**End of Project Evaluation (EPE)** 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

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by

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# List of Acronyms

CEMA : Central Committee for Ethnic Minorities

CIO : Commune Investment Ownership

CIP : Co-Implementing Partner

CPC : Commune People’s Committee

CDF : Commune Development Fund

DAC : Development Assistance Council

DARD : Department for Agriculture and Rural Development

DNPD : Deputy National Project Director

DoLISA : Department for Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs

DP : Development Partner

DPC : District People’s Committee

DPI : Department for Planning an Investment

EMPWG : Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group

EPE : End of Project Evaluation

GoVN : Government of Vietnam

GSO : General Statistical Office

IFAD : International Fund for Agriculture Development

ILSSA : Institute for Labour Science and Social Affairs

INGO : International Non-Governmental Organization

IFAD : International Fund for Agricultural Development

ISNC : Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities

M&E : Monitoring and Evaluation

MAF-EM : 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

MoC : Ministry of Construction

MoJ : Ministry of Justice

MoF : Ministry of Finance

MoLISA : Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs

MPI : Ministry of Education and Training

MTE : Mid-Term Evaluation

NA : National Assembly

NGO : Non-Governmental Organization

NIM : National Implementation Modality

NIP : National Implementing Partner

NPD : National Project Director

NRD : New Rural Development

NSC : National Steering Committee (of Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme)

NTP : National Target Program

NTP NRD : National Target Program on New Rural Development

NTP SPR : National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction

O&M : Operation and Maintenance

P135 : Programme 135

PCEM : Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs

PMU : Project Management Unit

PPC : Provincial People’s Committee

PRCO : Poverty Reduction Coordination Office

PRPP : Poverty Reduction Polies and Programs

RIM : Rapid Impact Monitoring

PSARD : Public Services for Agriculture and Rural Development Project

SEDP : Socio-Economic Development Planning

SDC : Swiss Development Cooperation Agency

SDG : Sustainable Development Goals

TA : Technical Assistance

TOR : Terms of Preferences

TOT : Training of Trainers

UNDP : United Nations’ Development Program

VHLSS : Vietnam Household Living Social Survey

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The purpose of the End of Project Evaluation (EPE) of the Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) undertaken over August and September 2016 is to measure and evaluate the progress in achieving the project’s results, and to assess the PRPP’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The EPE also draws lessons learned and recommendations for replicating and sustaining project’s results. An additional important role of the EPE is to inform future GoVN-UNDP-DP cooperation on poverty reduction in the next programming cycle over 2016 to 2020.

Specific objectives of this EPE include: (i) To review key changes in the project context and issues the project set out to address and assess the relevance of the project; (ii) To review project’s progress in achieving its results both at provincial and central level; (iii) To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in realizing its results and the sustainability of the results; (iv) To identify key lessons and make recommendations for the future Government of Viet Nam, United Nations Development Programme and Development Partners (GoVN-UNDP-DP) cooperation in the area of poverty reduction.

## Background

Support for the implementation of Resolution 80 and the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP SPR) towards the GoVN’s goal of accelerated poverty reduction in the poorest ethnic minority, mountainous and coastal regions of the country is the PRPP’s main objective. PRPP project support is intended to enhance the quality of the poverty reduction programmes, 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). 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 (SEDP).

The PRPP’s Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) was completed in 2014 and signalled some areas that attainment of outcomes was not certain at the project’s midterm. These includes 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).

## Methodology

An Evaluation Framework that adopts the four domains for the evaluation: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability forms the methodological basis for the EPE. Within each of these evaluation criteria, the framework details: (i) key issues to be addressed; (ii) what to look for; (iii) data and information sources, and; (iv) data collection methods. A series of questions were developed which guided the work during the assessment process. Reviewing of key documents was the initial task undertaken. This review included: project reports and reports from the project’s technical assistance activities; GoVN policy documents and reports; reports and analysis from UNDP, Irish Aid and other DPs; project field visit reports; and various outputs and reports from each of the eight PRPP provinces. The MTE report was also a key document reviewed.

Consultation with stakeholders and beneficiaries was organized at both the national and sub-national levels. Interviews at the national level were held with representatives from the National Assembly’s (NA) Committee for Social Affairs, Ethnic Council, and GoVN ministry representatives closely involved with the project. Three of the eight PRPP pilot provinces were visited by the evaluation team. The three provinces selected were Dien Bien (in the North, started PRPP since 2013), Quang Ngai (in the Central, started PRPP since 2013), and Tra Vinh (in the South, started PRPP since 2014).

## Project Results

Assessment of the PRPP’s results is focused upon the degree to which the Activity Results, their Indicators and Targets, as described in the PRPP Results and Resources Framework, have been achieved.

**One UN Plan.** PRPP’s contribution to the One UN Plan is assessed as satisfactory. MdP development and use in poverty monitoring being the main achievement. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) annual poverty assessment in 2016 has applied the MdP thus introducing the multi-facet approach to poverty assessment. GoVN adoption of the Accelerated Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Targets for Ethnic Minorities in the Decision 1557 and piloting of the MDG Acceleration Framework for Ethnic Minorities (MAF-EM) in three provinces has also introduced a new tool for addressing MdP among ethnic minorities. Both the MdP and Decision 1557 have better enabled the targeting of chronic and emerging forms of poverty- an important One UN Plan target.

**Output 1: Policies Streamlined into Ministry Work Plans.** Streamlining of new poverty policies into the plans of the ministries has had varied success, and the assessment ranges from highly successful to moderately successful. Preparation of the Resolution 80 action plan is a notable achievement and is assessed as high satisfactory (Target 1). The development of poverty policies based on studies and into the ministry frameworks is also assessed as being highly satisfactory (Target 2). Successful studies and sub sequent policy development include: National Assembly’s Supreme Oversight 2014 on land use; reduction of the number of National Target Programmes (NTPs) from 16 to two; and the acceleration of MDG for ethnic minorities into the mandates of ministries. Streamlining of the new and revised policies is only assessed as moderately satisfactory (Target 3). Although policies have been incorporated into plans and frameworks but fund mobilisation for them is less evident. Development of the network for information sharing and cooperation is also assessment as moderately satisfactory (Target 4). PRPP has supported several policy forums, conference and workshop to enhance cooperation across the GoVN agencies and DPs. But a formal network has yet to be established. The establishment of a formal process for the reviewing, evaluating and mainstreaming of poverty policies in the line ministries is assessed as moderately satisfactory (Target 5). It is unclear as to whether the respective ministries have instituted the formal process. Achievement of the final Output 1 target of the regular policy review and updating and the use of new poverty approaches is assessed as highly satisfactory (target 6). By the end of 2015 GoVN agencies, with considerable support from PRPP funded consultants, had completed the process of reviewing poverty reduction policies. New poverty approaches have been applied: MdP, the MAF-EM for accelerating MDG achievement and rationalisation of the NTPs into just two programs.

