

# FINAL REPORT

Independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Project '*Support to the Implementation of the Resolution 80/NQ-CP on Directions for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2011-2020 and the National Targeted Programme on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2012-2016*' (PRPP).

conducted for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
and Irish Aid (IA).

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Indochina Research and Consulting (IRC)

## List of Acronyms

AusAID	: Australian Aid
CDF	: Commune Development Fund
CEMA	: Central Committee for Ethnic Minorities
CIO	: Commune Investment Ownership
CIP	: Co-Implementing Partner
CPC	: Commune People's Committee
CRC	: Citizen Report Card
CSA	: Committee for Social Affairs
CTG	: Core Technical Group
DARD	: Department for Agriculture and Rural Development
DEMA	: Department for Ethnic Minorities Affairs
DFAT	: Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade
DFID	: Department for International Development
DNPD	: Deputy National Project Director
DoLISA	: Department for Labour, Invalid, and Social Affairs
DP	: Development Partner
DPC	: District People's Committee
DPI	: Department for Planning an Investment
EC	: Ethnic Council
EM	: Ethnic Minorities
EMPCD	: Ethnic Minority Policy and Capacity Development
EMPWG	: Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group
FFS	: Farmer Field School
GoVN	: Government of Vietnam
GSO	: General Statistical Office
IA	: Irish Aid
IFAD	: International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILLSA	: Institute for Labour and Social Affairs
INGO	: International Non-Governmental Organization
IRC	: Indochina Research and Consulting
ISP	: Implementation Support Program
M&E	: Monitoring and Evaluation
MAFEM: MDG Acceleration Framework for Ethnic Minorities	
MARD	: Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MDG	: Millennium Development Goal
MDP	: Multi-Dimensional Poverty
MIC	: Middle Income Country
MoET	: Ministry of Education and Training
MoJ	: Ministry of Justice
MoLISA : Ministry of Labour, Invalid, and Social Affairs	

MPI	: Ministry of Education and Training
MTE	: Mid-Term Evaluation
MTR	: Mid-Term Review
NA	: National Assembly
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NIM	: National Implementation Modality
NIP	: National Implementing Partner
NPD	: National Project Director
NRD	: New Rural Development
NTP	: National Target Program
NTP NRD	: National Target Program on New Rural Development
NTP SPR	: National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction
NTP-PR	: National Target Program on Poverty Reduction
O&M	: Operation and Maintenance
OPHI	: Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative
P135	: Program 135
P135-II	: Program 135 Phase II
PD	: Project Document
PMU	: Project Management Unit
PPC	: Provincial People's Committee
PR	: Poverty Reduction
PRCO	: Poverty Reduction Coordination Office
PRPP	: Poverty Reduction Policies and Programs
PSARD	: Public Provision of Services for Agriculture and Rural Development
Q&A	: Question and Answer
RIM	: Rapid Impact Assessment
RRF	: Results and Resources Framework
SDC	: Swiss Development Cooperation
SEDP	: Socio-Economic Development Planning
SPD	: Social Protection Department
TA	: Technical Assistance
TOR	: Terms of Preferences
TOT	: Train the Trainer
UNDP	: United Nations' Development Program
UNICEF	: United Nations' Children Fund
VASS	: Vietnam Academy for Social Sciences
VDPF	: Vietnam Development Partnership Forum
WB	: World Bank

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*'The PRPP project is highly relevant to the GoVN's needs. The focus and design is appropriate and it fills a number of important gaps in the unfinished task of poverty reduction. The project is highly strategic in that sense'.* International NGO representative, Hanoi.

*'This is a meaningful and important project for us. There are limited resources but the project has a very high impact'.* Vice Chairperson of a District People's Committee (DPC), responsible for poverty reduction.

*'The PRPP project design is good: it meets the needs of line ministries, not just MoLISA, as it is not a directive project, so it works well in the government environment. In fact it's not just a project but a bridge, to bring MoLISA to other line ministries'.* Line ministry representative, Hanoi.

*'Having too many different kinds of direct support to the poor, from materials to inputs etc., is not the effective way to provide poverty reduction support. What matters is how these types of support can create synergy and PRPP is relevant in this regard'.* Representative of the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) of one PRPP province.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

**The Mid-Term Evaluation:** This is the Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) report of the project ‘*Support to the Implementation of the Resolution 80/NQ-CP on Directions for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2011-2020 and the National Targeted Programme on Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2012-2016*’ (PRPP). Research for this report was conducted by a team of consultants from Indochina Research and Consulting (IRC) and was commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Irish Aid (IA) in Vietnam, the two donors to the project. The PRPP project began in late 2012 and is due to run until the end of 2016, so the project has reached the mid-point stage. This MTE took place from late October to late November 2014 and involved extensive interviews and technical meetings in Hanoi, and field visits to three of the eight provinces participating in the project: Bac Kan, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh. The main objectives of the independent project mid-term evaluation are to (i) analyze possible changes in the context until the end of the project period by 2016 and assess the relevance of the project, (ii) assess progress towards achieving the project’s results, the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation. Hence, this review is expected to provide inputs for prioritization of activities in the remaining second half of the project. In addition, as the PRPP has supported some key national policy dialogues for the post 2015 development agenda, some findings will ideally contribute to those dialogues.

**The Project’s Objectives:** The project aims to provide support to the Government of Vietnam’s (GoVN’s) Resolution 80, which sets out to better integrate national resources for poverty reduction, harmonize and rationalize the large number of policies which currently exist for poverty reduction, and consolidate and better target resources to more effectively address remaining pockets of chronic poverty in the country. The National Implementing Partner (NIP) of the project is the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) and the Co-Implementing National Partner (CIP) the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). The project also aims to support the GoVN’s National Target Programme for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR), the national programme through which poor areas of the country are supported. The project sets out to support the NTP-SPR through providing resources for establishing innovative mechanisms for poverty reduction, for example block grant funding mechanisms, commune investment ownership mechanisms and capacity building of poverty reduction officers to equip them with the skills to effect both policy and practice change for the delivery of better services to the poor. The project provides grants to poor households through which innovative block grant models are to be demonstrated, in eight provinces around the country (which are also project CIPs). Support to these provinces is provided to enable them to better integrate and rationalize the delivery of poverty reduction policies and support.

**Project Outputs:** The project is structured around three outputs in the Project Document, which provide the basis for project work planning. These three outputs support the objectives of Resolution 80 (output 1); the effective design and implementation of the NTP-SPR (output 2); and the development of a system for monitoring and analysis of multi-dimensional poverty and vulnerability, and policy discussions on poverty and vulnerability to improve policies and development programmes (output 3).

## Project Progress in Achieving Output Results

In Section 3 of the report we evaluate results in achieving the targets set in the Results and Resources Framework (RRF) of the project under each of the three outputs. This is based upon a detailed analysis of activities and results presented in the project’s workplans, quarterly and

annual reports, and findings from interviews and research during the MTE. Progress in project activities is reported in detail in Annex 2. The MTE found that the project closely followed the activities as designed in the workplan for each output. The support provided to the GoVN was also extremely diverse, ranging from high-level policy advice and support nationally, to providing material livelihood support to poor households in the project's eight target provinces. For the period 2012 - up to the end of the third quarter 2014 the project undertook 112 activities, which spanned support to a wide range of GoVN Ministries, the National Assembly, and sub-national Governments of the eight provinces. The MTE used three categories to evaluate the physical progress, including (i) whether results have been substantively achieved or are on course to being achieved within the project timeframe (green light); (ii) whether there is some progress towards results but full attainment of the target is uncertain (yellow light); and (iii) whether no results are yet evident and there is little prospect of achieving the target (red light). Based on the activities by the end of 2014, progress towards all targets are deemed satisfactory with five of the targets having demonstrated significant results (green), nine targets exhibiting significant progress at the mid-term point but further efforts needed to reach full achievement (yellow). There are two targets that are deemed borderline green/yellow, with certain results evident in some but not all aspects and hence needing attention in the remaining half of the PRPP project. No targets are found in red.

Despite the logistical and management challenges involved, the project achieved some significant results in the first two years of implementation culminating in reviewing a number of 149 legal documents and this provided the basis for the development of 20 important policy decisions, 15 of which have been issued and 5 of which are pending at the end of 2014. Results are most evident in terms of the review of poverty reduction policies and the high level review of poverty policies under Resolution 80, through the GoVN's Mid Term Review (MTR) of the NTP-SPR and the NA's Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction (output 1) and the resultant Resolution 76 that gives directions for rationalizing the current policies on poverty reduction and principles for programming next phase of poverty reduction policies; the development of a system for Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MDP) in Vietnam (output 3); and high level policy dialogue around ethnic minority poverty (output 3). Results in developing the implementation instructions for the NTP-SPR were largely achieved (output 2) but institutional complexity makes this process slow, and further work remains to be done in harmonizing the regulations under the respective sub-projects of the programme.

Areas where results have been less evident to date are in the redesign and mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies by line ministries (output 1); the development of innovative sub-national poverty reduction models, their replication and the integration and better targeting of sub-national poverty reduction resources (output 2); and the greater empowerment and agency of women and ethnic minorities in poverty reduction work (output 2). The redesign of policies, which is a complicated task, is contingent upon the completion of the comprehensive review of policies and the GoVN has been slow in completing this, hence the delay in beginning the redesign. At the time of the review, it seems that the completion of these outputs depends on the cooperation of other line ministries with the on-going review process led by MoLISA (and largely supported by PRPP). The project NPD/Vice Minister of MoLISA emphasized to the MTE team that the redesign is a priority activity now for the GoVN, and for the project itself.

## **A Changing Poverty Context**

The context for poverty reduction in Vietnam is changing. Vietnam's success in reducing mass poverty is well documented, with the official poverty rate falling from 58% in 1992/93 to 13% in 2012. However progress has been uneven between groups and between regions. Thus ethnic minority poverty in 2012 was 50.6%, against the majority rate of just 7.5%. It is increasingly recognized too that poverty relates not just to income and consumption rates, but also to an



inability to attain a range of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) spanning different aspects of wellbeing and human development. Thus poverty is increasingly an issue of chronic ethnic minority under-development, which has multiple dimensions and causes. This reinforces the importance of adopting more holistic and multi-dimensional approaches to both monitoring and targeting persistent poverty in the future. At the same time, urban poverty is an increasing phenomenon as Vietnam urbanizes rapidly. Some people are also increasingly vulnerable to economic and climatic shocks, as a result of the global economic volatility that has affected the country since around 2007, and the effects of increased climate variability resulting from climate change, which renders them more susceptible to natural disasters. These changes are taking place within a context of increasing resource scarcity for the GoVN, as state planners struggle with declining state revenue rates. This means, for instance, there are fewer resources available for National Target Programmes (NTPs). At the same time too, funds available for poverty reduction from Development Partners (DPs) are also restricted, partly as a result of shrinking aid budgets, but also because Vietnam is less a priority for funding now as the country has attained Middle Income Country (MIC) status though at a low level.

### Changing Orientation of the Government of Vietnam in Light of These Changes in Context

All of these contextual factors have reshaped the priorities of the GoVN for the forthcoming period, though it is important to note that the commitment of both GoVN and DPs to poverty reduction remains undiminished. The first manifestation of this change in orientation is the increasing focus of the GoVN upon developing social assistance policies and a framework that is distinct from development support policies. The future relationship between social assistance (or social protection) and poverty reduction needs to be clearly defined to ensure poor people have both an adequate safety net and opportunities to access support to transform their wellbeing.

In the next phase of the GoVN's poverty reduction programme and policies, another important initiative is that there will be only two NTPs (reducing from the current number of 16 NTPs), for poverty reduction and rural development, and again the relationship between the two needs to be clearly defined, and areas of overlap and duplication removed. MDP will be the cornerstone of the next phase of poverty reduction work, but much still needs to be done to institutionalize and operationalize the approach. In the new context we are also seeing the emergence of shared results based frameworks and tools through which poverty reduction support will be delivered and measured. The Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework for Ethnic Minorities (MAFEM), The Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group (EMPWG) and the GoVN's Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) system are all important in this regard. All of these initiatives will be further developed in the next phase of the NTP on poverty reduction, and it seems that the GoVN will rely upon the PRPP project to provide support, facilitation and thought leadership in the development of this new programme.

### Relevance of Project Support to Date

**National level relevance:** In terms of the relevance of project support and modalities at the national level to date, the MTE found that the project supported a number of key, highly strategic activities of the GoVN and provided substantive technical support which significantly enhanced the quality of the results and outputs achieved. This was confirmed by GoVN, INGO and DP interviews. Examples include the Mid Term Review of the NTP-SPR, the National Assembly's Supreme Oversight, the development of an MDP approach for Vietnam, the development of MAFEM, the GoVN's RIM, and the high level annual policy dialogues that have taken place around ethnic minority poverty. The project was particularly successful in engaging a broad set of advisers to collaborate with the GoVN in these critical tasks. Thus the MTR was conducted with

the assistance of the INGO Oxfam and the Vietnam Academy of Social Science (VASS); the NA's Supreme Oversight and the MAFEM were also conducted under significant external TA supported by PRPP. This TA support, which considerably enhanced the quality of the reports and processes, is generally appreciated by the users of these activities, being respectively the Poverty Reduction Coordination Office (PRCO) of MoLISA, the NA's CSA, and CEMA.

**Sub-national relevance:** The relevance of the project at the local level was found to be less clear. PRPP is a technical assistance project intended to facilitate greater coherence and effectiveness in the delivery of poverty reduction support. The MTE found that, at the sub-provincial level in particular, many GoVN officers participating in the project did not have a firm grasp of this concept. Instead, the project was seen more as an investment vehicle like most other poverty reduction project working in the provinces. As the level of resources available for direct investment are limited (supporting demonstration effects in a small target area), the project was considered 'small' and thus of a low priority to some of these officers. The MTE also found limited progress to date in the project's objectives of local level mainstreaming of poverty reduction resources into line department's work, consolidation and targeting of resources upon areas of critical need partly due to lack of effective coordination led by MoLISA with other line departments. This is a very challenging task given the current institutional settings for poverty reduction of the country. Progress was also limited in terms of replication of innovative models of practice from past DP supported projects in the PRPP provinces (such as the block grant models of ISP in Quang Ngai province, or the PSARD project in Cao Bang province). In the field of poverty reduction, there is much work to be done in encouraging effective cooperation both horizontally (between line departments) and vertically (between levels of sub-provincial government, and between localities and the centre). The exception was Tra Vinh province, where effective institutional arrangements have been set up to enhance coordination and planning for poverty reduction, under a Standing Office for Poverty Reduction, and through the use of Poverty Reduction Masterplans. These innovations predated the establishment of the project in Tra Vinh, but the project has benefitted from them. MoLISA should consider the scaling up of this Tra Vinh model to other PRPP provinces. A strong role of the Provincial Steering Committee on Poverty Reduction, supported by an effective secretariat office would be essential to support innovations and best practices in poverty reduction at sub-national levels.

## Project Effectiveness and Efficiency

**Optimality of project support activities:** The project is supporting an important process of consolidating and rationalizing poverty reduction policies under Resolution 80, which has strong political support, and there is therefore a strong political imperative for ministries to participate. At the same time, the project attempts to ensure that activities conform closely to the workplans and priorities of respective ministries. This is a challenging setting of the PRPP project being a technical assistance support to encourage changes RP policies that are managed by different GoVN ministries and sub-national levels. To facilitate the changes expected, the PRPP project has little choices but providing TA to different stakeholders. There are a large number of participating partners in the project (both centrally and locally) and limited financial resources. Consequently, activities are spread relatively thinly between some of the participating line ministries and departments, with some for example receiving support for only one or two activities (interviews with MoET, MPI, MoJ). Thus whilst the support is effective and contributes to the partners efforts under Resolution 80, the support is limited and doesn't make a large contribution to the partners work. In addition to supporting some key line ministries, support was also extended to some policy discussions across different ministries toward harmonization of different guidelines for production support and infrastructure development under different programmes. Progress today is rather limited due to the complexity of this coordination but there are certainly some encouraging preliminary results, especially the growing consensus to have harmonization of

different guidelines from line ministries on each aspect of poverty reduction support. PRPP has not yet, however, created a critical mass for change, given that resources are spread relatively thinly. It should also be noted that the PRPP project is not a magic solution to address all issues in the areas of PR policies, which are oversight by different ministries. The PRPP has however been successful in finding some strategic entry points with the national partners and provide significant TA to facilitate the expected policy changes.

The project did achieve notable successes where it built upon the long standing work of previous UNDP, IA and DP support for poverty reduction, such as in delivering training in 'anthropological' approaches to EM development through CEMA; raising further awareness and delivering training around commune investment ownership and block grant models; and in championing MDP and supporting the development of MDP criteria and political support for MDP's future application; and contributing to a growing acceptance of some good practices such as block grant models. At the local level as discussed in the previous paragraph, the lack of clear understanding of the project's strategic, TA objectives complicated the ability of provinces to effect strategic policy changes and the consolidation of poverty reduction resources. Local level officers reported lacking the confidence to be able to experiment creatively in combining resources from different programmes and were restricted by the rigid regulations for each poverty reduction programme/policy which made fostering creative innovations difficult. Tra Vinh was noticeably different, because of the high level of political support at the provincial level for the consolidation and targeting of resources, and for master planning for poverty reduction.

**Optimality of technical assistance:** Technical assistance provided through the project took a number of different forms, and included the provision of technical experts to support strategic policy making by line ministries. This support included research, facilitation of consultation, technical guidance, and policy advice. It also included support to the development of institutional tools (such as the development of a results framework for the NTP-SPR, ethnic minority development monitoring system for CEMA), and support to consultation events and forums through which to discuss policy changes and research in a participatory manner (notably the NA's Supreme Oversight, MTR of NTP SPR, and the development of MAFEM). The MTE found that TA provided through the project generally significantly improved the quality of some key policy outputs and processes and so was value adding. project TA support also filled important gaps in the provision of GoVN services, which was the case with training for officials at the sub-provincial level in particular. How these gaps will be bridged by GoVN in the future, using their own resources, is an important question for the project to address in the next phase.

In regard to TA support, an important MTE finding was that many TA activities took a long time to complete, and a long time to be applied in the manner intended. Thus for example, some of the major TA support products developed with project support had still not been fully applied six months after completion. This was the case with the results framework of the NTP-SPR, the recommendations from the M&E report, the communication report recommendations, and the recommendations from the programme management and implementation study. One of the main reasons for this was that the GoVN end users of the products were not always involved in the process of developing the ToR and selecting consultants. There was consequently a lack of consensus and clarity over what was required from the consultants, and a lot of time was needed to resolve differences and ensure products met the needs of end users and those required by the original TOR. This caused delay in adopting the recommendations of some major TA work. One further important finding is that the network of consultants, researchers and NGOs that the project document envisaged would advise the project has not yet been set up (though there is an informal list used by the central PMU). Such a network would provide important, regular TA support (though a list of national consultants and researchers was established by PRPP and shared informally to other stakeholders on an ad hoc basis). A network of senior retired officials is established to advise the project, but it is doubtful whether this network would necessarily

provide the stimulus for innovation in TA that the project requires, especially taking into account the new context that Vietnam has not experienced before that casts a doubt on the usefulness of past experiences.

***Optimality of capacity building activities:*** Capacity building is a major focus of the project, with capacity building support premised upon increasing skills and awareness, changing attitudes and beliefs of GoVN officials and eventually changing practices to enhance the quality of services delivered to the poor. The training activities were well received, with sub-national officials noting that the training enabled them to be more effective, and more participatory trainers. On the part of poor beneficiaries of capacity building support, their enhanced skills and awareness will improve their technical capacity, but also their ability to participate more and demand better services from the government. Building capacity is a long-term objective which takes time to achieve. The project adopted Training of Trainer (ToT) and Farmer Field School (FFS) methods, which appeared to be effective in delivering support to an estimated number of around 11,500 poor men and women of the 18 ethnic groups that were the beneficiaries in the target areas, through 'learning by doing' approaches. The number of courses offered and the number of beneficiaries (both GoVN officials and poor beneficiaries) was small compared to the target areas of the eight PRPP provinces, however, and thus had limited impact, and as discussed above, there are scarce resources available for capacity building through the regular GoVN budget, so opportunities for replication of the project models are limited. Some GoVN participants in the training also noted that they didn't have many opportunities to apply what they had learnt in their regular work.

***Effectiveness in fostering innovation and strategic change:*** The project worked well when supporting activities that aligned closely with the needs of partners, but was less effective in brokering pathways for action when the institutional interests of line ministries were not closely aligned, which is however justifiable. This was illustrated in the slow progress in establishing the implementation arrangements for the NTP-SPR, where a number of line ministries had their own separate regulations for implementing sub-project activities (i.e. under P135, NTP-NRD, Programme 30a). The project aims at harmonizing these regulations but being a catalyst for such concerted efforts of different line ministries is not easy. Similarly at the sub-national level, encouraging cooperation between line departments and the projects for which they are separately responsible has proved difficult (as evidenced in Bac Kan and Quang Ngai during MTE field visits). At the sub-provincial level there is strong pressure to distribute resources evenly, rather than 'target' them effectively to the areas where they are most needed, and sub-national officials don't feel empowered enough to be able to experiment innovatively with programme resources. In a context where more than 70% of the provincial budget often comes from the centre, the scope for autonomous action by sub-national government and their officers is limited, though Tra Vinh province proved to be an exception. In all of the project provinces, 'block grant' models had been established, but they didn't appear to conform to the classic, or 'ideal typical' block grant model, where a participatory planning process identified what communities wanted or most needed. Rather, the livelihood models for individual households adopted were heavily influenced by the district and province, with all provinces adopting some forms of cow or calf raising model, which could be best described as good livelihood support models rather than 'block grants'.

***Project management, utilization of resources and ways of working:*** DP, line ministry and project staff interviewees described the project as over-ambitious in scope, given the limited staff resources available, and this is also the view of the MTE team. With a broad span of activities and project partners, the staff of the project at both national and local levels are fully occupied with administering and coordinating activities, and have little scope to provide more structured and consistent technical input and support. As discussed above, the intended network of consultants and advisers to support the project has been established in a limited form but does not yet

operate on a regular basis to support the project. Much more consistent TA support is therefore needed, particularly to support sub-national activities. The project has made good progress in implementing activities but a few key activities have been rolled over through successive workplans, and may not now be completed: this is the case particularly with the planned Masters degree programme for GoVN officials which the project was to support (though the prolonged discussion on the usage of this funding was the direct cause of this delay).

Provinces also highlighted that the disbursement of project funds often comes late in the Quarter, though this is a consequence of the need for all partners to submit past quarterly reports on time in order that the next quarter funds can be released: late reporting by some partners delays the disbursement of all funds. This late disbursement was then translated into some difficulties in implementing the planned activities. In terms of annual work planning, provincial plans in the three provinces visited are heavily influenced by the centre. It is important to ensure a balance between local level initiatives and ensuring activities are sufficiently 'strategic' and the project's work planning process for 2014 appeared to the MTE team to be appropriate in this regard. It involved a series of workshops and discussions, and thus provided a potentially good model for future work planning. The project has some useful monitoring and evaluation tools but lacks an integrated system to utilize these tools strategically. Consequently the project is not well placed to assess (or show) the contribution it makes to affecting results and policy changes. Monitoring is usually seen as a tool for surveillance rather than to provide evidence for result-based management.

**Project partnerships:** The project has been successful in building upon successful past partnerships, with DPs, the National Assembly and line ministries, and in developing new partnerships, for example with INGO's as direct partners supporting project activities. In relation to the NA, the Committee of Social Affairs and Ethnic Council are now important collaborators and partners of the project: their engagement with the project has grown as their influence in poverty reduction policy processes has increased, highlighting the importance of the project to the GoVN's poverty reduction work. The project was described to the MTE team as an important 'bridge', enabling line ministries, MoLISA in particular, to engage effectively with other ministries and GoVN stakeholders. IA-UNDP co-chaired EM Poverty Working Group was also seen as an important partnership mechanism supported partly by PRPP. Partnership with other PR projects operating in the eight provinces was also developed by PRPP, for instance the collaboration with the WB-supported Northern Mountain Poverty Reduction Phase II (NMPPR2), Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project (GNTN), SDC-supported Public Services Provision for Agriculture and Rural Development (PSARD), and some other initiatives supported by INGOs, to facilitate experience sharing and innovations.

## Project Impacts

At the halfway point in the project cycle it is clear that the project has contributed significantly to the GoVN's objectives in implementing Resolution 80. The policy review process is largely complete and the project is well placed to help the GoVN achieve the objectives of Resolution 80 if rapid progress can be made in 2015 in redesigning the next phase of poverty reduction policies and programmes. The project is also well positioned to support the GoVN in developing a Masterplan for MDP in 2015 and the MAFEM which are priorities of both the GoVN and project. In regard to the NTP-SPR, the project has impacted only modestly upon its implementation to date, given that many of the activities to develop or harmonize NTP-SPR instructions have taken a long time to complete, or remain ongoing in the case of harmonizing production support and infrastructure regulations of line ministries across different components of the programme. The project has also not yet impacted significantly in harmonizing and targeting sub-national resources more effectively, or replicating innovative models of practice through the NTP-SPR, though the complex institutional context (as discussed above) lends a reasonable explanation for

this limited impact to date. It is also noted that given the complexity of the project and slow progress in the early stage, many of the key PRPP activities were actually taken place and/or completed just before the mid point. Hence, the project impacts are potentially higher than what found at the mid term, especially the impacts of the PRPP support to reviewing PR policies, adaptation of MDP in the next programming for PR policies.

## Prospects for Project Sustainability

The project's results are closely linked to some key policy and practice changes of the GoVN and government officials and they therefore have a strong prospect of sustainability as the project is already embedded in the GoVN system. In terms of policy change, the policy environment is now supportive of the objectives of Resolution 80 (and the project has contributed significantly to this end) but sustainability depends upon how far the critical aspects of MDP, policy mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies and consolidation of resources in poor areas can be built into the next generation poverty reduction policies and programme for the period 2016 onwards, and embedded into sub-national practice through local-level SEDPs. The project's capacity building activities are designed to effect practice changes amongst GoVN officers and behaviours of poor beneficiaries and these are long-term ambitions which require the GoVN to continue to support them beyond the scope of the project through the mainstream system, if they are to be sustainable.

In terms of enacting changes in cultures of participation, the project has delivered training in participatory planning and introduced initiatives to support greater participation of poor people and EMs in particular, most notably local level policy forums. Participatory consultation was also found as a part of many important policy reviews such as MTR for NTP SPR or the development of the MAFEM. However, an observation from the MTE team is that much of the participatory practice still appears to be at the consultation level, which is a low level of participation, rather than genuine participation. Top down and hierarchical decision making traditions are strong and difficult to overcome. This is also notably the case in terms of the greater participation and empowerment of women in poverty reduction processes and activities, which is an important objective of the project. Quantitative reporting of women's attendance in trainings and events supported by the project is positive, with women often attending in equal numbers to men. But women themselves reported that they still face very real barriers to participation, in the form of entrenched patriarchal views amongst male village residents and local officials. Ethnic minority women are particularly disadvantaged in this regard.

## Recommendations

Based upon the key findings, the MTE team has the following recommendations to the project (presented here in summary form, with the full narrative in the main report):

### ***Focus support upon the design of the next generation of poverty reduction policies after 2015:***

- 1) Focus attention and resources upon supporting the redesign of policies and programmes for poverty reduction for the next phase of poverty reduction programming after 2015;
- 2) Support the design of a policy framework to maximise synergies and avoid overlaps between policies and programmes for poverty reduction, social assistance, and rural development;
- 3) Strengthen the coordination and oversight roles of MoLISA and CEMA in PR policy making and supervision of PR policies, PR for ethnic minorities;
- 4) Support the institutionalization of the MDP approach through developing the MDP Masterplan and a legal framework for operationalizing the MDP approach. Ideally, this

institutionalization of the MDP approach should be made in relation to the next programming of PR policies;

- 5) Provide support to develop a platform for partnership between the GoVN and DPs in the next phase NTP SPR and implementation of MDP approach in the future PR policies.

***Focus support upon the integration of PR resources and the further development and institutionalization of innovative poverty reduction models at the sub-national level:***

- 6) Strengthen the capacity of PRPP pilot provinces to consolidate and integrate poverty reduction resources and target chronic poverty more effectively. To ensure success with limited resources and within a short timeframe, this should be prioritized to some potentially 'champion' provinces (such as Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai). In addition, collaboration with other PR projects in the PRPP provinces, especially NMPP2, GNTN, IA support to P135 communes, or IFAD-supported projects is recommended to leverage on these significant resources and promote experience sharing and cooperation toward a synergy;
- 7) Institutionalize best practice models for poverty reduction in block grant development (in a more conventional meaning of block grant), commune investment ownership and participatory SEDP planning);
- 8) Consider piloting results-based funding allocation in PRPP provinces (to improve efficiency and effectiveness, accountability and transparency). This is a challenging task in the current context but would be important demonstration of result-based management for the next programming of PR policies;

***Further enhance the capacity of poverty reduction officers and local people (and women in particular) to increase their agency in, and sense of ownership of the poverty reduction process:***

- 9) Intensify the project's capacity building efforts with local officials and local people through clearly linking capacity building support to other ongoing activities of the project;
- 10) Continue to facilitate better understanding of the project's strategic, technical assistance objective amongst local officials and local people;
- 11) Build the sense of ownership of local people of GoVN resources and programmes (through supporting participatory planning, M&E and building on the successes of local policy forums);
- 12) Promote the participation of women in poverty reduction processes through having an explicit gendered target for each project activity that goes beyond the number of women that attend a course or meeting.

***Concentrate effort and resources on developing more effective communication and advocacy between the project's central level and sub-provincial levels:***

- 13) Support activities that strengthen the ability of provinces to advocate for policy change to the national level, (through supporting their research, documentation, dissemination and advocacy capacity of good practice, and further developing networking and experience sharing activities). This is to strengthen the link between the national and sub-national levels in fostering policy changes, which was found relatively weak in practice.

***Strengthen and improve project activities and work planning processes:***

- 14) Consolidate and reduce the number of activities at both central and sub-national levels and focus upon key strategic activities that are clustered, or joined up, either to other national level activities, or to sub-national ones, and which can effect a 'critical mass' for change;

- 15) Improve the provision of Technical Assistance to sub-national PMU's in particular, who require better TA support to produce better quality outputs and processes (through for example the network of consultants, INGOs and researchers envisaged in the PD);
- 16) Ensure the end users of project TA are fully involved in identifying the output expected from the project TA during the ToR drafting process;
- 17) Strengthen the M&E system to ensure the project is operating at the requisite strategic level by deciding on a very selective list of key performance indicators for monitoring and at the same time, simplifying the current reporting requirements – which are relatively surveillance-oriented.



## 1. Introduction

This Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) of the Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) project took place in November 2014. The project is designed to run between 2012 and 2016 and is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Vietnam and Irish Aid (IA) in Vietnam. The National Implementing Partner (NIP) for the project is Vietnam's Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA), and the national Co-Implementing Partner (CIP) the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). There are eight additional CIPs: the provinces of Bac Kan, Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Kon Tum, Quang Ngai, Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh.

This introductory section of the evaluation will first discuss the key national policy and programme initiatives that the project is seeking to support. It will then discuss the PRPP project as designed, the stakeholders involved in the project, and the project's intended model of change. The final introductory section will discuss the legacy of support to poverty reduction upon which the project is built.

Following the introduction, section 2 discusses the evaluation and the methodology. This is followed in section 3 by a detailed assessment of the project's outputs and outcome's to date against the anticipated results in the project document and successive workplans. Section 4 discusses the continued relevance of the project in the light of changes in the context, the project's efficiency and effectiveness, impact and prospects for future sustainability. Section 5 presents conclusions in terms of lessons learnt and recommendations for the project for the future.

### 1.1 Resolution 80 and the National Target Programme for Sustainable Poverty Reduction

The purpose of the PRPP project is to support the implementation of the GoVN Resolution 80/NQ-CP, which sets the direction for sustainable poverty reduction in the period 2011-2020, and the National Target Programme for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP SPR), 2012-2015.

