB Assisting Viet Nam in Improving Quality, Safety of Agricultural Products



Manila, Philippines, 11 July 2007:

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will assist the Government of Vietnam in improving the quality and safety of its agricultural products.

"As Viet Nam's agricultural sector becomes increasingly integrated with domestic and international markets, improvements in product quality and safety assume greater importance," said Ahsan Tayyab, senior natural resources economist of ADB's Southeast Asia Department. "Efforts need to be directed at agriculture research, extension, marketing, post-harvest operations, and product grading and certification."

The agricultural sector in Viet Nam experienced rapid growth during the last decade, averaging about 4% annually. Food security has improved at the national level and the country has turned from a net food importer into a major exporter of various agricultural products. However, key concerns remain, most notably meat hygiene and pesticide residue.

Financial and human resource limitations of the government are preventing the establishment of an effective regulatory mechanism, and whatever resources are available are often too widely dispersed.

Through the project, ADB will assist the Government of Viet Nam in coming up with an action plan that will improve the quality and safety standards of agricultural products, increase the number of viable small- and medium-scale enterprises in the sector and strengthen the capacity of concerned government agencies. The project is expected to contribute to Viet Nam's sustainable agricultural growth by improving the competitiveness of farm products and enhancing

linkages among producers, traders, product processors and consumers.

The project is estimated to cost \$950,000, with ADB providing a [grant of \\$750,000](#) to cover most of that amount to be sourced from the Japan Special Fund (<http://www.adb.org/JSF>). The balance will be covered in kind by the Government of Viet Nam.

Source: ADB

Germany continues Tam Dao Park aid

Vinh Phuc, 04/07/2007: The German Government will dole out a further 2 million Euro non-refundable aid package for the second phase of a scheme that looks to protect forests in Tam Dao National Park and its surrounding buffer zones.

An agreement underscoring the importance of the 3-year project was signed by officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Germany Technical Cooperation (GTZ) organisation in Ha Noi, on July 2.

The second phase of the initiative that will run till 2009 will improve the management capacity of forest wardens and officials as well as the living conditions of local people in the buffer zones that straddle the three provinces of Vinh Phuc, Thai Nguyen and Tuyen Quang.

The 2003-06 first phase was provided with an aid package of 1.8 million Euros and was carried out in 26 villages of the three provinces' eight districts that focused on sustainable development, poverty reduction and environmental protection.

Covering an area of 36,900 ha, the Tam Dao National Forest is one of the largest national forests in Viet Nam and is home to an abundant and diverse ecosystem that includes 2,500 different species of flora and fauna.

Source: VNA

Plan's SHWIP project sets the baseline to depart (09/06/2007)

From 21 May to 8 June: the Sanitation, Hygiene and Water Improvement Project (SHWIP), supported under the Vietnam-Australia Non-Governmental Organization Cooperation Agreement (VANGOCA) and undertaken by Plan in Vietnam, launched a baseline study on gender equality and behavior change in eight communes in Quang Ngai Province. This serves as the baseline to measure the project achievements when the project closes in next four years and a half.

SHWIP was agreed by Quang Ngai Province in July 2005 to operate in 16 communes in the province for five years with total funding of 1,170,000 USD by AusAID aiming to the improvement of health and the enhancement of gender equality.

A three-week baseline survey is conducted by the Project team in consultation with Plan in Australia

consultant on gender and behavior change and cooperation from 23 Women Union members in eight communes ranked poor in three districts of Tu Nghia, Nghia Hanh and Son Tinh on more than 1,130 households, accounting ten percents of total households in the communes.

The study seeks for the overview on the existing situation on women's participation in decision making in their respective households, their involvement in the communities, women's burden in carrying water and managing waste and behavior change in water and sanitation.

For important matters in the households, about 60% of women join in discussion and make decisions jointly. It is clear that roles of women have been improved and their voices have become stronger recently but there still exists the traditional perception, unfortunately self-esteem by women themselves, that men have better understanding than women and decisions made by women are often incorrect.