**Output 2: National Target Programme Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP SPR) Designed and Implemented.** NTP SPR design and implementation results are variable for the 6 targets in the PRPP Resources and Results framework and range from less than satisfactory to highly satisfactory. Preparation of the NTP–SPR 2016-2020 using reviews of previous programs is assessed as satisfactory (Target 1) and is a significant result for the PRPP. Lessons learned and good practices have been included. The design also featured improved coordination and harmonisation between the main GoVN agencies. The impact upon the NTP SPR 2012 -2015 is less than initially planned. Development of the gender and ethnic minority sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system is assessed as moderately satisfactory (Target 2). While the M&E system has been developed there is little evidence of its use for targeting of poverty, especially women’s poverty. M&E data use for management is also limited. Use of the block grant model is also assessed as moderately satisfactory (Target 3). Three provinces piloted block grants and while the mechanism worked the actual block grant model did little to enhance community participation and decision making over the PRPP investments. Promoting empowerment and participation by local authorities and the community in planning and implementation management (Target 4) achieved variable results in the pilot provinces and communes. Community planning aligned with commune SEDP was a feature in Tra Vinh, and also made progress in Dien Bien. Tra Vinh provincial and local authorities have adopted commune SEDP but this is in association with the long running International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) project in Tra Vinh. In contrast Quang Ngai authorities did not promote participatory community planning. Livelihood models were the dominant models applied in the eight provinces and these all demonstrated very limited technical and market related innovation (also part of Target 4). Farmer financial contribution was the only notable feature that could be considered as an innovation. Although there was some documentation of models, this added little to the large pool of knowledge about livelihoods models that already exists. Development of an anthropological approach was implemented at the national level in CEMA, but was not able to be applied in the pilot provincial activities as the Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minorities (PCEM) staff were not fully trained in its use.- In contrast the activity to strengthen the knowledge and skills at the local levels is assessed as highly satisfactory (Target 5). Capacity development building provincial training expertise has been successful, community development and the communications program have achieved very good results, and commune SEDPs have also been a successful pilot feature. The promotion of social movement for greater self-reliance in rural development and poverty reduction is rated as Satisfactory (Target 6). Assessment of this activity has been more difficult as it was included later in the project but building self-reliance has had some initial success in the pilot provinces.

**Output 3: Monitoring and Analysis of Multi-Dimensional Poverty.** Development of the MdP is a major achievement and is assessed as Highly Satisfactory (Target 1). The MdP has been applied with the poverty assessment for 2016 now being multi-dimensional. It is used by a number of DPs and is widely publicised through workshops and forums. The harmonised framework for poverty monitoring and measurement and targeting is also assessed as Highly Satisfactory (Target 2). The MdP is now the basis for poverty assessment national wide, while Rapid Impact Monitoring (RIMs) are applied and used for policy evaluation. There was also linkage with the Viet Nam Household Living Standards Survey (VHLSS) in MdP development. Reporting on poverty and vulnerability analysis is in its early stages and is assessed as Moderately Satisfactory (Target 3). High level policy dialogues have been successfully organised and are rated as Satisfactory (Target 4). Dialogue has featured NA’s Social Affairs Committee, Ethnic Council and also the Ethnic Minority Working Group (EMPWG). Coordination with DP programs has been limited and is assessed as Less-than-Satisfactory (Target 5). The provincial pilots have only had weak relationships with the DP projects. There was positive input by DPs to policy development but additional resource mobilisation and subsequent coordination has been limited.

**Cross Cutting Issues**

*Gender:* Mainstreaming of gender into policies, program and development projects is the approach followed in the PRPP. At the policy level, there has been important achievement. Notably, the PRPP-supported Result Framework for the NTP SPR develops indicators disaggregated according to gender, poverty status, and ethnicity and this Framework has been modified for the new NTP SPR. At the activity level, gender disaggregated data in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 PRPP Annual Reports shows that women have been involved in some PRPP activities. Gender disaggregated data is usually available in terms of percentage or number of women attended trainings, workshops, or policy dialogue. The 2015 Annual Report states that: “19,916 women benefited from enhanced income opportunities and better engagement in social economic activities in the community”. But the M&E data or reports were silent on the degree of economic and social benefits and the EPE found limited evidence to substantiate how women benefited from the activities. .

*Human Rights*: PRRP activities have ensured that human rights have been well addressed and there has contributed to increased beneficiary inclusion, more equitable access to project resources and that all community members have been involved in community planning and decision making. Several policies and instruments have also been developed that ensure human rights principles are well applied. PRPP has also facilitated the use of commune-level SEDPs. PRPP’s assistance to the National Assembly’s Committee for Social Affairs and Ethnic Council are probably the best illustrations of how the Project has contributed to human rights.

*Environment and Climate Change*: Environmental sustainability of the NTP SPR production models is significant as environmental issues associated with agricultural production are coming under increased scrutiny. Livestock training in Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai was reported to have included waste management techniques. PRPP livelihood models in Dien Bien included worm farms and the feeding of the worms to poultry that lived under the beneficiaries’ houses, or in nearby shelters. The EPE assessment is that the opportunity for the project to demonstrate better environment management for the livelihoods activities has not been fully capitalised upon. Climate events, especially drought and high intensity storms, are increasing in their severity and influencing small holder production and viability. Building the resilience of small holder farming systems to climate risks is a major challenge, and poor smallholders are the most vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change. The EPE comment is that given the high vulnerability of the poor small holders to climate change the pilots should have had a much increased emphasis upon climate change adaption training.

**Main Findings**

Evaluation of the PRPP using the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) evaluation criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability has been undertaken.

**Relevance**

*Relevance at the National Level:* PRPP is perceived as highly relevant at the national level. This high relevance is reflected in the following aspects: Supporting the Action Plan to support Resolution 80 and reviewing poverty reduction policies for rationalizing and mainstreaming is highly relevant for PRPP. The process of reviewing and rationalizing poverty reduction policies is a resultant consequence of Resolution 80. By supporting this process, the PRPP Project has contributed to what is probably most needed over the past five years in terms of poverty reduction policy making. Support for the implementation of NTP SPR (guidelines, pilot innovative models and replication, capacity development for implementation at the local levels) is also a relevant focus of the PRPP Project. High relevance of the PRPP Project is also reflected in its support for raising awareness and advocacy for MdP approaches, development of the MdP Master Plan. It has been widely recognized that after two decades of poverty reduction, poverty has become more multifaceted and other non-income aspects of living standards increasingly important. The EPE consultants considered this as the PRPP “masterpiece”. Supporting the design of the new phase of poverty reduction policies, mainly the NTP SPR (design and implementation guidelines), is extremely relevant for the PRPP Project. It should be noted that supporting the design of NTP SPR was not included in the original Results and Resources Framework of the Project. This was recommended after the MTE when the need of Technical Assistance (TA) for designing a new phase of poverty reduction policies to capitalise good practices and lessons learned in poverty reduction over the past two decade was identified.

*Relevance at the Sub-national Level****:*** Relevance at the sub national level is however less clear. The Project is most relevant at the sub-national level in the following aspects: Piloting innovative models as to support the implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015 is a relevant direction to pursue. In this regards, a number of livelihoods models, policy forums, poverty reduction festivals were piloted in the eight PRPP provinces. In addition, new approaches and mechanisms planned at the central level have been experimented in the provinces. MdP approach in poverty assessment was piloted in PRPP provinces before being finalized to be used for the first poverty assessment using MdP; MAF-EM has been piloted in three PRPP provinces (and two ministries). The development of this link between the central and provincial level in piloting and learning from new ideas, models makes the PRPP Project relevant in its support for the eight provinces. Provision of capacity building at the local level, especially toward Commune Investment ownership (CIO), participatory SEDP, communication skills is another area where the PRPP Project shows its high relevance. In the second half of the Project, the sub-component of Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities (ISNC) that is inspired by the Korean Samaeul Undong represents another boost for capacity development.