Resolution 80/NQ-CP dated 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011 sets the direction for poverty reduction in the country during the period 2011-2020. It broadly establishes policy objectives; target beneficiaries and coverage areas for poverty reduction; support policies; and implementation arrangements for poverty reduction support. The Resolution recognises the successes of Vietnam's poverty reduction efforts to date but also highlights some continuing restraints as follows:

*'a majority of people moving out of poverty remain close to the poverty line, there is a high incidence of annual poverty relapsing, wide rich-poor gaps amongst regions and resident groups, harsh livelihoods of the poor, particularly those in mountainous, ethnic areas, and the sustainability of poverty elimination remains a question.'* (Resolution 80, Page 1)<sup>1</sup>

Resolution 80 was followed by the establishment of a National Steering Committee on Sustainable Poverty Reduction in the period 2011-2020, through Decision 705/QD-TTg, dated 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012. This steering committee has responsibility for guiding the implementation of poverty reduction efforts. Decision 705 (and the subsequent Decision 104/QD-BCDGNBV, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2012) established a central office on poverty reduction, based at MoLISA, to support the work of the Committee. This office, the Poverty Reduction Coordination Office (PRCO), is a critical user of the PRPP project's support.

The NTP-SPR 2012-2015 was established under decision 1489/QD-TTg, dated 8<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

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<sup>1</sup> The Decision on the approval of the action plan framework for the implementation of Resolution 80 was issued just prior to the PRPP project starting, through Decision 1200/QD-TTg, dated 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012.

The general objective of the programme is stated as the following:

*'Gradually improve and enhance living conditions for the poor, especially in mountainous, ethnic minority areas; create strong and comprehensive movements in poverty reduction in poor areas; reduce gaps in living standards between urban and rural areas, among regions, ethnicities and groups of the population.'* (Decision 1489, Page 2).

The Decision sets targets for poverty reduction, identifies beneficiaries and outlines implementation arrangements. It also establishes four sub-projects under the programme, as follows:

- Project 1: to support construction of infrastructure in poor districts, most disadvantaged communes in coastal areas and islands:
  - Sub-component 1 – to support construction of infrastructure in poor districts;<sup>2</sup>
  - Sub-component 2 – to support construction of infrastructure in the most disadvantaged communes in coastal and island areas;
- Project 2: to support construction of infrastructure in the most disadvantaged communes, frontier communes, safe zone communes and most disadvantaged villages.
- Project 3: develop and replicate poverty reduction models
- Project 4: support capacity building, communication and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of the implementation.

MoLISA has lead responsibility for the implementation of project's 1, 3 and 4, whilst CEMA has the responsibility for project 2, in the predominately upland and ethnic minority areas of the country. This follows the implementation of the Programme 135 by CEMA through two phases, 2001-2005 and 2006-2010. P135 focused upon support to poor ethnic minority communes throughout the country and CEMA refers to Project 2 of the NTP-SPR as 'P135'.<sup>3</sup> This was then recognized by the GoVN under Decision 551/QD-TTg (dated 04/04/2013), whereby CEMA has responsibility for infrastructure development and production support in the most disadvantaged communes under P135.

## **1.2 The Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) Project as Designed**

The PRPP project is intended to support the implementation of Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR towards the GoVN's goal of accelerated poverty reduction in the poorest ethnic minority, mountainous and coastal regions of the country. PRPP project support is intended to enhance the quality of the poverty reduction programmes designed and delivered by the NIP and CIPs, and foster policy dialogue on tackling chronic poverty and vulnerability, through providing value-adding technical assistance..

In addition to supporting Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR, the project also supports the GoVN's development and institutionalization of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty reduction (MDP), along with supporting policy discussions on tackling poverty and vulnerability more effectively in the future, through making programmes more inclusive and pro-poor, and through promoting better equality outcomes in poverty reduction programmes and policies.

The overall purpose of the project is also to support the United Nations One Plan outcome 1.1, output 1.1.3 whereby multi-dimensional approaches and human development are applied in poverty reduction components of Socio Economic Development Plans (SEDPs) at central and local

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<sup>2</sup> As set out in the targets under Resolution 30a/2008/NQ-CP, 27 December 2008, to support the poorest 62 districts of the country.

<sup>3</sup> P135-II had three components: infrastructure, support to agricultural production, and capacity building. Infrastructure though was the largest component. Project 2 of the NTP-SPR only covers infrastructure development in upland areas.

levels in order to effectively address chronic poverty and emerging forms of poverty. The project process is presented diagrammatically in Figure 1 on the following page.

***Project support is structured around three key anticipated project outputs:***

Output 1: Poverty reduction policies under the responsibility of line ministries are streamlined, and poverty reduction is mainstreamed into line ministries' plans and policies, in which activities and investment resources for poor districts and poor communes are prioritized to accelerate poverty reduction in these areas.

Output 2: The NTP-SPR is designed and implemented effectively, contributing to rapid poverty reduction in poorest districts, communes and villages and of ethnic minority people through the application of innovative modalities and approaches in terms of (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities and people in formulation, implementation and management of the programme at local level; (ii) anthropological approaches and modalities relevant to the particular features, cultures, traditions and knowledge of local ethnic minority people/ target groups of the programme; (iii) strengthening market linkages and accessibility, promoting gender equality, environmental sustainability and addressing poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective.

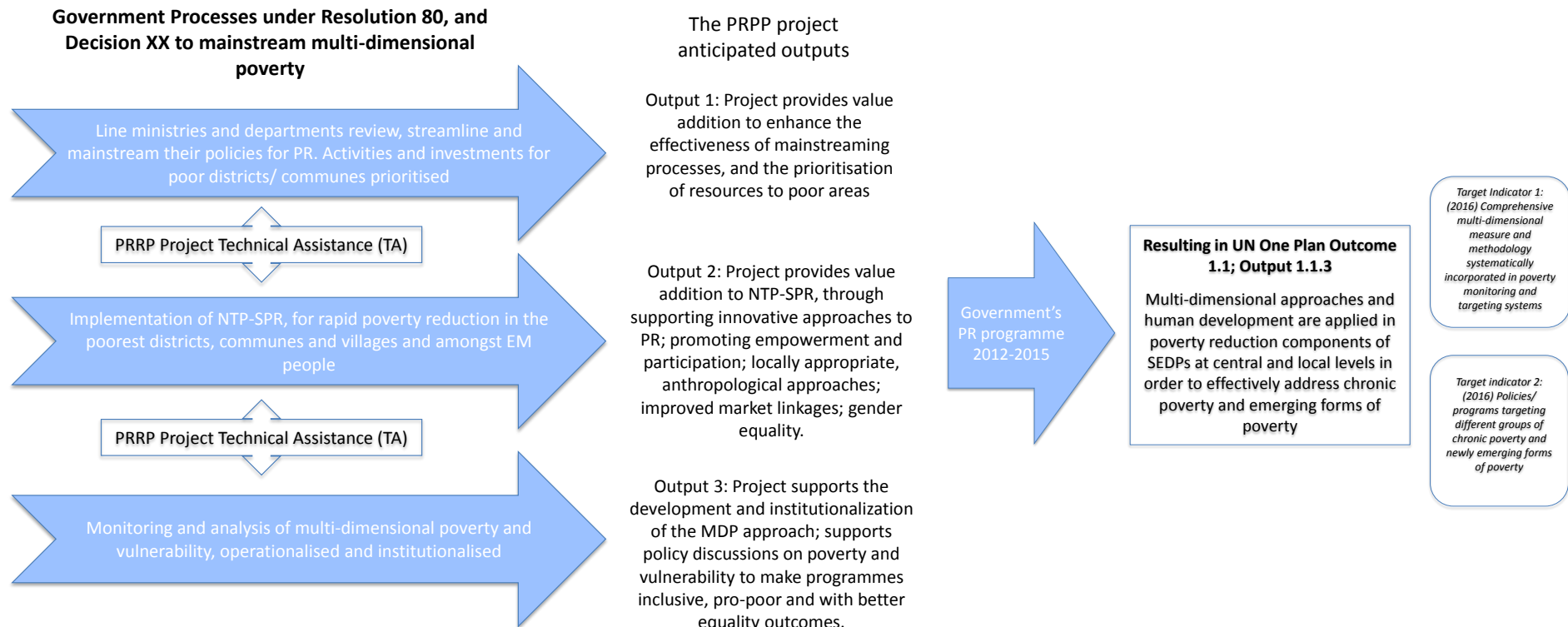
Output 3: System for monitoring and analysis of MDP and vulnerability situation and trends is operational and institutionalized; policy discussions on poverty and vulnerability contribute to improved policies and development programmes for inclusive, pro-poor development with better equality outcomes.

### **1.3 PRPP Project stakeholders**

In addition to the PRPP NIP and CIPs, there are also a number of other stakeholders with whom the PRPP project is engaged. The project is predicated upon a model of change whereby poverty reduction becomes a cross-cutting responsibility of all governmental agencies, in line with the multi-dimensional nature of poverty. The goal of the project to consolidate resources and accelerate poverty reduction in the critical areas of the country where poverty remains deeply entrenched also requires coordinated action, amongst national agencies and with sub-national authorities too. The active cooperation of a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders with the project, and their participation in project activities, is therefore critical to the long term success of the project in meeting its goals and anticipated outputs. (See Figure 2 for a diagram of project stakeholders). These stakeholders can be broadly grouped under the headings Governmental partners, and development partners.

Governmental partners encompass both national line ministry agencies and bodies, and sub-national authorities. The following national governmental agencies are envisaged as being key partners in the implementation, and are also listed under Decision 1200 (i.e. policy action plan for the implementation of Resolution 80) as being key agencies that must be engaged for the successful implementation of Resolution 80:

**Figure 1: The PRPP Project Process, 2012-2016**



National Assembly (NA) – Committee for Social Affairs (CSA) and the Ethnic Council (EC): The National Assembly is becoming an increasingly important and influential actor in national politics and both the CSA and EC have been keen participants and beneficiaries from some technical assistance by UNDP in the past (for example through a poverty policy mapping study conducted by UNDP and the CSA in 2009, and the organisation of high level policy forums with the Ethnic Council, through UNDP's EMPCD project). Both the CSA and EC play a key oversight role in monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of national policies. The Ethnic Council works closely with CEMA and both the CSA and EC are important beneficiaries of PRPP project support.

MoLISA (PRCO): The PRCO advises the GoVN's Poverty Reduction Steering Committee and is under the line management of the Vice Minister of MoLISA responsible for poverty reduction, who is also the National Project Director (NPD) of the PRPP project. The PRCO is a key user of PRPP, with much of the technical assistance provided by the project channeled through PRCO in support of its work.

MoLISA (Social Protection Department - SPD): Resolution 80 sets out to mainstream poverty reduction within the regular work of line ministries and one of the early successes were Resolutions 15 and 70 which separated social assistance policies from poverty reduction policies and placed them under the remit of MoLISA's SPD. UNDP is also providing support to MoLISA's SPD through the project 'Support to the Reform of Social Assistance Policies' (SAP). In fact the project shares an office space, staff resources and the Deputy National Project Director (DNPD) with PRPP. The PRPP project supported social assistance activities with SPD before the SAP project was established and the two projects continue to work closely together.

Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA): CEMA has the broad remit to develop policies for the protection and development of ethnic minorities, and is also responsible for the important project 2 under the NTP-SPR, for infrastructure development in ethnic minority areas (the P135). Two agencies of CEMA are closely involved in the project: the Ethnic Minority Policy Department and the P135 Office.

Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD): MARD is responsible for providing support to agriculture, forestry and fisheries and has an extensive network of extension offices throughout the country. Given the importance of agriculture in rural livelihoods in poor areas MARD's involvement in the PRPP project is critical. MARD is also the lead agency for the NTP for a 'New Rural Development', which provides substantial resources for rural development and is the masterplan for rural development planning in the country.

Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI): MPI has responsibility for issuing regulations for NTPs and for monitoring their implementation and effectiveness on behalf of the GoVN. MPI is a critical PRPP project partner given the primary role it plays in designing and regulating the policy architecture. MPI is also important as the NIP for the World Bank's two large poverty reduction projects, in the Northern Mountains and the Central Highlands. Both of these projects are important to the PRPP project in that the project seeks to complement the World Bank's models for poverty reduction in these two regions and leverage the World Bank project's resources in order to meet the PRPP objectives.

Ministry of Finance (MoF): Provides guidance and management on the use of the national budget and financial resources. The PRPP project seeks to introduce new methods of allocating funds to sub-national levels, particularly through advocating for a block grant method of funding and medium term funding allocation mechanisms. MoF is critical to the reform of these sub-national funding mechanisms.

Ministry of Education and Training (MoET): MoET is responsible for the provision of national education services, and also for policies on providing teachers for schools in poor areas and the exemption of ethnic minority students from tuition fees. These are critical policies in poor, ethnic minority areas.

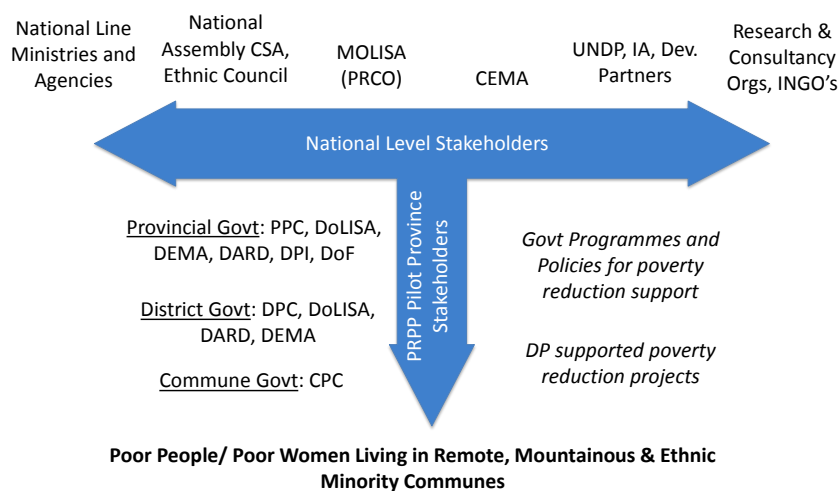
Ministry of Justice (MoJ): MoJ is responsible for coordinating the issuing of all new legislation and policies. MoJ is a critical actor in the policy review process, necessary before any reform of policies under Resolution 80 can take place, and in the issuing of new laws, policies and regulations.

Sub-national agencies and departments (Provincial People's Committee's, DoLISA, DEMA, DARD): The PRPP project is being implemented in cooperation with eight provinces from around the country. In each of these provinces there is a poverty reduction steering committee at the provincial level, headed by a vice chairman of the Provincial People's Committee. The project sits with provincial DOLISA and includes DEMA and other provincial agencies, along with district DOLISA, DEMA and line departments too. At the commune level the project is implemented under the direction of the Commune People's Committee along with commune level staff.

There are a range of Development Partners (DPs) engaged in the PRPP project. UNDP and Irish Aid are the principle funders and managers of the project, and both have a long-standing commitment to the GoVN's goals for poverty reduction in the country. They were key members of the development partnership between GoVN and DPs through the P135-II, which also included other DPs such as the World Bank, DFID, SDC, AusAID (now DFAT), Finland, the European Union and other UN agencies such as IFAD and UNICEF. These other DPs are no longer involved in supporting the national poverty reduction programmes through financial support, but remain committed to providing other forms of support, particularly through participation in the UNDP/Irish Aid co-chaired Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group (EMPWG). This working group was set up to support the sub-theme of ethnic minority poverty under the Vietnam Development Partnership Forum (VDPF) in 2013. The VDPF is the main partnership forum between the GoVN and international DPs.

Finally, international (such as Oxfam, Helvetas, Care, Caritas) and national NGO's and research and consultancy organisations are partners for the project, providing technical assistance, models of innovative practices, and participate in the national policy forums with the GoVN that the PRPP project facilitates.

Figure 2: PRPP Project Stakeholders



## 1.4 The Project's anticipated changes, and how change will happen

The Project Document identifies a number of critical changes that the GoVN wishes to enact in poverty reduction programmes and policies, which the PRPP project seeks to support.

- 1) Firstly, 'piloting the block grant model in the NTP SPS in poor areas and bringing poverty

*reduction initiatives nearer to essential demands of as well as strengthening empowerment of poor people’;*

- 2) Secondly, *‘shifting the responsibility of poverty reduction to become the regular responsibility of line ministries and sectors’;*
- 3) Thirdly *‘pilot the new/innovative approaches and models for poverty reduction programme and policies, for example block grant, cash transfer aimed at enhanced empowerment, decentralization and participation of local authorities and people’.*

In addition to these key GoVN priorities, the Project Document identifies the following ‘emerging development issues’ which the project will seek to address:

- 1) Mainstreaming poverty reduction policies into the regular system of the GoVN and developing special targeted poverty reduction policies. This process includes reviewing and simplifying existing policies, mainstreaming the policies into the regular work of line ministries, prioritizing effort and resources in the most disadvantaged areas, and studying and developing new policies for the 2011-2020 period;
- 2) Applying innovative and flexible approaches for accelerating rapid and sustainable poverty reduction;
- 3) Enhancing pilot-testing and replication of best practices, through strengthening decentralization and empowerment and to encourage the poor’s active engagement in the socio-economic development and capacity building processes. Examples include block grants, Commune Development Fund (CDF), Commune Investment Ownership (CIO), Citizen Report Cards (CRC), and other initiatives already successfully piloted elsewhere. In particular the project seeks to apply block grant models and conditional cash transfers, which have successfully been delivered in other developing countries;
- 4) Building capacity in organizational management and implementation of poverty reduction programmes at all levels, particularly at grass-roots level and for poor people. In particular the document highlights the need for ‘Enhancement of effective cooperation, information channel and policy dialogues among ministries, sectors and localities, researchers, related development partners and the poor themselves’;
- 5) Applying MDP approach in targeting and monitoring, including in improving the monitoring system for people living in poverty;
- 6) Better understanding the situation whereby people quickly fall back into poverty and are increasingly susceptible to vulnerability in the context of economic instability and climate change;
- 7) Developing and operating the M&E system for poverty reduction policies, programmes and monitoring poverty and vulnerability; and
- 8) Gender mainstreaming and promoting better equity outcomes, in order to ensure the participation of women in designing, implementing, managing and monitoring the implementation of poverty reduction policies and programmes and to ensure their equal access to services and support from these policies and programmes.

Through these activities, it is envisaged that the PRPP project will make poverty reduction policies and programmes more inclusive, more sustainable, more impactful, and more empowering for ethnic minority people and women in particular. These changes will be enacted through the PRPP project’s provision of technical assistance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The 2010 HPPMG manual describes a technical assistance project as one that is: *‘aimed at supporting capacity building and institutional development or providing technical inputs for the preparation,*

Technical assistance, as we have seen in the PRPP project, is the provision of value-adding support to the activities of GoVN staff and institutions, and to poor people, to enhance the impact of poverty reduction policies and programmes. Under the PRPP project, technical assistance takes the following forms:

- Capacity building support: Formal training, skills development and mentoring of national and local officials and local people to enhance their ability to undertake tasks;
- Development of systems and tools to facilitate organisational capacity building, through for example the GoVN's Rapid Impact Monitoring system, the AMT/PMT monitoring system of the P135;
- Research: Research, information collection and dissemination to improve the knowledge pool about poverty challenges, policy and programme impacts, and alternative scenarios and trajectories through which poverty reduction impacts can be enhanced;
- Development and dissemination of innovative poverty reduction models and experiences: Both experimentation with different, alternative models for poverty reduction, and the documentation and dissemination of existing alternative models that have already been applied and which show potential to be further mainstreamed in the GoVN poverty reduction system;
- Support to and facilitation of policy forums, information sharing and discussion: Provision of technical expertise and organisation of events to discuss and disseminate information, research and experience in alternative policy approaches and new modalities for conceptualizing and tackling poverty, including through study tours. In addition, local level forums to enhance the participation of poor people in poverty policy processes which can also hold higher level, sub-national officials accountable for poverty reduction impacts.

The Project Document anticipates this support will be provided through the project by the following key actors:

- Professional consultants and experts (national and international) mobilised on short-term contracts through the project;
- Project office staff: national and provincial technical coordinators;
- International project staff: the PRPP specialist in management and implementation, and the UNDP policy adviser;
- Senior and retired GoVN staff experts;
- Standing groups of consultant and research institutes at both national and provincial levels to provide technical assistance through the project.

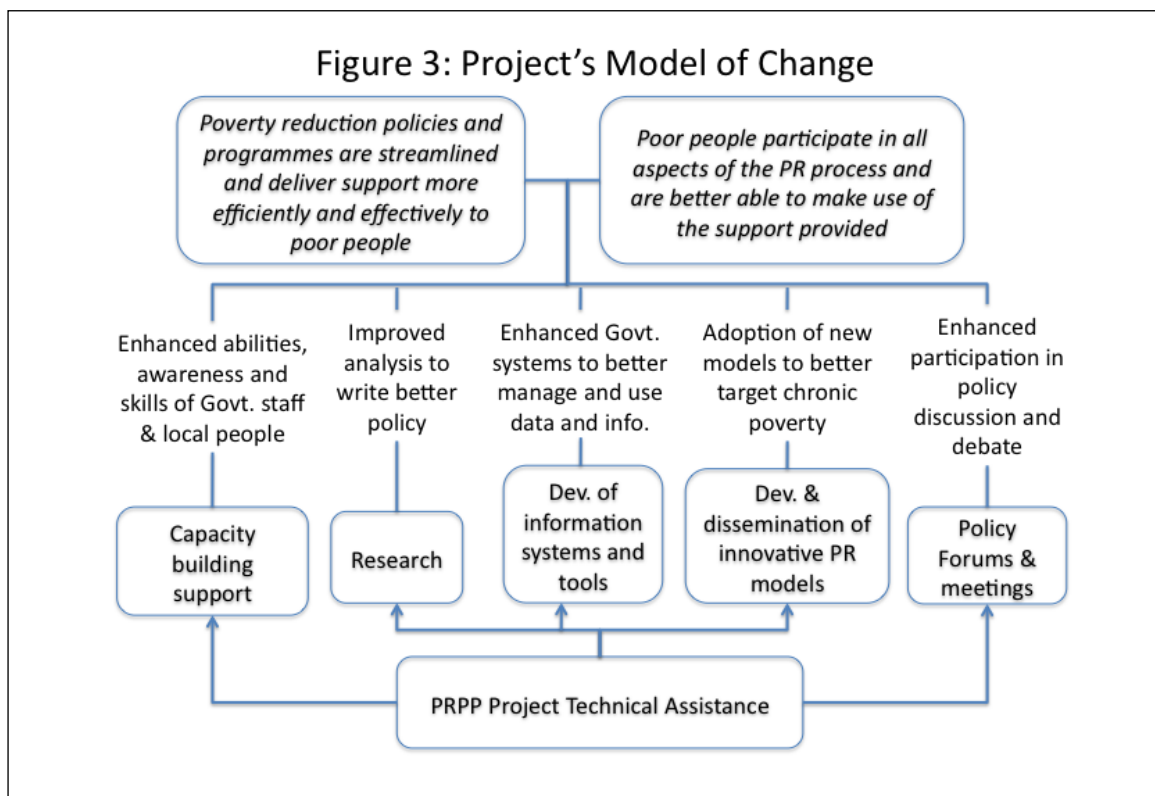
The anticipated model of change under the PRPP project is represented in Figure 3. Value adding technical assistance will enhance the skills and capacities of GoVN staff and of the poor to make better use of the resources available; enhanced quality of research will provide better information for more strategic and visionary policy making, and better accountability for the resources being used; the adoption of new and innovative poverty reduction models will enhance both the effectiveness and sustainability of poverty reduction support; and enhanced participation in policy forums and meetings will improve the transparency and inclusiveness of decision making, providing enhanced opportunities in particular for poor women and ethnic minority people to

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*implementation of programmes/projects through the provision of expertise, training, equipment, supplies, data and documentation, study tours, workshops and seminars' (HPPMG 2010, p14). The manual goes on to say that technical assistance 'in turn helps enhance national capacities and achieve national development goals' (p.18).*



participate in the socio-economic development process. Critically, the PRPP project is envisaged as a **catalyst for change**: a conduit through which new and innovative approaches to poverty reduction that have been tried around the country can be further mainstreamed into the GoVN system; and a catalyst around which existing (DP-supported) projects and GoVN-led programme resources (component projects of the NTP-SPR, NTP NRD and other provincial programmes) can



be consolidated and directed towards critical areas of need.

### 1.5 Project legacy and the context in which the project was designed

The PRPP project builds upon a long legacy of support and cooperation in poverty reduction between UNDP, Irish Aid, other DPs and the GoVN. This legacy of support is a critical factor in this evaluation as it shapes the context in which the project takes place. The project's goals and objectives are ambitious and rely heavily upon the ability of the project to work closely with GoVN policy makers in effecting critical policy changes. Close working relationships and mutual trust have been built over a long period of time between the DPs and key actors within the GoVN that make these objectives more attainable than if the PRPP project had started without this legacy of material support, policy discussion and debate.

UNDP supported MOLISA in implementing the NTP for Poverty Reduction (NTP-PR), the precursor to the NTP-SPR, through the Project VIE 02-001. UNDP also supported CEMA's P135 Phase II through the same project, and provided policy development and capacity building support to CEMA from 2008 to 2012 through another project, the Ethnic Minority Policy and Capacity Development (EMPCD). Crucially, these project's contributed to the current poverty reduction policy framework, for instance the critical support provided to both MolISA and the National Assembly during the process of developing Resolution 80.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> One of the most influential inputs to this process was the UNDP study mapping the large number of overlapping policies for poverty reduction, published in 2009, which was extensively discussed, debated and

Irish Aid supported CEMA's P135-II throughout the implementation period 2006-11 and was an active member of the Development Partnership for the P135, which established a policy matrix of agreed policy changes and actions through which the DP's financial contributions to P135-II were tied. Irish Aid has subsequently developed a further programme of support to P135 (project 3 of the NTP-SPR) in the period 2012-15, which provides additional funds (through targeted budget support) for infrastructure development in P135 communes.

The previous period of support to the NTP-PR and P135-II was productive in generating lessons from models of innovative practice, which the PRPP project is seeking to build upon. Notable practice models for replication include the following:

- Commune Investment Ownership (CIO) models. P135-II institutionalized the commune level as the owner of small-scale infrastructure under the programme, which was a significant development that enhanced accountability and ensured local infrastructure investment was appropriate to local needs, and was more sustainable in the long term as communes assumed responsibility for the investment. CIO in turn built upon a long legacy of DP supported project initiatives to decentralise responsibility and ownership to the commune level;
- Block grant models. Although neither P135-II or the NTP-PR had a block grant component as such, many DP supported projects (for example the AusAid ISP Quang Ngai project, Irish Aid's support to VOICE project in Bac Kan and the World Bank's Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project Phase 2) did and experience from these projects was widely disseminated to policy makers through policy forums and the Partnership Committee of P135-II;
- Citizen Report Cards. P135-II introduced the concept of Citizen Report Cards at the local level, a critical initiative in improving transparency and accountability. Lessons learnt from the P135-II experience were rolled over into the PRPP design;
- Multi-Dimensional Poverty (MDP) approaches. Dialogue over the adoption of MDP as an approach to conceptualizing poverty, to replace the unitary income/consumption based approach, has been a long standing feature of policy discussions between GoVN and DPs. DPs have provided technical assistance and study tours to view best practice from overseas for GoVN policy makers, and UNICEF has worked closely with MoLISA, CEMA and other stakeholders in the past in developing its child poverty index using the MDP approach. The PRPP's support to the GoVN's ongoing development of MDP reflects and builds upon this long legacy of support.

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cited, particularly by the National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs (CSA). This study was undertaken in close collaboration with the VIE 02-001 project.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Evaluation Objectives

The objectives of the mid-term evaluation (MTE) are clearly stated in the Terms of Reference:

*‘The main objectives of the independent project mid-term evaluation are to (i) analyse possible changes in the context until the end of the project period by 2016 and assess the relevance of the project, (ii) assess the progress towards achieving the project’s results, the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation’.*

*‘Lessons learned will be drawn from previous implementation and recommendations should be made for the NIP and UNDP/Irish Aid to take actions to ensure greater relevance, effectiveness and efficiency and sustainability of the project in the remainder of the project cycle’.*

### 2.2 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation framework: In order to meet these objectives the evaluation team developed an Evaluation Framework at the beginning of the assignment (see Annex 1). The evaluation framework follows closely the guidance issued by UNDP for the conduct of evaluations, most notably the Evaluation Policy (DP/2011/3) and the 2011 Guide to Outcome Level Evaluations.<sup>6</sup> The evaluation team developed the Framework in line with the recommended format in Annex 2 of the UNDP Evaluation Manual.

The Framework adopts four critical domains for the evaluation: **relevance of the project, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability**. Within each of these domains, the framework details a series of evaluation dimensions and criteria which guided the team in the assessment process. These were as follows: Key issues to be addressed; what to look for; data and information sources; data collection methods; achievements and enabling factors; inhibitors and bottlenecks observed. In looking at the issues to be addressed, and achievements and bottlenecks, a series of questions were developed which guided the team’s work during the assessment process, and these questions were applied within each of the evaluation domains and in respect of each of the three anticipated project outputs of the PRPP project. The questions can be seen in the framework which is included as Annex 1.

The Evaluation Framework was developed in advance of the inception meeting for the evaluation, and was presented at the meeting. Attendees at the meeting included Project Management Unit (PMU) staff from MoLISA and CEMA, along with project staff and representatives from both Irish Aid and UNDP. The UNDP Country Office’s M&E Team was also present and all participants in the meeting provided useful comments and feedback to further develop and refine both the evaluation framework, and the methodology.

Results and evidence based evaluation: The Terms of Reference clearly state the importance of the evaluation being results and evidence based. Therefore during the data collection process for the evaluation the team concentrated upon collecting clear evidence of progress towards achieving the intended project results. These findings are detailed in the following section 3 and inform the key findings in sections 4 and 5 of the report.

First round and second round effects: In assessing policy and practice changes however, attribution of the project’s activities to the end results is difficult. Many of the PRPP project’s activities contribute to high level policy change but assessing the degree of importance or significance of these activities in leading to these changes is sometimes hard to do. The team

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<sup>6</sup> UNDP ‘Outcome Level Evaluation: A Companion Guide to the Handbook on Planning Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results for Programme Units and Evaluators.’ December 2011.

therefore adopted an approach that attempted to capture mainly first round (direct) effects of the project. Direct effects were where the project's contribution to change is demonstrable and clearly evident. When relevant and possible, the team tried to capture second round effects by collecting credible stories of change, where the project's activities have indirectly but credibly contributed to policy and practice change. This was particularly evident in the case of the project's consultation and advocacy activities, where measurable and demonstrable impact in terms of policy change is difficult to see, but where the stories of stakeholders, particularly of policy makers, enabled the team to make credible assessments of the project's (often significant) contribution to the desired outputs and outcomes.

## 2.3 Evaluation Methods

The evaluation team closely followed the prescribed evaluation process in the TOR. At the beginning of the evaluation therefore, the team concentrated on reviewing key documents made available by the project office, which included: project workplan, annual and quarterly reports; outputs and reports from the project's technical assistance activities; GoVN policy documents and reports; reports and analysis from UNDP, Irish Aid and DPs; project field visit reports; outputs and reports from each of the eight PRPP provinces. A list of the documents consulted is included in Annex 4.

More than 100 people were interviewed over the course of the evaluation (see Annex 3 for details). Interviews were carried out with the NA's CSA, GoVN ministry representatives closely involved with the project, project staff, with DPs, local government officers and project beneficiaries. These interviews enabled the team to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of project activities as well as the contribution of the project to policy and practice change. The interviews were structured around the key questions in the evaluation framework and were also closely related to project activities which the interviewees had directly participated in.

In order to assess the impact of the project at the sub-national level, the evaluation team also visited three of the eight PRPP pilot provinces. The criteria for deciding which provinces to visit was discussed with UNDP and Project Office staff. In 2013 there were 4 participating provinces, and the number was expanded to 8 in 2014. It was agreed therefore to visit both 'old' and 'new' project provinces. It was also important to have a geographical spread of provinces, from the North, Centre and South. Finally, a highly subjective assessment was made of those provinces that were considered relatively successful implementers of the project to date, and those that were struggling, in order for the evaluation team to see a good spread of project experiences. The criteria are summarized in Table 1. Bac Kan, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh provinces were agreed upon as the three focus provinces in which the evaluation would be conducted.