Most female respondents, 816 out of 1130 households, accounting for 72%, said women in general are active in community decision making while 50% of the respondents attend between one to five meetings a year. Many of women see no barriers to joining in community decision making but in fact, up to 78% of interviewees join in Women Union while they are significantly absent from community leadership organizations as Commune People's Committee, being 0.5% only.

It is noticeable that 91% women have overwhelming responsibility to collect water for the household, excluding 8% girls under 18 sharing the burden. The situation is worse in Hanh Thien, Nghia Tho, Tinh Tho where the water sources are scarce or contaminated with carbon dioxide and women have to travel a long distance to access clean water for drinking. Nearly 39% of the respondents spend up to 90 minutes a day for carrying water and 32% spend another similar time for managing household waste. So, their half a day is just for water and sanitation activities.

Despite high level of commitment to providing water, 78% of the surveyed households, only 39% have latrines. This figure is particularly low in some communes as Nghia Tho where no household interviewed has any latrine or only 11.5% in Tinh Tho. Of all eight communes surveyed, 18% of the households have no latrine, bathroom, well or water tank. Two of major reasons found are (i) financial conditions which prevent these farmers from realizing the improvement of water and sanitation facilities, and (2) awareness which leads them to give higher priority to other matters.

In the sharing workshop conducted just right after the study, enumerators from local women unions suggested and prioritized actions to the project for consideration. It is believed that with

realistic assistance from the project, water and sanitation conditions will be improved leading to better health for people in remote areas; women's burden then will be lessened and they will have more time to contribute to local development and benefit from the results.

It is reported that two other baseline studies on healthcare and institutional involvement will be carried out shortly during June.

Source: Plan International

Japan Aids Efforts to Help Improve Water Services in Asia

MANILA, PHILIPPINES, 3 June, 07: The Government of Japan is supporting efforts to improve the performance of water and wastewater utilities in developing member countries in South, Central and East Asia to enable them to reach more people, particularly those in impoverished areas, and improve their services to existing clients.

Japan is extending a \$2 million grant to fund the Water Operators' Partnership in Asia project, which will be administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The funding comes from the Japan Special Fund. (<http://www.adb.org/JSF>)

The grant is being used to establish and operate water utility networks, develop and implement capacity building programs and benchmarking systems, adopt management processes that address specific areas of water utilities operations, and come up with a consensus on good practice institutional frameworks. The grant has a two-year timeframe and will form part of a longer-term assistance that is expected to run for five years.

Source: ADB

World Vision Supports Flash-flood Affected Villagers

Thanh Hoa, July 7, 2007: the World Vision Vietnam has begun to assist some 2,620 people who were affected by a flash flood in the mountainous district of Ba Thuoc, Thanh Hoa Province.

The flash flood, which swept through six communes, has seriously destroyed crops, roads, irrigation systems, dams and electricity networks in the areas, causing a total loss up to VND11.2 billion (US\$700,000).

It made more than 70 people homeless as their houses were completely collapsed. Local villagers are facing the threat of hunger as most of their crops were ruined. Fortunately, nobody was injured or died.

Thanh Son Commune, which belongs to Ba Thuoc Area Development Program (ADP), is among the most affected areas.

"The flood has made lives of the needy people worse. Their lives depend on agriculture but

their fields have badly damaged and they can't afford to restart their farming," said Le Quang Dao, Ba Thuoc ADP Manager.

"We start to provide the affected families and children with food, learning kits including books and bags for children, construction materials to repair houses, and basic family kits. The assistance is worth US\$50,000 funded by World Vision Malaysia, which is Ba Thuoc ADP's Support Office" said Le Van Duong, World Vision Vietnam's Relief and Disaster Mitigation Coordinator.

Started in October 2006, Ba Thuoc ADP is expected to bring benefits to around 18,100 people in four communes.