However, the Project’s relevance at the sub-national level is less clear in the following areas: a lack of arrangements for replicating the innovative models or the approaches of implementing these pilot models and hence there is little evidence to the EPE team that livelihood models and the associated implementation arrangements (as one of the key activity) have been replicated or institutionalized at the local level. In addition, the potential for replicating these innovative models (in terms of its actual implementation) does not seem to be promising given the level of innovation is rather limited. Hence, the relevance of livelihoods models – as the way these were implemented in practice – is questionable. There were some important outcomes at the national level in terms of institutionalizing block grant models for production support of the new NTP SPR but these outcomes are attributed to the Project’s TA in Hanoi rather than to models experimented in the provinces. In addition, the PRPP coverage is relatively large for the nature of this TA project – where most of key activities (and in fact, achievements) are at the central level casts a doubt on its relevance at the provincial level. This wide coverage might be partially justified by the fact that activities in the provincial level are on the Output 2, which is to support the implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015.

**Effectiveness**

*Achievement of Outcomes:* The high effectiveness rating given to the national level activities is due to the number of major policies and associated regulations that the PRPP has contributed to developing. The MdP is the most important of these but there is also the MAP-EM, and Resolution 76. While the preparation of these various policies and associated documents is quite an achievement it needs to be tempered by the fact that several of the policies have yet to fully applied. Even the MdP is still in its early stages.

*Output 1 Effectiveness****:***  Mainstreaming of policies into the plans and policy frameworks of the line ministries has been effectively achieved. This has included the Resolution 80 action plan and other policies that have facilitated the implementation of NTP SPR 2012-2015 and design of the NTP SPR 2016-2020. The process of review and revision of policies has been successful, as has their institutionalisation into plans and frameworks. Effective application of the new policies is constrained in some instances by funding. Development of processes for ongoing review and revision has yet to be achieved.

*Output 2 Effectiveness:* While policies and documents to provide the platform for NTP SPR 2016-2020 have been prepared the effectiveness of these policies will only be able to be assessed once the new NTP is implemented. Preparation of the NTP SPR is a significant output that PRPP has contributed to. Key success features have been the associated policy development process, the cooperative inputs of GoVN ministries, donor partner involvement and contributions, and the inclusion of good practices to better tackle poverty (such as participatory planning, block grant etc.). The new M&E system has been developed but it has not been effectively used for better poverty reduction program targeting, and program management of the NTP SPR 2012-2015. High level results have been in the Output 2 activity 5 that has built the capacity for program implementation and management. Training capacity has been developed and applied leading to successful trainee learning in training courses. The suite of community development, awareness and commune planning activities has delivered useful results and these activities are assessed as highly effective.

Output 2 activities that have less than satisfactory results are the Activity 3 Block Grants and Activity 4 Innovative Modalities. The PRPP has developed a block grant method that has provided little opportunity for the commune members to participate in decision making over how the allocated investment funds will be used. Block grants in the PRPP have also contributed little to the devolution of financial responsibility to the communes. Use of innovative modalities that builds upon best practice in other programs and projects that can be subsequently replicated in other locations is the stated objective of Activity 3. Provincial agencies focused upon livelihoods development activities as the main innovative modality. The livelihoods activities, however, demonstrated limited innovations, and did not incorporate best practices from other projects, including those that have operated in the provinces. Thus the innovative modalities activity has not been implemented with the breadth of innovation as envisaged. Moreover limited good practice been demonstrated from the implemented livelihood models. Cattle represented a high proportion of the livelihoods models, and the piloting developed few models that feature activities suited to poor women. Community participation in planning and decision making over livelihoods ranges from active participation to consultative. Greater community involvement in PRPP and NTP SPR activities was achieved through the communications activities (see Output 3 below). Some limited use of community participative planning for decision making over livelihoods development has occurred, through commune SEDPs and have been well applied in Tra Vinh. The innovative modality activity, however, has not fully taken the opportunity to implement and gain experience with community participatory planning and innovative livelihood models. Therefore it is rated as less than satisfactory.

*Output 3 Effectiveness*: development and implementation of the MdP approach to poverty. The application of the MdP approach is still in its initial stages and the EPE assessment is that is a highly effective. Following MdP development it has been applied by GoVN agencies and DPs. The harmonised use of the MdP is also a feature of its effectiveness. Reports using the MdP will increase as agencies become more familiar with it, but it is too early for this yet. Dialogues on high level policy were an effective activity that contributed to better poverty policies for the 2016-2020 cycle. Coordination with DPs was not effective especially at the provincial level. The provincial pilots had limited coordination with DP projects and this contributed to poor adoption of successful experience from these other projects.

*Management Effectiveness*: Management of the PRPP at the national and also the provincial levels is assessed as being effective. Completion of the main Output 1 and Output 3 tasks that have delivered significant policy documents is a main measure of management effectiveness. The PRPP Project Office has managed the implementation of a large number of project activities (of varying sizes) that have included studies and capacity building. Moreover the PRPP Project Office has achieved a disbursement rate of 97% in 2013 and 2015. This is a very satisfactory performance. Similarly the provincial PRPP offices have also implemented their planned activities and achieved quite satisfactory disbursement rates. One pitfall of the project management is found with regard to the institutional arrangements of the project. The PRPP provincial Project Management Unit (PPMU) is structured as an affiliate of Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DoLISA). This caused a constraint for the PPMU to exercise a coordination role with other line departments when needed. At times, the project was perceived as one project of DoLISA and ownership of other line departments was found limited. In this regard, the Tra Vinh model, where the PRPP management unit is a part of the Standing Office for Poverty Reduction that serves as a secretariat to the Provincial Steering Committee on Sustainable Poverty Reduction, is highly effective. Replication of the Tra Vinh model was strongly recommended at MTE but unfortunately the progress was not seen at this EPE.

*Attribution of Technical Assistance to Results*: Technical assistance has made a major contribution to policy development and to other technical aspects of the project including capacity development. It is assessed as being very effective. Many TA needs were identified by consulting with the GoVN agencies as the users. Use of technical assistance consultants introduced the line ministries to the model of consultant contracting for policy development. The involvement of private sector consultant and international and national Non-governmental Organisations ((I)NGOs) also demonstrated the benefits of consultation with a wider group of stakeholders in policy development. PRPP recruited a strong technical team with a senior technical advisor, who is an international consultant, and (national, provincial) technical coordinators. Having an in-house technical team in the project management structure is relevant for the project delivery of TA, but does have sustainability issues.

