

MID-TERM
EVALUATION REPORT

VIE/033

Climate Adapted Local Development and
Innovation Project

PROJECT SUMMARY DATA

Country	Vietnam
Long project title	Climate Adapted Local Development and Innovation Project
Short project title	CALDIP
LuxDev Code	VIE/033
Version of the Report	April 2016

RATING OF THE PROJECT BY THE EVALUATION MISSION

Global rating (Effectiveness)	1.8 On a scale of 1 (excellent results, significantly better than expected) to 6 (the project was unsuccessful, or the situation has deteriorated on balance)
Rating using other evaluation criteria	Relevance: 1.3 Efficiency: 1.9 Sustainability: 2.0

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mid-Term Evaluation for VIE/033 Climate Adapted Local Development and Innovation project was carried out in January 2016 by Mekong Economics Ltd. The evaluation objective was to assess progress toward project objectives and results, assess the management model, and evaluate overall project relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (and cross-cutting themes: poverty alleviation, governance, gender and environment).

The overall findings are very positive. District statistics show a continuous trend in poverty reduction during 2011-2014 (using the official Vietnamese poverty measurement). The poverty rates at the end of 2014 showed consistently lower rates in Quang Dien, Phu Vang, Phu Loc (7%, 6.4%, and 5.6% respectively). It is concluded that VIE/033 CALDIP made a meaningful contribution to poverty reduction and is on track to achieving its overall objective.

The project is complex: involving many stakeholders, target groups, and literally over one hundred different activities that arose from a very participatory approach. The target groups of VIE/033 project include rural households depending on agriculture (crops, livestock and aquaculture) as well as small rural enterprises. Local administrators and implementing partner staff are also target groups that benefit from capacity building measures and from support for implementing their services. Specific objectives focus on providing means of economic security of groups such as women, ethnic minorities, resettled poor Households, elderly, and children identified as most vulnerable in the face of environmental impacts from climate change. Project activities had the goals of promoting both income and non-income generating benefits that enforce sustainable and resilient livelihoods that are effectively integrated with government development strategies.

Most project interventions resulted in increased income for many beneficiaries as well as tangible infrastructure and knowledge based capacity improvements that are being widely utilised. Local governance capacity has been strengthened in terms of implementing the local participatory planning process at all levels, large numbers of people, including vulnerable populations benefited from basic production (in-field access roads combined with dykes) and social infrastructure (kindergartens) investments mostly for protection and improved service delivery in health, education, environmental protection, agriculture (crops, livestock, aquaculture), vocational training and employment services. This contributed to better living conditions and better livelihoods for many direct and indirect beneficiaries. Consequently, the specific objective of the project has been or is on track to be achieved by the project end.

Result 1

Improved knowledge, community and government management, systems for adaptive socio-economic development and poverty reduction are on pace to be achieved within the final two years. Effective capacity building is demonstrated by a very active and integrated local participatory planning process implementation in all three districts, and the institutionalisation of sustainable infrastructure selection and procurement. So far, 39 good quality infrastructure works were completed during 2014-2015 (of which 37 involved local contributions), producing a protected area of 3 037 ha. Upon the completion of all 44 infrastructure sub-projects, the area of enhanced climate protection will be 4 085 ha. Furthermore, training about disaster risk reduction, adaptive agriculture, gender equality integration, and market oriented vocational skills are highly participatory with strong emphasis in securing government and private sector support.

Result 2

Increased protection, availability, resilience and use of natural resources has been at the heart of all project activities, hence reinforcing the likelihood of sustained implementation by project end. Activities promoted protection through an inclusive, community based approach guided by the government of Vietnam support services and experts. Notable achievements so far have been community waste water and solid waste collection/disposal, primary school "Green" curriculum integration, maternal and child healthcare awareness raising, increased renewable energy use, and strengthening natural ecosystems to mitigate climate change hazards.