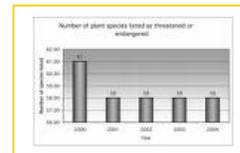
Under Tropical Storm Toraji's influence, which slammed Vietnam on July 5, flash floods occurred in several northern provinces. Ba Thuoc District was stricken the most.

The government has planned to remove vulnerable people in areas often hit by flash flood and landslides in 29 provinces to stay in safer places this year.

Source: World Vision Vietnam

3. ODA PERFORMANCE

Recommendations on the implementation progress of ODA projects reported to the Prime Minister



Hanoi, July 2007: In consideration of the request from MPI, the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung assigned the government's ODA Working Group to coordinate with the related agencies and five development banks to select specific recommendations made at the 5th Review Meeting on ODA projects (JPPR V Meeting) and to report them to him for consideration and decision to be given in Aug. 2007.

Besides, the government's ODA Working Group was assigned to, in coordination with the five-development bank Group to develop an action plan for period 2007-2009 based on the results and recommendations gained at the JPPR V Meeting, in order to improve the implementation of ODA projects and programs, and reach the disbursement target of USD 11 bil. in the period 2006-2010.

The Prime Minister authorized Minister of Planning and Investment to approve the action plan in Oct. 2007, to preside the implementation of the plan and to steer the leader of the government's ODA Working Group to make periodically reports on the implementation status to him.

Source: MPI

Viet Nam, Japan cooperate in projects' appraisal

Tokyo, 10/07/2007: The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) signed in Tokyo on July 9 an agreement on cooperation in appraisal of projects being implemented by two sides in Viet Nam.

Under the agreement, JBIC will provide the MPI with the methods to evaluate and manage projects before implementation and upon completion in order to help Viet Nam raise the efficiency in implementing foreign-invested projects, particularly projects using loans from the Japanese Government.

Earlier, JBIC signed similar agreements with the Philippines and Indonesia.

Source: VNA

4. INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Japan helps improve agricultural cooperatives' operation

Thai Binh, 09/07/2007: The Japanese government has doled out more than 4.3 billion VND (nearly 269,000 USD) to help strengthen the role of cooperatives in agricultural development in the Red River Delta province of Thai Binh.

The aid was devoted to the construction of headquarters of two cooperatives in Kien Xuong and Tien Hai districts, which were put into operation on July 9 and equipped with modern devices.

Under the project, officials of these cooperatives have also received training in Viet Nam and Japan on management and planning skills.

Apart from the two cooperatives in Kien Xuong and Tien Hai districts, the project will also benefit six other cooperatives in the province.

Source: VNA

5. INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION



Draft decree guides WTO commitments

Ha Noi, 09/07/2007: The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has just submitted a draft decree that will act as an investment guide in line with Viet Nam's commitments of joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The draft's main aim is to advise foreign entrepreneurs investing in Viet Nam and will assist them to apply Vietnamese investment law easily and solve any related difficulties.

According to Tran Hao Hung, deputy head of MPI's legal department, both investors and the

authorities have different understandings and interpretations of unclear articles in investment legal documents, which slows the process of issuing investment licenses.

Hung takes Investment Law and Decree No. 108, which cover the execution of investment law, as an example.

The decree regulates investments with requirements for foreign investors. However, it doesn't specify the requirements, but only refers investors to other laws and international conventions. He said that this makes the domestic legal system unclear leaving investors with major doubts regarding Vietnamese Investment Law.

Furthermore, legal documents relating to the service sector are difficult to execute because the Government has not issued any guiding documents.

Finally, according to WTO commitments, Viet Nam will open educational, medical and environmental services from January 2009. However the country has already opened this sector and permits 100 percent foreign investment.

Hung believes the new guide on investments will limit the above-mentioned shortcomings and make Vietnamese policies and regulations clearer.

The draft contains regulations on the capital contribution of foreign investors to Vietnamese enterprises that allow foreign investors buy unlimited amounts of shares in all fields and sectors.