*Capacity Building:* Capacity building quality was assessed as effective with the caveat that there is quite limited formal information available about the results of the PRPP training courses at central, provincial, district and commune levels rather than the numbers of participants in capacity building activities. Tra Vinh is an excellent example of effective capacity building practice. The staff who attended the Training of Trainers (ToT) courses have subsequently delivered training courses for the National Target Programme –New Rural Development (NTP-NRD), and to staff in a number of departments. There have been, however, few post course evaluations from the PRPP training courses. Despite the lack of formal evaluations the PRPP should be commended for the emphasis that it has placed upon developing the training and learning skills of the core group of trainers in the eight pilot provinces.

*Communications and Reporting*:PRPP communications are assessed as being highly effective. At the central level the PRPP Project Office has conducted regular meetings and workshops with other line ministries and poverty sector stakeholders including (I)NGOs and UN agencies. Knowledge of the PRPP progress and results has enabled the various stakeholders to contribute to policy development through the workshops and meetings that the PRPP has facilitated. The pilot provinces have instituted provincial communications programs that have been a successful feature of the project. It is at the commune and district levels, however, where the most effective communication activities have occurred. The mix of activities at that communes and districts that include the use of festivals, policy forums and workshops has had two outstanding results: (i) community members have actively contributed to policy development, and; (ii) there has been a much greater awareness of the NTP SPR by the community members.

PRPP reporting on the project activities through the Annual Reports is assessed as just effective. Although the three Annual Reports provide an adequate description of project activities it is considered that they provide limited analysis of the status of the project and the PRPP achievements. This is with regard to two important aspects: (i) Implementation progress against the annual plan, including any actions taken to address any slow implementation, and any other issues that have arisen, and; (ii) present initial results beyond the preparation of the various policy documents and completion of activities.

*Partnership*: The PRPP project has developed a diversified partnership that this contributed significantly to the project achievements. In terms of partnership with GoVN agencies, the Project has maintained partnership with the NA’s Council for Social Affairs and Ethnic Council, and all line ministries that involves in poverty reduction. This partnership is a contributing factor to the acceptance of many policy changes supported by PRPP at the central level. The project has maintained an effective partnership with research institutes, both GoVN and private sector, and consultants. With a number of TA contracts, the project has developed a network of qualified consultants who was central to many important policy outcomes of PRPP.

The project has also developed partnership with other DPs, especially through the UNDP and Ireland’s co-chairing role in the EMPWG, the high level Policy Forum on ethnic minorities, the associated network of INGOs, and local NGOs. The co-chairs of the EMPWG facilitated the DPs to provide suggestions and comments on the design of new programming for poverty reduction, namely the new NTP SPR 2016-2020, MdP Master Plan, and MAF-EM. However, the PRPP Project partnership with Irish Aid did not deliver on the expectations of Irish Aid. According to the formal agreement between UNDP and Irish Aid made at the outset of PRPP, UNDP took the sole management responsibility for the PRPP. This arrangement is the National Implementation Modality (NIM) of UNDP. During the PRPP implementation, Irish Aid identified an opportunity to add value by being more involved, especially given the fact that Irish Aid had also supported the implementation of the Programme 135 in the PRPP provinces. However, the discussion between UNDP and Irish Aid did not result in any deeper involvement of Irish Aid in the PRPP Project. The NIM remained intact as the mode of management. It is understood by the EPE consultants that Irish Aid considers this as an opportunity missed. At the end of the PRPP project, Irish Aid informed the UNDP of its decision not to provide funding to support another phase of PRPP project in the future.

**Efficiency**

The overall assessment is that the project is efficient. It must also be recognised that the PRPP Project Office has managed the completion of all the major project activities by mid of 2016. This is quite an achievement.

*Efficiency of Process and Outputs*: Efficiency of process was initially weak, as the project staff were unfamiliar with the project procedures such as financial management and reporting. Procurement of Technical Assistance consultants was also slow. Project staff at central and provincial levels informed the EPE that the high number of activities created a real challenge and contributed to some of the slow procurement and implementation.

*Timeliness:* Three main timeliness efficiency issues occurred. First is the time taken at the central level to approve the PRPP annual plan. The provinces found that the relatively later approval of the annual plan (usually April or May of each year) led to implementation over a condensed time period each year. Second is the different rates of implementation by the Country Implementation Partners (CIPs) and the achievement of the 80% funding threshold. Third is the delay in the procurement and contracting of consultants to undertake the initial projects studies and preparation of policy documents.

*Value for Money*: Several of the PRPP activities demonstrate value for money and the EPE highlights the MdP development as an excellent illustration of this. The MDP development is ground breaking and involved a series of PRPP supported activities and events that included study tours, consultant services that were all completed at relatively moderate cost. No cost efficiency benchmarks exist for formal measurement of value for money but the EPE assessment is that for the relatively small cost the majority of the PRPP outputs have achieved very satisfactory value for money results.

## Sustainability

Sustainability assessment at the end of any project is a subjective exercise and this applies to the PRPP. Some main PRPP policy developments, including the MdP, have only had limited time to be applied and it is far too early to evaluate any effects. This also applies to the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

*Policies and Programs in Place*: There is real promise for sustainability of the main policies and their use already illustrates this. The assessment is highly likely.

*Organisational Management Capacity and Coordination*: Sustainability of organisational capacity at the national level has been influenced by the role of the PRPP Project Office and contracted staff in the management of the project. Sustainability of organisational capacity in MoLISA’s Poverty Reduction Coordination Office (PRCO) is assessed as moderate. In contrast PRPP introduced a new level of interagency coordination that is more likely to be sustained. Coordination at the provincial level is also expected to continue and enhance the implementation of the two NTPs from late 2016 onwards. Provincial level organisational sustainability is less influenced by contracted staff providing project management services. Therefore the EPE assesses the sustainability of provincial management capacity as likely.

*Livelihoods Models Application*: Prospects for the sustainability of the livelihoods models are medium to high. They are all livestock models and follow traditional and well proven production methods, and for the pilot livelihoods activities the farmers benefits from learning the basic production skills. Climatic events such as heavy and cold rain storms and drought that impacts upon the feed supply are the main risk to livelihoods sustainability. The PRPP method of requiring some counterpart financial investment in the livelihoods activity is likely to provide the farmers with a higher incentive to ensure that the activity is successful.

*Capacity Building*: The capacity building program that has developed provincial core trainers has a highpotential for sustainability*.* The provincial capacity building issue, however, is not around sustainability, it is about the effective use of the more skilled trainers. Capacity building efforts in terms of strengthening the capacity of local staff for participatory planning, community development skill (as part of ISNC) could also be sustained.

*Community Participation and Planning*: Community participation in planning and management, and use of commune SEDPs has been a feature in some pilot provinces. But other pilot provinces followed only a limited community based approach. Without external financial and technical support by other projects it is unlikely that commune SEDP’s will be instituted in project provinces. Tra Vinh is the exception as it has already committed to extending its SEDP programme. In a related note, the recent Prime Minister’s Decision 41/2016 (as one output of the PRPP TA) has mandated that planning of NTPs must be an integral part of commune SEDP. This creates a pressure for provinces to institutionalize commune SEDP for the implementation of the two NTPs in the period 2016-2020.