**Table 1: Selection Criteria for Provinces to Visit**

<i>Province</i>	<i>Geographical Location</i>	<i>Period of participation in the project</i>	<i>Performance of the province to date <sup>7</sup></i>
Bac Kan	North	2 years	Slower performing
Quang Ngai	Centre	2 years	Medium performing
Tra Vinh	South	1 year	High performing

The evaluation team spent three days in each of the three provinces. The team worked first with the provincial level stakeholders and interviewed DOLISA, DEMA and line department staff, as well as members of the provincial PMU and the Vice Chairman of the PPC who is responsible for poverty reduction. At the district level, the team also worked with the Vice Chairman of the DPC,

<sup>7</sup> A subjective assessment of the project staff and evaluation team based upon their knowledge of poverty reduction processes in each province. This assessment was of course carefully scrutinised and evaluated during the field visits themselves.

line departments and responsible poverty reduction staff, and project beneficiaries of capacity building support. The team then visited one commune and talked with commune level staff and local people, particularly the beneficiaries of the project's activities.<sup>8</sup>

The team conducted three important technical meetings as part of the evaluation process. The first meeting was the inception workshop (30<sup>th</sup> October 2014), where this methodology and the evaluation framework was discussed with key stakeholders, including the PMU, Project Office and UNDP and Irish Aid staff. This meeting gave a clear orientation for the evaluation team. The second technical meeting was held at the end of the research period on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014, to discuss the MTE team's findings and was attended by key PRPP project staff, UNDP and Irish Aid representatives. The final meeting was held on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014 where the evaluation team presented preliminary findings to the project's National Steering Committee meeting. This meeting included the Project Director (Vice Minister of MoLISA), senior representatives from CEMA and line Ministries, and members of the provincial PMUs (Vice Chairmen of the PPC's and provincial project directors) from each of the 8 project provinces. This meeting was an opportunity to solicit further opinions and information for the evaluation and receive feedback on preliminary findings. Throughout the assignment the evaluation team worked closely with project office technical staff (the Deputy National Project Director, Project Manager, international adviser, national coordinators, and provincial technical coordinators of the three provinces visited). A final technical meeting with this group was also held after the steering group meeting.

## 2.4 Restraints for the Evaluation

The evaluation faced some restraints. The PRPP project is extremely complex and involves a large number of different activities spread across many different stakeholders. These activities are also very different in scope, ranging from high-level policy influencing of the National Assembly and line ministries to fattening cows and delivering agricultural training at the individual household level. The project has also generated a large volume of documents, and the associated government policy documents and DP literature of relevance to the project is also large.

Given this complexity, broad scope and voluminous literature the evaluation team has found it challenging to cover everything in the limited time available. In particular the provincial assessment relies heavily upon the field visits to the three focus provinces, as there was insufficient time to be able to visit and assess all of the eight provinces involved in the project.

In regard to interviews at both the national and sub-national levels, the most appropriate person with full knowledge of the project and project activities was not always available and, given the limited time available it was not always possible to re-schedule or conduct follow-up interviews. This happened for a few meetings during the consultation at the central level and field visits.

Evaluation findings should therefore be viewed in the light of these restraints.

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<sup>8</sup> In each province, the PRPP project works with two communes, and the district authorities in which each of these communes are located. In the case of Quang Ngai, the project PMU has expanded coverage to four communes.

### 3. Project Progress in Achieving Results

In this section of the report we evaluate the PRPP project's progress in meeting the targets set in the project's Results and Resources Framework. We also review progress to date in meeting the One Plan outcome 1.1, output 1.1.3 whereby *'multi-dimensional approaches and human development are applied in poverty reduction components of SEDPs at central and local levels in order to effectively address chronic poverty and emerging forms of poverty.'*

The project activities undertaken are presented in detail in Annex 2 of the report. The detailed analysis of progress in each of the activities presented there forms the basis for the analysis of progress in achieving the RRF target results that is presented here. The analysis below runs to the end of Quarter 3 2014, as this is the last quarter for which quarterly reports were available at the time of the MTE.

***Progress in achieving the anticipated results is summarized under a 'traffic light' rubric, with green indicating good progress and the likely completion of the target; yellow indicating some progress but an uncertain attainment of the target; and red indicating no progress and little prospect of achieving the target.***

#### 3.1 Output 1

Output 1 of the project states that: *'Poverty reduction policies under the responsibility of line ministries are streamlined, and poverty reduction is mainstreamed into line ministries' plans and policies, in which activities and investment resources for poor districts and poor communes are prioritized to accelerate poverty reduction in these areas'.*

Under this output, the project undertook 40 activities under four sub-outputs, closely following the activities designed in the workplan. The Results and Resources Framework (RRF) has six targets and the results in achieving these targets are as follows:

Target 1: Action plan for implementation of Resolution 80/NQ-CP developed and approved (2012). Action plan implemented and monitored. Results reviewed, Lessons learned consolidated and documented (2012-2016). **Results status: Green**

Results to date: The Action Plan for implementation of Resolution 80 was implemented under Decision No. 1200/QĐ-TTg, on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2012. This was just prior to the beginning of the PRPP project. The Action Plan was subsequently developed and in 2014 the GoVN carried out a Mid Term Review (MTR) of the NTP-SPR. The results of the review were widely shared within GoVN and the National Assembly. The MTR provided an important evidence base for policy makers on the poverty reduction policy landscape at both the national and sub-national levels, and the progress to date in achieving the objectives of both Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR.

Stakeholder interviews with the PRCO (the implementing agency for the MTR) and other line ministries during the MTE confirmed that the project's support (under workplan activity 1.2.2 and related activities) played a significant role in enhancing the quality of the MTR. The support provided through the project included a comprehensive review of policy impacts at the sub-national level, conducted by INGO partners (Oxfam/Ageless) and a national research institution (VASS). This review was conducted and presented in a rigorous and transparent way that provided information to policy makers in a new and straightforward way. The project also supported the PRCO in consolidating information and putting together the final report. Extensive consultation and dissemination on the MTR report has been supported by the project (activity 1.3.020; 1.3.021) which has significantly contributed to the dissemination of findings, and subsequent policy discussions around these findings.

The National Assembly also undertook an important review in 2013-2014 through the Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction, resulting in National Assembly Resolution 76/2014/QH13, 24/06/2014, on promoting the implementation of the targets for sustainable poverty reduction to 2020. This was an important endorsement of Resolution 80 and its objectives. The project provided support to the NA-CSA to undertake the Supreme Oversight (activity 3.2.3) through a number of critical technical support activities, including a review of documentation on emerging poverty issues; clustering of the issues into groups for the oversight analysis; developed questionnaires to assist the oversight team in their fieldwork; and developed a framework and outline for the report (activity 3.2.3.1, 3.2.3.2, 3.2.3.4). The project also supported NA consultation meetings on the implementation progress of Resolution 80 as part of the Supreme Oversight process (activity 3.2.3.3) and provided substantial support to the consultation and dissemination process. Overall, project support contributed significantly to improving the quality and thus the utility of the Oversight report.

The results of the MTR and the NA Supreme Oversight informed GoVN Notice's 143/TB-VPCP, 26/03/2014 at the conclusion of the Central Steering Committee for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (CSC-SPR) and the CSC-SPR Notice 89/TB-VPCP, following the meeting on 05/03/2014. Most notably, the Decision 2324/QĐ-TTg dated 19/12/2014 to operationalize the directions set in the Resolution 76/2014/QH13 both in the 2014-2015 and the Post 2015.

*Target 2: Based on results of evidence based studies, line ministries review, revise and mainstream current poverty reduction policies into their plans and regular policy framework in order to accelerate poverty reduction in most disadvantaged and ethnic minority areas (2012-2013).*  
**Results status: Green/ Yellow**

Results to date: The GoVN has largely completed (by the end of 2014) a comprehensive review of poverty reduction policies across all line ministries. The project contributed to this result significantly. Project support enabled the PRCO to develop a framework for the review of policies (activity 1.2.1) which was also an important foundation for the MTR of the NTP-SPR (discussed above). In 2013 support was provided to MoLISA to begin the policy review process through two workshops (activity 1.1.1-2013) and the project also supported the National Assembly's CSA to discuss and disseminate the objectives of Resolution 80 through consultation workshops (activities 1.1.3-2013). Line ministries reviewed their policies for poverty reduction as required under the Action Plan for Resolution 80, and did so with project support: thus under activity 1.2.021 the project supported the Ministry of Health to review their poverty reduction policies, and similar support is being provided to the Ministry of Education (under activity 1.2.022) for policies for students in mountainous areas, and to the Ministry of Justice (activity 1.2.030). Other important activities that supported the review of poverty reduction policies included support to PRCO for a workshop to review the analysis of policy overlaps (1.12.020) and support to CIP CEMA in the review of Decision 102 on direct support to poor households (1.4.1b). This resulted in the issuing of an adjustment to Decision no. 102/2009-TTg on the direct support to poor households in difficult areas.

In terms of the evidence-based review of policies, CEMA commissioned and completed comprehensive thematic research on ethnic minority poverty and policies, through the project (activity 1.4.1a). This combined both quantitative analysis of existing data, and follow-up qualitative research. The research was disseminated through the high-level Ethnic Minority Policy Forum, and to NA members. CEMA also developed and issued a manual for ethnic minority policy-making and implementation (activity 1.4.6) and produced an ethnic minority friendly handbook, as a guide for local people to the policies available for poverty reduction (activity 1.4.025).

It is worth noting though that many of these activities have taken some time to initiate and had not been completed by the end of Q3 2014, the halfway point of the project. Therefore, the results under this Target are most pronounced in terms of line ministries reviewing the existing PR

policies under their mandate. To that end, the Target is classified as Green. However, as many of the activities were not yet completed at the time of MTE, the follow-up to the review (i.e. to revise and mainstream policies) had not yet materialized. Hence, this Target is seen by the team as in the border line between Green and Yellow.

**Target 3:** *Experiences in streamlining and mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies into plans and policy framework of line ministries and utilization of regular budget of line ministries for these policies are consolidated, widely shared and discussed (2013); Results status: Yellow*

Results to date: The process of streamlining and mainstreaming policies into the regular plans, policy frameworks and budgets of line ministries is dependent upon the completion of the comprehensive review of line ministry poverty reduction policies. At the time of MTE, the comprehensive review of PR policies was near completion. But the process of streamlining and consolidating policies has exhibited some progress. The Directive 183 of NSC-PR specifies six areas for consolidation process, including education, credits, and production support – which are the areas receiving important TA support from the PRPP project. Interviews with stakeholders reveals that there is growing consensus on the need for consolidation of the current 16 NTPs into only two NTPs (on SPR and NRD) in the next phase of PR policies. There was also increasing recognition for the necessity of building coherence between NTP SPR and NRD. Both of these two processes have been supported by the PRPP project. At the PRPP Steering Committee Meeting in November 2014 the Project Director, the Vice Minister of MOLISA, emphasised to the PRCO and all participating agencies the importance now of accelerating the process of redesigning policies in line with the objectives of Resolution 80. One notable result to date in doing this has been the consolidation of social assistance policies by MoLISA, under Resolutions 15 and 70 of the GoVN. The project provided important consultancy support in the review process (activity 1.4.8; 1.3.022) and the experience with social assistance policy perhaps provides an important example from which the PRCO and the project can build. Another important result to date is the completion of the draft for CEMA's MAFEM, strongly supported by the PRPP project under activity 1.4.5a, which provides a framework for policy rationalization and the project will continue to support the development of the Action Plan to implement the strategy.

The process of consolidation and streamlining will need to be accelerated in 2015 if it is to be completed in time for the development of the next poverty reduction programme. For this reason, this Target is seen by the MTE team as Yellow.

**Target 4:** *A network of line ministries and localities for information dissemination and cooperation (to avoid overlaps) about reviewing, mainstreaming and updating poverty reduction policies is established and put in place (2013-1016). Results status: Yellow*

Results to date: The PRCO of MoLISA has the leading role in coordinating the policy review process (as per its mandate), and communication on the policy review process through the PRCO is reported to be strong (confirmed in interviews with line ministries, development partners and project staff). But the network for information dissemination and cooperation envisaged under Target 4 has yet to be established. The project has supported a number of consultation events, through the MTR, the NA Supreme Oversight and through the policy review process (referenced above) which have been important in establishing and maintaining a network of engaged line ministry officials. In addition, the project supported the establishment of a network of senior retired national poverty policy experts to advise on the Resolution 80 process, through the project (activity 1.3.1). The planned network of researchers from national research institutes, private consulting companies and NGO's has yet to be established on a standing basis (though a list of research institutes and consulting companies was said to be shared informally between the PRPP project and many of its partners). The series of workshops, technical discussions, informal network of researchers, consultants, NGOs, and retired national poverty policy experts are best



considered as important perquisites for establishing such a network for information dissemination and cooperation. But consolidation and formalizing of these activities on a standing basis will need to be the focus in 2015 in order to achieve this Target 4

**Target 5: A suitable process/procedure for reviewing/ evaluating, streamlining and mainstreaming poverty reduction policies into regular plans, budgets and policy framework of line ministries introduced and applied by line ministries (2013-2016). Results status: Yellow**

Results to date: As discussed in relation to Target 3 above, the PRCO of MoLISA has taken a lead role in coordinating the policy review activities to date, and is expected to similarly lead in the second half of the project in facilitating the redesign of policies, with the support of the project. Results of this target are therefore satisfactory in terms of the policy review (though it has been much delayed), but there is little substantial evidence of policy streamlining and mainstreaming yet (though there are Directives of NSC-PR, Decision of the GoVN etc. that show the determination and guidance for consolidation and streamlining of PR policies). There is an urgent need to speed up the process of consolidation and mainstreaming of PR policies after the completion of the review of PR policies.

**Target 6: Poverty reduction policies are (i) updated and revised (based on results of studies, monitoring and evidence), (ii) new approaches are applied in order to support accelerated poverty reduction in most disadvantaged and ethnic minority areas and (iii) streamlined and mainstreamed into the regular plans, budgets and policy framework of line ministries (2014-2016). Results status: Yellow**

Results to date: As already described, the review of existing policies has taken place, but policies have yet to be comprehensively updated and revised. The project supported the evidence based analysis of the impact of poverty reduction policies, most notably through the support to the MTR of the NTP-SPR, the NA's Supreme Oversight, and more recently, the development of the MAFEM. Results in relation to (ii) new approaches to poverty reduction, are discussed under output 2 below. In regard to (iii) streamlining and mainstreaming into the regular plans, budgets and policy frameworks of line ministries, there is little evidence of this having taken place yet, as discussed above, but it has been indicated as a strong priority by the PD in the final two years of the project. Interviews with stakeholders show that the year of 2015 will be a very important turning point between the current phase and the next phase of PR policies. The consolidation and mainstreaming of the PR policies should be the focus for the PRPP project support in the remaining half of the project cycle.

### 3.2 Output 2

Output 2 of the project states that: *NTP-SPR is designed and implemented effectively, contributing to rapid poverty reduction in poorest districts, communes and villages and of ethnic minority people through the application of innovative modalities and approaches in terms of (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities and people in formulation, implementation and management of the programme at local level; (ii) anthropological approaches and modalities relevant to the particular features, cultures, traditions and knowledge of local ethnic minority people/ target groups of the programme; (iii) strengthening accessibility/linkage to the market, promoting gender equality, environmental sustainability and addressing poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective.*

Under this output, the project undertook 26 central level activities and numerous local level activities in the pilot provinces, under five sub-outputs, closely following the activities designed in the workplan. The Results and Resources Framework (RRF) has five targets and the results in achieving these targets are as follows:

Target 1: *The Programme Document and guidelines for implementation and management of the Programme is developed and updated with participation of DPs and people, based on results of evidence based studies and experiences/lessons learned from the P135-II and NTP-PR in the period 2005 – 2010. Strengthening application of innovative modalities and approaches in terms of (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities and people in the formulation, implementation and management of the programme in local areas; (ii) reviewing target people at household and commune level; (iii) application of anthropological approaches and modalities relevant to the particular features, cultures, traditions and knowledge of local ethnic minority people/target groups of the programme; (iv) strengthening accessibility/linkages to the market, gender equality, environmental sustainability and MDP approaches; (v) creation of jobs for local people through NTP-SPR supported infrastructure work (2012-2015). Results status: Green/Yellow*

Results to date: This target is complex and involves a number of different dimensions to the NTP-SPR, and progress towards results is variable across them. Hence the mixed results status of Green/ Yellow. Tangible results in regard to this Target are as follows:

MPI and MoF developed inter-ministerial circular 02-BKHDT-BTC/2014/TTLT, 12/02/2014 guiding the mainstreaming of poverty reduction resources in the implementation of the NTP-SPR in poor districts. MoF and MoLISA developed and issued Circular 68/2013/TTLT-BTC-BLDTBXH, 21/05/2013 regulating the management and use of the budgets of project 3 and 4 of the NTP-SPR. Both received substantial technical assistance from the project (project activities 2.1.1, 2.1.1a, 2.1.021) and two further inter-ministerial circulars regulating the NTP-SPR are under development with project support, though they will be issued at a time when their usefulness to the programme can be questioned, given that it is already beyond the mid-term point.

CEMA have also issued important policy documents to implement the NTP-SPR, with substantial project support. These are Decision 551/QD-TTg approving the P135, and inter-ministerial circular No. 5 guiding the implementation of P135 as an important project of NTP-SRP. The project provided TA support to the drafting of the policy document and circular, based upon past P135 experience, and provided support to national and sub-national workshops to consult on and disseminate the policies.

CEMA also updated the manuals on commune investment ownership and community procurement based upon past P135 experience, through project support (activity 2.1.4a). The project provided further support to these outputs through consultation workshops and training for users (activity 2.1.4b). CEMA developed criteria for the targeting of communes and villages under P135, and this was applied in the programme (activity 2.1.5).

In terms of the results in implementing more ‘anthropological’ approaches in the NTP-SPR, the project recruited an international anthropology specialist to develop and deliver training in anthropological approaches appropriate for ethnic minority development, and training was delivered to CEMA, DP and line ministry staff (activity 1.4.1a/1.4.020) and senior policy makers from CEMA and the NA-EC (activity 1.4.6). The intention is that the training will be mainstreamed in the curriculum of CEMA’s EM Training Institute from 2015 onwards but this has not yet happened.

For Target activity (iv) strengthening accessibility and linkages to the market, gender equality, environmental sustainability and MDP approaches, the project has strongly supported the development of an MDP approach and this is discussed further under output 3 below. There is little evidence of results in terms of promoting market linkages and promoting environmental sustainability which do not appear to be a strong focus of project support to the NTP-SPR (and of the NTP-SPR itself). Gender participation is monitored in terms of the quantitative number of women involved in activities, but as discussed in section 4.5.2, other barriers remain in promoting women’s genuine participation in the programme. In terms of (v) creation of jobs for local people

through NTP-SPR supported infrastructure work (2012-2015), there was no evidence available to the MTE of this having taken place as most of the infrastructure sub-projects were built by contractors and involvement of the local people in construction work is seen as being modest.

*Target 2: NTP-SPR's participatory, gender and ethnic minority sensitive M&E system (including audit plan, mid-term review of the programme, utilization of AMT/PMT tools, joint progress reports (JPRs) and citizen report cards (CRC) are developed and used); findings and experiences, lessons learned are applied to enhance effectiveness and impacts on poverty reduction of the NTP-SPR (2012 - 2015). Results status: Yellow*

**Results to date:** There were two significant results in support of this target. The first was the development of a monitoring and evaluation results framework for the NTP-SPR (2.2.1/2/2/020), which was completed in early 2014 and rolled out to sub-national users through a series of training workshops organized by PRCO under the PRPP project support. The project provided the consultancy team for this activity, and supported the training. Implementation remains challenging though, as there are limited resources available for M&E in the NTP-SPR, and awareness of the utility of M&E systems remains low amongst GoVN staff.<sup>9</sup> The second project supported initiative was the development of an information system for the management and monitoring of P135 (project 2) of the NTP-SPR (2.2.4/2/2.023). The project supported CIP CEMA in this activity with substantial consultancy support throughout 2013 and 2014. So far the system remains active at the central level only, and hasn't been widely adopted at sub-national level. Under activity 1.4.028, the project is also supporting CEMA with the development of a statistical indicator system and it is anticipated that the Prime Minister will issue approval of the system for data collection for the ethnic minority sector in early 2015. Building upon past good practice initiatives from P135-II, the project supported CEMA to update and revise the Citizen Report Card (CRC) tool, to collect local people's opinions on public service delivery (1.2.6). The project supported the development and testing of the tool, and training for poverty reduction staff (from MoLISA and CEMA) at national and sub-national levels, but it has not yet been widely rolled out through the programme.

*Target 3: Block grant model is introduced to selected provinces in 2012-2013 and replicated in more than 50% of the Programme coverage area in 2014-2016 in close harmonisation with the local social economic development plans in order to accelerate poverty reduction in the programme area. Results status: Yellow*

**Results to date:** Block grant models have been implemented in all of the PRPP pilot provinces (16 communes), with all eight provinces experimenting with some form of block grant by mid-2014. Progress in replicating these models within the province, to non-PRPP communes, has not yet taken place though, with the exception of Quang Ngai as one of the eight pilot provinces, where the block grant was experimented under project 3 of NTP-SPR and the Provincial PR Steering Committee is now considering the application of this mechanism for the six 30a districts in the province. The term 'block grant' is used for a variety of models that have been applied, which are not necessarily best described as a classic 'block grant' model. Provinces have usually prescribed what the block grant funds are to be used for, which is why the majority of provinces have some form of cow/calf raising model. A genuine block grant model, such as that applied by the ISP project in Quang Ngai or the PSARD project in Hoa Binh and Cao Bang, leaves the decision on the use of the funds to local people to decide through a participatory planning process. Thus strengthening local level SEDP planning is closely linked to successful block grant development. However, the team has not found evidence of whether a participatory planning process was

<sup>9</sup> Some policies issued by GoVN intensified resource constraints for these activities, notably Decision 826/QĐ-TTg (29/5/2013) where an amount of around VND1.500 billion was cut off from the budget originally planned for capacity building, M&E, and communication under NTPs.

undertaken in the pilot communes to discuss what types of activities should be proposed under that 'block grant' (though the project has supported training in participatory community planning for the sub-national government officials). The limited resources available to support the production support block grant is seen as a reason by local officials for not embarking on a serious participatory planning process – which requires considerable time, resources and effort. Activity 2.4.012, to develop a Training of Trainers (ToT) network to support the 8 PRPP provinces, is particularly important in this regard, and needs to be accelerated as it was not yet established by Q3 2014.

Outside the implementation of the production support block grants in the pilot provinces, the PRPP project supported a study on block grant models and a workshop with Oxfam, SDC, and DWC in December 2014 to discuss the block grant models. It was indicated from stakeholder interviews that the block grant is reflected in a draft inter-ministerial circular of MPI, MoLISA, and MoF for implementation of NTP-SPR. However, as 2015 is the final year of NTP-SPR before a new phase is in place and how such an inter-ministerial circular could improve the implementation of the NTP-SPR is questioned.

*Target 4: Successful models are identified, piloted, evaluated, adjusted and replicated in the period 2012-2016 (i.e., application of innovative modalities and approaches in terms of (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities and people in the formulation, implementation and management of the programme in local areas; (ii) reviewing target people at household and commune level; (iii) application of anthropological approaches and modalities relevant to the particular features, cultures, traditions and knowledge of local ethnic minority people/target groups of the programme; (iv) strengthening accessibility/linkage to the market, gender equality, environmental sustainability and multi-dimensional poverty reduction approaches; (v) creation of jobs for local people through NTP-SPR supported infrastructure work).*

**Results status: Yellow**

Results to date: MoLISA developed a roadmap and guidelines for the application of block grant mechanisms in the NTP-SPR. The project supported this through a review of innovative models of poverty reduction and existing block grant models, and supported a consultation process over what kind of block grant models should be developed through the NTP-SPR (activity 2.3.4/2.3.020). Both INGOs and DPs were involved in the review. A project workshop took place to review innovative poverty reduction models (activity 2.3.2b) and a study tour was undertaken to Lam Dong province to view block grant models there (activity 2.3.2). The project also supported the development of guidelines on the selection, development and replication of poverty reduction models under project 3 of the NTP-SPR (activity 2.3.2). However, there is no evidence of this support having moved beyond the awareness raising stage, to being widely applied. MTE team observations from the visit to Bac Kan province suggest that while innovative practices are known, which is already a good sign, efforts to adopt these good practices are modest. This limited duplication of good practices is probably caused by both limited resources from the PRPP project to support the duplication and lack of influence from the PRPP project to other programmes available in the pilot provinces.

An important local level initiative implemented in a number of the pilot provinces, which the PRPP project has supported, is policy dialogues between local people and policy makers. Provincial field visits during the MTE confirmed that these have been an important modality in increasing transparency and accountability. The current models take a formalistic 'Q&A' form, with policy makers providing information on policies and responding to specific queries on eligibility for particular policy benefits. This activity though has the potential to become a much more dynamic process in the future, as the confidence of local people increases in asking questions of policy makers, and could usefully be integrated into the local SEDP process as a form of planning, monitoring and reviewing local policy performance. To make this policy forum

modality more useful and instrumental for facilitating transparency and accountability in PR policies, streamlining this modality together with innovative practices in the next phase of PR policies is needed.

Target 5: *Local levels (in project locations) equipped with adequate knowledge and skills, and applied these in carrying out the programme implementation and management tasks delegated/empowered to them (as commune investment owners – CIO), in participatory planning and M&E, procurement, O&M and community supervision, etc.) (2012-2016). Results status: Yellow*

Results to date: The project has provided capacity building support to enhance the knowledge, skills and effectiveness of poverty reduction officers working in the PRPP provinces. This capacity building takes place mainly in terms of the short training courses organized in the pilot provinces and PRCO (for all the 63 provinces in 2013 and 2014). Much of this support was delivered through a ToT mechanism. Sub-national staff have received training in communications, participatory planning, M&E (through the results framework of NTP-SRP), financial management, reporting and have also received important training in community bidding and monitoring of infrastructure construction. The project has supported technical training in veterinary skills, animal husbandry and forestry. Support has also been provided to poverty reduction steering committees at the provincial, district and local levels.

Results of these capacity building measures are hard to see, given that they are delivered on a relatively small scale, across large areas of the country, and even in the target communes, the number of beneficiaries is small. From the MTE provincial field visits the team observed that the mainstream GoVN resources available for ToT beneficiaries to train colleagues are extremely limited. Many trainees found the training useful but had few opportunities to apply it in their everyday work. Field visits also suggested that there are different types of trainings available to local government officials. At times, it is not always possible for the line departments to send the most relevant staff to attend the training due to heavy workload. It is thus important for the PRPP project to identify the training needs that it is best positioned to support. Perhaps, a systematic training need assessment is missing while aiming at capacity building under the PRPP project.

### 3.3 Output 3

Output 3 of the project states that: *a system for monitoring and analysis of MDP and vulnerability situation and trends is operational and institutionalized; policy discussions on poverty and vulnerability contribute to improved policies and development programmes for inclusive, pro-poor development and better equality outcomes.*

Under this output, the project undertook 46 activities under six sub-outputs, closely following the activities designed in the workplan. The Results and Resources Framework (RRF) has five targets and the results in achieving these targets are as follows:

Target 1: *MDP approach in formulating poverty reduction policies is (i) introduced and widely publicised by researchers and policy makers at all levels and related National Assembly members (2012- 2014); and (ii) used in the unified framework for monitoring poverty and vulnerability 2012-2013. Results status: Green*

Results to date: Significant results have been achieved in the development and adoption of a system of MDP in Vietnam. Dispatch No. 7126/VPCP-KGX, 26/08/2013 approved MoLISA to formulate the MDP project, and Decision No. 1896/QD-LDTBXH, 06/12/2013 established a research commission and secretariat team to formulate the master project on renovating the approach to poverty through adopting a multi-dimensional approach. Decision No. 311/QD-LDTBXH, 20/03/2014 approved the plan to formulate the master project for adopting MDP. There

is consequently strong consensus and momentum across MOLISA, CEMA, NA CSA, other line ministries and provincial delegates that the MDP approach should be adopted in the next planning cycle 2016-2020. The NA and GoVN have endorsed the formulation of an MDP Masterplan, which the NPD and Vice Minister of MoLISA emphasized to the MTE team would be the key activity for the project to support in 2015.

The project supported these key results in a number of important ways. The project provided support to a Core Technical Group (CTG) tasked with developing the MDP approach, through contracting the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute (OPHI) to develop the capacity of the CTG (activity 3.1.1) and support the development and testing of MDP tools (activity 3.1.2). The project also supported a high level GoVN delegation to visit Mexico on a study tour to learn more about MDP (activity 3.1.3), and supported two people (an officer from the PRCO, and the project's national technical coordinator) to attend a two-week training course on MDP in the UK, in August 2014 (activity 3.1.1.b). The importance of MDP was further promulgated by the project through supporting the attendance of two MoLISA representatives at the high level MDPN meeting in Germany, July 2014 (activity 3.1.1.a).

Numerous MDP consultation events were supported by the project, to disseminate information about the approach to NA members and line ministries, and to build support for the concept and further develop ideas about its application. This included a workshop in Nha Trang to share the results from the Mexico study tour and discuss the MDP roadmap (activity 3.1.4), a workshop in Hanoi for NA members (activity 3.1.5) and a technical workshop in Q3 2014 to discuss the development of the MDP masterplan (activity 3.2.020). The project supported this process through providing technical consultants to help in identifying the criteria to be used for MDP measurement (activity 3.2.021).

*Target 2: Harmonized framework/system for poverty monitoring, measurement, targeting to support poverty and vulnerability reduction policies making with the application of a multi-dimensional poverty approach is in place and serving the development/adjustment of poverty reduction programmes and policies, including: (i) RIM is improved and regularly implemented (annually) and institutionalized in the poverty and vulnerability monitoring system (2012-2016); (ii) VHLSS is improved and provides better data in terms of MDP indicators and is utilised as an important tool in the unified framework/system for poverty and vulnerability monitoring 2013-2016; (iii) MDP approach is introduced and piloted for identification of target groups for poverty reduction programme and policies (2013) and gradually officially applied in the poverty targeting and monitoring system (2014-2016). Results status: Green*

**Results to date:** In terms of activity (i) the Rapid Impact Monitoring system (RIM), this has not been completed annually over the past few years, but has now been housed in ILLSA/MoLISA and the Project has supported MoLISA to develop and discuss a technical proposal for its future implementation (activity 3.3.1./3.3.020). It is anticipated that RIM will become an important part of the GoVN's monitoring system for social policies from 2015 onwards. Results in regard to MDP under (iii) of this target are discussed above. In regard to (ii) GSO will apply an MDP measure in the pilot questionnaire for the VHLSS 2015-16 (activity 3.4). Despite the good results to date on developing an MDP approach it is important to note that moving from concept of MDP to operationalize this concept in PR practices is a complicated process and significant work still remains before it is fully institutionalized in the government system.

*Target 3: Reports on poverty and vulnerability analysis with the application of MDP approach are (i) periodically developed (at least every two years); (ii) institutionalized and (iii) contribute to discussions/policy dialogues and development/adjustment of poverty reduction programme/policy in the period 2013-2016. Results status: Green*

Results to date: The integration of MDP by GSO into the pilot VHLSS for 2015-16 (discussed above) is an important result in support of this target (activity 3.4). There are currently no other regular reporting and analysis mechanisms on the poverty and vulnerability situation in Vietnam, but the GoVN and DPs have recently adopted the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) and CEMA has adopted the MAF, with the support of the project. A GoVN Decision to support the MAFEM Action Plan to promote the implementation of MAF for EMs in mountainous areas is due to be issued in the second quarter of 2015. As part of this PRPP support for this MAFEM, the issue of mainstreaming ethnic minority development in the next phase SEDP has been recently discussed between CEMA and MPI.

*Target 4: High level policy dialogues are annually organized and contribute to the improvement of development directions and development programmes, policies in an inclusive, pro-poor and equitable manner in the period 2012 – 2016. Results status: Green*

Results to date: NA-EC, CEMA and UNDP held an annual forum on ethnic minority poverty. This is a high level event through which DPs, GoVN and NA members can exchange views and discuss on critical issues affecting ethnic minority people. The project facilitates the meeting and much of the material discussed results from the project research activities (activity 3.5.4.1/3.5.025). Two important pieces of project supported research work that were discussed were the CEMA/NAEC study on the impact of hydropower projects and resettlement on ethnic minorities (activity 3.5.2.3/3/5/026) and the study on land and forest allocation and the impacts upon ethnic minority livelihoods. Outcomes from the studies were disseminated through the forum to policy makers and NA members and subsequently brought up during NA sessions in November 2014.

Another high level forum is the Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group (EMPWG). This working group is co-chaired by UNDP and Irish Aid and brings together DPs and the GoVN to discuss important issues of continuing ethnic minority poverty in the country. The EMPWG has become an important forum through which DP's have remained engaged in ethnic minority poverty issues, and an important channel for high level dialogue with the GoVN. Project research outputs and human resources have been important in supporting the work of the EMPWG. The project has supported other policy dialogue activities, including a national workshop on the implementation of CEMA's EM human resource development strategy (3.5.2.2), and the resultant Action Plan which was issued as Decision no. 2356/QD-TTg 04/12/2013. This is a significant result of the PRPP project under this target.