It then regulates the procedures that domestic enterprises must carry out when renewing business licences after foreign investors have bought shares which have changed the capital content.

In this case, foreign investors will not have to set up the investment project or apply for a business license. This new regulation will solve many concerns.

It is believed that the new decree will be ratified and issued by the Gov't later this month.

Source: VNA

6. EXPORT PERFORMANCE

Agro-forestry exports rake in 4.4 billion USD



Ha Noi, 03/07/2007: Viet Nam fetched 4.4 billion USD from exports of agro-forestry products in the first half of this year, a year-on-year increase of 27 percent, according to MARD.

Over the six-month period, the value of farm produce reached 3.2 billion USD and forestry exports chalked up 1.2 billion USD.

Coffee remains one of the country's top export items in terms of value, which was attributed to a spike in global market prices. During the period, almost 832,000 tonnes of coffee, worth 1.2 billion

USD, were exported, a year-on-year increase of 64 percent in volume and a two-fold increase in value.

Other big movers in exports include cashew nuts with 63,000 tonnes, worth 258 million USD being shipped abroad. The figure represented year-on-year increases of 15 percent and 18 percent in volume and value, respectively.

The export value of tea and rubber increased only modestly in the past six months of this year with 547 million USD for rubber and 44 million USD for tea, up 6 percent and 1 percent year-on-year, respectively.

Meanwhile, pepper exports saw volume drop by 40 percent but value increase by 26 percent as 46,000 tonnes were sent overseas earning 137 million USD.

Source: VNA

Wood processing sector still clinging on imports

Ha Noi, 09/07/2007: Viet Nam's wood processing sector depends much on imported materials although exports has so far this year fetched more than 1.1 billion USD, a year-on-year rise of 23 percent, said the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

In the first half of 2007, the industry's import value has climbed to 480 million USD, a year-on-year increase of 42 percent.

Last year, the sector earned an export turnover of almost 2 billion USD while its spent half of the number for material timber imports and facilities for processing, according to the Viet Nam Timber and Forest Product Association (ViForest). However, locally grown timber accounts for only 20 percent of the total demand from processors and craftsmen, said the association.

ViForest and its members are focusing on establishment of three timber transaction centers in northern, southern and central regions with the aim of increasing the availability of materials.

Under its long-term development strategy, ViForest will encourage processors to directly invest in developing material zones to increase the supply of locally grown timber over the next 10-15 years.

The country boasts more than 1.4 million ha of forest, which is capable of yielding 30.6 million cu.m of timber, but most of which will be zoned off for paper processing, fibre and chipboard.

Source: VNA

Rice processing company upgrades to increase exports

Can Tho, 03/07/2007: Song Hau Food Company from the Mekong Delta Can Tho city has spent 10 billion VND (625,000 USD) on rice polishing and packaging equipment to improve productivity and ensure the quality of rice for export.

The modernization is part of the company's efforts to fulfill its export target of 185,000 tonnes of rice in 2007.

The company has so far this year shipped 75,000 tonnes of rice, including 5,000 tonnes of aromatic rice, to several Asian, African and European countries.

Source: VNA

Viet Nam, Indonesia push up pepper cooperation

Ha Noi, 21/07/2007: Viet Nam and Indonesia have signed a document on the establishment of a joint committee in a bid to increase cooperation in pepper production and exports.

The deal came after the two major Southeast Asian exporters attended a conference held in Jakarta, Indonesia, from July 8-12.

The committee will meet every year to confirm pepper statistics of each country and look at possibilities for joint marketing programmes.

This is part of the cooperation programme for the pepper sector inked by the two countries in last May. The programme aimed at increasing joint coordination in pepper farming and production, and forecasting export prices and pepper development tendency in the world and in each country.

A number of territories and countries engaged in growing and exporting peppers expressed wishes to team up with Viet Nam and Indonesia in this cooperation programme.

