



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



©FAO/Hoàng Đình Nam

POLICY-BASED SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN LINE WITH NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SUSTAINABLE POVERTY REDUCTION AND ZERO HUNGER INITIATIVE OF VIETNAM

September 2020

SDGs:



Countries:

Viet Nam

Project Codes:

TCP/VIE/3604

FAO Contribution

USD 267 000

Duration:

1 May 2017 – 31 December 2019

Contact Info:

FAO Representation in Viet Nam

FAO-VN@fao.org

Implementing Partner

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Beneficiaries

Department of Cooperatives and Rural Development, National Coordination Office on National Target Programmes for new and sustainable development, as well as the rural poor benefiting from the National Target Programmes.

Country Programming Framework (CPF) Outputs

CPF 2017-2021, Priority Area 1.



BACKGROUND

In recognition of the importance of multidimensional food and nutrition security and poverty reduction, the Government of Viet Nam has approved two National Target Programmes (NTP), focusing on New Rural Development (NRD) and Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR), with a total budget of around USD 11 billion. The ultimate goal of these programmes is to improve the living standards of poor and rural communities. The NTP-NRD focuses on rural development in almost 9 000 communes throughout the country, in line with the Agriculture Restructuring Plan at all levels, while SPR targets areas in which to reduce poverty.

One of the most important tasks faced by the Government of Viet Nam is to produce a harmonized policy system among the two NTPs, with a view to mass and market-oriented agricultural production. The present Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) project was implemented with the aim of facilitating this process. Its expected outcomes were as follows: (i) increase the income of the rural poor through a harmonized policy design in support of the two NTPs in line with the Agriculture Restructuring Plan at all levels and (ii) stronger linkages among farmers and between farmers and enterprises in a consistent production system with recognized standards.

In order to deliver these outcomes in a sustainable manner, there was a need to encourage the participation of the business community and of millions of small households. Through such cooperation, it was expected that agricultural value chains would be established, connecting agricultural production zones to markets and promoting the application of traceability and technical standards into production.

IMPACT

The project's expected impact was a reduction in poverty and an improvement in the livelihoods and nutritional intake of disadvantaged farmers.

ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS

A series of policy documents were developed, allowing the Government of Viet Nam to implement effectively a series of production support components. These included an inception report, in-depth analysis on the current status, challenges and opportunities of agricultural production, as well as an assessment of malnutrition in selected areas and an operational framework proposal for a nutrition sensitive agriculture model.

As part of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) for the National Action Plan (NAP) to achieve the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) by 2025, a review was conducted of existing policies and their impact upon and effectiveness for ZHC. In addition, a M&E component was developed for the ZHC and case studies were conducted with a view to sharing lessons learned, in particular in terms of reducing stunting in children under the age of two and increasing smallholder productivity and income.

Finally, the best agricultural practices for policy and institutional reform were documented. The pilot nutrition models were instrumental in capturing good practices as they provided substantial information and knowledge on the issue. These models are consistent with the localities in question and suitable for replication in poor districts of other provinces, raising awareness of the nutrition sensitive production system to ensure food security and nutrition, in particular for pregnant mothers and children under age of two.



IMPLEMENTATION OF WORK PLAN

Although no request was made for an extension of the project's closing date, the reporting by the project stakeholders concerned was postponed. Despite this, all scheduled activities were completed by the end of 2019.

The concept of a pilot nutrition model was new to the implementing partner. This factor, as well as the limited knowledge at community level of the correct way to utilize foods to provide sufficient nutrients for family members, in particular pregnant women and children under the age of two, led to a longer than expected period of implementation. The project subsequently resorted to a "learning-by-doing" approach.

The main risk faced by the project at the outset of implementation was that, given that the policies to be reviewed were cross-sectorial and cross-regional in nature, consensus in different localities and ministries may not be met. To mitigate this risk, during the period of project implementation, collaboration took place with other interested organizations to promote advocacy events at both national and local levels.

FOLLOW-UP FOR GOVERNMENT ATTENTION

In order to sustain and maximize the impact of the project after its closure, the policy proposals made by the project should be translated into the promulgation of relevant government documents for implementation at national or regional levels. The scale-up of good agricultural production models will be integrated into the extension programmes of the Government and of other development agencies and enterprises.



©FAO/Hoang Dinh Nam

SUSTAINABILITY

1. Capacity development

The project performed a comprehensive review of cross-cutting policies and mechanisms, which are relatively complete and affect nearly all stages of food production and consumption. With inclusive methodology for collecting secondary data (through policy review and a desk review of published documents, reports and articles) and primary data (through direct surveys in three districts representing 85 of Viet Nam's poorest districts, including meetings, interviews using a questionnaire, in-depth interviews and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method), as well as a validation workshop, the report's results were well identified, contributing to the realization of the goals of the NAP on "Zero Hunger" (ZH).

