

## CARD Project Evaluation Summary Sheet

<b>Project Number and Name:</b> <i>055/04VIE-Enhancing Small Holders Access to Agribusiness Services in the Central Region of Vietnam</i>			
<b>Vietnamese Institution(s):</b> Hue College of Economics (HCE)			
<b>Australian Partner Institution(s):</b> Lincoln University (LU), New Zealand			
<b>Date Approved:</b> May 2005	<b>Date Commenced:</b> May 2005	<b>Date Completed:</b> December 2008	
<b>Project budget (A\$):</b>	Total: 700,499	From: AusAID: 410,313	Vietnamese institution: 108,000
		Australian institution: 182,186	
<b>Project Abstract</b> (from Proposal):			
<p>Developing the agribusiness capacity of the Faculty of Economics and Development Studies (FEDS) at the Hue College of Economics (HCE) to act as a strategic resource for rural development in the Central Regions of Viet Nam is the purpose of the project. Livelihood improvement for the small holders, including ethnic minorities, is constrained by their lack of agribusiness skills and also by the lack of agribusiness skills of the provincial extension staff. The project methodology is for the Australian partner, Lincoln University, to develop the agribusiness and applied research skills of the FEDS staff over a three year program. The capacity building program will include three major phases: a survey to determine the agribusiness needs of small holders and provincial staff in four Central Regions provinces Nghe An, Quang Ngai, Thua Thien Hue and Kon Tum; development of training courses for small holders (including women and ethnic minorities) and provincial extension agencies a well as the development of an agribusiness program curriculum at HCE; delivery of training courses for small holders and provincial agencies including the development of the capacity of the provincial agencies to deliver effective agribusiness training courses for small holders. Project outputs will include: FEDS with improved applied research skills and agribusiness teaching, research and consultancy skills, HCE with an improved agribusiness curriculum; provincial agency staff with enhanced agribusiness skills and able to deliver agribusiness training for small holders; small holders with better agribusiness skills and supported by more effective provincial agencies.</p>			
<b>Objectives:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen agribusiness teaching, research and consultancy activities at HCE through the development of the agribusiness skills and knowledge and the applied research skills.</li> <li>• To develop the capacity of provincial agricultural extension service staff in agribusiness skills and methods that will enable them to more effectively contribute to smallholder</li> <li>• To increase the capacity of small holders (men and women) in formulating production plan, analyzing market opportunity, and accessing to agribusiness services in order to improve their income in Kon Tum, Thua Thien Hue, Nghe An and Quang Ngai provinces.</li> </ul>			
<b>Milestones Completed:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>		<b>Y/N</b>
1. CARD Contract signed	Y	7. Fourth six-monthly report	Y
2. First six-monthly report	Y	8. Agribusiness competency of HCE staff, Department of Agricultural and Rural Development and private sector service providers assessed	Y
3. Agribusiness needs of small holders and extension staff	Y	9. Fifth six-monthly report	Y
4. Second six-monthly report	Y	10. Agribusiness skills applied by small holders, extension service providers and in research programs	Y
5. Third six-monthly report	Y	11. Project completion report	Y
6. Training modules and agribusiness curriculum developed	Y		

**Reports Produced** (Title/Date: E-Expected, D: Delivered):

MS1. CARD Contract signed; E: April 2005; D: June 2005

MS2. First six-monthly report; E: Sep 2005; D: Nov 2005

MS3. Agribusiness needs of small holders and extension staff; E: Dec 2005; D: Feb 2006

MS4. Second six-monthly report; E: March 2006; D: March 2006

MS5. Third six-monthly report; E: Sep 2006; D: March 2007

MS6. Training modules and agribusiness curriculum developed; E: Oct 2006; D: March 2008

MS7. Fourth six-monthly report; E: March 2007; D: June 2007

MS8. Agribusiness competency of HCE staff, Department of Agricultural and Rural Development and private sector service providers assessed; E: June 2007; D: Aug 2008

MS9. Fifth six-monthly report; E: Sep 2007; D: Dec 2007

MS10. Agribusiness skills applied by small holders, extension service providers and in research programs; E: Dec 2007; D: Nov 2008

MS11. Project completion report; E: March 2008; D: Jan 2009

**Evaluation Team:**1. *Mr. Dang Kim Khoi* (team leader), Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development2. *Mr. Nguyen Van Kien*, CARD M&E Coordinator**Date of Evaluation:**11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> June 2009**Project Completion Evaluation (PCIE)**

