

CARD Project Evaluation Summary Sheet

Project Number and Name: (037/04 VIE) <i>Developing GAP systems for dragon fruit producers & exporters in Binh Thuan and Tien Giang provinces</i>			
Vietnamese Institution(s): Southern Fruit Research Institute (SOFRI)			
Australian Partner Institution(s): The Horticulture and Food Research Institute of New Zealand			
Date Approved: Dec 2004	Date Commenced: June 30 th , 2005		Date Completed: September 2007
Project budget (A\$)	Total: 367,621	From AusAID: 218,967 Australian Institute: 92,622 Vietnamese Institute: 56,032	
<p>Project Abstract (from Proposal): Producers of dragon fruit in Vietnam have seen prices for their fruit decline by about 60% since 2000, which can be attributed, in part, to their dependence on local and nearby export markets. There are about ten major dragon fruit exporters in Vietnam but a significant proportion of the total production is sourced from many small farmers. Returns from dragon fruit could be significantly improved if small growers and exporters can gain access to new high value markets in Europe and North America. Unfortunately, regulatory requirements and recent consumer concerns over food safety and security mean that Vietnamese growers can now only export to these high value markets if they have Good Agricultural Practice (GAP) programmes in place. EUREPGAP is a comprehensive and auditable GAP programme which is now the minimum fruit quality, safety and sustainability standard required by most supermarket chains in Europe. This project will develop the basis for EUREPGAP implementation amongst groups of dragon fruit growers in Binh Thuan and Tien Giang provinces, to enable Vietnamese growers to export dragon fruit to high value European markets. If successful it will also provide a model GAP system for potential adoption by other Vietnamese fruit sectors.</p>			
<p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To increase small holders' competitiveness and capacity to supply dragon fruit to high-value international markets, introducing new concepts of food safety, environmental responsibility, sustainability and worker safety into their production practices. 2. To provide technical support and training for Vietnamese extension/researchers to improve their capacity in group training procedures for GAP implementation in dragon fruit. 			
Milestones Completed:		Y/N	Y/N
1. CARD contract signed		Y	6. 4 th Six-monthly report
2. 1 st Six-monthly report		Y	7. Farmer cluster groups applying GAP
3. 2 nd Six-monthly report		Y	8. SOFRI staff competent in GAP
4. EUOPGAP compliant supply system for dragon fruit.		Y	application & training
5. 3 rd Six-monthly report		Y	9. Project Completion report
<p>Reports Produced (Title/Date): M2: First six monthly report, August 2005 M3: Second six monthly report, February 2006 M4: Dragon Fruit Quality Manual, November 2006 M5: Third six monthly report, August 2006 M6: Fourth six-monthly report, February 2007 M7: Farmer cluster groups applying GAP, June 2007 M8: SOFRI staff competent in GAP application & training, June 2007 M9: Project Completion Report, December 2007</p>			
Evaluation Team:		Date of Evaluation:	Project Completion Evaluation (PCIE)
1. <i>Mr. Nguyen Thien Luong</i> (Team Leader), Science Technology and Environment Department		August 24-28, 2008	
2. <i>Ms. Pham My Linh</i> , Fruit and Vegetable Research Institute			
3. <i>Ms. Marlo Rankin</i> , CARD			

Evaluation Summary	Score	Comments
Relevance	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project objectives were highly relevant – acknowledged increasing VN Gov focus on food safety and GAP as base standard for access to high value export markets.
Impact	3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impacts on commercial dragon fruit producers may be high because it meet requirements of market on quantity, continuous supply and quality. Difficulties engaging smallholder farmers and provincial level extension staff lead to a reduced potential for project impact, however greater awareness of safer production practices have demonstrated positive environmental & social impacts. Difficult to make judgement on financial impact of project in relation to improved livelihoods this soon after project completion.
Effectiveness	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot system for demonstrating integrated EUREPGAP supply chain successfully achieved. SOFRI scientists have become national leaders in GAP principles and practice. GAP principles and Manual from this project has successfully adapted to meet requirements of other crops BRC Certification of the Packager has been delayed, but it's expected implementing soon after project completes and potential duplication on GAP approach for other dragon areas is now being realised
Efficiency	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal investment by pilot participants reduced the costs of delivering project outputs and enhanced the chance of sustainability. Good communication between partners helped to reduce project costs and maximise benefits from project investment. However the number of farmers who successfully achieved certification was limited (3), therefore cost of achieving certification under the project could be perceived to be high and relatively inefficient in relation to initial project objectives.
Sustainability	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good indicators that project will be sustainable in the future. More farmers have become interested in joining the pilot system; both packer and certified farmers have further invested their own money into certification systems; training of scientists in GAP techniques has gone beyond targeted scientists to other institutes and private sector.
Average Score	4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general the evaluation team found this project to be highly successful in relation to the level of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. Early signs of positive impact were also found along with good indicators for the ongoing sustainability of the project.

Overall Assessment b/: Highly satisfactory

Major Problems Identified:

Although the target population in the original project proposal focused on smallholder farmers, through project implementation it became evident that of this aspect needed to be adjusted in order to achieve project objectives (GlobalGAP certification) within the given time frame and limited project resources. By no means were smallholder farmers excluded from the project (participation was actively encouraged), however several off-farm issues prevented smallholders from achieving GAP certification. These issues fell outside the scope of the project but will ultimately need to be addressed if project impact is to be maximised.

While the pilot model developed has successfully demonstrated how an integrated supply system for GAP certified fruit can be developed (Output 1), some concerns could be raised that it is effectively a “closed system” whereby the potential

exists for the packer/exporter to disproportionately accrue the financial benefits from accessing higher-value markets at the expense of the producers. Another concern is that only larger farmers who are able and willing to commit the necessary resources required achieve certification have the capacity to be included in this type of supply system. Time will tell whether this is a genuine concern for the longer-term impact of the project.

Lessons Learned:

The evaluation team found that the development of a pilot system for the supply of GAP certified dragon fruit that is driven by a commercial partner (i.e. Top down model) was a highly effective strategy to demonstrate the potential for Vietnam to develop integrated, high quality supply chains for the fruit. A high level of commitment to the project objectives by pilot participants (as demonstrated through the investment of personal funds) was found to be a key factor influencing the success of the project. Also, the high level of relevance of the project to current industry and government concerns (food safety, reduced access to export markets etc.) provided a genuine incentive for SOFRI project staff to embrace the training they received under the project as the opportunity to become experts in training and extension in an emerging field (QA) was evident. The Australian partner project leadership style was also something that others could learn from. It greatly enhanced the implementation of the project and the capacity building of local project staff by consistently supporting and encouraging project staff to take increasing ownership over the project and the joint achievement of objectives. The level of competency in GAP/quality systems that has been achieved by the SOFRI staff is a clear indicator of the success of this type of approach.

Recommendations:

A second phase of this project has commenced and aims to build on success of first phase by further extending the pilot model and replicating the model in other provinces. The second phase of the project will do well to take into account the finding from this evaluation – in particular the lessons learned from the first phase.

a/ 1 = worst 5 = best b/ Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Un-satisfactory