*Target 5: Operation and support of DPs (both international and national) to the Programme is well coordinated, enhancing effectiveness and avoiding overlaps, in a results oriented manner (based on the programme results framework to be developed and agreed). Results status: Yellow*

Results to date: The project aspired to replicate the highly successful partnership forum of P135-II, between DPs and GoVN (cited in the Project Document). To this end, the project supported the mobilisation of national consultants to research and develop a partnership mechanism for Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR, and supported technical and consultation workshops as part of this process (activity 3.6.1). This partnership mechanism hasn't yet been actioned. To date, DPs involvement in Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR has been centered upon the EMPWG and ad hoc PRPP project consultations and events, such as the annual forum on Ethnic Minority poverty. To this end, there is a room for the PRPP project to support the establishment of a partnership mechanism between the DPs who remain interested in poverty issues (especially ethnic minority poverty) and the GoVN in the next phase of NTP SPR.

### 3.4 Progress in delivering on One Plan objectives

In this section, we review the project's progress in delivering upon the UN One Plan objectives in

the Results and Resources Framework, detailed in the box below.

One Plan objectives: Outcome 1.1: By 2016, key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centred, green and evidence-based socio-economic development policies to ensure quality of growth as a Middle Income Country.

Specifically output 1.1.3. Multi-dimensional approaches and human development are applied in poverty reduction components of SEDPs at central and local levels in order to effectively address chronic poverty and emerging forms of poverty.

*Indicator 1: Degree to which GoVN poverty monitoring and targeting systems include multidimensional approaches and methodologies.*

*Indicator 2: Degree to which GoVN poverty reduction policies are specifically designed to target chronic and emerging forms of poverty.*

At the project mid-term point, it is difficult to assess progress towards these outputs in detail. Both GoVN and DPs have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting Outcome 1.1, and many of the activities of the project in the first two years of implementation have supported a more people centred, evidence based approach to poverty reduction policy making. This includes the multiple capacity building activities at the local level in support of participatory planning, and the implementation of block grants to support households in the pilot provinces with more demand based support models. Notably, the policy forums held in the pilot provinces represents an important mechanism to make PR policies more people-oriented at the sub-national level. As far as the national-level PR policies are concerned, the PRPP project support to the MTR of NTP-SPR and the NA's Supreme Oversight, and CEMA's MAFEM involved a component on consultation with the grassroot level through which there were consultations between NA members, national policy makers and the poor and ethnic minorities. CEMA's implementation of an anthropological approach to their work and the plan to institutionalize this in the training curricula for CEMA staff is a key people centred initiative.

In terms of greater evidence based policy making, the project supported initiatives for a results framework for the NTP-SPR; recommendations on improving M&E of the NTP-SPR; and CEMA's development of a management information system for ethnic minority policy making are all key initiatives. Under output 3 of the project, the support to the continued development of RIMs for policy making, and the support to the development of a system for implementing a MDP approach, significantly strengthen the GOVN's evidence base for poverty reduction policy making, as does the adoption by CEMA of the MAFEM.

In terms of the specific Output 1.1 and the associated two indicators, progress is underway but it is still unclear whether these will have been fully achieved by the end of the project, in 2016. In terms of Indicator 1, there is still much work to be done in mainstreaming MDP in the government's monitoring and targeting systems for poverty reduction, though the GoVN's commitment to this as a goal is very strong. 2015 will be a crucial year in determining whether this can be achieved, and the signs are encouraging. For Indicator 2, again it is too early in the project cycle to say categorically whether this will be achieved, but there is strong political will to redesign poverty reduction policies to more specifically target chronic poverty and new, emergent forms of poverty. As the discussion in the following section will demonstrate, the changing context for the project make addressing these two issues a pressing priority for the government. The policy review process is largely complete and the GoVN will need to make major strides in 2015 in redesigning the policy framework for the forthcoming period in order for this indicator to be fully achieved. At this stage, it is probably fair to assess that the PRPP project has built up the acceptance at all levels for the adoption of the MDP approach and a strong future policy emphasis on chronic and emergent forms of poverty. It has also created a good momentum to achieve these two indicators. Continuing the support for the implementation of the MDP Masterplan and



design of the next phase NTP SRP should hence be the focus of the PRPP project until the end of the project.

### 3.5 Conclusion on Project Progress in Achieving Results

The project is large and complex with a set of highly ambitious targets and anticipated results. It operates in a complex and challenging institutional environment, with many GoVN stakeholders involved, and also operates from the highest policy making levels of GoVN, right down to providing material assistance to poor households at the commune level. Despite these challenges, significant results have been achieved in the first two years of project implementation (as detailed in sections 3.1-3.3 above) culminating in the development of 20 important policy decisions, 15 of which have been issued and 5 of which are pending (see table in section 4.4.1). The progress in achieving results against each of the RRF targets is summarised in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Progress in Achieving RRF Target Results**

Output 1		Output 2		Output 3	
<i>Target</i>	<i>Results Status</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Results Status</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Results Status</i>
1	Green	1	Green/Yellow	1	Green
2	Green/Yellow	2	Yellow	2	Green
3	Yellow	3	Yellow	3	Green
4	Yellow	4	Yellow	4	Green
5	Yellow	5	Yellow	5	Yellow
6	Yellow				

As can be seen, all results can be deemed satisfactory (i.e. with status of yellow or above), with some progress evident but results not yet fully attained. Two targets are deemed borderline Green/Yellow, with significant results evident in some but not all aspects, and five of the targets have demonstrated significant results (green) with the likely completion of the anticipated results by the end of the project. Results are most evident in terms of the review of poverty reduction policies and the high level commitment to continuing the reform of poverty policies under Resolution 80 (output 1); the development of a system for MDP in Vietnam (output 3); and high level policy dialogue around ethnic minority poverty and adoption of the MAFEM (output 3). Results in developing the implementation instructions for the NTP-SPR were largely achieved (output 2) but were slow, and much remains to be done in harmonizing the regulations under the respective sub-projects of the programme. Areas where results have been less evident to date are in the redesign and mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies by line ministries (output 1); the development of innovative sub-national poverty reduction models, their replication and the integration and better targeting of sub-national poverty reduction resources (output 2); and the greater empowerment and agency of women and ethnic minorities in poverty reduction work (output 2).

## 4. Key Findings: Relevance, Efficiency and Effectiveness, Impact and Sustainability

### 4.1 Continued relevance of the project in a changing context

#### 4.1.1 Chronic, multi-dimensional poverty

Vietnam's success in tackling poverty is well documented, with the official poverty rate having fallen from 58% in 1992/93 to 13% in 2012 (using data from the Vietnam Household Living Standards Survey – VHLSS). But poverty has fallen far quicker for the majority Kinh ethnic group than for ethnic minorities, particularly the smaller ethnic minority groups, and entrenched and chronic, inter-generational poverty remains a significant challenge amongst ethnic minority people. As of 2012, the poverty headcount amongst the majority was 7.5% while the corresponding figure for ethnic minorities was 50.6%. Ethnic minority wellbeing lags behind in terms of income and consumption which are the traditional means of evaluating well-being, but also in the achievement of a range of the MDGs. The situation of ethnic minority's relative deprivation is reflected in the rates of poverty experienced in ethnic minority areas compared to majority areas too. Addressing this poverty situation has been a key concern for the GoVN and DPs over the past two decades and this remains the case today, with the PRPP project building upon a legacy of cooperation between GoVN and DPs for poverty reduction, particularly for ethnic minority people, through the P135-II and the NTP-PR). A large number of bi-lateral and multi-lateral projects have also been implemented for poverty reduction.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Urban poverty and increasing vulnerability

At the same time, new poverty challenges are arising which are also significantly shaping the current context for poverty reduction. The first of these challenges is the recognition that urban poverty is an increasing phenomenon, as urbanization accelerates and more people move from rural to urban areas in search of industrial and service sector jobs. The project has supported high-level consultation events on the challenge of urban poverty, notably through the NA Supreme Oversight process (activity 3.5.020). Closely related to this is the economic fluctuations and uncertainty many people in Vietnam are now facing as a result of a slowdown in economic growth, which renders increasing numbers of people vulnerable to quickly losing their jobs and livelihoods and falling into poverty. The project has supported the implementation and proposal to institutionalize the RIM as a key monitoring tool for tracking the impacts of economic fluctuations.

Increasing vulnerability is also apparent in rural areas through people's susceptibility to natural disasters, some of which are attributable to increased climate variability resulting from climate change. Urban poverty and increased vulnerability to economic shocks and natural disasters are thus increasingly prevalent features of the current context in which the project is operating. The PRPP project's focus upon tackling poverty and vulnerability ensures it remains highly relevant in assisting the GoVN to respond.

The project's focus upon MDP also ensures continued relevance in helping formulate a multi-faceted approach to understanding and responding to new and complex poverty and vulnerability challenges. Social assistance and social protection policies are a critical means whereby poor people and people at risk can be protected against vulnerability and the PRPP project operates in close cooperation with a partner UNDP project to this end, 'Support to the Reform of Social Assistance Policies' (SAP) with the MoLISA's SPD, and has supported the development of social

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<sup>10</sup> See the introduction for further discussion of this legacy of cooperation.

assistance policies through research in support of the development of Resolutions 15 and 70 for social assistance reform (project activity 1.4.8/1.3.022).

#### ***4.1.3 A complex institutional context***

Poverty reduction efforts take place within a seemingly increasingly complex institutional environment in Vietnam. Different line ministries have responsibility for different programmes and policies that have evolved over time to constitute the broad suite of government interventions for poverty reduction. Thus CEMA has traditionally had responsibility for poverty reduction initiatives in ethnic minority areas, MoLISA for social policy and non-ethnic minority areas, MARD for agricultural development and rural extension, the MoET for support to ethnic minority students etc. This complex policy landscape has made coordination and cooperation between agencies difficult and this was a primary reason behind the issuing of Resolution 80 for sustainable poverty reduction: to mainstream poverty reduction into the regular work and policies of line ministries and to consolidate the large number of separate poverty reduction initiatives to enhance their effectiveness. Whilst progress has taken place in achieving the objectives of Resolution 80 (as discussed in the previous section) this prevailing institutional context of line ministry control of particular programmes and policies remains a key feature of the context in which the PRPP project operates, and is a strong countervailing pressure working against the objectives of Resolution 80. Stakeholder interviews suggest that at times line ministries still wish to retain in the future their control of particular programmes that have been under their mandate rather than mainstream those programmes (or components of those programmes) to other line ministries. This also, however, confirms the continued relevance of the project in addressing the need for (challenging) institutional and policy reform to rationalize the organisation of poverty reduction interventions.

#### ***4.1.4 Limited financial resources***

One notable aspect of the current project context that has changed since the time when the project was originally designed is the availability of financial resources. The GoVN has faced significant budgetary restraints since around 2007-08, as the economy has slowed down in response to the global economic downturn. The state's revenue as a percentage of GDP has decreased from nearly 30% in 2008 to around 22% in 2013. Over the past few years this has translated into a significant tightening in the availability of financial resources for target programmes. According to the GoVN's own website, the resources allocated for all of the 16 current NTPs declined from 7.07% of total public expenditure to 4.68% between 2008 and 2013.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the availability of financial resources for poverty reduction support from DPs has also declined. DPs interviewed during the MTE process attributed this decline to three factors. Firstly, DP budgets available for international development have been frozen or scaled back in response to the global economic downturn. Secondly, Vietnam's attainment of Middle Income Country status (MIC) means that many DPs are now focusing their assistance away from Vietnam as part of their larger global strategies, or restricting the funds available given this shift to MIC status. Thirdly, a delay in designing and approving a new phase of P135-II and/or the NTP-SPR after the completion of P135-II meant that many DPs who had supported P135-II were forced to assign funds elsewhere. In consequence, the funds available for poverty reduction are constricted from both the GoVN and DP sides. This has further confirmed the importance of implementing Resolution 80 on the part of senior policy makers consulted during the MTE: reducing policy and programme overlaps will ensure that the limited funds available are used in the most effective and efficient way possible. As prospects for economic recovery remain fragile, it is likely that this

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<sup>11</sup> The State budget statistics are available at <http://www.chinhphu.vn/portal/page/portal/chinhphu/solieungansachnhanuoc>

budgetary constraint will continue to be the case in the coming years. The project's relevance is thus increasingly important in this context of limited financial resources.

#### ***4.1.5 Continued commitment of the GoVN to poverty reduction with a changing orientation***

It is important to note that despite restricted budgets for poverty reduction, the GoVN remains strongly committed to the goal of poverty reduction. This was clear throughout all of the consultations carried out with senior policy makers and DPs over the course of the MTE, including National Assembly leaders (CSA and EC), Vice Ministers of MoLISA and CEMA, and Vice Chairmen of the PPC's in the three provinces which the MTE team visited. The changes in context have reshaped the GoVN's orientation to poverty reduction in the following ways:

- Social assistance policies have been clearly separated out from development support policies for poverty reduction (as demonstrated by the issuing of the GoVN Resolution 15) and social assistance represents a new focus for the development of programmes and policies to tackle vulnerability. The relationship and 'boundary' between social policy, or social protection, and poverty reduction policies remain a critical area in which further advice and technical support is needed, as the Vice Minister for MoLISA/ Project Director emphasised to the MTE team during discussions;
- The GoVN has given a clear orientation for the next phase of national programming that there will only be two NTPs in the future (reduced from the current number of 16), for rural development and poverty reduction. Again, interviews with senior GoVN and National Assembly officials emphasised that each of these programmes, and the relationship between them, will need to be carefully worked out for the next phase of poverty reduction programming;
- Multi-Dimensional Poverty approaches will be a cornerstone of the next phase of poverty reduction programming, in terms of poverty measurement, monitoring and targeting and the delivery of support and the GoVN will need technical support in taking this work forward;
- Shared results-based frameworks are emerging and will become increasingly important tools through which poverty reduction will be delivered and measured. These include the MAFEM that the PRPP project supported CEMA in drafting and consulting on, and through the VDPF, and the EMPWG which is co-chaired by UNDP and IA and which the project has supported in the period 2013-14;
- There are strong narratives (both nationally and locally) on holding the poor accountable for poverty reduction support: that the poor must contribute to their own development, be more pro-active in accessing the poverty reduction support available, and that support should be conditional upon a commitment on the part of beneficiaries to escape poverty. One important consequence of this is a focus upon the 'productive' or 'capable' poor as the key target group for PR support. Provision of support for the structurally, chronically poor must also be thought through in the new policy framework, but more likely in relation to social assistance policies in particular.

There is a strong expectation from GoVN and DPs, expressed during MTE interviews and in the project quarterly meeting in Hanoi in November 2014, that the project will continue to provide strategic support to this emerging orientation for poverty reduction in the future, particularly in supporting the development of the follow-up programme for the NTP-SPR in the period 2016-2020. There is therefore a critical need for DPs and the project to help the GoVN in thinking through the key challenges for the next phase PR policy framework, and to continue providing innovative and practical solutions, and capacity development in support of the next phase of PR policies and programmes.

## 4.2 Relevance of the project's support and modalities to date

One of the clearest indicators for the MTE team of the relevance of the PRPP project as formulated was the high level of political commitment to the project expressed both centrally and in the participating provinces which the team was able to visit (Bac Kan, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh). Both national and sub-national policy makers talked authoritatively and persuasively about the value and importance of the project in supporting the PR policy reform process.

### 4.2.1. National Level Relevance

GoVN and NA -interviewees strongly felt that the project has supported key and highly strategic activities of the GoVN, and in many cases provided substantive technical support without which the activities would not have been completed to the requisite quality threshold. This was the case with the support the project has provided to the development of an MDP approach in particular. Project support included providing high-level technical assistance from Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) in the UK, a specialist University research centre on poverty reduction. The project supported line ministry officials to visit Mexico to view a particular model for the application of MDP, and supported technical meetings and workshops to build understanding and commitment to MDP amongst stakeholders, and to develop MDP indicators for the system. MDP discussions have consequently been enriched by the project's support, whilst at the same time maintaining a high level of GoVN ownership of the process and outcomes.

In the case of the Mid Term Review of the NTP-SPR, the project supported a high priority activity of the GoVN (the PRCO of MoLISA) and significantly enhanced the quality of the output from the process, through providing quality technical support. This support came from Oxfam with the research organisation Ageless, and the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS), and meant that independent specialists from the INGO and research sectors were able to directly engage the PRCO in discussions over poverty policies. This engagement proved fruitful with the PRCO confirming during MTE interviews that the TA support had been extremely useful and enabled both sides to engage in a critical and constructive dialogue. Consequently Oxfam has engaged with PRCO in other workshop discussions (for example on community empowerment for decentralization) and with the National Assembly, highlighting how a broader range of views, from the non-governmental sector too, are now increasingly being heard. The project support to the MTR also provided consultants to assist the PRCO in consolidating information and drafting the report, which again ensured that a quality output resulted.

A final key high level national project activity that confirms the relevance of the project to the poverty reduction work of the GoVN is the technical support provided to the Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction by the National Assembly. The National Assembly has taken an increasingly high level role in overseeing policy in Vietnam in recent years and the supreme oversight mechanism is an important and extremely high level mechanism through which they are able to exert their oversight role in national policy making. The project provided a team of experienced consultants to work with the NA CSA in formulating the Oversight process, including formulating a logframe, guiding deputies in what information they should look for during field visits, and support in structuring the final report.

Another example of the national relevance of the project's support is the TA provided to CEMA to develop the MAFEM. This MAFEM is potentially a key mechanism for support to narrow the gap in living standards between the ethnic minority poor and the national average by identifying a set of actions to be prioritized in the coming years in the agenda of CEMA and other line ministries. The PRPP project provided a team of experienced consultants to develop the draft MAFEM and consultation both at the national and sub-national level (in Thai Nguyen province and two PRPP pilot provinces of Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh). As a result of the MAFEM, a draft Action Plan on

MAFEM is about to be submitted to the GoVN for approval. In addition, with the project support, dialogue between CEMA and MPI has been ongoing in order to mainstream poverty reduction for EM's into the next national SEDP.

#### **4.2.2. Local Level Relevance**

The relevance of the project's activities and approach at the local level is less clear and the lack of understanding on how a TA project could add value sometimes caused misleading expectations of what the project could provide. National level project staff report having experienced spending a lot of time in the first six months of the project simply familiarising sub-national level staff with the complex objectives and design. Even now, in all of the provinces which the MTE team visited, understanding of the project and its objectives amongst key stakeholders was variable. The project is a technical assistance project intended to facilitate greater coherence and effectiveness in the delivery of poverty reduction support but, at the district and commune levels in particular, many participating officers did not yet have a firm grasp of this important project concept. Rather, the project was seen in more traditional project terms, as being the means through which financial resources for development are channeled for physical investment. Viewed in this way, the project's resources are extremely limited, as the resources available for 'direct' support to households is very small. Consequently, the project was sometimes accorded low importance by local officials. Further work needs to be done therefore, at the sub-provincial level in particular, in building a full understanding of the project objectives and its implementation arrangements. Even the Project has passed its mid point, having a clear understanding of the RPRP strategies and arrangements remains an important requirement in order to effectively manage the project in the remaining half, which is the period for implementing a number of vital activities that affect the impacts and sustainability of the project at the end.

In Bac Kan province, the district level of government is not directly involved in the project and is not represented on the PMU.<sup>12</sup> The Vice Chairman of the district PPC noted that this makes it very difficult to generate interest and commitment of district officers to engage in the project. In Quang Ngai province, the provincial DoLISA has strong ownership of the project and is an effective driver of project activities, but as a consequence the project is very closely identified as belonging to DoLISA, which makes it more difficult to facilitate line department cooperation for the consolidation of poverty reduction resources, as intended in the project design. Effective mainstreaming of PR policies, planning for the optimal use of resources and sharing and replication of models of good practice requires effective dialogue and cooperation across line departments at the provincial level, and between provincial, district and commune levels of government. Based upon the evidence from the field visits to Bac Kan and Quang Ngai, there is still much work to be done in encouraging effective cooperation both horizontally (between line departments) and vertically (between levels of sub-provincial government) and this is clearly a relevant area for project support in the remaining half of the PRPP project.

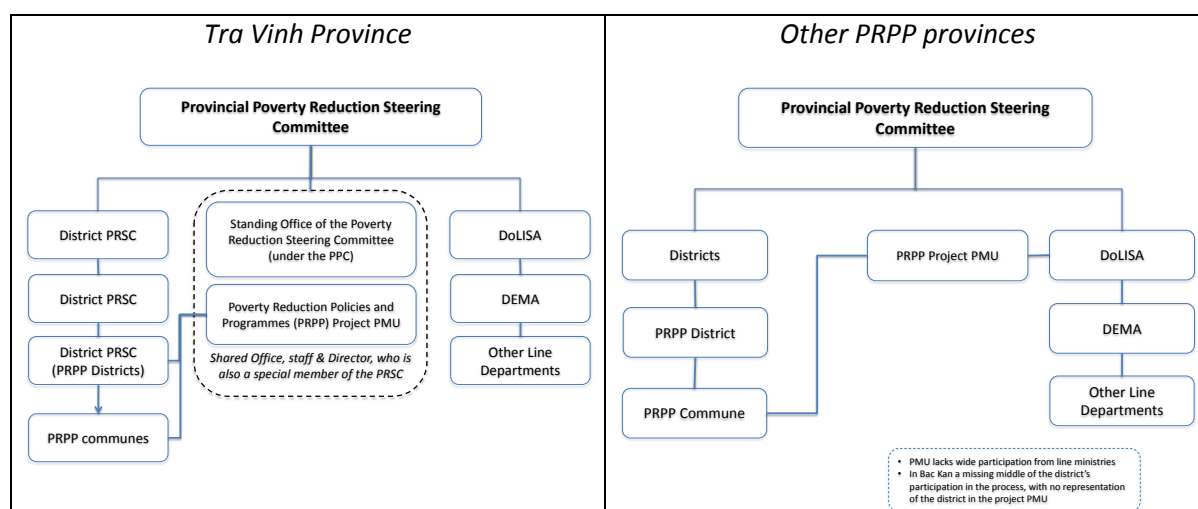
The provincial level arrangements for poverty reduction in Tra Vinh, and the PRPP project's location within this framework, show how important institutional arrangements are in ensuring the project's relevance. In this sense Tra Vinh provides an interesting model for possible replication by other provinces in the future. In Tra Vinh the PPC has established a Standing Office for Poverty Reduction (SO-PR), which sits directly under the Provincial Poverty Reduction Steering Committee (PPRSC). This Standing Office is made up of officers from DoLISA and other line departments, and advises the PPRSC. The head of the Standing Office is a senior Director in DoLISA and a special member of the PPRSC. The PRPP project shares an office with the SO-PR and the Director of the Standing Office is also the Director of the PRPP. The PRPP project is therefore

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<sup>12</sup> In the other two provinces visited, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh, the district level is represented on the project PMU.



directly engaged at the centre of the poverty reduction work of the province, and is not directly attached to any one line department (i.e. DoLISA in all the other pilot provinces) so is well placed to coordinate across all line departments involved in poverty reduction work. This certainly seemed to be the case during the MTE visit to Tra Vinh, where it was notably easier to organise meetings across provincial departments, and where the knowledge of the project and the engagement of line departments in the project is significantly higher than in the other two provinces visited (even Tra Vinh had only been engaged in the PRPP project for one year at the time of the MTE). These arrangements appear to accord strongly with the vision of the PRPP project as a strategic facilitator for the harmonisation of poverty reduction policies and resources. The Tra Vinh model is presented diagrammatically below, alongside the model used in many of the other PRPP provinces, where the project PMU is situated within DoLISA at the provincial level.<sup>13</sup>



A final point on the relevance of project modalities at the sub-national level is that the project is predicated on the dissemination upwards of good project experiences, including the replication of innovative models for poverty reduction, the mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies and better coordination of poverty reduction resources (both GOVN resources and that of DP supported projects) for enhanced poverty reduction impact. To date the project has supported sharing of experiences across project provinces, and the provinces have participated in national level meetings (quarterly and annual) where they have shared their project experiences with national policy makers. So far, however, there have been few examples of the mainstreaming of innovative project models into local poverty reduction policies, or of effective coordination of different streams of resources for poverty reduction. In fact, the political economy of the pilot provinces, where there are different line agencies shared the responsibility of PR policies without effective coordination and the lack of incentives and empowerment to adopt innovations, might provide an explanation for this limitation. As observed in many poverty reduction projects or programmes, there are good practices at the local levels but mainstreaming such good practices and applying them to a wider context rather than just the target areas of projects appears to be very difficult. In addition, with the exception of the Tra Vinh model, the organizational structure of the project in other pilot provinces are not best suited to facilitate coordination across line departments and mainstreaming innovative project models to other local PR policies.

<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately the PRCO model in Tra Vinh is set to change, as provincial officials reported that the central Ministry of Internal Affairs is reluctant to have standing bodies independent of line departments, and the PRCO is thus set to be merged under provincial DoLISA (confirmed by project PMU interviews).

It is also not clear how experiences in the participating provinces would then be fed into policy dialogue at the national level. As the project is supposed to provide TA for the pilot provinces to facilitate their PR policy reforms and innovations, the experiences and lessons learnt from the participating provinces should be linked to the national level policy dialogue. This will then facilitate the institutionalization of such experiences at the national level. The design of the next phase of PR policies and programmes would also benefit from incorporating local level experiences and best practices. The MTE observed that quarterly or annual PRPP meetings is one mechanism for linking local experiences to national level policy discussion. There has also been a communication strategy developed through project support and it is now being adopted by the pilot provinces. But the link between experiences in the pilot provinces to national level policy dialogue remains weak. In the second half of the project, then, local project PMU's should focus upon the replication of good models and the dissemination of these models to national policy makers, so that they can be replicated on a wider, provincial and ultimately national scale. The national project office can usefully focus upon supporting provinces to replicate good practice models through linking up national and local activities more closely, and developing communication tools that effectively capture and disseminate good practice models.

### **4.3 Project Effectiveness and Efficiency**

#### ***4.3.1 Optimality of project support activities***

The project of course uses the UNDP model of 'National Implementation Modality' (NIM) and the activities of the project are consequently closely identified in collaboration with GoVN project partners. Project staff and national partners highlighted during interviews how national ownership is critical to the project successfully achieving its objectives, as government officers will only participate if the project activities directly support their needs. This provides an important check upon the project to ensure activities are both relevant and effective. At the same time however, project staff and the PMU's at both national and local levels must provide support and advice to policy makers and poverty reduction staff in order to prioritise activities and ensure that activities are supported that best achieve or support the project's objectives. GoVN officers often have a range of tasks to complete and insufficient resources to do so, and consequently the project's provincial coordinators observed that there was sometimes pressure to use the project's support to get activities done that are time-critical, or politically important, but which may not directly support the project's goals. At the national level, the Deputy National Project Director (DNPD) described how the project uses both a hard and soft approach ('carrot and stick') to working with line ministries and identifying project activities: on the one hand, implementing Resolution 80 is a political priority and they are therefore compelled to participate (the stick), but the project also explores ways of working that ensures that activities undertaken relate closely to the workplans and needs of the respective departments and that they therefore also have a strong incentive to participate (the carrot).

At the same time there are many demands from GoVN partners for support, particularly so given the restraints in the state budget discussed earlier. Limited project resources available are therefore spread relatively thinly across a number of GoVN partners, and consequently key ministries centrally, and departments locally, may only receive support for one or two activities each year (confirmed by interviews with MPI, MoET, and MoJ). The project therefore cannot, under these circumstances, make a major contribution to the agenda of line ministries. Ultimately there are a range of important tasks and limited project resources available, so careful choices must be made that are optimal in enhancing the objectives of the project (see the discussion on project workplanning below). In this context, the focus of the project support to MoLISA and CEMA is seen by the MTE team as worthwhile and strategic. While the project resources are insufficient to make a major contribution to the agenda of line ministries, TA support for the NIP



and CIP is significant. For MoLISA, the project support to MDP, MTR of NTP-SPR, social assistance, efforts to harmonize guidelines for NTP-SPR, and the design of the new phase of NTP-SPR are seen by MTE interviewees as critical for MoLISA to accomplish their important policy agenda. In the case of CEMA as CIP, the project support was focused upon building awareness and understanding of anthropology-based approach in EM poverty reduction, development of the MAFEM and its resultant Action Plan, monitoring system for EM poverty, the annual Forum on EM Poverty, all of which are clearly important policy priorities of CEMA.

For other line ministries, though the project support was not at a level to produce a major contribution, interviews with GoVN stakeholders and DPs confirmed that project choices in terms of the GoVN led activities that they support have often been impactful. This has particularly been the case with support to key national level activities. In these cases, both the activities and the technical assistance provided were deemed effective, as they closely supported the needs of project partners and the activities had strong political will driving them. This was the case with project activities to support the review of line ministry policies under output 1 of the project. Under this activity for example, MoET worked to integrate Decision 36 on supporting EM pupils in extremely difficult areas; Decision 85 to support EM students at EM boarding schools; and Decision 12 to support lower secondary school pupils in the extremely difficult areas. This was undertaken with PRPP support. The project also supported the PRCO to undertake the Mid-Term Review of the NTP-SPR. The support provided to the NA's Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction was also effective and well received, as the project provided value adding technical assistance in the form of well-qualified and effective consultants, and supported the process through workshops and support to field visits to enhance the quality of the final output from the process.

The project has been effective in supporting, over a period of time, the knowledge, understanding and political will to champion significant changes in poverty reduction policies and approach. This was the case with CEMA's 'anthropological approach', commune investment ownership, block grant approach to development support, and multi-dimensional poverty. All of these initiatives resulted from DP advocacy and support over a period of time, and the PRPP project continued the support provided through P135-II and the NTP-PR in the previous period, to foster policy dialogue and change. This is also the case with the EMPWG co-chaired by UNDP and IA and the sub-national policy forums supported by the project, which have been important and effective in maintaining ethnic minority poverty as a high profile issue. In this regard, the project was sometimes described as a 'bridge', linking line ministries and provinces to DPs, and to international developments and discussions on poverty reduction.

For local level activities, interviews with national and local level project coordinators highlighted how it took considerable time for local stakeholders to understand the complex nature and objectives of the project as TA support. This was particularly the case at the sub-provincial level, and amongst line departments beside DoLISA. During field visits it was apparent that many sub-provincial officers saw the PRPP project in conventional terms, as a project to deliver resources, and not as a strategic facilitator of support to enhance the effective utilization of poverty reduction resources (also discussed in section 4.2.2. above). PMU members in Bac Kan and Quang Ngai observed that where expectations of material support were high, hence it was more difficult for the province to isolate effective activities that supported the strategic goals of the project. This lack of understanding at the sub-national level is a significant obstacle to effecting the kind of strategic changes the project envisages, as evidenced by the slow progress in some PRPP provinces in replicating block grant models more widely and integrating poverty reduction resources effectively to target chronic poverty. In this context, a strategic position for the PRPP project is to ride 'on the shoulders' of other programmes with significant resources (using the language of the national technical coordinators) to provide TA in order to, for instance, rationalize PR resources, facilitate cooperation across line departments managing different resources, or

champion best practices. Establishing that position is difficult and optimising project support at the sub-national level in the coming year will depend on whether the project would be successful in attaining that position.

#### ***4.3.2 Optimality of technical assistance***

The project supported a range of technical assistance modalities. Two important means of supporting project partners are the provision of expert consultants to give value adding advice and research support to government agencies at the national and sub-national level; and support to consultation activities that enable a wide range of stakeholder views to be expressed and debated. There are a number of successful examples of the former kind of value adding TA: the MTR of the NTP-SPR, where an INGO and a research institute were brought onboard to provide what the head of the PRCO described as ‘independent expertise’ in support of the process. Another example is the support provided by the UK based OPHI to the core working group on MDP. OPHI’s expertise provided important support to the working group at a critical time, in areas where the working group lacked the requisite levels of technical understanding and expertise. This support was critical in building momentum for the MDP process and securing high-level political support. Another key example is the mobilization by CIP-CEMA of an international anthropologist to develop and provide training in more ‘anthropological’, or ethnographic approaches to their work by poverty reduction officers and the development of MAFEM.