The Government committed itself to providing financial resources from its own programmes (such as the NRD, ZHC, Agriculture Restructuring and Disaster Risk Reduction), as well as staff from their offices to provide support both during the project and beyond its closure. Furthermore, the policy proposals made by the project will be considered and potentially lead to the promulgation of the relevant government documents for implementation at national or regional levels, thereby sustaining and maximizing the impact of the project after its closure.

2. Gender equality

Significant consideration was given to gender as a cross-cutting issue during the implementation of project activities.

3. Environmental sustainability

As described in the demonstration reports of pilot models in three poor communes in Quang Ngai, Tra Vinh and Lao Cai provinces, climate and environment aspects were strongly assessed, evaluated and reflected in the results of the research.

4. Human Rights-based Approach (HRBA) – in particular Right to Food and Decent Work

The project's outcomes and outputs add value to agriculture products, which, as a result, now have greater nutritional quality along the value chain and ensure equal benefits for the rural poor, farmers and stakeholders, in particular pregnant women and children under the age of two. This also resulted in higher income for target beneficiaries being among the major objectives of the NTPs and Pillar Four of the ZHC initiative.

5. Technological sustainability

Six training courses, each featuring 50 participants, were organized to provide information on nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agriculture for government official and communities in Quang Ngai, Tra Vinh and Lao Cai provinces. Training documents on nutrition, food security and a method for developing a nutrition-sensitive agriculture model were provided.

Six successful cases of nutrition-sensitive agriculture models were documented for the sharing of lessons learned for further application. In addition, a national knowledge-sharing workshop was organized in order to advocate successful models and policies on the ZH programme in disadvantaged areas. The programme was implemented in ethnic minority areas in which living conditions are difficult and the awareness of local people remains limited. This, in turn, can lead to a difficulty in applying pilot nutrition-sensitive agriculture models and sustaining the project activities. However, the mainstreaming of these models into NTPs and the NAP on ZH, with the necessary financial and human resources, will ensure their replication in other poor districts and will raise awareness of the nutrition-sensitive production system.

6. Economic sustainability

An inclusive report featuring policy solutions and mechanisms was submitted to the National Steering Committee on ZH, with “policy options and recommendations to attract and promote investment in production and consumption of agricultural products in disadvantaged areas”.

DOCUMENTS AND OUTREACH PRODUCTS

Documents produced

- ❑ Implementation of nutrition agriculture production. Training material. Hanoi, Viet Nam. September 2019.
- ❑ Policies on attracting investment in food production and consumption in disadvantaged areas in Vietnam. Report. Hanoi, Viet Nam. November 2019.
- ❑ Guidelines for building nutrition agriculture project of National Action Plan on “Zero Hunger in Vietnam in 2025”. Handbook, Hanoi, Viet Nam. December 2019.
- ❑ Reasonable nutrition and food security for households. Training material for interdisciplinary officials implementing the Nutrition Agriculture Model. Hanoi, Viet Nam. 2019.

Outreach material

- ❑ Video clip on project outcome.
- ❑ A range of newspaper and media articles on field visits by FAO officers.



ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS - LOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Expected Impact	Reduced poverty and improved livelihoods and nutrition intake for disadvantaged farmers		
Outcome	(i) Increased rural poor income through a harmonized policy design for production support of the two NTPs in line with the Agriculture Restructuring Plan at all levels. ii) Stronger linkage among farmers and farmers' enterprises in a consistent production system with recognized standards		
	Indicator	1. Nutrition status of children under five (against the National Strategy for Nutrition (NSN)). 2. Farmers' income (against the National target Programme (NTP) for New Rural Development (NTP-NRD) NTP-NRD and NTP for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR)). 3. Food loss/waste in post-harvest stages (selected products). 4. Rural environment (against NTP-NRD).	
	Baseline		
	End Target		
	Comments and follow-up action to be taken	In order to sustain and maximize the impact of the project after its closure, the policy proposals made by the project should be translated into the promulgation of relevant government documents for implementation at national or regional levels. The scale-up of good agricultural production models will be integrated into the extension programmes of the Government and of other development agencies and enterprises.	
Output 1	Policy documents developed for the Government of Vietnam to implement effectively the production support components in NTPs through harmonization approach		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An inception report providing policy recommendations at macro-level to support livelihood diversification activities in order to increase the productivity and income of smallholders under the two NTPs and newly approved NAP on ZH. – In-depth analysis of the current status, challenges and opportunities on agricultural production, inputs and markets in selected disadvantaged areas. – Assessment of malnutrition in selected areas and classification of the malnutrition levels of household groups. – An operation framework proposal for a nutrition-sensitive agriculture model. 	The following were expected to be available at the end of the project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Inception report and detailed outline of in-depth policy review. – Thematic report on policy review and assessment of agriculture diversification and malnutrition. – An in-depth review on policy recommendations to support livelihood activities under the two NTPs and the NAP on ZH. – Detailed operational framework of integrated nutrition-sensitive agriculture and climate-resilience agriculture model. 	Yes
Baseline	N/A		
Comments	This programme provided the Government of Vietnam with better conditions with which to develop the NAP until 2025.		
Activity 1.1	Policy gap analysis		
	Achieved	Partially	
	Comments	The tools for surveying and formulating quick-impact projects were not made available, in particular the indicators for nutrition assessments.	
Activity 1.2	Set up an international expertise pool to directly provide policy advice to the Government		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	A regional consultation workshop was held for international experts to share their experiences on relevant policies in Viet Nam other countries. It was attended by 200 participants from ministries, government line agencies, international organizations, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), research institutions, the private sector and the media. In the discussion session, experts shared their experiences of building and implementing successful models of poverty reduction and nutritional agriculture and continued to provide policy advices to the Government of Viet Nam after the workshop.	
Activity 1.3	Develop market development and production guidelines for application in NTPs		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An inception report was developed, providing policy recommendations at macro-level to support livelihood diversification activities in order to increase the productivity and income of smallholders under the two NTPs and newly-approved NAP on ZH.	

