

TERMS OF REFERENCE

2006 Ex-post evaluation of the Ha Tinh Poverty Alleviation Project (1997-2003)

1. Background

1. HTPAP was DFID's first poverty focused project in Vietnam. It was designed just before the first Labour government White Paper on development aid in 1997. The project was visited by Claire Short in 1998.
2. DFID's immediate partners in this project were three UK NGOs (Oxfam, Save the Children Fund UK and Action Aid Vietnam) and the Province of Ha Tinh. Each of the three NGOs in turn developed working partnerships with different bodies within Ha Tinh province, especially the Ha Tinh Women's Union, the Hunger and Poverty Eradication Board, the Departments of Education and Agriculture, the State Bank and the Peoples Committees at the Province, District and Commune levels.
3. All three NGOs had been working in Ha Tinh prior to 1997 (Oxfam 1995, AAV 1994, SCF 1989). Although DFID funding ceased in March 2003 AAV will continue to work in Ha Tinh until 2005 at least. Each NGOs focused initially on one district (AAAV Can Loc, SCF Cam Xuyen, Oxfam Ky Anh), however by 2003 their work had begun to extend to other districts in Ha Tinh province.
4. The main areas of investment were in: savings and credit scheme (all three NGOs in all three districts), infrastructure developments (dykes and irrigation works, in two districts), education facilities and services (three districts), and agricultural extension services (one district). Cutting across all these activities, and also taking place at the province level, were investments in organisational capacity building.
5. The total budget of the HTPAP was £5,754,000, of which £5,260,142 was spent. Amounts spent by each NGO were: AA - £1,526,100, Oxfam - £2,231,059, SCF - £827,281.
6. In the Project Completion Report achievement of the Purpose was rated 2 out of 5 (i.e likely to be largely achieved) and achievement of Outputs was rated 3 out of 5 (i.e. Likely to be partially achieved). The project was given a risk rating of 1 out of 3 (i.e. Low). During the course of the project the risk rating was downgraded from 2 to 1, and the Purpose achievement rating was upgraded from 3 to 2.
7. A funding extension of the project was not proposed despite its reasonable success (the average Purpose level rating of projects in DFID is 3). This was because of a change in DFID's country strategy that took place during the project period. Following DFID's global policy position, DFID Vietnam decided to focus more of its attention on working with multilaterals (e.g. WB, ADB) rather than funding what have been described as "stand alone" projects. This decision was the subject of some contention between the NGOs and DFID, and amongst members of the 2002 Country Strategy review team. Would the cessation of the project cut DFID off from valuable grassroots level experience that would help it

in its higher level policy work, both directly with GoV and via multilaterals and other bilaterals? Or would that experience still be available though its provision of technical assistance to those partners' projects?

2. Objectives

8. The ex-post evaluation has three objectives
 1. To identify the longer-term impact of project activities undertaken between 1997 and 2003. Of particular concern is the sustainability of achievements in the areas of savings and credit and participatory approaches to community infrastructure development. Sustainability means not only survival of practices that were introduced, but also their replication. In both cases there are likely to be some kinds of modifications in the practices of concern, which may or may not be in the interests of the poorest.
 2. To identify the nature of any additional value gained from continued engagement in the Ha Tinh province after March 2003, as evident via the work of ActionAid Vietnam from 2003 to 2006.
 3. To identify the extent to which DFID has retained access to the lessons being learned from Ha Tinh in the post March 2003 period, or not. These may be via AAV, Oxfam, SCF or other organisations working in Ha Tinh.
9. Objectives 1 and 3 are highest priority. However Objective 3 will require attention to Objective 2

3. Outputs

10. Timing

- The evaluation must be completed in time to be available as an input into the next review of the Country Assistance Plan, which is likely to be scheduled for early 2006.

11. Reports

- One evaluation report will be required, covering all three objectives. This should be no longer than 30 pages, excluding annexes.
- The report should be produced in two forms: MS Word and HTML The latter version may go on the HTPAP website at www.mande.co.uk/htpap/hatinh.htm
- The report should include a dissemination plan, for consideration by DFID

12. Workshops

- A plenary workshop should be held in order to provide various stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on a draft version of the report, and to learn about any lessons identified by the evaluation. The list of participants will drawn up by the evaluators but be subject to DFID review

- The evaluators may consider using smaller scale workshops with a more specialist focus (e.g. on savings and credit) as an exploratory tool during the course of the evaluation and prior to the drafting of their report

4. Activities and approach

13. The evaluators will be contracted by and responsible to the DFID office in Hanoi (to the specific person designated in 2006). Briefing meetings should be held at the beginning, midway and at the end of the evaluation.
14. The quality of the evaluation will be dependent on the good will of the staff of SCF, Oxfam and Action Aid, and of officials at the Province, District and Commune level. Their interests in the possible outcomes of the evaluation should be taken account of.
15. The evaluation should be theory-led. That is, the focus should be on testing the validity of a number of predictions made in 2003 about what will happen to the various changes in policy and practice that were introduced by the HTPAP between 1998 and 2003. A list of these can be found in Annex 1
 - Predictions 1, 2 and 4 relate to the sustainability of the savings and credit schemes (Evaluation Objective 1)
 - Predictions 3 and 5 relates to the achievements of AAV in Ha Tinh by 2005 (Evaluation Objective 2)
 - Predictions 6 – 8 relate to DFID's access to information about grassroots development. (Evaluation Objective 3)
16. As well as identifying what happened the evaluation should also identify and analyse participants' views on why these outcomes happened. Especially those that contracted expectations in 2003.
17. Attention should be paid not only to average or total outcomes (across all 22 SCF S&C commune funds) but also to the range of performance (especially the best and worst cases).
18. In the course of the evaluation it is likely that a number of unexpected outcomes will also become evident. These should be documented and included in the report, along with analyses of causes.
19. The priority areas for investigation are, in descending order:
 - Savings and credit by AAV, SCF and Oxfam
 - Physical infrastructure development by Oxfam and AAV, including related social infrastructure
 - HEPR and Social Development Funds by AAV and Replication Funds by Oxfam
 - Agricultural services by AAV
 - Education assistance by SCF and Oxfam
- 20 As noted above, the evaluation report should include a proposed dissemination plan. If possible the evaluator should identify at the earliest possible stage who is most interested in which particular predictions. This knowledge should be taken into account when structuring the report.