In terms of supporting consultation processes, notable examples include the flagship Ethnic Minority Forum organised by the project, UNDP, IA, the EC and CEMA, and the project’s support to the National Assembly’s Supreme Oversight for Poverty Reduction. Through this process a number of high level consultation events took place on poverty reduction issues with National Assembly members, and the MDP process again, where multiple forums and technical meetings were carried out with the project’s support to build understanding and support for the concept. Other forms of technical assistance that the project has provided include support to capacity building (discussed below); study tours, both international (to Mexico for MDP, and to Thailand for conditional cash transfers) and between provinces to view good models of practice in poverty reduction (i.e. to Lam Dong province, and to Cao Bang and Hoa Binh to learn from the PSARD block grant model).

The selection of national consultants for technical assistance is governed by the competitive bidding regulations under UNDP’s HPPMG guidelines. Line ministry interviewees shared with the MTE team that not all consultants selected are necessarily equipped to work with GoVN officers, in some cases the consultants didn’t fully understand the complexity of the government system, or the difficulties faced by ministry officials in undertaking multiple tasks. Project technical staff noted that in many cases, consultancy outputs were delivered late and were not necessarily tailored effectively to the needs of the end users, i.e. line ministries. In mitigation, both consultants and line ministry officials interviewed during the MTE pointed out that the end users of the TA outputs are not always fully involved in drafting TOR and specifying the scope of work required, and this can lead to misunderstandings. The Head of the PRCO, for example, confirmed that he is not involved in the process of developing the scope of work and expected deliverables in the TORs for hiring consultants for activities in which he is the end user. Consultants also noted that government clients often demand more of the consultants than is included in the TORs, and that the nature of the assignment often changes midway through in response to different needs of stakeholders, or tensions between different users of their services. These tensions require careful and transparent management by the project PMU. In fact, meetings with consultants, end users, and project staff were usually organized at key milestones to share findings and discuss the way ahead. This is a measure taken by the project PMU to facilitate interaction between consultants and end users for better results. Nevertheless, improved coordination between the project and line ministry users could both simplify and accelerate the process of delivery by

consultants, enhancing the project's effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the project has established a network of retired officials to advise the project in this regard. However, the project needs to strike a balance between providing consultants whom government officers are comfortable and familiar working with, and introducing innovation and fresh thinking and ways of working, which can often come only from those who are outside the established government system. The need for this balance is an ongoing area of tension within the project, though it is inherent to the nature of UNDP NIM projects.

At the sub-provincial level, officials and the provincial project coordinators observed that there were few local consultants with the requisite skills to provide the consultancy support needed. Therefore, hiring consultants from Hanoi is usually the (only) choice available at times. One disadvantage of hiring such consultants is their lack of understanding of the local context in which the project operates. This issue could be mitigated by more pro-active involvement of the provincial technical coordinators with the work of consultants. However, as found in the MTE visits to provinces, there is only one technical coordinator in one pilot province and the coordinators revealed that they were overloaded and therefore not always available to provide consultants with technical inputs (rather than just managing logistical arrangements for meetings, for instance).

#### ***4.3.3 Optimality of capacity building activities***

During interviews with DPs and senior government officers they stressed that capacity building is a long-term objective and takes time to achieve. There are various stages to the capacity building process, with individual officers first required to change their attitudes and beliefs, before any changes in institutional effectiveness can take place. Capacity building is therefore a key building block in the process of change envisioned by the project. Consequently, a significant part of the project involves capacity building support, both to national and to local level project stakeholders. At one level, capacity building is expected to take place through the support provided by consultants to government officers, with whom they work closely. National consultants are expected to provide training to poverty reduction officers in the tools that they develop and this is built into the requirements of their assignments. For instance, the consultants that delivered the results framework for the NTP-SPR were also required to deliver training in the tools to staff through three regional workshops in 2014.

At the local level a variety of capacity building activities and approaches take place, clustered around 'technical' skills development, and general training in poverty reduction. In terms of technical skills training, provinces have developed a number of models delivered through 'Farmer Field School' (FFS) and 'Training of Trainer' (ToT) modalities. Provincial interviews with training beneficiaries and trainers confirmed that both methods of delivering training have been effective and equipped participants with useful skills, and that the project filled an important gap in the provision of technical training (see the case study Box 3 below). Where project training was provided by national consultants a common observation was that the training could usefully be tailored to local realities, with better suggestions on how to roll-out training content to ethnic minorities who face particular difficulties in understanding highly literate and technical training, delivered in Vietnamese. FFS methods are particularly effective in overcoming this problem, with less literate trainees receptive to 'learning by doing' methods. The integrated nature of training delivered through the project was a particular project feature in Bac Kan, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh that distinguished it from other forms of support. Beneficiary households in all three provinces observed that the technical training they received was well coordinated with the material support they received through the project, for example buffalos or cows. They would receive support first in learning how to grow high yielding grass varieties, before receiving the credit for the cow, and would subsequently receive timely support in basic veterinary skills for

their animals. This made a big difference in ensuring the household project was successful, they observed, and seldom happened under other livelihood support schemes of the government.

The second common form of capacity building delivered to the sub-national level is general training in skills for poverty reduction support. This included the dissemination of information on national policy initiatives, like Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR, and skills development training in participatory planning, commune construction supervision, reporting, and monitoring and evaluation. GoVN officials who were beneficiaries of this training at the local level observed that they sometimes found it hard to apply this general skills training to their everyday work. One example of this capacity building is through regional workshops organized by PRCO in the past two years. The workshops were appreciated as a good chance for gaining new knowledge and sharing experiences (especially horizontal experience sharing across different provinces). However, the high numbers of participants in the regional workshops made it difficult to ensure any significant level of interaction across participants and instructors. This was a factor that reportedly limited the effectiveness of the training.

It is important to note, however, that the PRPP training provided to both officials and poor households was very limited in scope, involving only a few sessions annually for officials and involving only a limited number of households, which was often only the twenty or so households in each commune that received material project support. There is an urgent need, therefore, to mainstream the PRPP training model into the training system of local GoVN, otherwise this modest support is not sufficient to make a major contribution to capacity building, and neither is it sustainable. A lack of financial resources available for training at the sub-national level means that the project is filling a gap in the provision of services, but the PRPP support for training is also limited and it is not clear yet how provincial GoVN will close this gap without making more resources available.

**Box 3: Experience of Project Beneficiaries**

*Participants in commune training events in Tra Son commune, Tra Bong district, Quang Ngai Province.*

The project supported the replication in the commune of an innovative training event conducted previously by the Red Cross, in gender equality. The women noted that the training was useful and practical and equipped participating people with skills to apply in their everyday lives. The training was particularly noteworthy for including men as well as women in the training. The women appreciated the training but suggested that it could be improved by including 'difficult men' in the training, and they expected more follow-up, that it was just a one-off event. The women also participated in the policy forums run by the district, where they had the chance to submit questions about policies to policy makers. They appreciated the chance to learn more about policies but there were a large number of questions submitted so they didn't get the chance to hear answers to their particular questions.

*Mr. Luu Van Phuc, Head of the Provincial Agricultural Extension Centre and Ms. Tran Thi Hong Yen, Head of the Agriculture and Rural Development Division, Tra Vinh Province.*

Mr. Phuc received project training in student centred approach and he felt the farmer field school methods were particularly appropriate to working with ethnic minority farmers. He appreciated the new approaches he was taught which got away from simply making a presentation, and fostered dialogue instead. He also welcomed the problem solving skills he was introduced to. Ms. Yen also received training in student centered teaching approaches, as well as supervisory skills for community supervision. She felt the ToT training helped her to make her own training more interesting and exciting. One way in which the training could be improved was if it was better tailored to local people's needs as learners, as ethnic minority people in Tra Vinh face particular challenges. Both Mr. Phuc and Ms. Yen explained that they tried to integrate what they had learnt from the ToT course into their own department's training curriculum but resources were

severely restricted. Nevertheless, Ms. Yen had put in a request to her line ministry superiors which had been accepted and would be a part of the training next year.

*Mr. Thach Sa Wan and Ms. Sun Thi Suong, khmer famers, Ngoc Bien commune, Tra Cuu district, Tra Vinh province.*

This couple were recipients of support to buy a cow under the 'block grant' scheme of the project. They were supported with 17 million dong and borrowed a further 20 million dong from family to buy an Italian breeding cow. They are ranked as poor in the village and thus eligible for support, as they have no rice land for cultivation. Prior to receiving the money Mr. Thach went on a study tour to see successful cow breeding in other communes, and received training in how to raise the cow and grow appropriate feed. The training was delivered in both Vietnamese and Khmer and both the training and study tour gave him the confidence to buy the cow. They subsequently lined the cow's stall with mosquito netting, a technique he had seen on the study tour. They hope to breed the cow successfully and have more cows in the future, as a means of escaping poverty.

#### ***4.3.4. Effectiveness in fostering innovation and providing leadership for strategic change***

The project works well when supporting activities that align closely with the needs of particular project partners, as we have seen. It is less effective though, in brokering pathways to change when the institutional interests of particular line ministries are not closely aligned, but where alignment is necessary to achieve the project objectives. This has been the case with harmonizing the modalities and provisions within the NTP-SPR projects on the production support component, where separate provisions under MARD's NTP-NRD, CEMA's P135 and MoLISA's Resolution 30a have remained in place for longer than expected, because of the difficulties involved in brokering a common formula for production support activities across the different projects. Similarly, separate guidelines for infrastructure investment remains under CEMA's P135 and MoLISA's programme for coastal and island communes. Indeed, slow progress in setting up the implementation arrangements for the NTP-SPR was highlighted by DPs, project staff and some line ministry officials as an area where the project was not yet able to produce effective outputs in supporting the NTP-SPR. This limited effectiveness has its own root causes that might be beyond the ability of the project to solve. For instance, the establishment of the P135 and the implementation mechanism for the project was not confirmed until the issuing of Decision 551 in 2013. Until that time, project 3 of the NTP-SPR was implemented on a very unclear basis, under the provisions of the previous P135-II which had in fact expired.

Fostering harmony in the provision of support managed by different line ministries and local departments is a very complex and difficult task. Line ministries have their own agendas and interests, and coordination is seen as being difficult enough, not to say harmonization of these differences. Nevertheless, the project has made significant efforts toward that end. A draft circular on infrastructure investment for NTP-SPR with reference to the arrangements under NRD was made available for consultation in mid-2014. There was also PRPP project support to MARD to rationalise guidelines on the provision of production support. But the complexity of the institutional context is not easy to address and whether these draft guidelines can be finalized in 2015, being the final year of the NTP-SPR (and thus approval will make little practical sense) or whether they are used for the design of the next phase of NTP SPR is unclear.

Similarly at the sub-national level, encouraging cooperation between line departments and the projects for which they are separately responsible has proved difficult in Bac Kan and Quang Ngai, though Tra Vinh has made some progress under their innovate institutional arrangement (that existed before Tra Vinh joined the project) of having a Standing Office for Poverty Reduction to

coordinate poverty reduction activities (as discussed in the previous section on project relevance). A key goal of the GoVN through Resolution 80, and of the project, is to consolidate resources for poverty reduction to make more efficient and effective use of the limited funds available at the sub-national level, and to explore synergies between the GoVN and DPs support programmes available. Below the provincial level, as we saw during field visits for the MTE, there is strong pressure to distribute resources evenly across districts (and across poor communes in each district). Sub-national officers also don't feel empowered enough to experiment innovatively with programme resources and fear getting into trouble if they do not apply the regulations for each programme exactly as they are prescribed by the centre.<sup>14</sup> This means they don't explore how the resources from different target programmes of the government, and from major DP supported projects like the Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction project or IFAD supported programmes or even IA support for some P135 communes in the pilot provinces, can be leveraged and better coordinated to maximise impact. It came out strongly from interviews that local officers consider regulations in managing different PR resources as the key obstacle for rationalizing the use of the PR resources available. Moreover, in a context where more than 70% of the provincial budget comes from the centre, the scope for autonomous action by sub-national officers in this regard is limited.

The experience of Tra Vinh though shows that with determined leadership from the provincial level it is possible to coordinate resources effectively at the district and commune levels, to maximize the impact of poverty reduction funds under different programmes. Also, that it is possible to concentrate resources in those areas that need them most, as Tra Vinh has begun to do in Tra Cu district where the MTE team visited, through poverty reduction masterplans that are developed. Supporting the provinces to do this should be a key focus activity for the project in 2015-16. However, to make this happen, the model of Tra Vinh in terms of having a PR Standing Office needs to be shared and replicated by other pilot provinces. Without this institutional structure and Tra Vinh's determined leadership, it would be difficult for other provinces to replicate the success of Tra Vinh in ensuring effective coordination across different PR resources. To that end, the role of the project's Central Steering Committee and MoLISA's Vice Minister as the project NPD is crucial.

Another important anticipated area of innovation for the project is the adoption by provincial authorities of successful models for poverty reduction from past programmes and DP supported projects. The PRPP project has supported the extensive documentation of such models as a key project activity, inviting for example a dozen different INGOs and projects to present their models to policy makers. This documentation focused in particular on models for the development of block grants, with extensive experience existing in Viet Nam of block grant and Community Development Fund (CDF) and Village Development Fund (VDF) models. One particular project experience the MTE team was keen to review was of the AusAid supported ISP programme in Quang Ngai. The ISP project worked closely with P135-II during implementation and developed a particular block grant model that conformed closely to the classic definition of what a block grant should be. A participatory planning process amongst commune and village people determined how a substantial block of untied funds should be spent. Despite the recent experience of the ISP project in Quang Ngai however, it was evident that the province had not adopted the ISP model after the end of the project in 2011.<sup>15</sup> Instead, Quang Ngai adopted a cow breeding model for its

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<sup>14</sup> One example of the failure to date to leverage resources for poverty reduction effectively comes from Irish Aid's parallel support to P135 through targeted budget support: the provision of top-up grants for infrastructure development in target communes. The communes selected for this support were not the PRPP communes. The opportunity to demonstrate how effective consolidating resources can be was thus missed, though CEMA has now committed to ensuring future IA resources do go to the PRPP communes.

<sup>15</sup> Helvetas/ SDC, the Swiss Development Agency, have supported an important participatory planning and block grant development project in Hoa Binh and Cao Bang, the PSARD project, and this could have been an important project with which the PRPP project could partner in Cao Bang. However, SDC staff confirmed

‘block grant’, very similar to that adopted by other PRPP provinces, which is not really a good example of the block grant model. The selection of cow breeding as the project activity was supposed to have been arrived at by local people through a participatory process, but discussions at the commune level seemed to suggest that the decision to adopt a cow breeding model was heavily influenced by district officials. In Quang Ngai, Bac Kan and Tra Vinh, households didn’t appear to have much choice in the models they were able to select. However, the MTE team also noted that exercising a block grant mechanism that is closer to the classic block grant model as experienced under ISP or SDC-supported PSARD is not possible under the PRPP’s limited budget for provincial activities. In 2015 then, the project could usefully revisit the block grant models developed and focus attention on building upon the legacies of innovative practices and models for participatory planning that have already been successfully developed and applied, such as the block grant model of the SDC supported PSARD project in Hoa Binh and Cao Bang, and the block grant model of the NMPRP-2 under the Commune Development Fund (CDF) component. One option to make this happen is to direct the IA support to P135 communes to the PRPP pilot communes (who are also covered by P135) in order to make significant investment resources available to exercise the block grant model. Then the PRPP technical assistance could be geared to facilitate the implementation of that block grant (e.g. through participatory planning, community supervision) while investment resources under the block grant come from the IA support budget.

A final point on fostering innovation through the project is that the project document anticipated well that this is a challenging thing to do, and that it requires strong technical support. The project document therefore prescribed a network of consultants, consultant organisations and researchers to act as a standing group to advise and support on innovation development through the project. The project did, in 2014, establish a network of senior retired GoVN officials to act in this capacity, but it was unclear to the MTE how active this network is, what kind of advice and support they provide, and how innovative their input can be, given they are deeply embedded in the current system. This kind of network is unlikely to be the spur to innovation envisaged in the project document. Instead, the document prescribes mobilizing consultants and researchers intimately engaged in applying the kinds of innovations discussed in the previous paragraph, through the ISP project, PSARD, INGO etc. The MTE team found that the network was in place in some informal ways and the list of consultants in the network was sometimes shared across DPs on an ad hoc basis. Again then, the role and function of the existing consultant network could usefully be reviewed in 2015, and supplemented with further skills and current experience that would support critical areas of innovation. In addition, the MTE team also discussed the necessity of having the support provided by these networks consistently across provinces. For instance, if the block grant model is revisited under the light of the suggestion above (i.e. directing the IA support to P135 communes to the pilot communes where possible), TA for implementation of such a block grant model should be in place and then implemented consistently across provinces.

#### ***4.3.5. Effectiveness and efficiency of the management structure of the project, at national and sub-national levels***

Consensus amongst project staff, line ministry officials and DPs with an intimate knowledge of the project that were interviewed was that the project is over-ambitious in scope, given the limited staff resources of the project. This is also the opinion of the MTE team following the review process. A large number of the activities of the project require a high level of technical support to GoVN partners in order to facilitate change. At the national level, there is only one national coordinator assigned to work across all of the national partners. He is consequently required to support many different activities simultaneously and consequently can’t provide in-depth, quality

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that these connections were never made. Instead, the PRPP project invested resources in hiring a consultant organisation to develop an alternative participatory planning model, despite the good experience of PSARD which already existed.



technical assistance. There is a full-time international management and coordination specialist who provides advice to the national and sub-national levels, and the UNDP policy adviser also provides part-time support to the project since being recruited in March 2014. There are three national coordinators supporting the eight provinces, with one of these coordinators (who was recently recruited) also responsible for the project's monitoring and evaluation and communication activities. These staff are acknowledged also to have a heavy workload and, by their own admission, are not necessarily qualified to provide substantive technical support to the innovation areas highlighted in the section above.

At the provincial level, each province has two full time project staff: one coordinator and one accountant. During the provincial visits it was clear that the provincial coordinators are required to do all of the project's management and organization, coordinating across the various provincial level stakeholders, and working directly with the district and implementing commune authorities. In the case of Tra Vinh, the coordinators role is more straightforward given the organization of the poverty reduction work through the SO-PR, and his mandate is consequently much clearer, but for the coordinators in Bac Kan and Quang Ngai the role is more complex, with a great deal of time spent cajoling line departments to participate in the project and coordinating their activities. None of the provincial coordinators interviewed have the time to provide strategic technical assistance to the project, as they are fully engaged in administering and coordinating project activities, in reporting and in liaising across the local level stakeholders.

There is therefore an urgent need for the project to rationalize the number of activities that are undertaken at the national level, to utilize the available project staff resources more effectively and efficiently. The 2014 workplan has more than 130 separate activities at both national and provincial levels. Instead of spreading national staff across a large number of sometimes disparate and isolated activities, the project could consolidate resources by prioritising those activities that are clustered around strategic priorities and strategically support each other. This would also enhance the project's impact. It is notable that the project's key successes have come around clearly defined activities where resources and effort have been focused intensively, i.e. the MTR, Supreme Oversight, MDP, and MAFEM. In terms of improving the level of technical support to national partners provided through the project, mobilising the network of national consultants and researchers discussed in the section above would enhance the quality of technical support and advice available to the project itself and GoVN partners.<sup>16</sup> This is particularly necessary at the sub-national level, where enhanced and strategic technical support is needed to foster the kinds of break-through innovations expected from the project. Some successful activities in the first half (e.g. policy forums, many capacity building activities) should be continued in the second half of the project. More importantly, technical assistance should be deployed to encourage the lessons from Tra Vinh's model of coordinating the project support in conjunction with other RP resources available. Efforts in fostering innovation and good practices available from the previous round of PR policies before 2010 should also be encouraged in the remaining time in preparation for the implementation of the next phase of NTP SPR. In terms of the demonstration effects intended of the project at the sub-national level, it was probably unnecessary to extend to eight projects in 2014, from the original four. It is however too late in the project cycle to reverse this decision now, but if effective support is to be provided to the eight provinces, and particularly to those provinces that have been less effective to date in meeting the project's objectives, then much more frequent and effective TA support will need to be provided in line with what has been suggested above.

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<sup>16</sup> It is important to acknowledge the substantive technical and coordinating role played by the UNDP project associate for the project, who plays a key leadership role too in networking and liaising with other DPs and across GoVN and has thus substantially contributed to the high level successes and high profile of the project.



#### ***4.3.6 Project management, utilisation of resources, ways of working and workplanning***

The project progress in completing workplan activities has generally been good, as can be seen from the discussion in Section 3 above. The project has followed the workplan closely. However, there are a number of key activities that have been constantly rolled over from one quarter to the next. This has been the case for instance with CIP CEMA's work on the development of a statistical indicator system (activity 1.4.028) which was also a project activity in the previous VIE02-001 project, and activity 3.3.1/3.3.2 to continue the work of RIM with MoLISA/ILLSA, which has not progressed far (according to interviews with ILLSA Director and staff) despite appearing in the quarterly workplans. CIP CEMA has also not yet implemented activity 1.4.4. to set up a Masters Degree programme for poverty reduction officers. This is a significant activity that was planned and the fear on the part of the project donors now is that there is insufficient time left in the project to implement this activity at all.

There have been delays in implementing some key recommendations from the TA outputs of project supported activities. There were four key pieces of technical assistance work to support the implementation of the NTP-SPR in 2013-early 2014: on monitoring and evaluation, communications, programme management and implementation, and the results framework. Many of the recommendations from these reports had not been implemented six months after they were presented at the quarterly project meeting in Q1 2014. Project staff attribute these delays to the fact that it took time to adjust the tools to the direct needs of the end users of the outputs. However the activities had already taken on average more than six months to complete, suggesting there was adequate time to incorporate the needs of end users. It is recognized by the MTE team that implementation of some recommendations needs important changes in the current institutional context. For instance, the adoption of the results framework or M&E framework requires better coordination across line ministries and sub-national line departments in terms of data collection and reporting. There was also an important TA activity undertaken to review the block grant model but implementation of a classic block grant (rather than the current model) requires the PRPP project tapping into the IA support to the project pilot P135 communes. Therefore, some recommendations are best considered as conditional on the project's success in implementing wider and more strategic actions. Nevertheless, the recommendations from these studies must now be quickly adopted and applied in the second half of the project in order to ensure the consultancy provided by the project is effectively utilised.

A project management concern expressed by the PMU's of the provinces visited during the MTE, and raised again during the project Central Steering Committee meeting in November 2014, was over the late disbursement of quarterly funds. Commune interviewees stated that funds for activities often didn't arrive until the end of the quarter for which they were planned. UNDP disbursement is results based, with implementing partners having to spend 80% of funds before the next tranche of money is released, which appears a sensible formula. The DNPd explained that with the PRPP project, there are a large number of CIPs and the release of quarterly funds is dependent upon all partners completing their quarterly reporting on time, to ensure a timely release of the next tranche of funds. When reporting by one partner is late, it delays the release of all funds. CIPs therefore need to ensure their reporting is done in a timely manner to ensure the timely release of project funds.

At the sub-national level workplans are quite heavily influenced by the central level, according to provincial informants during the MTE process. There is a delicate balance that needs to be struck then, between enabling provinces to develop activities according to their local needs, and ensuring that activities meet the strategic goals of the project. The PRPP Project Manager explained during the inception meeting that that the project now always asks three questions of provinces when they propose activities: what are the innovations that are being proposed, what are the linkages to the national level, and what are the possibilities for replication? During the

2014 workplanning process (in late 2013) the project set up a series of workshops to carefully assess the proposed activities under each output. Project staff consequently reported that the 2014 workplanning process was an improvement on the previous year, in identifying activities that were both relevant and effective. Planning for 2015 and beyond should involve a similarly focused approach while allowing a role for the pilot provinces to propose their activities that are relevant to the overall strategies of the project.

Given the large volume of demand from line ministries and sub-national line departments for project support, the project needs to carefully distill needs and prioritise activities according to strategic value and the contribution they will make to meeting project objectives. Project staff at both the national and local level, and DPs, highlighted during interviews the importance of consolidating resources in support of fewer, bigger and more 'joined-up' project activities, particularly activities that linked the national and sub-national levels more closely together. This is likely to result in more momentum for change, through building a critical mass of new capacity, research or experience to support policy and practice change (also discussed in section 4.3.5 above).

#### ***4.3.7 Effectiveness in monitoring progress, evaluation and making project adjustments***

A complex project like the PRPP, with a wide range of stakeholders and large number of very different activities, requires a good system for monitoring and evaluation in order to keep close track of what is going on. After two years of operation, the project has assembled a number of monitoring and evaluation tools, which were shared with the MTE team. These include forms for completion after field visits, evaluation forms of activities, and checklists for monitoring the work at provincial levels. The project also recently began to track legal documents that have been issued and the project's contribution. Regular monitoring visits are conducted by national project staff, and high level DP and GoVN monitoring visits also take place, most notably through the joint UNDP/IA and GoVN GACA project visits. These visits generate meeting minutes and observations of use to the Project in monitoring and adjusting its work. To date however, the project has yet to integrate these monitoring tools into a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework, or tool, which can be used for management, evaluation and ready adjustment of the project based upon evidence garnered through the system. Consolidating the existing M&E database into a comprehensive M&E system should be a priority in 2015 in order to inform the outcomes and impacts of the project at the end in 2016. In doing this, it is important to note that the system should be as simple as possible so that operationalizing the system will not incur significant additional workload for project staff, taking into account the current heavy workload of technical coordinators both at the national and sub-national level.

It also appears to the MTE team that the M&E culture of the project currently appears to be focused upon monitoring and surveillance (for instance detailed evaluation forms to be completed after field visits, checklists for monitoring activities at sub-national level), and less on compiling information and evidence to support strategic project thinking. As an example, the 'spot check' forms developed by the central project office for application in the provinces focus upon closely monitoring what is happening at the local level, rather than focusing upon results of activities as an M&E system would usually require. Another example arose during the process of writing this MTE report. The MTE team requested from the project office a concise list of the progress and outputs of project activities under each of the three project outputs. The project office was unable to provide this, and consequently the MTE team have had to examine every activity in the quarterly and annual workplans for 2013 and 2014 to determine what progress towards the project objectives under each output has been achieved (see Annex 2 and Section 3 of the report). At a minimum, the project's M&E system should be able to show clearly the progress of outputs against plan, progress in meeting anticipated targets and results, and track

through how each activity has contributed to higher level policy change. This information should form the basis of the project's M&E system.

#### **4.3.8 Project partnerships**

The project has made significant progress in building upon successful past partnerships, and developing new ones. The precursor UNDP projects to the PRPP, the support to P135-II (SEDEMA) and the NTP-PR under project VIE02-001, had developed strong relationships with DPs (through the P135-II partnership mechanism) and with the GoVN agencies beyond the two NIPs of MoLISA and CEMA. This was most notably the case with the NA-CSA and the NA-EC. As their importance in the policy process in Vietnam has increased, so they have increasingly been engaged in partnership with the PRPP project. The NA's Oversight of Poverty Reduction was a manifestation of this partnership, as is the EC's chairmanship with CEMA of the annual Policy Forum on EM Poverty. The project has also successfully kept DP's engaged with poverty reduction issues through supporting the EMPWG, which has been a high profile process highly commended by both GoVN and DPs for the important policy dialogue it has promoted, and the evidence based project research on ethnic minority poverty that has been presented and discussed.

One important further area of partnership which the project has successfully developed is in the inclusion of INGOs as direct partners in project activities. There has traditionally been reluctance on the part of both GoVN and INGOs in working closely together but over a period of time, and through project supported activities like policy forums, workshops and technical meetings, the working relationship has become much closer. The INGO Oxfam worked closely with the PRCO on the MTR of the NTP-SPR and are now working with the NA-CSA on provincial budget oversight, supported by the PRPP project. These kinds of relationships are important in promoting good policy and poverty reduction outcomes and should be further developed and deepened in the second half of project implementation. Partnership with research institutes such as ILLSA (for RIM) and VASS (for MTR of NTP-SPR) could also usefully be strengthened. In addition, there has been an intention on the part of the project (mainly under the plan for establishing a network of research institutes and consultants) to develop partnership with other independent research and consultancy organizations.

#### **4.4 Project Impacts**

At the half way point in the project cycle there is evidence of the project having contributed significantly to the GoVN's objectives in implementing Resolution 80, the orientation towards MDP, and preparation for the next phase of PR policies. The project is well placed to achieve the targets of Resolution 80 if rapid progress can be made in 2015 in redesigning policies for poverty reduction. The project is also on track to support the GoVN in developing a Masterplan for MDP in 2015, indeed the NPD identified this as one of the most critical areas of support required from the project in 2015. Once the MDP Masterplan is approved, it can be reflected in the SEDP 2016-2020 and then mainstreamed into local SEDPs. The recent support to CEMA to develop the MAFEM and its resultant Action Plan is another major contribution. Once approved, this MAFEM Action Plan will be a key component in accelerating poverty reduction for ethnic minorities. But this will take time. In regard to the NTP-SPR, the project has contributed only modestly to its implementation, given that many of the activities to develop or harmonize NTP-SPR implementation instructions have taken a long time to complete due to the complexity of the institutional setting and complex relationships between key stakeholders, or remain ongoing in the case of the harmonization of production support regulations across different ministries.

Effecting policy change is a critical measurable indicator of project impact, and the PRPP project has demonstrably contributed to the following key policy changes over the first two years of the

project (at the completion of this report by the end of 2014, policies 7, 9, 14, 17 and 20 were at the draft stage):

	<b>Document title</b>	<b>Issuing body</b>	<b>Project contribution</b>
1	Resolution no. 76/2014/QH13, dated 24/06/2014 on promoting the implementation of the targets for sustainable poverty reduction to 2020 <i>(A key resolution of the GoVN reiterating the GoVN's strong commitment to Resolution 80 and its objectives)</i>	National Assembly	The project strongly supported the NA Supreme Oversight process through the provision of consultancy TA support and support to consultations and fieldwork by the oversight team, as well as playing a key role in helping in the drafting of the Oversight report.
2	Resolution no. 661/NQ-UBTVQH13 dated 4/9/2013 on the establishment of supervisory team for NA Supreme Oversight on the implementation of policies and legal regulation on poverty reduction in the period 2005 -2012	Standing Committee of NA	
3	Notice no. 187/TB-VPCP, 05/05/2014 following the Deputy PM's (as the Chairman of the CSC-SPR) tele-conference evaluation of the results of policy implementation 2005-2013)	GoVN	
4	Notice no. 143/TB-VPCP, 26/03/2014 at the conclusion of the CSC-SPR, directing the process of renovating poverty reduction policies and mechanisms in the forthcoming period <i>(Also Notice no. 89/TB-VPCP 05/03/2014 following the steering committee meeting on SPR on the 20/02/2014)</i>	GoVN	Project TA inputs and support to MoLISA in providing the report for the Steering Committee significantly shaped both the discussion and outcome of the meeting, and the subsequent notice.
5	Inter-ministerial circular no. 02-BKHDT-BTC /2014/TTLT dated 12/02/2014 guiding the mainstreaming of poverty reduction resources in the implementation of SPR programmes in poor districts	MPI - MoF	TA support through consultants to draft a technical report and support to the consultation process
6	Circular no. 68/2013/TTLT-BTC-BLDTBXH, 21/05/2013 regulating the management and use of the budget for projects 3 and 4 of the NTP-SPR	MoF-MoLISA	Technical support through consultants for the technical report and support to the national and sub-national consultation processes
7	<u>Draft</u> inter-ministerial circular guiding the implementation of infrastructure investment projects for the Programme 30a	MPI-MoF-MoLISA	TA support through consultants and support to the national and sub-national consultation process
9	<u>Draft</u> inter-ministerial circular by MARD guiding the implementation of Decision no. 2621/QD-TTg, 31/12/2013, adjusting and supplementing the support for production development under Resolution 30a.	MARD	TA support through consultants and support to the national and sub-national consultation process
10	Dispatch no 7126/VPCP-KGVX dated 26/08/2013 by the GoVN Office approving MoLISA to formulate the Multi-dimensional Poverty Project	GoVN/ MoLISA	Supported awareness raising through a study tour to Mexico for ministerial officials; supported training

11	Decision no. 1896 /QĐ-LĐTBXH dated 06/12/2013 on the establishment of the research commission and the secretariat team to formulate the master project on renovating the approach to poverty in Vietnam from a uni-dimensional approach to MDP	MoLISA	in MDP through a course in the UK; provided TA through research on MDP indicators; organized policy advocacy events at central level such as conferences, workshops, training courses.
12	Decision no. 311 /QĐ-LĐTBXH dated 20/03/2014 approving the plan to formulate the master project for renovating the approach to poverty in Vietnam, towards a MDP	MoLISA	Also supported consultation on the system with ministries, sectors and agencies.
13	Decision no. 2356/QĐ-TTg dated 4/12/2013 by the PM issuing the Action Plan to implement the Ethnic Minority Strategy to the Year 2020	PM	Provided experts and consultants to support the process and supported national and sub-national consultations
14	Approval of the system for data collection indicators for the ethnic minority sector (the decision will be issued at the end of 2014 or beginning of 2015)	PM	Supported the development of indicators for the system through TA, and the consultation process
15	Inter-ministerial circular no. 06/2013 dated 27/12/2013 by MoF - CEMA guiding the implementation of Decision no. 33/2013/QĐ-TTg dated 4/6/2013 on the continued implementation of the policy supporting the settled agriculture and fixed residence of ethnic minorities to 2015	MoF - CEMA	Research support and support to the consultation process
16	(Adjusted) Decision no. 102/2009-TTg dated 07/8/2009 on the direct support to poor households in difficult areas	PM	TA research support, and support to the policy review process
17	Approval of the project on the development of ethnic minority human resources to 2020, and orientation to 2030. (The decision will be issued at the end of 2014 or beginning of 2015)	PM	TA research support and support to the consultation process
18	Decision no. 551/QĐ-TTg approving the Programme 135 on supporting infrastructure investment and production support for especially difficult communes, border communes, safety zone communes and especially difficult villages	PM	Support to national and sub-national consultation workshops and TA support to the drafting of the documents and circular
19	Inter-ministerial circular no. 05 guiding the implementation of P135	CEMA - MoF - MPI - MARD	
20	<u>Draft</u> Action Plan to promote the implementation of the MAFEM (approval is expected in the second quarter of 2015)	PM	Supported with consultants to draft MAFEM and its resultant Action Plan, and the organisation of consultation workshops to formulate and complete the Action Plan

20 policy actions are listed in the above table, of which some are strategic decisions that will reshape the poverty reduction policies in Vietnam in the next 5-years socio-economic planning cycle. This is clearly a very significant policy impact of the project. In addition to these concrete

and important policy actions, it is important to note that the PRPP project has contributed to creating an 'enabling environment for change'. There are many factors that contributed to the creation of this enabling environment. At the national level, numerous workshops and consultations on key PR policies issues (e.g. Supreme Oversight, MDP, MAFEM, MTR of NTP-SPR) have contributed to creating a vibrant debate on the issues/problems of the current plethora of PR policies and programmes as well as future direction for changes. MTE interviews with national stakeholders reveal that there is a consensus that the next phase PR policies should incorporate significant changes to the existing framework. These are not enacted yet but will be instrumental in enabling change to happen in the coming years. Also at the national level, while many DPs have announced their exit or are transforming their programmes 'from aid to trade', there are DPs who remain strongly interested and committed to support EM poverty reduction. The consultations within EMPWG co-chaired by the two principal donors of the PRPP project and the VDPF 2013 were examples of significant national level interactions between GoVN and DPs on the current and future agenda for PR. At the sub-national level, stakeholder interviews conducted during the MTE reveal that there was a strong perception at the local level on the pitfalls of having overlapping PR resources, and calls for change. This 'enabling environment for change' cannot be measured concretely but the MTE team acknowledge the major contribution of the project support to creating this important 'platform'. It is expected that having such an enabling environment is a necessary precondition for realizing key policy change goals such as the application of MDP, rationalizing NTPs into the NTP SPR and NRD, and mainstreaming poverty reduction into the mandate of the line ministries.