Viet Nam is currently the world's largest pepper producer. Its pepper output this year is estimated at around 80,000-90,000 tonnes.

In the first six months, the Southeast Asian country exported 49,000 tonnes for 142 million USD, a rise of 30 percent over the same period last year.

Viet Nam pepper association predicted that pepper prices in the world market will continue to increase as there will be a shortage of 50,000 tonnes.

Source: VNA

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Source: VNA

Vegetable exports to China surge

HCM City, 12/07/2007: The exportation of fresh vegetables to China across the Mong Cai international border gate is bearing fruit with some 30 tonnes of fresh produce heading to the world's most populous every week.

The Commercial Information Centre (CIC) under the Ministry of Trade reported that their weekly earnings topped over 120,000 Yuan (16,000 USD).

Meanwhile, fruit exported from the south is also seeing a share in the bounty, especially in regional specialties such as durian, mangosteen and rambutan, the CIC said.

In the first week of July alone, 18,000 tonnes of dried litchi were shipped to China.

Source: VNA

7. FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT



Northern mountainous provinces call for investment

Ha Noi, 09/07/2007: The three northern mountainous provinces of Lang Son, Cao

Bang and Bac Kan hosted a conference in Ha Noi on July 9 to call for foreign investment.

Deputy Prime Minister Truong Vinh Trong stressed that Lang Son, Cao Bang and Bac Kan hold strategic role in the country's socio-economic development, defence, security and foreign relations.

Highlighting their potentials in minerals, forestry, hydropower, border economic development, and tourism, the Deputy PM called on domestic and foreign enterprises to seek their fortune in these provinces.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment (MoI) affirmed its support for the provinces in implementing measures to boost their economic development. The ministry said it will closely coordinate with the provincial authorities in planning

projects and devising policies to facilitate investment activities.

On this occasion, the Bank for Investment and Development of Viet Nam signed agreements on providing credit and banking services for enterprises in the three provinces.

Source: VNA

Hung Yen organized a workshop in Tokyo to call for FDI

Hanoi, 5 July, 2007: Nearly 150 Japanese entrepreneurs and some Vietnamese ones gathered at the workshop held by the Vietnamese Embassy in Japan and Hung Yen province in coordination with the JETRO on 4th July, in Tokyo, Japan.

At the workshop, Mr. Nguyen Dinh Phach – the chairman of Hung Yen Provincial People's Council introduced the status of social – economic development and investment environment of Vietnam in general and Hung Yen in particular. He also called for the investments from the Japanese enterprises into Hung Yen province.

He released that Hung Yen would offer the highest possible preferences to foreign investors, especially for high technology, and environment friendly projects.

Representatives from such Japanese enterprises as Sumitomo, Sane, Japan-Vietnam Trading Promotion Chamber highly appreciated the investment environment of Vietnam, especially for its politic stability, cheap and hard-working labour.

According to the assessment of Japanese investors, Hung Yen has more competitive advantages than other provinces in terms of its abundant labour force and location which is near the Hanoi capital, Hai Phong port, Noi Bai International Airport and China border.

The Japanese enterprises raised a lot of questions to have further information of the investment environment in Hung Yen province like legal procedures, investment process, infrastructure, and social services.

At the workshop, the Japanese enterprises that had investments and have been doing business in Hung Yen province shared their experiences and encouraged more enterprises to invest in this province.

Source: VNA

Japan pledges to help nation manage FDI

Ha Noi, 10/07/2007: Japan's government has agreed to fund a project making it easier for foreign firms and organisations to invest in Viet Nam.

A deal to this effect was inked in Ha Noi on July 9 by Phan Huu Thang, director general of the Foreign Investment Agency under the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and Hiroaki Nakagawa, a

representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

The three-year project aims to strengthen the Foreign Investment Agency's capacity to effectively manage and promote foreign direct investment. Provincial-level Department of Planning and Investment and industrial zone management boards from Ha Noi, Vinh Phuc, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai as well as the Hoa Lac and Sai Gon Hi-Tech Parks will also benefit from the programme.