*Resources and Finances to Ensure Maintenance of Project Outputs*: Sustaining project achievements is very dependent upon government funding in the post project phase as well as other factors such as the institutional capacity developed by the project. Despite the many useful PRPP achievements the EPE’s review shows that sustainability of some successful PRPP outputs is at risk. This is particularly at the provincial level. Provincial funding to continue successful PRPP activities in two of the provinces, Dien Bien and Quang Ngai, is likely to be limited. In Tra Vinh, however, plans are in place for the provincial budget to fund the successful PRRP activities. At the national level, mobilizing funding for capacity development in order to execute many good practices institutionalized in the NTP SPR will be a challenge.

*Factors to Ensure Sustainability and Replication*: Despite the manysuccessful achievements the main sustainability driver for the PRPP developments is funding at both the central and provincial levels. Now that Viet Nam has reached middle income country status the donor support for poverty reduction programs is much diminished and there much greater reliance upon the GoVN budget to fund the poverty activities.Main sustainability factors include: (i) institutionalisation of the PRPP TA-supported policies into the planning frameworks and annual plans is a critical factor and the PRPP has been successful in this regard*;* (ii)how well the new policies can be implemented and their suitability to address the poverty problems, and-therefore regular monitoring is required of NTP SPR implementation, especially over the first two years; and, (iii) capacity of the GoVN agencies to monitor and review policy impacts. The process of monitoring, and subsequent review, of the new policies are measures that will contribute to the sustainability of the new poverty policies.

*Replication and Scaling Up:* The challenge is for replication and scaling up of the most effective activities and results from the PRPP pilots into the wider NTP SPR and NTP New Rural Development (NTP NRD). There has been no substantive PRPP program to share these lessons and successes on a wider scale. The NTP SPR kick off process provides the first opportunity to promote best practice adoption and replication. But there will need to a regular program to support this across all the provinces. It is unlikely that MoLISA, CEMA and MARD will have the resources for a program to share the lessons and successes and replicate these in the two NTPs. Therefore any lessons application and replication program will need it be driven through a TA project.

**Lessons Learned**

**Policy changes cannot be taken place without direct engagement of the policy makers in a technical assistance course**. One determining factor that observed in all the important policy changes induced by the PRPP Project is an active engagement of line ministries who are the end users of the TA inputs.

**Poverty reduction policy coordination cannot take place without effective enforcement**. Lack of coordination or distant working relationship across different line ministries (and line departments in provinces) has been considered as long lasting weaknesses in the implementation of poverty reduction policies in Vietnam.

 **‘Having less is better than having more’:** Since the course of poverty reduction in Vietnam started in the earlier 1990s, Vietnam has translated in a plethora of policies and programs in poverty reduction and this caused issues and problems in terms of resource mobilization, coordination, and targeting. The PRPP Project has effectively supported the process of reviewing these policies and contributed considerably to rationalizing and mainstreaming poverty reduction policies so that the new programming for poverty reduction is now characterized by less but more coherent and well-coordinated (by design) policies

**Self-reliance is growing** and there has been an increasingly growing perception that self-reliance is important for sustainably poverty reduction. The recent ISNC contributes partly to this movement. In the new NTP SPRs, the community force account has been formalized (by a draft Decree of the GoVN, submitted by MPI), production support would take place in a ‘project modality’, which is a variant of block grant model (which is also institutionalized by a draft Decree of the GoVN, submitted by Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)) are the key mechanisms that reflect the spirit of the poor being self-reliant.

**Good practices have never been institutionalized as strongly as in the new phase of the poverty reduction policies but capacity on the ground is not yet ready**. It is important and encouraging to note that there have been many good practices in poverty reduction institutionalized and the PRPP project contributed significantly to that institutionalization. It is worrying to note that the capacity on the ground is not yet ready. Concerted efforts for capacity development at the local level is needed, otherwise such institutionalization would be an operational risk for the implementation of the NTPs.

**Being a Middle Income Country, Vietnam still depends on TA for poverty reduction policies**. Consultation of the EPE consultants indicated that most of PRPP TA was in line with the mandate of line ministries and it has been made clear that without PRPP TA, these activities needed to be done. However, interviewees from line ministries acknowledged that the TA support from PRPP make it possible to mobilize expertise (that is not usually available in-house). In fact, the PRPP project makes the mobilization of quality and independent technical input available, and more importantly justifiable. TA support was found by the EPE instrumental to ‘trigger’ policy changes.

**Partnership needs to be strengthened with action rather than dialogue only**. The PRPP project has developed diverse partnerships with a large number of the GoVN agencies, DPs and INGOs, and these partnerships were found to be useful for the Project. However, lessons should be learned from the partnership between UNDP and Irish Aid. If the NIM could have been modified for the PRPP Project to allow a deeper involvement of Irish Aid, there would have been more opportunities to capitalise on the expertise available among other partners, to build synergies with other work, to widen the Project’s sphere of influence and to ensure the strongest possible quality assurance. In this regard, it is noted that if the partnership is enhanced by joint action, it becomes more effective and instrumental for policy changes.

**Recommendations**

**For Poverty Reduction Programs**

1. Enhance the Governance role of the National Assembly Ethnic Council and the Council for Social Affairs in poverty program policy development and monitoring ;
2. Gender approach and activities in the poverty reduction programs must more directly target women and actively involve them in poverty reduction activities that lead to their social and economic empowerment;
3. New approaches to Livelihoods development are required in poverty reduction programs if sustainable poverty reduction outcomes and rural transformation are to be achieved;
4. Use of the new tools for targeting poverty must ensure that they recognise ethnic diversity and the different cultural features and social customs of the many ethnic groups;
5. Increase the emphasis upon building the self-reliance of rural communities including greater devolution for the use of poverty reduction investments;

**For Interventions to Support the NTPs**

1. UNDP to coordinate the design and implementation of a Technical Assistance Project to support the 2016-2020 cycle of poverty reduction programs, including the NTP SPR;

*Key Design Features of the New Project*

1. The new Technical Assistance Project should prioritise support for poverty reduction programs at the central level;
2. The new Technical Assistance Project’s scope of activities should be narrower than under PRPP and primarily be concentrated around the core poverty roles of MoLISA and CEMA;
3. Follow a Program approach and make greater use of Ministry staff to manage the new Project;

*Priority Poverty Reduction Program Development Tasks for the new Project*

1. On-going development of the Multi-Dimensional Poverty approach must be a high priority for further assistance provide by the new Project;
2. Dialogue with donors partners, (I)NGOs and national agencies must continue to be a feature and should be widened and deepened, with a focus on joint advocacy and action;
3. Utilise the Technical Assistance to build the Policy Development capacity in the Ministries;
4. Supporting the implementation of the NTP SPR 2016-2020 must be the initial priority for the new Technical Assistance Project;

*New Project Support for better NTP SPR 2016-2020 Results*

1. Prioritise the identification of the successful results and ensure that these are shared across whole NTP SPR , and that there is a program of technical support to assist their replications;
2. Make more effective use of the M&E system for program management and poverty targeting in the NTP SPR;
3. Support commune SEDPs as the basis for the planning of poverty reduction investments and activities;
4. Agricultural production livelihoods development should adopt and apply models that have been successful in Donor Partner and (I)NGO projects. There must also be include a much greater emphasis upon climate change adaption and risk management, safe use of agri-chemicals and better livestock waste management and sanitation;
5. Develop capacity of trainers in better training and learning methods at both the provincial and district levels;
6. Continue the community focused development initiated in the PRPP with the aim of building greater self-reliance and empowerment of the local communities;
7. Build upon the community communications program activities that were successfully used in the PRPP;
8. Much greater emphasis must be placed upon achieving Commune Investment Ownership for all the communes investment activities;
9. Only institute a Block Grant model where it enables the community a greater role in the decisions about their investment priorities;

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Some background

The End-of-Project Independent Evaluation (EPE) of the Poverty Reduction Policies and Programme (PRPP) project took place over August and September 2016. 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 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.