This enabling environment for change is augmented by the project induced improvements in the attitudes and beliefs of key stakeholders able to influence the formulation and implementation of poverty reduction work. The project has invested heavily in facilitating this kind of practice change and there are clear stories of how this investment has strongly supported project objectives. A notable example is the study tour to Mexico for MoLISA and line ministry officials to view the Mexican approach to implementing MDP. Participants in the study tour confirmed to the MTE team during interviews how important the study tour had been in convincing them of the utility of MDP approaches, and how it equipped them with the knowledge and experience to convince others. The MDP training in Oxford, UK and further TA support by the PRPP project have consolidated an in-depth understanding across key PR policy makers on the MDP approach and what is required (including what difficulties need to be address) in operationalizing MDP in the practice of monitoring and targeting in future PR interventions.

At a more modest level, numerous commune level interviewees during the visits to the three PRPP provinces described how project supported visits to other communes had given them important insight into how they could take forward their own livelihood activities, through for example observing how to effectively raise cows and grow fodder in new and effective ways. (See case studies in Box 3 above). Sub-national GoVN officers participation in study tours to other provinces to view poverty reduction models also had a positive effect in exposing them to different and often more innovative models which they could seek to apply in their own work. Provincial participants in project supported trainings described how they had received new skills, which enabled them to do their work in more effective and participatory ways, though they expressed frustration that they often lacked the opportunities to apply what they had learnt in practice. Investments in practice change, though not easy to measure, are important in mobilising and motivating poverty reduction officers to approach their work differently, and in a way that better supports the strategic objectives of the project. They play a part in building the knowledge and confidence of poor people to participate in poverty reduction planning and monitoring, and to demand effective services from GoVN locally .

## 4.5 Sustainability

### 4.5.1 Policy change

Sustainability of the project's outputs is closely linked to the discussion of project impacts in the preceding section. Sustainability is ensured through policy change. The project's objectives are closely linked to those of GoVN, so effecting change through the project will be reflected and institutionalized in the GoVN system, which is an inherent advantage of NIM projects. The policy environment is supportive for the long term sustainability of the objectives of Resolution 80, if the critical aspects of MDP, MAFEM, policy mainstreaming and consolidation of resources to poor areas can be built into the next generation poverty programme for the period 2016 onwards, and embedded into practice through SEDPs at both the national and sub-national levels. Ensuring that these critical objectives are reflected in the design of the two NTPs after 2015 will be a project priority, according to the NPD, and will be a key factor therefore in ensuring the sustainability of project outcomes. At the time of this MTE, there have been ongoing activities on all the fronts listed above: the design of the next NTP SPR; finalization of the Action Plan as a result of the MAFEM; activities undertaken under MDP masterplan; continued collaboration between line ministries on the alignment of different guidelines on the provision of PR support; frequent consultation between GoVN and DPs on EM poverty reduction. These are clearly strategic for the next phase of PR framework and policies. Under the enabling environment for change described earlier, it is likely that all of the above on-going initiatives would produce important strategic outcomes in 2015 the year 2016. Therefore, in terms of sustainability, the key strategic policy changes that the project has supported are likely to make a substantive long term contribution to improving poverty reduction.

Alongside this, ensuring the sustainability of improved attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour of beneficiaries supported by the project remains a challenge. As discussed earlier, practice change is a long term process and continued effort on the part of the project is needed to develop capacity in key dimensions championed by the project, including participatory planning, ethnic minority sensitivity and gender sensitivity. Progress has been made in the area of participation and participatory planning, through local level policy forums, training and the application of participatory methods in the development of block grant models, but much of this practice still appears to be consultation rather than genuine participation, with top down and centralizing pressures still strong at all levels. In the domain of ethnic sensitivity CEMA has made important steps in implementing training in anthropological/ethnographic approaches, but this still needs to be mainstreamed into the core curriculum for training CEMA and other line ministry and department cadre. Hence, there is a need for continued capacity building support to the key beneficiaries of the project but, as discussed earlier, continuing this support is constrained by the level of resources available for this activity. In this regard, this aspect of project sustainability depends heavily upon whether the project will be able to mainstream such capacity building activities so that other GoVN resources could be spared to deliver capacity building both at the national and sub-national levels.

### 4.5.2 Gender empowerment

In the realm of gender sensitivity and gender empowerment, the MTE team found that much remains to be done before a genuine process of women's empowerment and equality can be said to be operating through the GoVN-led poverty reduction processes (while this remains a focus in many DP-supported interventions). Gender equality is an important project objective and an important goal for the donors to the project, UNDP and Irish Aid. Gender empowerment extends across all realms of poverty reduction work. Thus women should be beneficiaries of trainings and should receive project investment support on an equal basis to men. But they should also feel



empowered to participate in all local discussions about poverty reduction support; should be able to monitor and observe the implementation of poverty reduction activities; and should be able to participate in processes whereby poverty reduction activities are evaluated and adjusted, with their needs accorded equal importance to those of men.

The MTE team specifically evaluated progress in gender empowerment at all levels as part of the MTE methodology (as reflected in the evaluation framework key questions). At both the national and sub-national levels, women's participation was always assumed by local officers to be on track, because the numbers of women participating in activities was reported to be high. However, this kind of quantitative assessment masks the very real barriers women still face in being able to voice their particular demands and concerns. For the women interviewed during the MTE process, they face significant barriers to participation in the form of entrenched patriarchal views amongst fellow village residents and local officials. Complacency amongst higher level officials is a strong barrier to women's greater empowerment in poverty reduction processes. In the next phase then, the project should proactively address remaining obstacles to women's empowerment, through working to change the attitudes of men in particular. Gender empowerment should be a much more explicit and visible project component in the PRPP. A key future instrument to consider would be to position a gender dimension in the TA provided to support the PR review and redesign by the NIP MoLISA and CEMA. Gender dimensions should also be incorporated in the TOR for TA provision to support line ministries (see below for recommendations).

#### ***4.5.3 Replication and consolidation***

Replication of project objectives in the mainstream work of the GoVN at the sub-national level is critical to the long-term sustainability of the project. A number of contextual restraints operate to make this replication difficult. Firstly, the GoVN has limited funds for activities like capacity building, which makes mainstreaming GoVN supported activities difficult. There is simply often no budget line for the replication of these kinds of activities. Paradoxically then, the financial conditions which make consolidation of poverty reduction activities a priority for the GoVN, also means that there are less funds available for critical activities like capacity building and replication of good models of practice. Besides budgetary constraints, replication of the project activities requires strong interaction between GoVN officials, representatives of DPs and INGOs, independent researchers and consultants – which is not yet a culture in the workplace in many line ministry offices at the national level, and remains a new concept for many sub-national authorities. Replication of project activities also requires a significant provision of TA support. There are a number of research institutes in the GoVN system such as VASS, ILLSA and these institutions should be encouraged to provide TA at the level required to facilitate or even catalyze policy changes as the PRPP project has done by involving a large (and mixed from different institutions) number of researchers and consultants.

In this context, leveraging off other projects and programmes to maximise the take-up of innovative models and initiatives becomes even more important. To ensure the sustainability of project objectives, much more needs to be done to ensure synergies and consolidation between poverty reduction programmes (such as the different component parts of the NRTP-SPR: 30a, P135, and with the NTP-NRD) and with other DP supported projects, like the Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction project and the Central Highlands Poverty Reduction project of the World Bank/MPI and IFAD supported programmes in the PRPP provinces. Replication of their good models of practice, in CDF and block grants, CIO, cash transfers also need to be effectively integrated into the mainstream GoVN programme of the NTP-SPR. It is still only the mid-point of the project's lifespan, but 2015 will be a critical year in progressing these initiatives to ensure the future sustainability of the PRPP's objectives.





## 5. Conclusions: Lessons Learned and Recommendations

In the following section 5.1 we summarise the lessons learned from the preceding discussion of project progress in achieving results and key findings on relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, impact and sustainability. In section 5.2 we make recommendations for the project based upon the evaluation of progress, key findings and lessons learned.

### 5.1 Lessons learned

- 1) ***Progress in reviewing policies has taken time and redesigning policies will be a similarly complex and challenging task that should start now.*** The review of poverty reduction policies (to provide the basis for rationalizing PR policies) has been the main focus of project activities under output 1 of the project over the first two years of implementation. According to interviews with the PRCO and Vice Minister of MoLISA/NPD this review process has been slow but is now largely complete, after around two years of active project technical support. Given the complexity of policies and the large number of stakeholders involved, this re-designing process will be similarly complex and time consuming.
- 2) ***Important restraints and bottlenecks have hindered NTP-SPR implementation, and the implementation of Resolution 80:***
  - Delays in developing the implementation instructions for the NTP-SPR (confirmed by interviews with line ministries, provinces and project office staff), resulted from uncertainty over the status of the P135 and the relationship between implementation arrangements across different national programmes, which has hindered sub-national implementation of the programme;
  - A distant working relationship between the NIP (MoLISA) and CIP (CEMA) which is a legacy of the formulation process over the new programme, which has complicated the NTP-SPR implementation and also cooperation between MoLISA and CEMA in the PRPP project to a degree (confirmed by DP and project staff interviews);
  - Heavy workload of line ministry staff, which has meant that progress in reviewing policies has been slow (confirmed during line ministry interviews). The project has done well in strategically supporting the GoVN policy review process, given this context, and in particular in improving the quality of the outputs from the process, through providing high quality and value adding TA.
- 3) ***The new post 2015 context will have a reduced number of target programmes and policies, but avoiding overlaps and maximising synergies, as well as ensuring effective coordination across different line ministries and departments, will still be a challenging task.*** The project has worked well when supporting initiatives that align closely with the needs of particular project partners, but has been less successful when the institutional interests of line ministries are not closely aligned, or even conflict. As an example, the NTP-SPR was intended to consolidate poverty reduction programmes into a single programme, but what resulted was a single programme with distinct project components managed by separate ministries, so the objective was not completely realized (observation by a number of DPs, and line ministry interviewees). One line ministry interviewee described the NTP-SPR as '*not one programme, but four programmes under one, so that the one programme is in name only*'. Centrifugal pressures to keep distinct programmes under line ministry control are still strong. The challenge thus remains of integrating and harmonizing poverty reduction support under the two remaining target programmes after 2015 – the NTP-PR and the NTP-NRD. This is situation is also mirrored at the sub-national level, between different line departments.

- 4) ***Nevertheless, in broad terms coordination between MoLISA, CEMA and other line ministries for poverty reduction and ethnic minority development has improved over the past two years.*** The project has significantly supported this improved coordination, through supporting the issuing of guidance for policy review and consolidation and the adoption of a new MDP approach (MoLISA); leadership of ethnic minority policy dialogues (CEMA) and through leading the process of MAFEM (CEMA). Thus whilst enacting the specifics of coordination and cooperation remains challenging, the political imperative to cooperate and coordinate remains very strong, and the project has acted as an important bridge between institutional stakeholders. Improved cooperation extends to INGOs, research institutes, and independent observers too, who are increasingly involved in the GoVN's poverty reduction process through the project.
- 5) ***MoLISA and CEMA are not yet playing the role envisaged in the PD of strategic monitor of poverty reduction impacts and champion for poverty reduction (MoLISA); and custodian of ethnic minority development (CEMA).*** As poverty reduction policies become mainstreamed into the regular work of line ministries and departments, it is anticipated that MoLISA and CEMA's roles in the direct implementation of poverty reduction programmes will be reduced, and they will adopt more of an oversight and monitoring role for poverty reduction, in assessing higher level poverty reduction outcomes (MoLISA) and ensuring ethnic minorities are effectively reached and participate in the poverty reduction process (CEMA). The project supported important developments in this regard through the first two years of implementation, through developing results based frameworks and new approaches to conceptualising EM poverty i.e. drafting and discussing a system for MDP, developing a results framework for the NTP-SPR, developing a statistical indicator system for EMs, supporting the MAFEM and developing more anthropological approaches for EM development. The oversight and management roles for MoLISA and CEMA must be much more clearly defined and institutionalized in the next phase of the project utilizing these new tools and approaches. This should also be supported through an agenda for capacity building in order to make sure that there is a strong 'watchdog' capacity under these two key stakeholders of future poverty reduction in the country.
- 6) ***MDP approaches will be a critical component in the GoVN's approach to poverty reduction in the next phase. The project has supported significant progress in the development of an MDP approach, but much remains to be done.*** The development of an MDP approach in Vietnam has been strongly supported by the project and progress in developing the approach is significant, with a Masterplan anticipated to be in place in 2015. Experience from the first half of the project shows that in order to reach the point where MDP is institutionalized in the mainstream work of GoVN, a great deal of work is still needed especially in how to operationalize the concept of MDP into the practice of poverty reduction, requiring strong support from the project and leadership from the PMU and project Central Steering Committee.
- 7) ***Progress in consolidating and integrating poverty reduction resources, and targeting chronic poverty has been slow at both the national and the sub-national levels.*** Evidence from field visits to three PRPP provinces during the MTE confirmed that progress has been slow in targeting resources more effectively at the local level, and consolidating poverty reduction resources. This is the case with both donor supported resources, such as from Irish Aid, IFAD and World Bank projects operating in the provinces, and from the National Target Programmes (NTP-RD and the constituent projects under the NTP-SPR). Reasons for this include conflicting regulations governing the use of resources under each programme; conflicting time frames and reporting requirements; and local officials feelings of not being empowered to creatively and flexibly allocate these programme resources to best effect. During the Central Steering Committee meeting in November 2014, more than one provincial

delegate requested the national level to provide guidance on how this could be done effectively. Tra Vinh's initiative in developing a poverty reduction Masterplan to govern the use of resources is a significant initiative which the project can further support and help replicate in the second half of the project.

- 8) ***Innovative experiences from other poverty reduction programmes in the PRPP provinces have not yet been successfully replicated and mainstreamed into the GoVN system.*** The project supported the review of innovative models from INGOs and DP supported projects, block grants in particular. However, these models and other DP models on participatory planning have not yet made their way into the mainstream government system, as intended in the project design, though project implementation in some of the provinces only started in 2014 and is therefore very new. Given the timeframe and resources available for the project, the project focus should now be geared towards facilitating national level consultations across NIPs, other line ministries, and DPs on how to institutionalize the innovative and good practices into the next round of NTP SRP and other PR policies in the future.
- 9) ***Top-down and hierarchical traditions of decision-making are hard to overcome and act as a barrier to women and EM's empowerment.*** Top-down and centralized traditions of decision-making are a substantial obstacle to empowering women, poor people and ethnic minorities to participate in, and own poverty reduction activities (an important project objective). Evidence from the communes visited, and from reports on poverty reduction reviewed, is that marginalized people struggle to overcome these hierarchical traditions and are still often viewed as objects for development (as recipients of support and other interventions), rather than subjects in their own process of empowerment. Women often face a double barrier, based upon their gender, and their status as poor and/or ethnic minority people. Consequently the gender empowerment objectives of the donors through the project are not being met, despite the levels of women's formal participation that are reported. Women consulted during the MTE reported that attending meetings or trainings didn't necessarily translate into changes in their lives and ability to participate, as they were still marginalized in their own households and communities, and by local officials who didn't value their opinions or needs as highly as those of men.
- 10) ***The strategic purpose of the project, in applying value adding technical assistance to existing government programmes, is often not well understood at the sub-national level.*** This was the case amongst some provincial partners, and at the sub-provincial level in the PRPP provinces the MTE team visited. The project was instead viewed in conventional terms, as a vehicle for providing investment, and as the levels of direct support provided through the project are low, the project was sometimes given a low level of importance. This is then translated into lack of incentive for line departments to participate in the project and the cooperation across line departments, which is supposed to be facilitated by the project provincial PMUs, is very challenging.
- 11) ***Provinces are currently not subject to results based assessment or accountability in poverty reduction performance.*** There is no strong accountability mechanism or performance related measure for provinces in accounting for poverty reduction resources allocated to them. The project supported policy forums in the pilot provinces appears to be a good mechanism to promote accountability, if such forums could be institutionalized with the mainstream GoVN system at the local level. Emergent discourses on poverty reduction stress the importance of holding poor people responsible for the poverty reduction resources they receive, and this could usefully be extended to provinces and other sub-national authorities too, to enhance performance. This could be a critical innovation and area of future support by the project.
- 12) ***Provinces find it difficult to advocate for policy changes to the higher level, and need support in communicating good experiences and innovations.*** The project seeks to play a key

strategic role in supporting national level advocacy for sub-national initiatives but provincial policy makers and poverty reduction officers expressed some frustration at their inability to influence national policy makers to make changes that would give them more flexibility to manage poverty reduction resources locally. There is therefore a need to develop much more innovative and dynamic arrangements and communication channels between the national and sub-national levels of the project.

- 13) ***Capacity building activities of the project are important, but their application in the everyday work of poverty reduction officers is sometimes not clear and they are consequently often not utilized.*** This was less the case with technical training, for example in animal husbandry and crop production, but was the case with the skills training that was provided, in participatory planning for example, or commune supervision for infrastructure construction. At times, beneficiaries of the training reported being frustrated that they often didn't have the opportunity to apply this training. Innovative training initiatives of the project (mainly ToT) are often not replicated, because of the lack of government funding available for training (and consequently, the TOT trainees found it difficult to replicate the training). Capacity building thus appears not to have a high priority in poverty reduction work at the sub-national level, particularly in the new context where budgets are restricted, which makes the institutionalization of project capacity building models difficult.
- 14) ***National and provincial project coordinators have heavy workloads and struggle to effectively implement and monitor a large number of sometimes disparate and small activities.*** The heavy workload associated with the sheer number of project activities was a common observation made by national and provincial project staff, and was reported as an obstacle to their effectiveness. The volume of project activities is therefore over-ambitious and could be scaled back, with more focus on fewer, more joined-up activities (such as the MTR and Supreme Oversight processes, and support to MDP, which were all significant project successes). In addition, monitoring the project activities in this context needs to focus on key performance indicators and avoid time-intensive surveillance activities of routine work when operationalizing the M&E system.
- 15) ***The volume of sub-national activities of the project is also large and sub-national activities are not well linked up to national activities, minimizing their policy and practice change impacts.*** Many provincial activities are small in both scope (types of support) and scale (level of support) and not linked well to other activities. Each stakeholder appears to be given an activity and, though they may be important to the agency implementing them, they are not always strategically linked to the anticipated outcomes of the project overall. An example is the support to conflict resolution training in Tra Son commune, Tra Bong district in Quang Ngai province, which the MTE visited. It is also not clear how the project supported block grant models, which are quite limited in the number of beneficiaries (e.g. a few dozen households per commune) could be mirrored in other PR projects at the sub-national level. Sub-national activities would also benefit from much stronger TA support especially in creating a more explicitly joined-up approach across different activities.
- 16) ***Innovations in providing TA are important to the project success.*** Being a TA project, the provision of technical assistance needs innovation to maximize effectiveness. The establishment of an (informal) network of consultants, researchers, and senior retired government officials is a good direction to take in order to create a strong and diversified technical resource for the provision of project TA. Organizing consultants to support end users and the project team is a good arrangement to make sure that the TA output could then be applied effectively by end users. Perhaps, an explicit involvement of end users in developing TORs should be considered to avoid delays in implementing the recommendations from project TA outputs.

- 17) ***The project's M&E system is underdeveloped.*** A number of useful M&E tools have been developed but the project lacks a joined-up M&E system which would enable project staff to utilize these tools more strategically. The project could also usefully focus less upon micro-monitoring and managing province's activities, and more upon the outcomes and results of these activities. The fact that project coordinators at both national and sub-national level are overloaded supports the imperative to keep the M&E focused on key performance indicators rather than closely monitoring routine activities on the ground.

## 5.2 Recommendations to the Project

### Support the design of the next generation of poverty reduction policies after 2015

- 1) ***Focus attention and resources upon supporting the redesign of policies for poverty reduction for the next phase of poverty reduction programming after 2015:*** The Vice Minister of MoLISA/NPD gave very clear direction to the Project Central Steering Committee meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014 that the PRCO now needs to begin the process of redesigning poverty reduction policies, in close cooperation with the project. The project should now support the PRCO and Central Poverty Reduction Steering Committee to redesign the policies in line with Resolution 80, i.e. to avoid overlaps in provision, harmonise support mechanisms, mainstream poverty reduction into the regular work of line ministries and concentrate resources on the areas and groups that need them most;
- 2) ***Support the design of a policy framework to maximise synergies and avoid overlaps between policies and programmes for poverty reduction, social assistance, and rural development:*** The next phase of target programming will have only two NTP's, for Rural Development and Poverty Reduction. There will also be a P135 (which will be augmented by the Action Plan of MAFEM), and social assistance policy framework. The new NTP-SPR needs to be designed in such a way as to maximise the opportunities for synergy across all of these programmes, avoid overlaps, and ensure poor people have the maximum support possible to enable them to escape poverty sustainably in the future. The project should help all stakeholders conceptualise what this framework should look like, and assist in developing the framework and policies under Resolution 80;
- 3) ***Support the institutionalization of the MDP approach:*** Much progress has been made by the project in building an understanding of, and commitment to MDP as an approach to poverty reduction. In the next period from 2015 onwards, this support must be built upon to make MDP a reality in the GoVN's poverty reduction work through developing the MDP Masterplan, and supporting the development of MDP as both a monitoring and targeting tool within the next generation poverty reduction programme. It is important to note that this MDP priority should be the key focus so that MDP approach could be reflected in the design of the next phase of NTP SPR and other PR policies.
- 4) ***Strengthen the coordination and oversight roles of MoLISA and CEMA:*** With the shift of poverty reduction policies to line ministry control under Resolution 80, the project should now assist MoLISA and CEMA to take up their key coordination and oversight roles. In the case of MoLISA, it is anticipated they will continue to have responsibility for social assistance policies, but they will also need to further develop their role as the agency responsible for monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction impacts, and will need to be equipped with the appropriate skills and technologies to do so, particularly in regard to MDP (see below). For CEMA, they will continue to have responsibility for P135, (which has been approved to 2020 under Decision 551) but they must also develop their role as guardians and advocates for ethnic minority development and ethnic minority affairs. Again, they must be equipped with the skills and technologies to be able to undertake this role effectively in the new context;

- 5) ***Develop a platform to engage DPs in supporting the next phase programming for poverty reduction*** should also be considered in the remaining two years of project implementation. The experience of partnership under P135-II was clearly a good example of GoVN and DPs working together on solving concrete issues faced by EM poor. As Vietnam being a low-level MIC, DPs have reshaped their engagement strategies but there are DPs who continue to support PR processes, especially for EM. In addition to EMPWG or VDPF, it is important to develop and incorporate a partnership between GoVN and DPs in the next NTP SPR and operationalizing the MDP approach in the post 2015 agenda. Support the integration of PR resources and the further development and institutionalization of innovative poverty reduction models at the sub-national level. While supporting the next phase programming, the PRPP should also support the development of an arrangement to coordinate the cooperation between DPs and GoVN by having, for instance, a policy matrix with actions needed to ensure successful implementation of the new NTP SPR.
- 6) ***Strengthen the capacity of PRPP pilot provinces to consolidate and integrate poverty reduction resources and target chronic poverty more effectively:*** This is a critical goal of Resolution 80, and also integral to the targets set under the NTP-SPR. It is built into the PRPP project design but so far, progress in implementing has been slow and should now be accelerated. This acceleration in the remaining half of PRPP in the pilot provinces should be linked to the national-level design of the next phase for NTP SPR. Pilot provinces require strong TA support from the PRPP project to do this and a comprehensive plan of support must therefore be developed by the project to achieve this in the remaining two years of implementation;
- 7) ***Institutionalize best practice models for poverty reduction:*** The project has extensively reviewed and discussed innovative models for poverty reduction that have been applied in Vietnam, for block grant development, commune investment ownership and participatory SEDP planning. In the second half of the project, TA should be geared to facilitate discussion and buy-in to these best practices at the central level so that by the end of the project in 2016 they will have been institutionalized in the design for new NTP SPR and other PR policies. At the sub-national level, the limited timeframe and resources available suggest that any experiments need to be selective and once implemented, there should be a link to bring in the lessons learned to the national-level policy dialogue;
- 8) ***Pilot results-based funding allocation in PRPP provinces:*** Introducing a performance based measure for provinces, and linking this to the disbursement of NTP-SPR funds, would improve efficiency and effectiveness, accountability and transparency and would accelerate progress in achieving the project's objectives, through making local policy makers and poverty reduction officers more receptive to the project's goals. The project should consider developing this as a key activity. Experience of piloting this approach such as by the WB in supporting the NTP on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (under RforR initiative) might be revisited. To save the resources for other priorities, experience should be conducted in a limited number of high-performing pilot provinces

Further enhance the capacity of poverty reduction officers and local people (and women in particular) to increase their agency in, and sense of ownership of the poverty reduction process.

- 9) ***Intensify the project's capacity building efforts with local officials and local people in support of project activities:*** through linking capacity building support very clearly to other ongoing activities of the project, for example in mainstreaming participatory planning in SEDP's, consolidating poverty reduction resources or implementing block grant models;
- 10) ***Continue to facilitate better understanding of the project's strategic, technical assistance objective*** amongst local officials and local people, which will increase the prospects of project

outcomes being achieved and sustained. As long as the project is still seen more as a vehicle for investment, it is difficult to reach the project objectives at the sub-national level;

- 11) ***Build the sense of ownership of local people of GoVN resources and programmes***, ensuring they feel empowered to question how resources are spent, what kinds of activities are most appropriate for poverty reduction (for ethnic groups in particular), and enabling them to hold higher level officials more accountable. Support to participatory planning, monitoring and evaluation is critical in this regard, as well as building on the successes of local level policy forums, through rolling these out and linking them to GoVN decision making processes;
- 12) ***Promote the genuine participation of women, especially EM women, in all activities supported through the project***: to enable women in poor areas to feel they have genuine ownership of poverty reduction processes and feel empowered to participate. This could best be achieved by having an explicit gendered target for each activity (by having, for instance, some floor rates for female participation) that goes beyond the number of women that attend a course or meeting;

Developing more effective communication and advocacy between the project's central level and sub-provincial levels.

- 13) ***Support activities that strengthen the ability of provinces to advocate for policy change to the national level***, through supporting their research, documentation, dissemination and advocacy capacity of good practice from project supported sub-national level activities, and supporting them to link more effectively to national policy makers. Strengthening and operationalizing the communication strategy and strategic communication tools of the project will be important in this regard, and the project could also concentrate upon further developing networking and experience sharing activities between provincial project PMU's and coordinators. Any further experiment of new models should be considered in the light of how lessons learned from such experiments would be fed into national-level policy dialogue;

Strengthen and improve project activities and work planning processes:

- 14) ***Both central and sub-national level project activities and resources should be consolidated and the number of activities reduced, to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of project staff***: The project should focus upon a reduced number of key strategic activities that are clustered, or joined up, either to other national level activities, or to sub-national ones; which involve more than one project stakeholder or encourage collaborative working; and that have clear and demonstrable policy or practice change outcomes. In planning project activities, each activity should have a clear storyline and a timebound plan, detailing how the activity will effect (or contribute to effecting) significant change and progress towards achieving one of the three anticipated project outcomes, how it will be utilised (and not just delivered), by when, and by whom;
- 15) ***Priorities should be placed on activities supporting the development of the next phase programming for PR***, this will include the redesign of NTP SPR, the MDP Masterplan and a legal/institutional framework for operationalizing MDP concept, institutionalizing some best practices in PR. Most of these activities will take place at the central level. Activities in the pilot provinces should however be planned in order to create links between the sub-national level and the national level on the above policy processes. Therefore, planning activities in the pilot provinces should be guided by this focus and link.
- 16) ***Improve the provision of Technical Assistance***: to sub-national PMU's in particular, who require better TA support to produce better quality outputs. Developing a network of consultants, INGOs and researchers, as envisaged in the PD, would benefit the project at both the national and sub-national levels. In addition, end users of the project TA should be



involved in specifying the output expected and reflected in the TORs. This is necessary to ensure there are no gaps between the requirements of the project, and of end users of project outputs, and that consequently project TA outputs are appropriate and used in a timely manner;

- 17) ***Strengthen the M&E system of the project:*** to ensure that the M&E tools that have been developed are effectively used to track progress in achieving project outcomes and results, and to ensure the project is operating at the requisite strategic level. Taking into account the workload of the project coordinators, it is important to derive a limited list of project performance indicators for M&E while simplifying the current reporting forms and requirements, which are oriented towards the surveillance of routine activities.

