



## **Agricultural Atlas of Viet Nam A Depiction of the 2001 Rural Agriculture and Fisheries Census**

### Introduction

## **Population Distribution**

The demographic data for this map are from the 1999 Population and Housing Census. Aggregated by agro-ecological region, they show that the Red River Delta, with 19.4% of the total national population, including Hanoi City, has by far the highest population density (averaging 1,173 people per km<sup>2</sup>). The Mekong River Delta, while home to 16.1 million people and representing the largest regional share of the total population (21.1% of the country's population), has less than half the population density of the Red River Delta. With an average of 406 people per km<sup>2</sup>, this region still has the second highest population density. The third most densely populated region is the Southeast, including Ho Chi Minh City, with 16.7% of the total national population and a density of 286 people per km<sup>2</sup>.

The overall national population density is not very high - only 232 people per km<sup>2</sup> (195 people per km<sup>2</sup> in 1989). However, it is very unequally distributed across the country. As we have seen, provinces in the Red River Delta and the Mekong River Delta regions are particularly densely populated - easily visible on the map as concentrated areas of dark red. The population density in the least densely populated province in the Red River Delta region is still three times the national average. Ha Noi is the province with the highest population density in the region - 2,883 people per km<sup>2</sup>. Not surprisingly, the highest population densities in the country can be found in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi City, with commune/ward level densities of above 100,000 people per km<sup>2</sup> in some parts of Ho Chi Minh City.

The Red River Delta and the Mekong River Delta regions are flat areas with fertile soils suitable for agricultural development and that can support high population densities. In contrast, the upland provinces are mountainous areas with rugged terrain, poor irrigation systems and limited availability of cultivated land. These areas are much less suited to agricultural production, and thus can support much lower population densities. Provinces in the Central Highlands do have fertile soil, but accessibility to this region is not very good so until recently it has remained sparsely populated. Between 1989 and 1999, however, the Central Highlands and the Southeast were the only regions in the whole country to attract immigrants. Immigrants come to the Central Highlands mainly because of the availability of arable land (even though access to markets is difficult); whilst people are attracted to the Southeast mainly because of rapid industrialization, a high rate of urbanization and good market access.