The PRPP project is intended to support the implementation of Resolution 80 and the NTP SPR towards the Government of Viet Nam (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 (SEDP) at central and local levels in order to effectively address chronic poverty and emerging forms of poverty.

Mid Term Evaluation (MTE) was conducted in 2014. The report emphasizes that PRPP 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. The MTE report concluded that all results can be deemed satisfactory at the midterm. The MTE also signalled some areas that attainment of outcomes was not certain at the midterm. These includes 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) (see MTE report, p.38).

## 1.2 Purpose of the report

This EPE of PRPP is made to, building on the previous MTE, measure and assess the project progress in achieving the project’s results, the relevance, efficiency, sustainability and impacts on the target beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as to, draw lessons learnt and recommendations for replicating and sustaining project’s results (thus enhancing the project’s sustainability and impacts) and informing future GoVN-UNDP-Development Partners (DP) cooperation on poverty reduction in the next programming cycle.

Specific objectives of this EPE include:

* To review key changes in the project context and issues the project set out to address and assess the relevance of the project;
* To review project’s progress in achieving its results both at provincial and central level and assess the project’s impacts/contributions to the relevant national development targets/One Plan Outcomes/ Outputs, along the line of a reasonable “theory of change”;
* To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the project in realizing its results and the sustainability of the results;
* To identify key lessons and make recommendations for the future GoVN-UNDP-DP cooperation in the area of poverty reduction in terms of the relevance and effectiveness of (i) capacity building support, technical assistance and policy advising, (ii) partnership and implementation strategy, including partnership with donors (iii) management arrangements and M&E, while addressing the cross cutting topics such as gender equity/equality, ethnic minority development and inclusion etc., taking into account recent developments and likely future scenarios related to sustainable poverty reduction and reducing inequality in Viet Nam.

## 1.3 A changing context

The poverty context of the country remains largely the same as that described in the MTE report. However, there are fundamental changes in terms of the policy context.

At the time of MTE, the context for the next programing for poverty reduction policies was at the reshaping stage, which is probably marked by the Resolution 76/2014/QH13 of the National Assembly (to which the PRPP contributed technical assistance) that sets the direction for reviewing and rationalizing poverty reduction policies and obligates the adaptation of MdP approach. This was then followed by line ministries reviewing the poverty reduction policies under their mandates and this process was enforced by Decision 2324/2014/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister on the implementation of the Resolution 76. Both the MdP Master Plan and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Acceleration Framework for Ethnic Minorities (MAF-EM) were under drafting with support from the PRPP project. These policy design initiatives have been taken place at the time of MTE and completed before EPE.

At the time of this EPE, there is very important progress in the design of the next programing for poverty reduction policies. Notably, Resolution 100/2015/QH13 of the National Assembly that approves the two NTPs and hence from a number of 16 NTPs in the 2011-2015 period, there is now only two NTPs on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR) and New Rural Development (NRD) in the 2016-2020 period. The MdP Master Plan was approved Decision 1614/2015/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister. The Decision 59/2015/QD-TTg operationalizes that Master Plan by having the multidimensional poverty line for 2016-2020 and this new poverty line has been opted for poverty assessment in 2015 in order to identify the poor and the new poor. The MAF-EM was approved by Decision 1557/2015/QD-TTg that set the development indicators and mainstream these indicators to the mandate of different line ministries.

Notably, the design of the NTPs is ready and awaiting for the approval. The design of the new NTPs, especially the NTP SPR 2016-2020 have embedded a number of good practices in poverty reduction experimented over the past two decades. Namely, planning of NTPs is mainstreamed to the SEDP the commune level; production support is now conditional on counterpart contribution and only possible to farmer groups; operations and maintenance (O&M) mechanism is now a part of any infrastructure investment; commune investment ownership and community procurement are among the key implementation arrangements of the NTP SPR. ‘Special investment mechanism’ that was experimented in the NTP NRD under Decision 498/2013/QD-TTg is now scaled up to both NTPs under a draft Decree of the Government on this ‘special investment mechanism’. Importantly, it is now possible that for one type of poverty reduction efforts under NTP SPR, there would be only one uniform guideline for implementation.

This new policy context for poverty reduction, which was partly shaped by TA from the PRPP project, has important implications for this EPE, especially the part of recommendations for future GOVN-UNDP-DP cooperation in the area of poverty reduction.

## 1.4 Scope and structure of the report

It is important to note that, according to the TOR, the EPE is not to evaluate the PRPP project from the start. Instead, this evaluation is supposed to build up from the previous MTE. Hence, the discussion on the project results (in Section 3) will largely highlight the progress in achieving the expected outcomes since the midterm. For the analysis of the findings under different evaluation criteria (see below), comparison to that of the MTE report will also be provided.

In pursuing this EPE, attribution of the project’s activities to the end results is difficult. Many of the PRPP project’s activities contribute to important policy changes but assessing the contribution of these activities in leading to these changes is sometimes difficult. The EPE team therefore adopted an approach that attempted to capture mainly first round (or direct) effects of the project, where the project’s contribution to change is demonstrable and clearly evident. When possible, second round effects were also partially captured by collecting credible stories of stakeholders, particularly of the direct beneficiaries of the activities, to make credible assessments of the project’s contribution to the outputs and outcomes under consideration.

The structure of the EPE report is outlined below. The next section describes methodology used for evaluation. It follows by an analysis of the project results under each of the project outcome, One Plan Outcomes, and some cross cutting issues such as gender, environment, and climate change. Section 4 provides a discussion on different evaluation criteria, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Lessons learned from this EPE were drawn in Section 5. Finally, recommendations are produced in Section 6.

# 2. Methodology

## 2.1 Evaluation Criteria

In order to meet these objectives the evaluation, an Evaluation Framework was developed.[[1]](#footnote-1) This Framework was then consulted with UNDP and other stakeholders. The Framework adopts four domains for the evaluation, including relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Within each of these evaluation criteria, the framework details key issues to be addressed; what to look for; data and information sources; data collection methods. In looking at the issues to addressed, a series of questions were developed which guided the work during the assessment process (see Appendix for details).

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.

## 2.2 Evaluation Methods

Methods used for this EPE is a combination of document review and intensive consultation with different PRPP stakeholders at all levels. At the beginning of the evaluation, the focus was placed on reviewing key documents made available by the PRPP project office, which included: project work plans, 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 other DPs; project field visit reports; various outputs and reports from each of the eight PRPP provinces. MTE report is apparently a key document for reviewing.