## **Annexes**

Annex 1: Evaluation Framework

Annex 2: Project Activities Completed Under Each Output, 2012-2014

Annex 3: Stakeholder Interviewees

Annex 4: Provincial Field Visit Schedules

Annex 5: List of Reference Documents

### Annex 1: MTE PRPP Evaluation Framework

UNDP Evaluation Dimension	Issues to be addressed	What to look for	Data and information sources	Data collection methods	Achievements and enabling factors	Inhibitors and Bottlenecks Observed
<b>Relevance</b>  <i>(Is the project still relevant to the GoVN's needs?)</i>	<p>What changes in the external project context have taken place (poverty situation)?</p> <p>What changes in the institutional context around the project have taken place (GoVN arrangements)?</p> <p>Have the GoVN's priorities, policy directions and needs from the project changed?</p> <p>Is the project still aligned with national strategies and priorities?</p> <p>Is it consistent with the human development needs and challenges of the country?</p> <p>Does it continue to support the goals of greater gender equity, cultural diversity and social inclusion?</p> <p>Is it still aligned with the One Plan &amp; IA country strategy?</p>	<p>Are the 'issues to be addressed' in the project document still relevant?</p> <p>Are the project outputs and activities still relevant?</p> <p>Does the project workplanning process ensure the right activities are identified?</p> <p>Are the types of TA and CB support provided still relevant?</p> <p>Are the project's implementation and management strategies and arrangements still relevant?</p> <p>How does the project directly engage poor EM people?</p> <p>How does it address their human development needs?</p> <p>Does the project continue to support the One Plan outcomes?</p>	<p>DPO, project document;</p> <p>Project annual workplans;</p> <p>Project annual and quarterly reports;</p> <p>project TA outputs;</p> <p>GoVN decisions;</p> <p>UN documents and outputs (HDR, MDG reports);</p> <p>Stakeholder interviews (GoVN, UN agencies, DPs, NGOs, local authorities, project beneficiaries)</p>	<p>Desk review of project documents;</p> <p>Review of other context reports (on poverty, institutional context etc.);</p> <p>Interviews with GoVN partners: MoLISA, CEMA, NA, EC, line ministries etc.;</p> <p>Interviews with UN agencies, DPs and NGOs;</p> <p>Field visits: discussion with local officials and local people (interviews and FG discussions);</p>	<p>What achievements in terms of maintaining project relevance are observed?</p> <p>How flexible and adaptive has the project been?</p> <p>What were the critical enabling factors for this?</p> <p>Who was involved and what did they do?</p>	<p>What inhibitors or blocks in terms of project design can be observed?</p> <p>What could be done differently in the future?</p>

UNDP Evaluation Dimension	Issues to be addressed	What to look for	Data and information sources	Data collection methods	Achievements and enabling factors	Inhibitors and Bottlenecks Observed
<b>Effectiveness and efficiency</b>	<p>How effective and efficient has the project been in moving towards its 3 outputs, and in undertaking the associated activities?</p> <p>Were the modalities used for TA and CB support effective and efficient?</p> <p>Project's contribution to vertical and horizontal synergies between NIM and CIPs</p> <p>Project contribution to effective cooperation and coordination?</p> <p>Effectiveness in addressing gender inequalities?</p> <p>What was the contribution of project results to One Plan and IA development results and anticipated outcomes?</p> <p>Did it at least set dynamic changes and processes that move towards the long-term</p>	<p>What progress towards the anticipated outputs (and targets) has the project achieved?</p> <p>What changes can be observed as a result of these outputs?</p> <p>What is the project's progress in undertaking identified activities?</p> <p>How effective and efficient have the TA and CB modalities used been?</p> <p>How effective and efficient have the implementation and management arrangements been?</p> <p>Are the efficiency and effectiveness of the project being effectively monitored and evaluated?</p> <p>How effectively has the project planned for and adapted to changing conditions?</p> <p>In addition to the project initiatives, what other factors may have affected the results?</p> <p>Were there unintended results (positive or negative) of the project initiatives?</p> <p>How have poor EM people benefitted from this project?</p> <p>Is there evidence of project progress in promoting greater participation of poor EM women in poverty reduction processes?</p> <p>What credible 'stories' can we tell of project contributions to the development results (case studies)?</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly workplans;</p> <p>Project progress reports;</p> <p>Project TA outputs;</p> <p>GoVN decisions;</p> <p>UN reports;</p> <p>GoVN partners;</p> <p>Other UN agencies, DP's;</p> <p>Local authorities;</p> <p>Beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Desk reviews of secondary data;</p> <p>Interviews with GoVN partners, DPs, UN staff;</p> <p>Field visits to selected provinces</p>	<p>What were the key enabling factors that accounted for project effectiveness?</p> <p>How can these be replicated and expanded upon in the future?</p>	<p>What bottlenecks and constraints were identified?</p> <p>How could these be addressed in the future?</p>

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<b>UNDP Evaluation Dimension</b>	<b>Issues to be addressed</b>	<b>What to look for</b>	<b>Data and information sources</b>	<b>Data collection methods</b>	<b>Achievements and enabling factors</b>	<b>Inhibitors and Bottlenecks Observed</b>
<b><i>Sustainability</i></b>	<p>Degree to which the project's outputs will be met and continue after the lifetime of the project</p> <p>Degree to which project modalities and ways of working will be carried over into the regular work of GoVN beyond the lifetime of the project</p> <p>Degree to which the project will embed substantive and sustainable changes to gender equality, cultural diversity and social inclusion in GoVN poverty reduction programming</p>	<p>What evidence of progress is there that project outcomes are becoming mainstreamed in the regular work of GoVN?</p> <p>How far have project modalities and ways of working been adopted in the regular work of GoVN?</p> <p>Has the project contributed to sustainable linkages between GoVN partners?</p> <p>Has the project contributed towards building strengthened linkages between central and local partners?</p> <p>Has the project contributed to strengthening the linkages between GoVN partners and DPs for poverty reduction?</p> <p>Evidence of substantive, sustainable changes to gender participation, equity and cultural diversity in PR programmes</p>	<p>Annual and quarterly workplans;</p> <p>Project progress reports;</p> <p>Project TA outputs;</p> <p>GoVN decisions;</p> <p>UN reports;</p> <p>GoVN partners;</p> <p>Other UN agencies, DP's;</p> <p>Local authorities;</p> <p>Beneficiaries.</p>	<p>Desk reviews of secondary data;</p> <p>Interviews with GoVN partners, DPs, UN staff;</p> <p>Field visits to selected provinces</p>	<p>What are the key enabling factors that account for project sustainability?</p> <p>How can these be replicated and expanded upon in the future?</p>	<p>What bottlenecks and constraints to future sustainability were identified?</p> <p>How could these be addressed in the future?</p>

## ***Annex 2: Project Activities Completed Under Each Output, 2012-2014.***

Activities undertaken and progress made towards each of the three project outputs are presented below. This assessment has been drawn from the project annual and quarterly progress reports and project annual and quarterly work plans, as well as interviews with key stakeholders and other project reports. It should be noted that the project started in the final quarter of 2012 but substantive activities didn't begin until the first quarters of 2013, as time was needed to establish the project office at the national level and provincial project PMU's in the four provinces of Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Thanh Hoa and Quang Ngai. The project was expanded to a further four provinces from the beginning of 2014: Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Kon Tum and Tra Vinh. The analysis below runs to the end of Quarter 3 2014, as this is the last quarter for which quarterly reports were available at the time of the MTE.

**Output 1:** *'Poverty reduction policies under the responsibility of line ministries are streamlined, and poverty reduction is mainstreamed into line ministries' plans and policies, in which activities and investment resources for poor districts and poor communes are prioritized to accelerate poverty reduction in these areas'.*

### **1.1. Effective implementation of Action Plan to roll out Resolution 80.**

The project:

- (1.1.1-2013) Provided support to MOLISA to organise two workshops, in Yen Bai and Gia Lai in 2013, to review existing ethnic minority poverty reduction policies. These workshops were widely attended by line ministry agencies;
- (1.1.2-2013) Supported the Poverty Reduction Coordination Office (PRCO) to research and propose policies for near-poor households. The project helped the PRCO to draft Terms of Reference (ToR) and recruited consultants to undertake the task, which was completed and resulted in the GoVN issuing support policies for near poor households;
- (1.1.3-2013) Supported the National Assembly CSA to run workshops with national assembly delegates to discuss and disseminate information on new policies, and the challenges for poverty reduction in the coming years, in preparation for the 5<sup>th</sup> NA meeting in 2013. The delegates were also introduced to the concept of MDP and its relevance in the forthcoming period;
- (1.1.020-2014) Supported a consultation workshop in Thai Nguyen province on the NA Standing Committee's oversight report on the implementation of policies and laws on poverty reduction during the period 2005-2012. The workshop was attended by NA members and national and local policy makers;

### **1.2 Relevant process for reviewing, developing, streamlining and mainstreaming poverty reduction policies into plans and policy framework is introduced and applied by line ministries in cooperation with relevant UN agencies.**

The project:

- (1.2.1-2013) Provided consultants to the PRCO for the drafting of a framework for the review of existing poverty reduction policies, resulting in a request to line ministries and the 63 provinces of the country to review their related PR policies. Peer reviewers were also provided from line ministries to draft in-depth reviews of policies and interventions for poverty reduction, as an input to the report;

- (1.2.2-2013) A request was then made from the PRCO for support to undertake a mid-term review of the NTP-SPR, as an input to the policy review process. This support was divided into four groups of activities;
  - (1.2.2.1) The first was the development of a mid-term review framework. Consultants were provided to assist the PRCO in this, and the project also supported a consultation workshop;
  - (1.2.2.2) Secondly, the project mobilized research teams from the INGO Oxfam and Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences (VASS) to undertake thematic studies on poverty reduction policies in the following areas: preferential credit policy for the poor, education and training, health care, livelihood development and safe water for poor households. The results of the research were widely shared and discussed. (12.023-2014) The project then supported the dissemination of the results of the Oxfam/Vass supported thematic policy review for the MTR of the NTP-SPR, through workshops in Pleiku (Dec. 2013) and a national workshop in Hanoi (Jan. 2014);
  - (1.2.2.4) Thirdly, the project supported line ministry representatives in conducting monitoring visits to the provinces to review the implementation of Resolution 80. The project supported the PRCO in developing questionnaires for the visit, in developing the supervision report and supported the field trips of the inter-ministerial teams (completed in Quarter 1 2014, activity 12.024).
  - (1.2.2.7) Fourthly the project supported the PRCO in the consolidation of the overall MTR report, through providing two national consultants. (12.025-2014) The project supported the consolidation of the MTR report through holding a consultation workshop with line ministries, DPs and NGOs in Hanoi;
- (1.2.3-2013) Supported the Ministry of Home Affairs in developing a support scheme and related policies for establishing a network of socially conscious youth to act as community facilitators in poor districts and communes. The project provided technical assistance (consultants) and support to workshops and local consultations;
- (1.2.4-2013) Provided two consultants to the Department of Local Economy of MPI to help revise joint circular 10/2009/TTLT-BKH-BTC (30/10/2009) on integrating budget sources for the programme under Resolution 30a, 2008. The assignment was intended to help MPI and MoF mainstream and better integrate financial resources. The project also supported the consultation process that went into the revision of the joint circular;
- (1.2.6-2013) Supported CEMA to revise and update the CRC tool to collect local people's opinions on public services. Consultants were recruited to undertake this task and revised CRC tools were drafted and tested. Training of trainers took place to transfer the skills for applying the CRC to officers from CEMA, MoLISA and the provinces. (12.028-2014/1.2.7) The project completed activity 1.2.6 from 2013, whereby the draft CRC tools and guidelines were discussed in two project supported technical meetings in Hanoi, attended by line ministry agencies and project stakeholders;
- (1.2.020-2014) Supported PRCO in organising a workshop to discuss the draft report on the review of policy overlaps;
- (1.2.021-2014) planned support to MoH to conduct research on reviewing health care policies for poverty reduction had not been implemented by the end of Q3 2014 – a technical proposal was agreed in Q2 and the work was scheduled to be done in Q4 2014;
- (1.2.022-2014) Support to MoET to review and integrate education support policies for students in mountainous ethnic minority areas, as specified in GoVN Office announcement 143/TB-VPCP (04/082014). The project supported PRCO and MoET to develop a technical proposal through three technical meetings in Q2 2014 and the activity was rolled over to be completed in Q4 2014;

- (1.2.030-2014) Support to MoLISA and MoJ to organize a poverty reduction policy review was also delayed, and rolled over for completion in the final quarter of 2014;
- (1.2.10-2014) Supported the cooperation between NA CSA and the INGO Oxfam to conduct research on poverty reduction resource mobilisation and allocation, through providing technical consultants to undertake the research. This activity was begun in Q3 2014 and is scheduled to run through Q4 2014 with completion in early 2015.

1.3. MOLISA's advisory and coordination role in the implementation of the Resolution 80 enhanced.
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- Workplan activity 1.3.2, to support demand-based in-depth research for line ministries was shifted to the MTR of the NTP-SPR under activity 1.2;

The project:

- (1.3.1-2013) Supported the establishment of a network of senior national poverty reduction policy advisers and consultants (retired members of MPI, MoLISA and the PM's office) to advise the project;
- (1.3.020-2014) Conducted a consultation workshop on the report on PR policy review, in Q1 2014;
- (1.3.021-2014) Supported a national consultation workshop on the MTR report, and MDP (combined with activity 3.2.020 for a workshop on the MDP masterplan) in Hanoi, with line ministries in March 2014;
- (1.4.8-2013/ 1.3.022-2014) Provided two national consultants to research the current situation in social assistance (SA) and consolidate national and international practice. The results were shared at a project supported workshop under the Social Protection Department of MoLISA, in Hoa Binh province. This report and workshop were an important step in the GoVN's review of SA policies and formulation of SA policy reform under Resolutions 15 and 70 of the GoVN.

1.4. CEMA's advisory role in the promulgation of policies relevant with ethnic minority people is enhanced during the implementation process of the Resolution 80 and in the mainstreaming of poverty reduction policies into the programmes/plans of line ministries
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The project:

- (1.4.1.a-2013) Supported CEMA, NAEC and line ministries to conduct thematic research on EM poverty using 'anthropological' approaches. The project supported CEMA to recruit consultants to conduct research on evaluating the ethnic minority poverty situation in 2007-2012, based on lessons learned from previous poverty reduction programmes, and to make policy recommendations to address ethnic minority poverty in the period 2012-2016 and onward to 2020. The results of this quantitative research were presented in two workshops, first with line ministries and then with NA delegates. As part of this assignment the consultants also organized training in 'anthropological approaches' to EM poverty reduction and development, for CEMA policy makers, line ministries, and DP staff in December 2013. (1.4.020-2014) Follow-up qualitative research was conducted by a consultant team to validate the findings from the quantitative research and was presented at a workshop in March, 2014. Results from the research were also presented at the project supported EM Forum in Hanoi in May 2014, organised by CEMA, EC and UNDP. Key messages from the Forum were consolidated and sent to the 13<sup>th</sup> NA members. The report was also peer reviewed with project support;
- (1.4.1.b-2013) Provided consultants, peer reviewers and support for survey and technical workshops to CEMA to review Decision 102/2009/QĐ-TTg on the provision of direct support to poor households in extremely difficult areas;



- (1.4.1.c-2013) Supported CEMA to further develop the proposal on the development of human resources in ethnic minority areas towards 2020, through providing consultants for further researching the proposal. The project also supported the consultants and CEMA to undertake field research for the study, which was an input for the Task Force drafting the Masterplan. The draft of the Masterplan was presented and discussed at a project supported technical meeting in June 2014 in Hanoi, with project support. The project then supported a series of regional consultation workshops in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) and Hai Phong (September 2014) with comments collected for incorporation in the Masterplan. Further regional consultations will take place in the final quarter of 2014, supported by the project, before the Masterplan is finalised;
- (1.4.4-2013) The activity to support officials from CEMA, MoLISA and other line ministries to attend a Masters degree course in public administration was begun in 2013, through drafting ToR, but the activity has not progressed and remains uncompleted;
- (1.4.4.1-2013) A study tour to Dak Lak for UNDP and CEMA staff and experts for the design of the post 2015 MDGs was undertaken;
- (1.4.5.a-2013) Following the issuing of the PM's decision 449/QD-TTg (12/02/2013) for an EM strategy to 2020, the project supported CEMA to develop an action plan for the strategy. The project supported three regional consultation workshops for the Action Plan and a follow-up expert consultation workshop in Tam Dao, where the project also provided consultants to facilitate the discussion and consolidate recommendations for the Action Plan;
- (1.4.5.b-2013) Decision 33/QD-TTg (04/06/2013) supports the continued migration and resettlement of ethnic minority people to 2015 and the project supported CEMA to develop the circular on implementation of this government decision. The project provided consultants and funds for surveys, a workshop and peer review of the consultant report;
- (1.4.6-2013) Supported CEMA to develop publicity materials for EM poverty reduction policy, including the development of a manual for ethnic minority policy making and implementation. The project provided consultants to compile the manual, and provided resources to print and disseminate the manual. Training and dissemination took place through three regional workshops. Under this activity the project also supported a high level mission of policy makers and the UN to visit Dien Bien to analyse ethnic minority poverty issues;
- (1.4.025-2014) Supported CEMA to develop and issue an ethnic minority friendly handbook on the policies available for poverty reduction. Consultants were provided to assemble the material on policies for the handbook, and the project supported the printing and dissemination of the handbook in ethnic minority areas. The materials were also disseminated and discussed at an EM poverty Forum in May 2014, supported by the project (activity 1.4.8/ 1.4.027-2014);
- (1.4.026-2014/1.4.7-2013) Supported a workshop on the 'anthropological approach' for leaders from CEMA, Ethnic Council and line ministries, in Thanh Hoa province, which included field based training. This activity is part of the development of a curriculum and training course in the anthropological approach to be run through the ethnic minority training institute of CEMA, and there was a further workshop in May 2014 attended by the international anthropological expert to the project and Development Partners to further discuss the approach;
- (1.4.028-2014) Supported CEMA in the development of a statistical indicator system for ethnic minority affairs. The project supported a consultation workshop (June 2014) and recruited consultants to support the working group to develop the statistical indicator system in Q3 and Q4, 2014;
- (1.4.032-2014) Supported the recruitment of an international consultant to develop training in the anthropological approach. The expert participated in two workshops in May 2014 and will continue to provide support in developing training materials and research over the course of his assignment in 2014-2015.

**Output 2** of the project states that: *National Targeted Programme on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR) is designed and implemented effectively, contributing to rapid poverty reduction in poorest districts, communes and villages and of ethnic minority people through the application of innovative modalities and approaches in terms of (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities and people in formulation, implementation and management of the programme at local level; (ii) anthropological approaches and modalities relevant to the particular features, cultures, traditions and knowledge of local ethnic minority people/ target groups of the programme; (iii) strengthening accessibility/linkage to the market, promoting gender equality, environmental sustainability and addressing poverty from a multi-dimensional perspective.*

The anticipated activity results under this output are as follows:

2.1. The Programme Document and guidelines for implementation and management of the NTP-SPR are developed, promoting empowerment and participation and encouraging application of innovative modalities and approaches, based on lessons learned from programmes in the period 2006 – 2010.

The project:

- (2.1.1.a-2013) Supported the PRCO/ MOLISA to conduct three regional training courses in Q3 2013, for poverty reduction officers at the provincial and district levels nationwide. As well as the workshops, the project provided consultant support to deliver training in participatory planning, use of results frameworks, and multi-dimensional poverty approaches. The training was targeted at enhancing the understanding of the participants of the new resolutions, guidelines and policies for poverty reduction;
- (2.1.1.b1-2013) Provided consultant support to MoLISA and MoF in developing guidelines and a mechanism for planning and financial management for projects using business capital under the NTP-SPR 2012-15. The activity supported the development of joint circular No.68/TTLT regulating norms and the mechanism for block grant modalities under Resolution 80 and the NTP-SPR;
- (2.1.1.b2-2013/2.1.021-2014/2.1.2) Provided national consultant support and support to the consultation process to enable MPI, MoLISA, MoF and CEMA to develop a draft joint circular on the regulations for allocating and managing investment capital under Project's 1 and 2 of the NTP-SPR (see activity above). The joint circular detailed a mid-term budget allocation mechanism, to enable poor communes to make longer term investment plans. The draft circular was delivered nationwide to provinces through training workshops in August 2014. The technical report that resulted from this activity also supported MPI in recommending the national poverty reduction steering committee to adopt the investment mechanism from the National Target Programme New Rural Development (NTP-NRD) into poverty reduction programmes (announcement 187/TB-VPCP); supported MPI and MOLISA to report to the NA as part of the supreme oversight process; and supported MPI's advocacy of bottom-up and medium term investment planning for localities in the draft law on public investment;
- (2.1.3-2014) Supported CIP CEMA in the development of project 2 of the NTP-SPR, P135. The project supported CEMA in the consultation for finalizing the programme, and in finalizing documents guiding implementation, through mobilising consultancy support for the development of a circular guiding project implementation. The project supported three regional consultation workshops for the circular, along with a national consultation workshop for line ministries in Ninh Binh in Q3 2013;
- (2.1.022-2014) Supported the Ministry of Construction (MoC) with consultant support to develop guidelines on budgeting and investment management for infrastructure under P135, 2012-16;
- (2.1.023-2014) Supported the State Treasury (MoF) with consultancy support to develop a guideline on budget management and payment for P135;

- (2.1.4.a-2013) Supported CEMA through consultancy support to update the manuals guiding the implementation of project 2 of the NTP-SPR, specifically on communes as investment owner (CIO) and public bidding. Lessons learnt from the implementation of P135-II were incorporated in the revised manuals, which were peer reviewed by CEMA officials and used in activity 2.1.4.b;
- (2.1.4.b-2013) Supported CEMA to organise consultation workshops and training courses on commune investment ownership, bidding for infrastructure works in P135, and maintenance of construction works in projects 1 and 2 of the NTP-SPR. Three regional training events for local officials were held, in the north, centre and south, in Q4 2013;
- (2.1.5.-2013) Supported CEMA in developing criteria through which to target communes for inclusion in the P135, 2012-2016, based upon Decision 30/2012/TTg. The project provided two consultants to help develop the criteria;
- (2.1.020-2014) Supported MARD, through research and consultations, to develop a circular to guide the implementation of the production component of project 1 in the NTP-SPR (Programme 30a and coastal communes support) in accordance with decision 2621/QĐ-TTg (31/12/2013) on the structural shift to commodity production in poor districts under Programme 30a. The project also supported the consultation process around the draft circular (closely connected to activity 2.4.1 below);

2.2. NTP-SPR's participatory, gender and EM sensitive programme monitoring and evaluation system (relevant to the overall poverty reduction M&E framework and relevant to the needs for M&E information in making programme implementation and management decisions of different users at different levels) is established and put in place; findings, experiences and lessons learned are used to make adjustments in order to increase the efficiency and impact of NTP-SPR.

The project:

- (2.2.1.-2013/2.2.020-2014) Recruited a consultant organisation to develop a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) results framework for the NTP-SPR, which was completed in early 2014 and shared at the PRPP quarterly meeting in Hue, Q1 2014. The agreed framework was subsequently disseminated nationally through training courses delivered by the consultants, which were organised by the PRCO/MoLISA with PRPP project support;
- (2.2.4.-2013/ 2.2.023-2014) Supported CEMA to develop an information system for the management and monitoring of P135 project 2 of the NTP-SPR. The project provided national consultants to develop the system and supported the consultation process for their outputs. The project also supported the roll-out of the system in early 2014, through supporting the server, telephone and online support to users. Subsequently in mid 2014, a national consultant team further developed the system through updating the database in three regions of the country (transferring hardcopy reports to softcopy), in order for the system to be fully integrated with the P135 management system;
- (2.2.130-2014) Supported CIP Tra Vinh to recruit a consultant to consolidate documentation on good practices of poverty reduction implementation in Tra Vinh and make recommendations for the replication of these models;
- (2.2.031-2014) Provided consultants and support to consultations to enable CIP Cao Bang to research and evaluate the provincial results for the poor household survey, and revise provincial procedures in line with Circular 21 of the GoVN. The results of the research and the revision of the survey tools were rolled out to poverty reduction officers through training courses;
- (2.2.030-2014) Supported CIP Ha Giang to research and recommend improvements to the transparency of the process of identifying poor households, which resulted in revisions to the

process in document 751/LDTBXH-BTXH (1/10/2014) of the Ha Giang Provincial People's Committee (PPC);

- (2.2.130-2014) Provided a consultant to CIP Quang Ngai to document good practices to support policy dialogues and make recommendations for effective replication as a provincial level activity of the GoVN;

2.3. Block grant model is piloted in 8 selected provinces (2 districts/province and 1 commune/district) and replicated.

The project:

- (2.3.1.a-2013) Recruited, in 2013, a technical service provider to support the 4 project pilot provinces to develop NTP-SPR plans based on a participatory local SEDP planning process. Commune level training of trainer (ToT) courses on PRA were organized and local people were trained in the application of the method in the 8 pilot communes in 2013;
- (2.3.1.a1-2013 & 2.3.2-2013) Supported the review of innovative poverty reduction block grant models from INGOs and DPs, through contracting a consultant organisation to undertake the research. The process also involved 10 INGO's presenting their models to policy makers. The final report was presented at a workshop in Hai Phong at the end of 2013 (see 2.3.2.b below) and MoLISA subsequently developed guidelines and a roadmap for the application of block grant models as recommended through the research and consultation process (ongoing activity at the end of 2014, 2.3.021);
- (2.3.2-2013) Supported provincial policy makers from the 4 PRPP provinces in 2013 to visit Lam Dong province to view block grant models and discuss the application of block grants in a workshop;
- (2.3.2.b-2013) Organised a workshop in Hai Phong to discuss and share experiences with innovative poverty reduction models. The workshop was attended by both national and local level GoVN officers and policy makers, NGO representatives and DPs;
- (2.3.2-2014) Supported the development of guidelines on the selection, development and replication of poverty reduction models under project 3 of the NTP-SPR. Project support involved providing consultants and supporting field studies and consultations for the development of the guidelines. The draft guidelines were developed and applied in regional trainings for poverty reduction staff in August 2014 and will be further consulted on and developed before being issued by MoLISA;
- (2.3.4.-2013/2.3.020-2014) Contracted consultants and supported consultation workshops for research and development of a block grant mechanism to be applied under the NTP-SPR framework. The results of the assignment were presented at the PRPP Q1 2014 meeting in Hue and subsequently disseminated for adaptation and implementation in PRPP provinces, through the NTP-SPR;
- Pilot provinces implemented a number of different block grant activities in their pilot communes. These models supported livelihood projects and were developed through communities selecting the model to be adopted. The activities usually supported 20 households on average in each commune, with two pilot communes per province:
  - Cow (calf) raising models (Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Kon Tum, Tra Vinh) were widely selected. These schemes were often implemented using a revolving fund mechanism whereby beneficiaries returned a calf to the commune once new calves were born;
  - Other livestock raising block grant models included buffalo raising (Thanh Hoa); pig raising (Cao Bang, Bac Kan); buffalo fattening (Bac Kan); and goat raising (Cao Bang);

- Livestock raising models were widely integrated with training on growing appropriate feed crops or prolific grass planting methods to support cow raising models (Quang Ngai, Kon Tum and other provinces);
- In 2014 Ha Giang completed community discussions and revised regulations to enable the project to implement a Community Development Fund (CDF)/ Village Development Fund (VDF) block grant model in its pilot communes. This is ongoing at the end of 2014. Training on planting and livestock breeding techniques, and on biological fertiliser production were implemented to date in support of the scheme;
- In 2014 Dien Bien province experimented with a honey bee raising model, and *perionyx excavates* raising (a commercial earthworm used for composting), though both schemes faced problems in implementation with the ethnic minority people targeted as project beneficiaries, as noted in the quarterly reports in 2014;
- Bac Kan province in 2014 adopted a successful model that had been piloted by the Women's Union, in orange and tangerine plantation methods;
- In Quang Ngai, the project extended to a further 2 communes in 2014 and in one of these, Binh Tri commune, the block grant mechanism was used to help the commune develop a cooking/ catering service, following the establishment of an industrial area and the loss of land of local people. Beneficiaries bought cooking equipment and received training and a study tour as they developed the catering business;
- Tra Vinh's block grant livelihood models in 2014 also included backyard chicken raising, fruit plantation, mushroom plantation and handicraft production.

2.4. Innovative modalities and approaches are defined, piloted in 8 provinces (2 communes in each province) then assessed, adjusted and replicated in other localities.

The project:

- (2.4.1-2013) Supported MARD with consultants, field studies and a workshop to research modalities for livelihood development, for replication in the NTP-SPR livelihood support components. The TA output was used by MARD to revise and improve guidelines on the management and implementation of poverty reduction models in project 3 of the NTP-SPR;
- (2.4.012-2014) Supported the recruitment of consultants to provide training and form a Training of Trainers (ToT) network to support the 8 PRPP provinces (not completed, ongoing in late 2014);
- (2.4.022-2014) Supported CIP-CEMA to deliver ToT through regional workshops on using the system of management and monitoring of P135, developed under activity 2.2.023;
- (2.4.024-2014) Supported CIP CEMA to explore integrating some P135 mechanisms more effectively with those of the NTP NRD. Under this activity the project supported units of CEMA to attend a World Bank supported workshop on international experiences of EM poverty reduction, in Thai Nguyen, June 2014; and supported a workshop in September 2014 with Irish Aid (IA) and other DPs, line ministries and PRPP supported provinces to better integrate IA support to poverty reduction activities in these provinces;

2.5. Capacity for programme implementation and management at local level is increased.

Under this anticipated activity result each of the 4 project provinces in 2013, and 8 provinces in 2014, conducted project activities to enhance the performance of the NTP-SPR in their localities, and to support the objectives of Resolution 80.<sup>17</sup> These included the following groupings of activities:

<sup>17</sup> The sub-national level anticipated activity results are listed here under 2.5, though in fact they straddle 2.4 and 2.5 in the 2013 annual and 2014 quarterly progress reports. They have been collectively listed here as they are

- Extensive capacity building activities took place, primarily through Training of Trainers (ToT) mechanisms. Provinces delivered training in communications, participatory planning, monitoring & evaluation, financial management, reporting and presentation skills, monitoring of local infrastructure construction, training for community monitoring boards and training in community bidding;
- Training took place for poverty reduction steering committees at provincial, district and commune levels, usually at the beginning of the provinces involvement in the project. This training was often linked to the dissemination of information and capacity building on Resolution 80 and the implementation mechanisms for the NTP-SPR;
- The project supported provinces to review their poverty reduction work (Bac Kan) and also supported provincial workshops on consolidating poverty reduction activities (in Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Tra Vinh, Kon Tum) in line with the objectives of Resolution 80;
- A wide array of training was also provided in support of local level SEDP planning (Bac Kan), often alongside participatory poverty reduction planning (Thanh Hoa); and in planning and monitoring for the implementation of P135 (Cao Bang);
- Training in household financial management, gender equality and reproductive health was carried out in Quang Ngai, and household economic planning and financial management was also carried out in Bac Kan and Thanh Hoa;
- Technical training was provided in veterinary skills (Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Ha Giang); prevention of cattle and poultry diseases (Bac Kan) and the selection of appropriate varieties of livestock (Ha Giang);
- In 2014 CIP Bac Kan supported capacity building in surveying agricultural product market linkages and socio-economic development planning, and developed a farmer field school (FFS) model to deliver agricultural production support;
- Capacity building support was provided to commune level agricultural extension officers (Quang Ngai);
- Training in agricultural and forestry techniques took place in Kon Tum, and CIP Thanh Hoa supported training in sugar cane planting methods;
- ToT support was provided in undertaking the annual poor household survey (Thanh Hoa, Cao Bang and forthcoming in Tra Vinh);
- CIP Bac Kan supported the development of media products for communicating on the NTP-SPR and Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh focused upon communicating information about poverty reduction policies, and the NTP-SPR respectively;
- Support was provided to the documentation of livelihood models (Thanh Hoa) and poverty reduction models (Quang Ngai);
- Many study tours for CIPs were supported by the project, for cross learning to other provinces, and within the province for commune and village level officials and households to learn from successful models. Thus for example Quang Ngai CIP frequently supported study tours within the province, as did Cao Bang and Bac Kan;
- Examples of study tours to other provinces supported by the project include study tours to Thanh Hoa by Ha Giang officials; study tours to Thanh Hoa and Quang Ngai by Dien Bien; study tours to Quang Ngai by Bac Kan; a visit by Tra Vinh to Lam Dong to view poverty reduction

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most often listed under 2.5 in the reports. Sub-national activities in support of block grant model development are listed under 2.3.

models; and a Thanh Hoa study tour to the PSARD project in Cao Bang and Hoa Binh to view their block grant models;

- Policy dialogues were supported at provincial, district and commune levels, whereby local people had the opportunity to question policy makers on particular policies and these policy makers could disseminate information about policies and people's entitlements (Cao Bang, Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Kon Tum);
- CIP Quang Ngai also supported policy dialogues on the production support component of P135;
- Support was provided to the development of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) teams to manage commune investments in Ha Giang;
- CIP Kon Tum implemented a workshop on MDP, to enhance sub-national understanding of the evolving national process on implementing MDP approaches to poverty reduction;
- In 2014 Tra Vinh implemented a study tour within the province to learn from successful micro-credit models, and subsequently supported the provincial poverty reduction steering committee to develop a credit master plan to support poverty reduction;
- The project also supported regular reviews of PRPP project activities and work planning, by PRPP PMU's and stakeholders at provincial, district and commune levels.