Result 3

Ensuring more diverse, efficient and market competitive on-farm and off-farm productive activities have been an ongoing endeavor. Adaptive agriculture has been strongly supported and successfully implemented with income generating results. Some tested new models failed, which is to be expected. Increased local demand has put continuation of specific environmentally adaptive species and cultivation techniques in line with future Government of Vietnam support. Off-farm economic activities have largely been market research and vocational trainings with the goal of creating new networks and small and medium-sized enterprise growth. Although with positive results, the off-farm training and medium-sized enterprise support have been the least impressive aspect of the project.

Lessons learned and recommendations for VIE/033 CALDIP:

Capacity building for participatory planning and implementation: It is recommended to focus on how to ensure the transfer of knowledge and skills to ensure sustained local ownership. This includes local citizen and government involvement in the training plan and its implementation.

Infrastructure Development: It is recommended continued support be given to the commune Operation and Maintenance (supervisory boards and management to embed procurement and environmental impact procedures once the project has ended. Furthermore, ensuring government of Vietnam funding and regulatory changes that reinforce use of infrastructure selection criteria and monitoring and evaluation procedures should be supported.

Rural Economy and Production Organisation & Development: It is recommended to intensify participatory value chain approaches to identify and connect farming trainees to private markets. Greater innovation related to non-farming economic opportunities can be promoted by attaching small business and jobs that support small scale renewable energy or energy efficiency initiatives at the local level (ex. weatherproofing, households, businesses, communal biogas expansion, etc.). Increasing efforts to promote eco-tourism is another action in line with project scope that has potential.

Climate Change Adaptation and Emergency Preparedness: Interventions aimed at reducing the losses from natural disasters involved hard and soft investments. Hard investments were guided by a list of 35 pre-approved types of infrastructure projects, including: dykes, boat shelters embankments, drainage channels, dredging, irrigation canals, in-field accessroads, as well as bio-infrastructure works such as vegetation of coastal dunes, and introducing adaptive plant species for increased biodiversity. The dilemma of “maladaptation” was most common regarding that latter infrastructure types, but then the point of testing is to see what can adapt to local circumstances. Cost effective and long-term ecosystem-based mitigation measures are preferable because of their low cost for establishment and maintenance, natural resource protection, and biodiversity conservation.

Climate change awareness trainings as well as community operation and maintenance infrastructure funds depend on ongoing government cooperation. Community driven environmental monitoring trainings are in their infancy, but show promise with respect to community members being able to adequately identify water quality problems. Solutions to surface water contaminants again largely depend on government support.

Non-income poverty reduction activities included climate change and adaptation trainings, planting adaptive vegetation, *Reuse, Recycle, Reduce* waste collection models, wastewater treatment training, water quality measurement training, gender equality trainings, and female and early childhood health services as well as early childhood education about the environment. Environmental and climate change adaptation trainings will need to be integrated into government of Vietnam priorities and throughout multiple levels of the educational system.

Project Organisation and Management: Coordination and exchange between the beneficiary districts, local people, and implementing partners will need to be developed further. Sustaining project disbursement and financial management practices in district and provincial operations is recommended. Existing differences between software activity planning practices and newly introduced delegation agreement standards need to be resolved.

The mid-term review scores the project highly on all OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, as well as for relevant cross-cutting concerns. The project is clearly relevant, and well integrated with local systems. The commune vulnerability and capacity assessment and local participatory planning process are enhanced (and notably more participatory) versions of the established five-year and annual planning processes in Vietnam. Consequently, it seems that there will be sustained institutional changes due to this project: five-year and annual planning will continue with much of what was introduced under this project, which includes the methodology and criteria approach to prioritise infrastructure investments. These are highly significant outcomes from the project.

The highly participatory approach of the project has generated a wide variety of activities and models being tested. Guiding criteria, such as that models should be “innovative” have been followed. Ideas for testing new models or training have come from all levels of stakeholders. A strong Monitoring and Evaluation system has underwritten the approach and ensured that guiding criteria have not been forgotten (e.g. the targeting of particular vulnerable groups).

One area for improvement would be more consideration about working with the private sector. In particular, to deliver vocational training and to implement some agriculture and livestock models (with results-based contracts). At present the Government of Vietnam delivers most of these services, with low budgets and often poor quality, while also “crowding out” private operators.