Consultation with stakeholders and beneficiaries was organized at both the national and sub-national levels. Regarding the national level, interviews were made with representatives from the National Assembly’s (NA) Committee for Social Affairs, Ethnic Council, and GoVN ministry representatives closely involved with the project. Interviews were also carried out with UNDP and Irish Aid as the two sponsors of PRPP, development partners in Hanoi, project staff at the PRPP NIP Office.

At the sub-national level, the evaluation team visited three of the eight PRPP pilot provinces. The selection of these provinces was discussed with UNDP and project staff using three criteria. First, as PRPP started first with 4 participating provinces in 2013 and the number was then expanded to 8 in 2014, it was agreed to visit both ‘old’ and ‘new’ provinces. Second, it was also useful to have a geographical spread of provinces, from the North, Centre and South. Finally, a subjective assessment was made of those provinces that were at different pace of performances during the project cycle. As a result, the three provinces were selected, including Dien Bien (in the North, started PRPP since 2013), Quang Ngai (in the Central, started PRPP since 2013), and Tra Vinh (in the South, started PRPP since 2014).

In each of these provinces, the evaluation team first worked with the PRPP project staff, interviewed line departments staff (Department of Finance (DoF), Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), and Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minorities (PCEM)) and representatives from other development projects (such as those of the World Bank in Dien Bien and Quang Ngai, IFAD in Tra Vinh). At the district level, the team also worked with the Vice Chairman of the DPC, line departments 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. The provincial visit was ended by a debriefing with the project staff to collect feedback on preliminary findings and a meeting with Vice Chairman of Provincial Peoples’ Committee (PPC) to highlight the outcomes, challenges, and directions for the future.

List of people interviewed is provided in Appendix 3.

## 2.3 Restraints for the Evaluation

The evaluation faced some restraints and the findings in this report should therefore be viewed in the light of these restraints.

It is noted that the PRPP project is highly complex and involves a large number of 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 at the national level to fattening cows and delivering agricultural training at the individual household level. The project has also generated a large volume of documents of different types. Hence, 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.

# 3. Project Results

Assessment of the achievement of the PRPP’s results is presented in this section. The focus of the assessment is upon the degree to which the Activity Results, their Indicators and Targets, as outlined in the PRPP Results and Resources Framework have been achieved. A detailed assessment of the progress towards achievement of the Activity Results was presented in the MTE and is not repeated in this EPE report. PRPP activities have also prepared many policy documents, reports and studies and only the most relevant and significant of these are referred in this section (see Appendix 2).

## 3.1 United Nations One Plan

Design of the PRRP was aimed to make a contribution to the achievement of the UN One Plan Outcome 1.1 and Output 1.1.3 as shown in Table 1 below. Outcome 1.1 is high level and the purpose of the three PRPP Outputs is to make a contribution to achieving the UN One Plan Outcome. Whereas Output 1.1.3 is more specific, and encompasses the application of MdP as part of the SEDP process at both central and local levels.

Table 1. Assessment of Contribution to One UN Plan

| **Indicators** | **EPE Assessment** |
| --- | --- |
| **Outcome 1.1**: By 2016 key national institutions formulate and monitor people-centered, green, and evidence based development policies to ensure quality of growth as middle level income country, and;**Output 1.1.3**: MdP 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 MdP approaches and methodologies  | **Overall assessment: satisfactory*** MdP approaches have been used in poverty monitoring: MdP Master Plan was approved; new MdP poverty line for 2016-2020 was in use; MoLISA annual poverty assessment 2016 using the new MdP poverty line;
* In terms of targeting, MdP new poverty assessment has started to be used for targeting, especially under the new NTP SPR 2016-2020
 |
| **Indicator 2**: Degree to which GoVN poverty reduction policies are specifically designed to target chronic and emerging forms of poverty | **Overall assessment: satisfactory*** MdP Master Plan was approved; MoLISA annual poverty assessment 2016 using the new MdP poverty line; poverty reduction policies/programmes (e.g. NTP SPR 2016-2020) adapt MdP approaches to address multifaceted poverty;
* MAF-EM was approved by the PM and now piloted in the three provinces with PRPP support. Accelerating MDGs for ethnic minorities as the most persistently poor is institutionalized to the mandate of line ministries;
* Some challenges for the coming years for GoVN poverty reduction policies: (i) Urban poverty; (ii) increasing vulnerability of the poor under climate change; (iii) architecture of poverty reduction policy after 2020.
 |

## 3.2 Output 1: Policies Streamlined into Ministry Work plans

This output 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’. EPE assessment of each of the targets under this Output 1 is summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Assessment of Targets under Output 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output Targets** | **EPE Assessment** |
| **Target 1**: Action plan for implementation of Resolution 80 approved, implemented and monitored. Results reviewed, lessons learned consolidated & documented. | **Overall assessment: Highly Satisfactory*** Decision No. 1200/QD-TTg is the basis of the action plan for implementation of Resolution 80. This implementation was subject to a MTR of the NTP SPR in 2014;
* NA’s Supreme Oversight 2014 reviewed the implementation of Resolution 80, NTP SPR, and other policies on poverty reduction.
* Issues and lesson learnt (as the product of the MTR of NTP SPR, NA’s Supreme Oversight etc.) were widely shared to the GoVN agencies and development partners. This contributes to a background for designing poverty reduction policies (including NTP SPR) for 2016-2020 and afterward.
 |
| **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. | **Overall assessment: Highly Satisfactory*** MTR of NTP SPR, NA’s Supreme Oversight 2014 on poverty reduction policies, NA’s Supreme Oversight 2014 on the usage of forestry land etc. are important reviews of current poverty reduction policies;
* Line ministries (MoLISA, CEMA, Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Ministry of Health (MoH)…) were also supported by PRPP to review policies related to poverty reduction;
* Numbers of NTPs were rationalized from 16 to 2 NTPs for 2016-2020; other NTPs were restructured into the mandate of line ministries;
* Accelerating MDGs for ethnic minorities is institutionalized into the mandate of line ministries;
 |
| **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; | **Overall assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** Issues of rationalizing, mainstreaming poverty reduction policies were while discussed and actions were taken especially in the design of the new poverty reduction policies after 2015.
* Many policies and NTPs were streamlined to the mandate of line ministries (as above) but budget mobilization remains a challenge. For instance, Decision 1557/2015 for MAF-EM to be streamlined into the plans and frameworks of line ministries but whether this has been translated into the utilization of regular budget is not evident;
* Under NTP SPR 2016-2020, projects and subprojects are streamlined to line ministries (e.g. MARD is responsible for all production support activities across projects of NTP SPR);
 |
| **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 (2013-2016). | **Overall assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** PRCO (under 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;
* PRPP has supported several policy forum, conferences, workshops, technical meetings to discuss, disseminate, and facilitate cooperation across different GoVN agencies and DPs in reviewing and mainstreaming poverty reduction policies;
* There has been an increasing cooperation and coordination across different GoVN and DPs for updating and designing the new phase of poverty reduction policies. But a formal network for information dissemination and cooperation envisaged under this target has yet to be established.
 |
| **Target 5**: A suitable process, procedure for reviewing, evaluating, mainstreaming poverty reduction policies into regular plans, budgets and policy framework of line ministries introduced and applied by line ministries. | **Overall assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** Poverty Reduction Coordination Office (PRCO) (under MoLISA) has taken a lead role in coordinating the policy review activities and the design of a new phase of poverty reduction policies;
* An updated Decision in replacement for Decision 135/2009 has provided a background for implementation mechanisms of NTPs. The updated decision has a section on monitoring and evaluation of the NTPs;
* It has remained unclear whether there has been a formal process as expected under this target.
 |
| **Target 6**: Poverty reduction policies are: (i) updated and revised; (ii) new approaches are applied in order to support accelerated poverty reduction in most disadvantaged and ethnic minority areas, and; (iii) mainstreamed into the regular plans, budgets and policy framework of line ministries. | **Overall assessment: Highly satisfactory*** By the end of 2015, the GoVN agencies have completed the process of reviewing poverty reduction policies and a background for new programming of poverty reduction was ready for designing the next phase of poverty reduction polies;
* New approaches are applied (such as MdP) or piloted (such as anthropology-based approach in poverty reduction for ethnic minorities; MAF-EM for accelerating MDGs for ethnic minority areas); good practices in poverty reduction such as block grant, participatory planning, community force account… were institutionalized into the new NTPs;
* 14 NTPs in 2011-2015 were streamlined to the mandate of line ministries; MAF-EM is also institutionalized to regular plans and policy framework of line ministries.
 |