**Output 3** of the project states that a system for monitoring and analysis of multi-dimensional poverty and vulnerability situation and trends is operational and institutionalized; policy discussions on poverty and vulnerability contribute to improved policies and development programmes for inclusive, pro-poor development and better equality outcomes.

Progress in meeting the anticipated activity results under this output are as follows:

**3.1.** Multidimensional poverty approach in monitoring, measurement and development of poverty reduction policies is introduced and widely utilised by researchers and policy makers at all levels and National Assembly members.

The project:

- (3.1.1-2013) Supported a Core Technical Group (CTG) of specialists drawn from line ministries to develop a Masterplan for developing and implementing a multi-dimensional poverty (MDP) approach in Vietnam. Five national consultants were mobilized through the project to support the CTG and the project also provided support to the CTG from Oxford Poverty and Human Development Institute (OPHI, international consultants) as well as resources for consultation workshops and training to the CTG from OPHI;
- (3.1.1.a) Supported two MoLISA representatives (the Head of the PRCO and a representative from ILLSA, the research body of MoLISA) to attend the MPPN high level meeting in Berlin, Germany in July 2014 to share lessons on Vietnam's implementation of MDP to date and demonstrate Vietnam's commitment to MDP to the international community;
- (3.1.1.b) Supported two representatives (one officer from the PRCO, one PRPP project national coordinator) to attend a technical training course in MDP in Oxford, UK in August 2014. Skills gained from the training were to be applied in support of the MDP masterplanning process;
- (3.1.2-2013) Closely related to activity 3.1.1 above, the project provided ongoing technical support from OPHI for the CTG in developing the tools for testing the MDP approach, including questionnaires, delivered training and provided periodic distance support to the development of the MDP Masterplan;
- (3.1.3-2013) Sent a 12-person delegation to Mexico to study the application of MDP. The delegation was led by the Head of the Social Protection Department (SPD) of MoLISA. The study

tour raised the awareness of the participating officers in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction activities using a MDP approach;

- (3.1.4-2013) Organised a dissemination workshop in Nha Trang to discuss and share the results from the study tour to Mexico, and to discuss the development of a roadmap for implementing MDP in Vietnam. The workshop was co-chaired by leaders of MoLISA, NA CSA and UNDP, and involved line ministry policy makers, researchers and national and international experts. The workshop generated agreement on the need to develop a masterplan for MDP in Vietnam;
- (3.1.5-2013) Supported a workshop in Hanoi in May 2013 for NA members to share with them the international experiences with MDP and to discuss the application of the MDP approach in Vietnam in the future, as orientation for the 5<sup>th</sup> National People's Congress in 2013;
- (3.1.6-2013) Supported a workshop with NA members to share the results of the implementation of Resolution 80, as part of the NA CSA's Supreme Oversight on PR policies;
- (3.1.7-2013) Supported four GovN officers to attend a training course on cash transfers and social assistance in Thailand;
- (3.2.020-2014) Under activity result 3.2 below, supported the development of the MDP masterplan through holding a technical workshop for the MDP masterplan process (March 2014) and two follow-up technical workshops in Q3 2014, where invited experts had the opportunity to comment upon and discuss the CTG's research results and methodology for applying MDP in Vietnam, and the outline for the masterplan (which is to be completed by the end of 2014);
- (3.2.021-2014) Provided consultants for research on identifying criteria for MDP measurement, to support activity 3.2.020. The consultant's output was peer reviewed and was further consulted upon with line ministries at three national workshops. The consultation process continued throughout 2014 as part of the process of developing agreement on the MDP Masterplan.

**3.2.** Harmonized framework/system for poverty monitoring, measurement targeting to support poverty and vulnerability reduction policies making with close linkages to efforts of other stakeholders and application of multi-dimensional poverty approach is established.

- (3.2.1-2013) This workplan activity was changed to support the development of MDP and the NA Supreme Oversight of PR policies (through activity 3.2.3);

The project:

- (3.2.2-2013) Supported a technical meeting to discuss with the NA CSA the issue of minimum living standards and social policies, which involved policy makers, researchers, national and international experts;
- (3.2.3-2013) Provided support to the National Assembly's Supreme Oversight Report on Poverty Reduction, for 2014 under Resolution 621/NQ-UBTVQH13 (22/07/2013) of the National Assembly, through the following activities:
  - (3.2.3.1) Provided consultancy support to undertake a literature review of existing studies on poverty reduction, with the assignment also requiring the consultants to provide key questions and issues to guide the Oversight team in their work;
  - (3.2.3.2) Supported the NA Oversight process with two seminars and technical input from consultants on the development of a logframe for the process, as an input to the oversight framework and action plan. One of the seminars involved DPs and NGOs in the NA oversight process;
  - (3.2.3.3) Supported an NA consultation meeting on the implementation progress of Resolution 80 on sustainable poverty reduction;



- (3.2.3.4/3.2.022-2014) Provided technical support through the consultant team to the Supreme Oversight team to review documentation on emerging issues for poverty reduction, identify key groups of issues, develop questionnaires for the delegates to use in fieldwork, and develop report outlines and a framework for the report. Also, to draft the report;
- (3.2.3.5) Supported, in late 2014, the NA Supreme Oversight team to undertake a thematic study on resource mobilization and allocation in the field, in support of the design of the NTP-SPR 2016-2020, in collaboration with the INGO Oxfam;
- (3.2.3.6/3.2.023-2014) Supported the Supreme Oversight process through providing consultants to undertake a study on the participation of the poor in poverty reduction policy implementation. Case study research was conducted in 6 provinces and the report was peer reviewed with project support. The final report was integrated into the NA Supreme Oversight report;

**3.3.** Harmonized framework/system for poverty monitoring, measurement and targeting to support poverty and vulnerability reduction policies making with application of a multi-dimensional poverty approach is put in place and serves the development/adjustment of poverty reduction programme and policies.

The project:

- (3.3.1-2013/3.3.020-2014) Supported MoLISA to develop a technical proposal for the future implementation of the GoVN's Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) system. Project support involved the mobilization of consultants from ILLSA and a technical workshop to review the consultant's work. A consultation workshop was held in Hai Phong in June 2014 and the report was subsequently finalized and published. This activity has been integrated with activity 3.3.2-2013 for project support to ILLSA/MoLISA to implement the RIM, and is ongoing (not yet completed);

**3.4.** Reports on poverty and vulnerability analysis with application of multi-dimensional poverty approach are (i) periodically developed (every two years); (ii) institutionalized and (iii) contribute to discussions/policy dialogues and development/adjustment of poverty reduction programme/policy.

- This activity started in Q4 2014, through the involvement of GSO in the application of MDP measurement in the VHLSS pilot questionnaire for 2015-16;

**3.5.** High-level policy dialogues are annually organized and contribute to the improvement of development directions and development programmes, policies in an inclusive, pro-poor and equitable manner.

The project:

- (3.5.2.1) Supported CEMA to organise a workshop for NA members on the results of the research on EM poverty reduction, conducted in November 2013;
- (3.5.2.2) Supported a national workshop on the implementation of the EM strategy, chaired by the CEMA Vice Minister;
- (3.5.020-2014) Supported a high level workshop in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) in Q1 2014 as an input to the Supreme Oversight Report, on the topic of 'Urban Poverty';
- (3.5.4.1/3.5.025-2014) Supported the annual policy forum on Ethnic Minority poverty reduction in May 2014, facilitated by UNDP, CEMA and the NA/EC, to discuss and disseminate key results from poverty research to national assembly delegates and to communicate key messages to the NA/EC;
- (3.5.2.3-2013/3.5.026/3.5.4.2a) Supported CEMA and the NA/EC with consultants to conduct research on the impact of hydropower projects and resettlement on EM groups, as an input to the NA's supreme oversight of poverty reduction;

- (3.5.0927/3.5.4.2b) Provided consultants to CEMA to conduct research into land and forest provision and the impact upon ethnic minorities livelihoods. Summary results from the research were disseminated to NA members for the NA meeting in May 2014, and a workshop was organised to disseminate the results of the research to NA members;
- (3.5.028/3.5.4.3) Provided consultants to support the collaborative activities conducted between CEMA and the NA/EC, through facilitating technical meetings in regard to the two pieces of research work above (3.5.4.2a&b);
- (3.5.4-2013/3.5.029/3.5.5) Supported CEMA with consultants to conduct research on improving communication mechanisms for mobilizing investment resources and improving transparency for PR in ethnic minority and mountainous areas. The research findings were also disseminated through a project supported workshop;
- (3.5.5-2013) Supported MoLISA to organize a Forum on poverty reduction on the International Day for Poverty Eradication, 2013;
- (3.5.6-2013/3.5.022-2014) Supported the making of a documentary for MOLISA on the transition to MDP, broadcast on national television. The project provided the film making team;
- (3.5.7-2013/3.5.021-2014) Supported the development of a communication strategy for the NTP-SPR, to be piloted in the PRPP provinces, through mobilizing a consultant team that developed a report and recommendations. The report's findings were presented at the project Q1 workshop in Hue in 2014 and disseminated to PRPP provinces;
- (3.5.7/3.5.031-2014) As part of the Millennium Development Goals Acceleration Framework (MAF) the project supported the formation of a MAF Task Force and development of an Action Plan for promoting the MDGs in EM and mountainous areas. CIP CEMA convened a workshop in June 2014 to discuss the development of the Action Plan;
- (3.5.023-2014) Established a network of 7 communication agencies (newspapers, reporters, TV channels) which attend all PRPP project events and report regularly on R80, NTP-SPR and PRPP project implementation;
- (3.5.8-2013/3.5.024-2014) Provided consultancy support to upgrade MoLISA's national poverty reduction website;
- (3.5.7 & 3.6.027-2014) Provided experts to support the direction, implementation, quality assurance and reporting of the CIP CEMA, through a project adviser;

**3.6. Resources and support of development partners to poverty reduction policies and programme are effectively coordinated and managed**

The project:

- (3.6.1-2013) Supported MoLISA (as NIP) with national consultants and technical and consultation workshops to research and develop a Resolution 80/ NTP SPR partnership mechanism, based upon past DP/GoVN experience on partnership for poverty reduction;
- (3.6.3-2013) Convened a workshop and training in project management and soft skills for provincial project staff;
- (3.6.4.1) Facilitated a workshop for all CIPs and line ministry staff for the 2014 annual work planning process;
- (3.6.4.2) Provided CIPs with consultants to support the development of their 2014 annual workplans;
- (3.6.4.3) Held a workshop to consolidate 2013 activities and plan for 2014;

- (3.6.4.4-2013) Held a press conference and workshop on the International day of Poverty Eradication and Vietnamese day of the poor (17<sup>th</sup> October);
- (3.6.5-2013) Supported MoLISA, in collaboration with UNDP and Irish Aid, to hold a workshop in Gia Lai to discuss the policy review work and evaluation of poverty reduction policies, and the process for policy redesign. More than 70 delegates attended from line ministries and provinces and the workshop resulted in the PRCO/ MoLISA drafting a letter to the head of the national poverty reduction steering committee requesting he accelerate the policy review and redesign process and assign tasks for 2014;
- (3.6.020-2014) Mobilised consultants to review and make recommendations on improving PRPP project management and coordination capacity. The results were communicated to the PRPP Q1 2014 meeting in Hue and a plan was developed to implement the consultancy team's recommendations;
- (3.6.021-2014) Supported a workshop with MoF in July 2014 on financial management capacity building for the 8 PRPP province PMUs, the central PRPP PMU and CIP-CEMA;
- (3.6.022-2014) Supported the improved implementation of the project through a workshop with the 9 CIPs in Da Nang in September 2014, to review the 9 month implementation of the project in 2014 and to set the direction for future work. The support was intended to develop the capacity of PRPP PMUs for project management and soft skills for the implementation of the critical TA outputs of the project (management and coordination capacity building study; communication strategy; block grant mechanism; M&E results framework for the NTP-SPR);
- (3.6.026-2014) Provided short term consultants to support the direction, quality assurance and reporting on PRPP activities from the 8 project provinces;

### ***Annex 3: Stakeholder Interviewees***

<b>No.</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Job title</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>Central Level</b>				
1.	Vo Hoang Nga	Female	Programme Associate	UNDP
2.	Nguyen Tien Phong	Male	Assistant Country Director	UNDP
3.	Bakhodir Burkhanov	Male	Deputy Country Director	UNDP
4.	Nguyen Thanh Van	Female	Programme Officer	UNESCO
5.	Nguyen Son Ha	Male	Assistant Representative, Programme	FAO
6.	Tran Thuy Duong	Female	Programme Officer	Delegation of the European Union
7.	Doan Huu Minh	Male	National Project Manager	PRPP Project
8.	Trinh Cong Khanh	Male	Former Head of Department	CEMA
9.	Babul Azad	Male	M&E Officer	UNDP
10.	Sarah Downey	Female	Development Attache	Irish Aid
11.	To Ngoc Anh	Male	Programme Officer	Irish Aid
12.	Colman Ross	Male	Technical Adviser	PRPP Project
13.	Fiona Quinn	Female	Deputy Head of Development	Irish Aid
14.	Be Thi Hong Van	Female	Deputy Head of Department	CEMA
15.	Le Tuyet Nhung	Female	Deputy National Project Director	MoLISA
16.	Nguyen Hoang Linh	Male	National Coordinator	PRPP Project
17.	Nguyen Thu Hang	Female	Project Admin	PRPP Project
18.	Tran Thi Tuyet	Female	National Coordinator	PRPP Project
19.	Ngo Truong Thi	Male	Director	National Office for Poverty Reduction, MoLISA
20.	Chu Thị Hạnh	Female	Vice-Director	National Office for Poverty Reduction, MoLISA
21.	Nguyen Tuan Anh	Male	Vice-Director	National Office for Poverty Reduction, MoLISA
22.	Son Phuoc Hoan	Male	Vice Minister, Deputy Chairman	CEMA
23.	Mr. Tung	Male		CEMA
24.	Pham Duc Van	Female		CEMA
25.	Nguyen Duc Thuat	Female	Finance Division	CEMA
26.	Tran Dong Phuong	Female	Adviser - CEMA	PRPP Project
27.	Mr. Hoang	Male	Director, Ethnic Minority Affairs Department	Ethnic Council, National Assembly

No.	Full name	Gender	Job title	Organization
28.	Mr. Quynh	Male	Vice-Director, Ethnic Minority Affairs Department	Ethnic Council, National Assembly
29.	Trieu Quoc Binh	Male	Officer	Ethnic Council
30.	Le Kim Dung	Female	Associate Country Director	Oxfam in Vietnam
31.	Do Ngoc Ba	Male	Vice Director, Legal Documents Division	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
32.	Le Tuyet Nguyen	Female	Deputy Head, Legal Documents Division	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
33.	Le Tu Hoa	Female	Deputy Head, Legal Documents Division	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
34.	Dung Van Ba	Male	Vice Director	Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)
35.	Bui Ten Dung	Male	Senior officer	Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)
36.	Vo Thanh Son	Male	Senior Specialist	World Bank Vietnam
37.	Do Thanh Trung	Male	Head of Department of Regional and Local Planning	Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)
38.	Pham Lan Huong	Female	Director	ILLSA
39.	Nguyen Minh Thu	Female	Researcher	ILLSA
40.	Bui Sy Tuan	Male	Researcher	ILLSA
41.	Nguyen Thi Van Anh	Female	Senior Programme Specialist	UNICEF
42.	Dao Minh Chau	Male	Senior Programme Specialist	SDC
43.	Nguyen Manh Hung	Male	Vice Chairman	Committee for Social Affairs, National Assembly
44.	Nguyen Trong Dam	Male	Vice Minister	MoLISA
<b>I. Bac Kan province</b>				
<b>A. Provincial level</b>				
45.	Nong Van Chi	Male	Vice Chairperson	PPC
46.	Ma Xuan Thu	Male	Director	PRPP PMU
47.	Ngo Trung Kien	Male	Vice Director	PRPP PMU
48.	Nguyen The Manh	Male	Coordinator	PRPP PMU
49.	Ha Anh Tuan	Male	Director	DPI
50.	Luong Thai Hau	Male	Officer	DPI
51.	Ha Sy Tho	Male	Director	PCEM
52.	Nguyen Khanh Tung	Male	Director	DoF
53.	Dang Van Son	Male	Director	DARD
54.	Hoang Van Giap	Male	Vice Director	3 PAD PMU

No.	Full name	Gender	Job title	Organization
55.	Le Tuan Mau	Male	Head of Division	Division of Veterinary, Extension Center
56.	Trieu Thi Hang	Female	Officer	Division of Plant Protection, Extension Center
<b>B. Ngan Son District</b>				
57.	Chu Thi Huyen	Female	Vice Chairperson	District People's Committee
58.	Duong Thanh Son	Male	Head of Division	Division of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
59.	Ha Van Toan	Male	Head of Division	Division of Ethnic Minority Affairs
60.	Nguyen Duc Hien	Male	Head of Division	Division of Planning and Finance
61.	Nong Thi Huyen	Female	Officer	Division of Agriculture and Rural Development
62.	Luc Anh Luan	Male	Head of Division	Division of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>C. Lang Ngam commune</b>				
63.	Chu Van Han	Male	Chairperson	Commune People's Committee
64.	Trieu Thi Kien	Female	Officer	Commune People's Committee
65.	Hoang Thi Xuan	Female	Officer	Commune People's Committee
<b>II. Quang Ngai province</b>				
<b>Provincial level</b>				
66.	Le Quang Thich	Male	Vice Chairperson	Provincial People's Committee
67.	Truong Dinh Duc	Male	Director	PRPP PMU
68.	Nguyen Hoang Chi	Male	Vice Director	PRPP PMU
69.	Che Nguyen Vu	Male	Coordinator	PRPP PMU
70.	Nguyen Thi Nha	Female	Member	PRPP PMU
71.	Phan Thi Thanh Thuy	Female	Member	PRPP PMU
72.	Huynh Van Hoa	Male	Member	PRPP PMU
73.	Nguyen Hoang Chi	Male	Member	PRPP PMU
74.	Le Quang Manh	Male	Member	PRPP PMU
75.	Bui Thanh Dung	Male	Member	PRPP PMU
76.	Tran Thi Le Diem	Female	Member	PRPP PMU
77.	Tran Nhu Man	Male	Member	PRPP PMU
78.	Nguyen Dang Loc	Male	Vice Director	DPI
79.	Ho Van The	Male	Chairperson	PCEM
80.	Nguyen Vuong	Male	Vice Chairperson	PCEM
81.	Le Thi Dieu	Female	Head of Division	Division of Finance Policy

No.	Full name	Gender	Job title	Organization
82.	Duong Van To	Male	Director	DARD
83.	Ngo Huu Ha	Male	Director	Extension Center
84.	Nguyen Huu Nguyen	Male	Head of Division	Division of Veterinary, Extension Center
85.	Tran Thi Le Quyen	Female	Officer	Extension Center
86.	Ngo Huu Phuoc	Male	Coordinator	Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project
<b>Tra Bong District</b>				
87.	Ho Van Thinh		Vice Chairperson	District People's Committee
88.	Phan Thi Quyen	Female	Head of Division	DoLISA
89.	Ho Van Dung	Male	Officer	Division of Ethnic Minority Affairs
90.	Nguyen Tan Tam	Male	Head of Division	Division of Planning and Finance
91.	Le Anh Tuan	Male	Head of Division	Division of Agriculture and Rural Development
92.	Nguyen Tan Hoa	Male	Officer	District Bank for Social Policies
93.	Nguyen Thi Mien	Female	Chief Officer	District People's Committee Office
94.	Nguyen Thanh Son	Male	Officer	Bank for Social and Policy
<b>Tra Son commune</b>				
95.	Dinh Van Phu	Male	Chairperson	Commune People's Committee
96.	Dinh Van Tri	Male	Officer	Commune People's Committee
97.	Nguyen Thi My Trang	Female	Officer	Commune People's Committee
98.	Nguyen Thi Bich Linh	Female	Officer	Commune People's Committee
99.	Ho Van Tien	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
100.	Ho Chi Bien	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
101.	Ho Van Phuong	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
102.	Ho Ngoc Vung	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
103.	Ho Van Hung	Male	Framer	Beneficiary of PRPP
<b>III. Tra Vinh province</b>				
<b>Provincial level</b>				
104.	Nguyen Thanh Tam	Male	Vice Chairperson	Provincial People's Committee
105.	Nguyen Thi Cuc	Female	Director	PRPP PMU
106.	Nguyen Van Toan	Male	Vice Director	PRPP PMU
107.	Nguyen Hoang Tri Minh	Male	Coordinator	PRPP PMU
108.	Le Van Huong	Male	Director	DPI
109.	Name not recorded	Male	Vice Chairperson	PCEM

No.	Full name	Gender	Job title	Organization
110.	Name not recorded	Male	Chief Officer	PCEM
111.	Pham Van Trinh	Male	Vice Director	Department of Finance
112.	Thach My Trang	Male	Officer	Division of Financial Policy
113.	Name not recorded	Male	Vice Head of Department	DARD
114.	Name not recorded	Male	Extension technician	Extension Center – Beneficiaries of the TOT training
115.	Name not recorded	Female	Extension technician	Extension Center - Beneficiaries of the TOT training
116.	Huynh Nghia Tho	Male	Director	Adaptation in Mekong Delta (ADM) Project – IFAD
117.	Duong Huy Phong	Male	Vice Director	Bank for Social Policy
<b>Tra Cu district</b>				
118.	Thach Phuoc Binh	Male	Chairperson	District People’s Committee
119.	Le Hoang Phuong	Male	Head of Division	DoLISA
120.	Name not recorded		Officer	Division of Ethnic Minority Affairs
121.	Lam Phong Xuan	Male	Head of Division	Division of Planning and Finance
122.	Huynh Van Thao	Male	Head of Division	Division of Agriculture and Rural Development
<b>Ngoc Bien commune</b>				
123.	Lam Phuoc An	Male	Chairperson	Commune People’s Committee
124.	Thach Tho	Male	Officer	Commune People’s Committee
125.	Thach Van Tha	Male	Officer	Commune People’s Committee
126.	Phan Quoc Long	Male	Head of Village	Beneficiary of PRPP
127.	Thach Sol	Male	Head of Village	Beneficiary of PRPP
128.	Thach Mao	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
129.	Duong Van Trung	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
130.	Kien Sao	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
131.	Kim Thi Chuong	Female	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
132.	Tran Quan Duc Hanh	Male	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
133.	Le Thi Thu Tuyen	Female	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP
134.	Kim To Ran	Female	Farmer	Beneficiary of PRPP



#### Annex 4: Fieldwork schedules

##### Bac Kan fieldtrip

Date and time	Proposed meetings
<b>02 Sun</b>	Leaving for Bac Kan (by car)
<b>03 Mon</b>	Working in Bac Kan City
7:30-9:00	PRPP Provincial Management Unit (Director, Vice Director, Coordinator)
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Vice/Director of DPI
	Group 2: Vice/Director of Provincial CEMA
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Vice/Director of DoF
	Group 2: Vice/Director of DARD
13:30-14:30	Meeting with a donor-supported project at the Province
14:45-15:45	Group 1: Meeting with 1-2 provincial officials that have benefited from capacity building
	Group 2: Meeting with Vietnam Bank for Social Policy
16:00-16:45	Vice Chairman of PPC, Chair of Poverty Reduction Board
<b>04 Tue</b>	Working in Ngan Son District
6:30-8:00	<i>Leaving for the district</i>
8:00-9:00	Meeting Vice Chairman of DPC
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Head of Labour and Social Affairs Division
	Group 2: Head of District Ethnic Minorities Division
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Head of Planning and Finance Division
	Group 2: Head of Agriculture and Rural Development Division
	Working in Lang Ngam commune
	<i>Leaving for the commune</i>
13:30-14:30	Group 1: Meeting with Chairman/Vice Chairman of CPC
	Group 2: 1-2 commune staff that is most involved with PRPP
14:45-17:00	Group 1: Focus Group Discussion with 6-8 farmers who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
	Group 2, Meeting 1: Meeting with head of the village (especially those received the training)
	Group 2, Meeting 2: Interviewing few households who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
<b>05 Wed</b>	Working in Bac Kan City
8:30-10:00	Debriefing with the PRPP Provincial PRPP Management Unit (All management board members)
10:00-11:30	Reserve for further meetings that might be needed
	<i>Leaving to Hanoi</i>

## Quang Ngai fieldtrip

Date and time	Proposed meetings
<b>09 Sun</b>	Leaving for Quang Ngai
<b>10 Mon</b>	Working in Quang Ngai City
7:30-9:00	PRPP Provincial Management Unit (Director, Vice Director, Coordinator)
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Vice/Director of DPI
	Group 2: Vice/Director of Provincial CEMA
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Vice/Director of DoF
	Group 2: Vice/Director of DARD
13:30-14:30	Meeting with a donor-supported project at the Province
14:45-15:45	Group 1: Meeting with 1-2 provincial officials that have benefited from capacity building
	Group 2: Meeting with Vietnam Bank for Social Policy
16:00-16:45	Vice Chairman of PPC, Chair of Poverty Reduction Board
<b>11 Tue</b>	Working in Trà Bồng District
6:30-8:00	<i>Leaving for the district</i>
8:00-9:00	Meeting Vice Chairman of DPC
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Head of Labour and Social Affairs Division
	Group 2: Head of District Ethnic Minorities Division
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Head of Planning and Finance Division
	Group 2: Head of Agriculture and Rural Development Division
	Working in Trà Sơn commune
	<i>Leaving for the commune</i>
13:30-14:30	Group 1: Meeting with Chairman/Vice Chairman of CPC
	Group 2: 1-2 commune staff that is most involved with PRPP
14:45-17:00	Group 1: Focus Group Discussion with 6-8 farmers who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
	Group 2, Meeting 1: Meeting with head of the village (especially those received the training)
	Group 2, Meeting 2: Interviewing few households who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
<b>12 Wed</b>	Working in Quang Ngai City
8:30-10:00	Debriefing with the PRPP Provincial PRPP Management Unit (All management board members)
10:00-11:30	Reserve for further meetings that might be needed
	<i>Leaving for Tra Vinh (through Can Tho Airport)</i>

## Tra Vinh fieldtrip

Date and time	Proposed meetings
<b>13 Thu</b>	Working in Tra Vinh City
7:30-9:00	PRPP Provincial Management Unit (Director, Vice Director, Coordinator)
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Vice/Director of DPI
	Group 2: Vice/Director of Provincial CEMA
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Vice/Director of DoF
	Group 2: Vice/Director of DARD
13:30-14:30	Meeting with a donor-supported project at the Province
14:45-15:45	Group 1: Meeting with 1-2 provincial officials that have benefited from capacity building
	Group 2: Meeting with Vietnam Bank for Social Policy
16:00-16:45	Vice Chairman of PPC, Chair of Poverty Reduction Board
<b>14 Fri</b>	Working in Trà Cú District
6:30-8:00	<i>Leaving for the district</i>
8:00-9:00	Meeting Vice Chairman of DPC
9:15-10:15	Group 1: Head of Labour and Social Affairs Division
	Group 2: Head of District Ethnic Minorities Division
10:30-11:30	Group 1: Head of Planning and Finance Division
	Group 2: Head of Agriculture and Rural Development Division
	Working in Ngọc Biên commune
	<i>Leaving for the commune</i>
13:30-14:30	Group 1: Meeting with Chairman/Vice Chairman of CPC
	Group 2: 1-2 commune staff that is most involved with PRPP
14:45-17:00	Group 1: Focus Group Discussion with 6-8 farmers who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
	Group 2, Meeting 1: Meeting with head of the village (especially those received the training)
	Group 2, Meeting 2: Interviewing few households who are direct beneficiaries of PRPP
<b>15 Sat</b>	Working in Tra Vinh City
8:30-10:00	Debriefing with the PRPP Provincial PRPP Management Unit (All management board members)
10:00-11:30	Reserve for further meetings that might be needed
	<i>Leaving to Hanoi</i>

## ***Annex 5: Reference documents***

Detailed PRPP Project Outline, June 2012

Draft Poverty Reduction Framework 2016-2020

EMPCD Project Report: Situation and Policy Recommendations for Land Management and Use in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas 2012

EMPCD Project Summary Report: Research on Ethnic Minority Human Resources and Solutions for Human Resource Development Toward 2020

Ethnic Minorities Working Group Paper: Critical Issues in Achieving Sustainable Development of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam, 2014

GACA Project Progress Briefs

Indochina Research and Consulting: Multidimensional Child Poverty of Ethnic Minority Children, August 2014

Irish Aid 2011-2015 Results Framework

Irish Aid Field Monitoring Reports

Irish Aid Thematic Paper: Shaping Policies and Programs for Poverty Reduction Among Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam, 2014

Irish Aid Vietnam Country Strategy 2011-2015

Irish Aid/ European Union Discussion Paper on Engagement of Development Partners in Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam, June 2014

Meeting Notes of the Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group, 2013 – 2014

Mid Term Review Report for the NTP-SPR, 2014

MoLISA VDPF Implementation Progress Report on 2013 Policy Actions

MOLISA VDPF Implementation Progress Report, October 2014

Multidimensional Poverty Report

National Assembly Resolution 76

National Assembly Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction Reports 2014

National Assembly Supreme Oversight Report on the Implementation of Policies and Laws on Poverty Reduction 2005-2012

PRPP 9 Month Narrative Report September 2014

PRPP Annual Progress Report 2013

PRPP Block Grant Study (Consultant report)

PRPP Capacity Building and Management Study (Consultant report)

PRPP Communication Strategy (Consultant report)

PRPP M&E Action Plan

PRPP Management and Coordination Capacity Building Report

PRPP National Technical Coordinators Monthly and Quarterly Reports (central level)

PRPP National Technical Coordinators Provincial Reports

PRPP Project Annual Workplan 2012-13

PRPP Project Annual Workplan 2014

PRPP Project Implementation Guidelines

PRPP Project Policy Briefs: Capacity Building on Management and Coordination of PRPP; Block Grants; Communication; Results Framework

PRPP Project Staff Field Monitoring Reports

PRPP Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 2013 – 2014

PRPP Quarterly Progress Reports, Quarter 1 2013 – Quarter 3 2014

PRPP Quarterly Workplans, Q4 2012 – Q4 2014

PRPP Results Framework (Consultancy report)

PRPP Review of Poverty Reduction Models (Consultancy report)  
 PRPP Sot-Check Tools  
 PRPP Staff ToRs  
 Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIM) Report 2014  
 Resolution 80 on Directions for Sustainable Poverty Reduction in the Period 2011-2020  
 UN Harmonised Programme and Project Management Guidelines (HPPMG) 2010  
 UN Vietnam Delivering as One Annual Results Report 2013  
 UN Vietnam JPG 1 (Inclusive Growth and Decent Work) Annual Reports 2012, 2013  
 UN Vietnam JPG 1 Annual Workplan and Results Table 2014  
 UN Vietnam One Plan 2012-2016  
 UNDP/ CEMA Report 2011: Poverty of Ethnic Minorities in Viet Nam: Situation and Challenges in Programme 135 Phase II Communes 2006-07  
 UNDP/CEMA Report 2012: Impact of Program 135 Phase II through the Lens of Baseline and Endline Surveys  
 UNDP Evaluation Policy  
 UNDP/ IA/ CEMA Report 2013: Poverty Situation Analysis of Ethnic Minorities in Vietnam 2007-2012. Key Findings from Quantitative Study  
 UNDP Guidelines for Outcome Evaluators, 2002  
 UNDP Outcome Level Evaluation: A Companion Guide, 2011  
 UNDP PRPP Project Document  
 UNDP Strategic Plan 2014-17  
 UNDP Strategic Plan Integrated Results and Resources Framework 2014-2017  
 UNDP Vietnam Human Development Report 2011, Social Services for Human Development  
 UNICEF Field Study Report on Adopting an Anthropological/ Culturally Appropriate Approach to Poverty Reduction in Quang Ngai Province, March 2014  
 UNICEF/ MoET. Research Report: Action Research on Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education, Sept 2012  
 UNICEF/ MPI. Manual on Local Annual and Five Year Development Planning with New Approach, April 2013  
 VDPF 2013 Ethnic Minority Policy Subgroup, Action Framework  
 World Bank Vietnam Poverty Assessment 2012: World Begun Not Yet Done