<b>Evaluation Summary</b>	<b>Score a/</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Relevance	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Agribiz project correctly addressed the real needs. Representatives of these stakeholders, who participated in the Agribiz completion workshop and were interviewed by PCE team, highly valued the results of the projects</li> <li>The Agribiz project had a clear overall goal with clear, realistic and measurable objectives. This project design guaranteed the successful achievement of most Agribiz's objectives</li> </ul>
Impact	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In terms of technological and social aspect, thanks to the project, agribusiness became an understandable concept and was applied widely in four target provinces.</li> <li>Farmers indicated that their income had been increased thanks to applying agribusiness knowledge and skills from the project's training courses by 10 to 15 per cent compared to before</li> <li>The project some positive impacts on environment</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	4.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The strategic approaches of Agribiz were appropriate to achieve the project objectives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on improving the agribusiness capacity of FEDS and local agricultural extension sector</li> <li>- Partnership with LU</li> <li>- Agribusiness training contents were built based on the real need of farmers, Department of Agricultural and Rural Development (DARD), District Support Team (DST), Agricultural cooperative (Coop)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Efficiency	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Agribiz project team completed all expected outputs thanks to their hard working with a serious manner. However, project timeline was delayed and needed to be extended from March 2009 to December 2009</li> <li>During its implementation lifecycle, the Agribiz project showed a high level of efficiency in expenditure of project funds</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The method of partner support in this project appears to be highly efficient and should be considered as a model for other projects</li> </ul>
Sustainability	4	<p>The Agribiz's outcomes are likely to be sustained in the future. However, there are still some issues that could affect the sustainability of the Agribiz's outcome:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperation plans between FEDS/HCE with DARDs in four target provinces is unclear</li> <li>Time availability of nuclear groups.</li> <li>World Bank funding has been granted to further develop the agribusiness curriculum and to assist in developing skills from non-project target provinces.</li> <li>There is an increase in students opting for agribusiness related education and there is a demand for extension worker training, but the number of training courses for extension workers after completion of the project could be significantly increased.</li> </ul>
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>4.6</b>	

**Overall Assessment b/: Highly Satisfactory**

**Major Problems Identified:**

- The late submission of MS reports was a challenge but this was primarily due to the time consuming process for preparing the Agribusiness curriculum and then consulting with other universities, and finally gaining approval by Hue University and Ministry of Education. Unfavorable weather conditions also delayed the submission of MS3
- Farmers felt training material contents are some times too complicated for them to understand and apply. In the project completion workshop, DARD staff of Quang Ngai, Nghe An and Kontum also shared this view. This would reduce the understanding and application of training contents into practice.
- Farmers understood fundamental principles of agribusiness, and began to apply in reality. However, it seemed that they did not have a standard reporting or document management system (mechanism) to record their financial transactions or construct their business plans. Thus, it was difficult to monitor their cash flow. In addition, a lack of assessment of DARD staff's practical capacity in delivering training courses to farmers is believed to contribute to this problem.

**Lessons Learned:**

- Need for regular dialog between partners:* FEDS and LU developed a close working relationship and were able to meet regularly to review progress and revise the work program as required. One of the LU staff was working in Vietnam on a regular basis and this enabled regular meetings (approximately quarterly) to be undertaken.
- Importance of Relationships with Provincial Agencies:* FEDS has established relationships with DARD and other agencies in each province. These relationships were professional and very strong and resulted in solid support at provincial level.
- Flexibility in planning and implementation:* Climate (wet season), logistics and competing staff commitment all contributed to delays in the implementation of Agribiz activities. The Agribiz work plan was flexible enabling activities to be rescheduled without impacting on the achievement of objectives.
- Timing of strategic activities:* Several activities were identified as critical to the achievement of the Agribiz objectives. These included training of FEDS staff in agribusiness and survey methodology, developing curriculum development skills, and developing the training skills of the FEDS staff. Considerable planning went into the timing of these strategic activities to ensure they were coordinated with the overall work program.
- Absorptive Capacity:* Agribusiness was a very new discipline for many of the FEDS staff. They were also unfamiliar with the case study based research methodology that was used in the provincial field work. The work schedule allowed time for the FEDS staff to review the training in the new concepts from the LU staff before applying the concepts. LU staff also provided ongoing support during the implementation of the main activities: field work, curriculum development and preparation of training courses.
- Scope and Logistics:* Agribiz project had a wide scope and also involved working in provinces with a considerable

distance from HCE. Nghe An, Kon Tum and Quang Ngai are all at least one days travel by road from Hue. The travel to the provinces and also in province travel provided quite a logistical challenge and required close liaison with provincial agencies. Wet weather in central Vietnam limits travel and operations and is a factor that needs to be considered in the implementation of a project such as Agribiz. The scope of the project that included both preparation of training courses and also a revised curriculum was a major challenge. The academic processes that have to be followed to get approval by academic authorities are considerable. Future projects should recognize this.

- *Piloting:* Agribiz piloted its field survey methods and the training courses in Thua Thien Hue. These main activities were evaluated and modified (where required) before committing resources to deliver in the more distant provinces.

**Recommendations:**

- FEDS should collaborate with DARD, DST, Coop to simplify the content of agribusiness training materials for local staff and small holders.
- It is suggested that the FEDS/HCE try to seek support from provincial authorities and extension centers to provide more training courses on agribusiness knowledge and skills to DARD, DST, Coop staff and small holders in Central Vietnam.
- FEDS should increase research cooperation with agribusiness institutions (farms, cooperatives, enterprises) and provide them with agribusiness consultancy services. This would improve the practical ability of HCE staff and students as well as open new market for agribusiness consultancy services in the future
- DARD, DST should include agribusiness content in other agricultural extension activities.
- DARD, DST should set up specific plans and condition (especially providing more time) for the nuclear trainer team to implement frequently agribusiness training courses to farmers. It is suggested that each district has at least one nuclear staff.

a/ 1 = worst 5 = best

b/ Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Moderately Satisfactory, Un-satisfactory