Output 2	M&E for NAP to achieve ZHC by 2025		
	Indicators	Target	Achieved
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A policy review report on attracting investment in production and consumption of agricultural products in disadvantaged areas. – A stock-take of good practices/modalities related to investment in production and consumption of agricultural products in selected disadvantaged areas. – A constructive report submitted to the National Steering Committee of ZH on policy options and recommendations to attract and promote investment in production and consumption of agricultural products in disadvantaged areas. 	<p>The following were expected to be available at the end of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A policy review report. – A stock-take of good practices/modalities. – A policy/mechanisms report to be submitted to the National Steering Committee of ZH in Viet Nam led by the Deputy Prime Minister. 	Yes
Baseline	N/A		
Comments	In order to achieve the goal of attracting investment in food production and consumption in disadvantaged areas under the NAP on ZH, the following recommendations were made to the National Steering Committee: (i) twin-track approach application; (ii) adequate investments in social protection; (iii) other possible domains for additional investment in agriculture; and (iv) modification of the focus.		
Activity 2.1	Review of existing policies and their impacts and effectiveness on ZHC, together with recommended policy actions under five pillars of ZHC		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	17 central-level policy documents reviewed in depth, including one Government Resolution, 10 Government Decrees and six Decisions of the Prime Minister.	
Activity 2.2	Develop a M&E component for the NAP on ZH		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	An inclusive report with policy solutions and mechanisms was submitted to the National Steering Committee of Zero Hunger.	
Activity 2.3	Conduct case studies and organize local and national events for sharing of lessons learned focusing on Pillars 2 (zero stunted children under the age of two) and 4 (increase in smallholder productivity and income)		
	Achieved	Yes	
	Comments	Six good models on attracting investment in three poor districts of Lao Cai, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh provinces were implemented. Each model was evaluated for its effectiveness and capacity for replication.	

Documentation of in-country best agricultural practices for policy and institutional reform	
Indicators	Target
<p>Output 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consultation workshop conducted to identify three nutrition-sensitive agriculture models in three disadvantaged areas. – Pilot nutrition-sensitive agriculture models established, documented and mainstreamed into NTPs and the NAP on ZH. – Report on six case studies on good practices of nutrition-sensitive agriculture models. – National knowledge-sharing workshop conducted and report prepared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – One consultation workshop conducted and report prepared. – Guideline and training materials on nutrition-sensitive agriculture models developed. – Six training courses organized in three provinces (50 participants per course) on nutrition-sensitive and climate-smart agriculture for government officials and communities in provinces of Lao Cai, Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai and reports prepared. – Set of M&E indicators for nutrition-sensitive agriculture models identified. – One report on six case studies on good practices of nutrition-sensitive agriculture models prepared. – One national knowledge-sharing workshop conducted and report prepared.
Baseline	N/A
Comments	The pilot nutrition models were instrumental in capturing good practices as they provided substantial information and knowledge on the issue. These models are consistent with the localities in question and suitable for replication in poor districts of other provinces, raising awareness of the nutrition-sensitive production system to ensure food security and nutrition, in particular for pregnant mothers and children under age of two.
Review, documentation and forum of best agricultural practices with the involvement of relevant national stakeholders, including development partners and private sector	
Activity 3.1	<p>Achieved Yes</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>Some of the impediments faced during the implementation of this activity are outlined below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Although local people responded positively to the new model, their level of awareness remains limited and the lack of reciprocal capital leads to a difficulty for people to apply the model. – Limited M&E capacity of local officials participating in the project. – Given that the project was approved in August, the implementation process took place when the weather conditions were not favourable, leading to the vulnerability of production (e.g. susceptibility of chickens and ducks to diseases). <p>Beyond the project's implementation period, it will be necessary to expand the model to other villages in the commune so that the villages can together improve their living standards and nutritional status.</p>
Consultation and scaling-up of advocacy activities	
Activity 3.2	<p>Achieved Yes</p> <p>Comments</p> <p>A good advocacy plan and collaboration will help to encourage and improve people's awareness on the importance of nutrition to children and pregnant women, as well as the importance of a balanced diet.</p>

Partnerships and Outreach

For more information, please contact: Reporting@fao.org

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153 Rome, Italy