Project leaders will first establish an information management system that can be shared with relevant organisations. The second stage will focus on training human resources whose jobs involve managing, advertising or processing FDI.

The project is expected to further improve Viet Nam's investment environment as per agreements already ratified by the Government.

Viet Nam is currently home to 7,490 FDI projects with a total registered capital of 67 billion USD. Of those, some 575 new projects worth 4.3 billion USD set up shop in the first six months of 2007.

Source: VNA

Vinacafe launches coffee project in Laos

Kon Tum, 21/07/2007: The Viet Nam-Laos JSC, a subsidiary of the Viet Nam National Coffee Corp. (Vinacafe), has begun a project to grow around 3,000-3,500ha of coffee in the Champassak province of Laos.

The company is expected to create thousands of jobs when harvesting begins.

Authorities in Champassak have already agreed in principle to lease Vinacafe 1,000ha for growing coffee, and plans to allocate another 3,000ha-5,000ha.

The Viet Nam-Laos Coffee JSC has so far cultivated over 100ha in Champassak.

Source: VNA

Viet Nam, RoK sign economic cooperation deal

Ha Noi, 03/07/2007: A memorandum of understanding on economic cooperation between Viet Nam and the Republic of Korea was signed in Ha Noi on July 3.

The document was inked by Vietnamese Minister of Planning and Investment Vo Hong Phuc and Minister of Industry, Trade and Energy of the Republic of Korea, Kim Young-ju.

Following the MoU, a working group is to be established that will aid the two governments and businesses remain abreast of investment trends and opportunities and laws and regulations of the two countries.

The group will mainly work in the fields of trade and investment, agriculture, services,

construction, infrastructure, information technology, defence industry and energy.

The group, comprised of government representatives, officials from the commerce and industry chambers and businesspeople, will meet annually.

Source: VNA

8. MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS

Tokyo holds seminar on VN's investment environment



Ha Noi, 25/07/2007: Investment in Viet Nam was the order of the day for over 150 Japanese businesses attending a seminar in Tokyo, Japan, hosted on July 24 by the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce.

Japanese experts briefed the businesses on Viet Nam's socio-economic development and investment activities.

Aikawa Seiji from the Aikawa business research institute, highlighted Viet Nam's advantages compared to other regional countries like China and Thailand in terms of investment environment and costs. He also spoke in detail about Viet Nam's key industries, procedures of registration for licensing a company, advantages of the country after it joined the WTO and foreign investment promotion policies.

Sugiyama Hiromi, an expert from the Viet Nam study group, added that Viet Nam has a young and industrious workforce.

The Ha Noi Office in Japan dispatched a representative to the event to advertise the city's favourable investment conditions. Issues of concern raised at the meeting were incentives and investment costs at key economic zones in Ha Noi.

Source: VNA

Workshop on farmers' contributions: current situation and solutions

Vinh phuc, 8 June 2007: Under the instructions of the Prime Minister on reviewing all the fees paid by farmers, MARD held the Workshop on farmers' contributions: current situation and solutions. The workshop was chaired by MARD Vice Minister Ho Xuan Hung, and was participated by international organizations, national relevant agencies, and local authorities.

The workshop was held with a view to consult with the relevant stakeholders regarding the draft Report by MARD's Department of Cooperatives and Rural Development on proposed policies for reducing contributions from farmers. This draft report was synthesized based on the reports from line ministries/sectors, localities and based on the results of the survey conducted on field by MARD itself.

The draft report by MARD proposes some solutions and policies to reduce contributions by farmers in the time to come.

Presenting at the workshop, the Ministry of Finance reported on the current status of communes' budget, objective and several solutions for strengthening communes' budget for socio-economic development within the localities. Additionally, the workshop listened to presentations by Ministry of Transportation, Central Association of Vietnam's Farmers, State Bank of Vietnam, and presentations by such provinces as Ha Tinh, Nghe An, Hai Duong, and Thuyen Quang.