5. Resources

20. A list of documents produced by the HTPAP is available at www.mande.co.uk/htpap/hatinh.htm A CD copy of the documents marked with an asterisk is also available. Hard copies of the other listed documents should be available, but this cannot be guaranteed in all cases.
 21. Also available on the same website is a list of the NGO staff and consultants associated with the project since 1997
 22. The evaluation team will be made up of at least two members:
 - A Vietnamese national resident in Vietnam
 - A non-Vietnamese resident or non-resident within VietnamBoth should have extensive experience of the evaluation of rural development projects. Both within Vietnam and the latter with projects elsewhere in Asia and Africa.
 23. A total of 2 x 5 working weeks (5 x 6 days) are available for the evaluation, being the equivalent of one week per NGO and two weeks for preparation, drafting, plenary workshop and write up.
 24. DFID will seek to ensure that there is
 - An independent audit of all three savings and credit funds prior to the evaluation
 - Official agreement by each NGO to participate in the evaluation
 - Consent for the evaluation from Ha Tinh provincial government
 25. NGOs will provide...
 - Access to auditors reports produced in 2003
 - Access to all documents listed on the HTPAP website that are not available directly from that website in digital form
 - Access to staff who are or have had any management or field involvement in the HTPAP.
-

Annex 1: Predictions about HTPAP outcomes by 2006

By Save the Children Fund

1. The performance of the SCF assisted Savings and Credit scheme in Cam Xuyen will not deteriorate following the hand over to the Cam Xuyen Women's Union in mid-2003.
 - Performance will be measured against the Prudential Standards targets and achievements as documented in the SCF Annual Report for 2002/2003, at <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/SCFAnnualReport2002-2003English.doc>
 - The following additional performance measures have been proposed by CDS and accepted by SCF in May 2003.
 - Number of commune funds still in operation: all 22
 - Number of commune funds whose membership has grown since 2003: all 22
 - The savings fund of members, as a percentage of total assets, has grown by 5% since 2003
 - The repayment rate has not fallen below 99% in any of the communes
 - The loan loss rate has not fallen below 0.5% in any of the communes
 - Double entry book keeping will be maintained in all 22 communes
 - Interest rate charged on loans and savings will still be at rates that are institutionally self-sustainable.
 - All the impact indicators being monitored by the Cam Xuyen Womens Union in 2003 will be still be monitored in 2006 (See <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/SCFImpactIndicator2003.doc>)
 - Of these the following will show the
 - Greatest change since 2003: The two poverty measures
 - Least change since 2003: Education status of children
 - Negative change since 2003: The percentage of women having the third child (effected by government policy on same)
 - Other performance measures may be included the handover agreement with Ha Ting Province, to be developed by mid-2003. See HTPAP website for contents <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/hatinh.htm>

By Oxfam

2. The performance of the Oxfam assisted Savings and Credit scheme in Ky Anh District will not deteriorate following the hand over to the Ky Anh Women's Union in mid-2003.
 - The performance measures to be used have been jointly agreed with the Women's Union and summarised in a Logical Framework which can be found at <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/OxfamS&CLogicalFramework2003.doc> This includes approximately 30 indicators relating to the participation of poor women, the nature of the staff managing the fund, quantitative targets relating to volumes of loans, savings and other measures, the sustainability of the fund, conformity with the law, adequacy of capital, and transparency of regulations and entitlements.

By ActionAid

3. Through its continual involvement in Ha Tinh province ActionAid will successfully implement its Ha Tinh Programme Strategy 2001-2005. See <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/AAVHaTinh2001-2005Strategy.doc>
 - Performance will be documented in AAV's own proposed review of that strategy in 2005.

By WOCCU

4. The predictions made by WOCCU in relation to the savings and credit schemes set up by SCF, Oxfam and AAV will be validated. These include some predictions that are contrary to those made by the three NGOs above. See "Predictions on likely changes in the HTPAP savings and credit system by 2005" by WOCCU at <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/WOCCUhypotheses2005>
5. SCF dispute a number of predictions made by WOCCU and have produced their own counter-hypotheses. See <http://www.mande.co.uk/htpap/docs/SCFhypotheses2006>

By CDS

6. AAV's review in 2005 (referred to above) will not provide detailed and comprehensive evidence of its achievements in relationship to its 2001-2005 plan for work in Ha Tinh. And its objectives in 2005 will no longer be adequately represented within that plan, or a replacement.
 7. DFID Vietnam will obtain better access to knowledge about grassroots developments in Ha Tinh via AAV than via Oxfam and SCF, or other organisations within Ha Tinh.
 8. DFID Vietnam will obtain better access to knowledge about grassroots developments in Vietnam as a whole via AAV, Oxfam and SCF than via the bilateral and multilateral projects that it is co-funding. The assumption being made here is that all three NGOs will see DFID Vietnam as an important target for their advocacy work on development issues within Vietnam.
 9. DFID Vietnam will obtain better access to information on how central and provincial level Vietnamese government institutions work via the bilateral and multilateral projects that it is co-funding, compared to that available via AAV, Oxfam and SCF.
-