For further information, please contact MARD's Department of Cooperatives and Rural Development.

Source: MARD's Department of Cooperatives and Rural Development

Strengthening capacity for the staff involved in the management of products quality in provinces

Hanoi, July 2007: MARD's Department of Agro-forestry product processing and salt industry coordinated with the Management Officer Training School of Agriculture and Rural Development to organize a training course on improving capacity for the local officers who are involved in the management of food quality and safety in agro-forestry processing and preserving.

The objective of the course is to equip these officers with knowledge on the management of food quality and safety implementation which is one of the most important tasks to be conducted in 2008 and in the following years for not only the related officers in the provincial DARDs but also expanded for the related ones in the agricultural products processing companies, in order to improve the value and the competitiveness of agricultural products.

This is one of the necessary activities to establish a product quality management system from the Ministry to localities, which will facilitate the better management of agro-forestry products quality and consequently increase farmers' income as well as ensure safety for the consumers, and expand the markets.

Source: Department of Agro-forestry Product Processing and Salt Industry.

9. NEW PUBLICATIONS POSTED ON ISG WEBSITE



List of reports newly posted on ISG website in the month

1. Priority of GM and Non GM biotechnology in Vietnam agriculture and rural area

2. Main content of overall plan for biotechnology development in Vietnam until 2020.
3. Overview on Legal Framework on Bio-safety in Vietnam
4. Monitoring and Evaluation for World Bank Agricultural Research and Extension Projects: A Good Practice Note.
5. Extortion at the gate Will Viet Nam join the WTO on pro-development terms?
6. Enhancing Agricultural Innovation: How to Go Beyond the Strengthening of Research Systems.
7. Extension and Rural Development Converging Views on Institutional Approaches?
8. Developing Research Systems to Support the Changing Agricultural Sector.

Download attachments at:

<http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Information%20Service/Report/Report.asp>

List of new publications posted on ISG website

1. [ISG Monthly Briefing-June - 2007](#)
2. [RWSS Partnership News Briefs](#)

10. COMING EVENTS

[International Conference on Sustainable Forest Management and Poverty Alleviation: Roles of Traditional Forest-related Knowledge](#)

17-20 December 2007, Kunming, China

See details at:

<http://www.isgmard.org.vn/Jobs/Jobs.asp>



11. LIST OF LEGAL DOCUMENTS ISSUED IN JULY 2007

No.	Issuers	Brief description
By the Government		
1.	Decree 113/2007/NĐ-CP dated 28 th June, 2007 by the government on specific stipulation and guiding the implementation of Dyke Law	The government regulates that the structures, houses currently located in the collapsing areas have to be moved immediately to ensure life and asset safety. The structures, houses that are not in conformity with the planning approved by the authority have to be moved within the maximum time of 5 years since the effective date of this dyke law...
2.	Decree 117/2007/NĐ-CP dated 11 st July, 2007 by the government on production, supplying and using of clean water.	Under this decree, water supply is a business activity under the control of the state in order to ensure the legal power and beneficiaries of the water suppliers and customers, taking account to supporting the poor, and areas of special difficulties . Only the organizations have authority or being authorized in accordance with the state regulations on measuring are entitled to test the water measuring equipments. The customers can claim if they have doubts about the measures' accuracy.
By the Prime Minister		
3.	Decision 100/2007/QĐ-TTg dated 6 th July, 2007 by the Prime Minister supplementing, and amending some articles of the decision 661/QĐ-TTg dated 29 th July, 1998 by the Prime Minister on the objective, task, policy and the implementation organization of the 5-million ha forest project	Under this decision, before 2007 the People Committee of provinces and cities have to complete the review and planning of 3 forest types (production, protection and special forest) and border land-marking... Specifically, 5% of the budget is for management and protection of forests. A support of 100,000 VND/ha/year for protecting special and protection forests in the high-risk areas. In addition, food will be provided to the on-site ethnic minority who plant forest to replace farming. During the time of planting forest, the state assists them with 10kg rice/person/month, and allocate budget based on the regulation for forest planting. The government also encourages the planting of multi-purpose and non-forestry plants in the protection forest.
4.	Decision 112/2007/QĐ-TTg dated 20 th July, 2007 by the Prime Minister on the policy supporting services to improve the people's life, and legal support to increase the legal awareness under the program 135 phase II.	Under this decision, assistance rate for the poor pupils of hamlet nursery schools: 70.000 VND/month x 9 months/year; day-broader students at high school: 140.000 VND/month x 9 months/year. Support for the poor household to improve environment: one-time assistance in terms of materials to upgrade, repair, rehabilitate, move or rebuild breeding facilities and toilets: 1,000,000 VND/household.
By the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development		
5.	Decision 63/2007/QĐ-BNN dated 2 nd July, 2007 supplementing and amending some articles of the Decision on plant protection chemicals, attached to the Decision 89/2006/QĐ-BNN dated 02/10/2006 by the Minister of MARD.	9 items are supplementally amended and 2 items are deleted, relating to the regulations on the chemicals subject to the impossible registration, registration forms, import-export conditions, procedures to issue import-export licenses ...
6.	Decision 64/2007/QĐ-BNN dated 3 rd July, 2007 regulating the function, organization structure of the Institute of Agriculture Planning and Projection	Under this decision, the NIAPP is a public economic unit performing based on the public mechanism, under the MARD, has tasks of conducting basic investigations, zoning, planning, and designing nationwide; doing scientific researches, compiling economic- technical standards and processes in the agriculture planning and designing.

7.	Decision 65/2007/QĐ-BNN dated 3 rd July, 2007 issuing the supplemental list of animal feed, imported animal feed.	The supplemental list includes: 1. List of animal feed allowed to import into Vietnam 2. List of feed materials allowed to import into Vietnam 3. List of imported feed under HS adjustment.
8.	Decision 66/2007/QĐ-BNN dated 9 th July, 2007 regulating the equipment mechanism for the officers using professional dogs; mechanism of raising professional dogs and their equipments in the forest protection agencies	Regulating the equipment mechanism for the officers using professional dogs; mechanism of raising professional dogs and their equipments in the forest protection agencies
9.	Decision 67/2007/QĐ-BNN dated 10 th July, 2007 issuing the supplemental list of fertilizers subject to the permitted production and trading in Vietnam	The list of fertilizers subject to the permitted production and trading in Vietnam includes 125 types: single mineral fertilizer, multi-factor fertilizer, organic fertilizer, organic mineral fertilizer, bio-organic fertilizer, microorganic fertilizer, leaf fertilizer, ... ,materials for fertilizer production and land improvement.
10.	Directive 68/2007/CT-BNN dated 11 th July, 2007 strengthening the management of dalbergia hancen (go sua) exploitation and utilization	The illegal exploitation of “go sua” in such provinces as Gia Lai, Kon Tum, Quang Ngai, Quang Binh has occurred complicatedly. Besides, being aware of the plant’s value, the farmers plant it by themselves and ask for exploiting it when its harvesting time has not come. The Minister of MARD, therefore, requests the DARDs of these provinces to organize good management and protection of this plant; to steer the sub-departments of forestry protection to, in coordination with the province polices, define the illegal exploiters and traders.
11.	Directive 69/2007/CT-BNN, dated 26 th July, 2007 strengthening the dyke management and preparedness for dyke protection in the flood season of 2007	Now is the height of flood season, the weather developments is more and more complicated. However, some river and sea dyke parts have not been reinforced. The Minister of MARD requested the chairmen of Province’s People Committees, the steering committees of flood and storm control and rescue to implement some tasks to be prepared to minimize loss.

Source: ISG

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