## 3.3 Output 2: NTP SPR designed and implemented

Under this output, 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 EPE assessment is reported below.

Table 3. Assessment of Targets under Output 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output Targets** | **EPE Assessment** |
| **Target 1**: The Program Document and guidelines for implementation and management of the Program is developed and updated with participation of development partners and people, based on results of evidence based studies and experiences/lessons learned from the P 135-II and NTP-PR 2005 – 2010. | **Overall Assessment: Satisfactory*** Studies to review P135 II, NTP SPR 2005-201, and other related studies completed with a number of lesson learned and good practices. But influence upon NTP SPR 2012-2015 less than initially planned. MTE recommended to concentrate upon the NTP SPR for 2016-2020 and this recommendation has been followed.
* Design of NTP SPR for the 2016-2020 cycle is a major PRPP output and features improved harmonization and coordination across the line ministries concerned. Coordination between MoLISA, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural development (MARD) and CEMA in the preparation is a notable success feature. Many lesson learned and good practices are institutionalized in the new NTP SPR design (participatory planning, community force account, block grant for livelihood support, creating jobs through construction work of infrastructures etc.)
* Active participation of DPs invited by PRPP in formulation of the new NTP SPR and its underpinning policies is a positive partnership feature.
 |
| **Target 2**: NTP SPR’s participatory, gender and ethnic minority sensitive M&E system developed. | **Overall Assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** Gender and ethnic minority sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system developed; a Result Framework was also in place to support the pursuit of the M&E system. But M&E data use for implementation management is rather limited, including use for ethnic minority and gender for gender targeting Capacity to exercise M&E good practices for NTP SPR remains low.
* Successful models and good practices documented and presented at different policy dialogue and dissemination events but dissemination needs to be much wider. At the same time, more lessons from other projects should also be taken into account.
 |
| **Target 3**: Block grant model is introduced to selected provinces in 2012-2013 and replicated in close harmonization with the local social economic development plans in order to accelerate poverty reduction in the program area | **Overall Assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** Block grant modality developed based on study and implemented in the pilot provinces. Livelihood block grant models were experimented in practices. These models themselves are satisfactory in provision of technical training and other support. But these models have provided limited community decision making opportunities over investment fund use and been mechanistic. This is not the conventional block grant model and contributes little to encourage community decision making and empowerment;
* The block grant model piloted in PRPP has produced limited replication, partially due to resource constraint. But block grant was widely discussed in the designing of the new phase for poverty reduction policies. The new NTP SPR has institutionalized the block grant model by envisaging the production support through ‘project modality’ which is closely related to block grant. This is attributed more to the PRPP Technical Assistance (TA) at the central level for designing of the new NTP SPR rather than success of the pilot models on the ground.
 |
| **Target 4**: Successful models are identified, piloted, evaluated, adjusted and replicated and include: (i) promoting empowerment and participation of local authorities in the formulation implementation and management of program in local areas, (ii) reviewing target people at household and commune level (iii) application of anthropological approaches, (iv) strengthened accessibility and linkage to market, gender quality, environmental sustainability and MdP approaches (v) creation of jobs for local people through NTP SPR construction work | **Overall Assessment: Less than Satisfactory*** Livelihoods models have been implemented. Implementation arrangements were in terms of technical training, formulation of common interest groups, and provision of inputs. Certain levels of participation were also observed in practice; counterpart contribution was also required. At places, there were examples of integrating with other resources (e.g. PRPP provided technical training and parts of input on the top of the resources that provided inputs…). However, these models demonstrate limited innovation and have not actively promoted market and private sector linkages. These models have limited scope and are deemed ineffective in adequately addressing cross cutting issues especially women’s livelihoods and climate change adaption;
* Commune participation in planning and implementation varied and was a feature in some provinces, and less so in others. Several pilot communes had an overlap with other projects where commune participatory planning had been practiced and enhanced management capacity successfully developed. Commune SEDP were successfully initiated in Dien Bien and Tra Vinh in combination with other projects. Some communes gained experience in the use of block grant model;
* Some documentation of successful livelihood models experimented under other programmes and projects prepared, and shared at workshops at both national and sub-national levels. But replication of these models remains limited;
* Program of anthropological training implemented at the national level at CEMA but this training was not provided at the sub-national level yet and hence it has a quite limited application in pilot provinces;
* Creation of jobs for local people through NTP SPR was not materialized as strongly as expected partly due to limited application of community force account modality. This is however institutionalized in the new NTP SPR as one of the objective in infrastructure development and the recent draft Decree of the GoVN on special investment mechanism lays a ground for usage of this community force account.
 |
| **Target 5**: Local levels (in project locations) equipped with adequate knowledge and skills.  | **Overall Assessment: Highly Satisfactory*** Capacity development through TOT successfully completed, with a core group of trainers in place. Subsequent training courses in key topics delivered for provincial, district and commune staff and farmers;
* Community development and communications methods successfully applied. Poverty reduction festivals, policy forums and community workshops all contributed to increased awareness and increased community participation in poverty reduction activities, thereby contributing to increased empowerment;
* Commune SEDPs with community participation successful in some pilot provinces, and their use widened to include all communes (such as in Tra Vinh province);
* Piloting the use of MdP for better poverty targeting in Tra Vinh is highly commendable, as is the use of the MAP-EM (Decision 1557) – initial results are yet materialized in this early stage but expected to be positive.
 |
| **Target 6**: Promotion of social movement for greater self-reliance, rural development and poverty reduction (ISNC) | **Overall Assessment: Satisfactory** * Effect is integrated across all three Outputs and shown in approach to building greater self-reliance in livelihoods models e.g. farmers’ investment contribution, community participatory planning and the commune SEDPs;
* Issues of self-reliance has been widely discussed in policy dialogue at various level of both GoVN agencies and DPs. Self-reliance is also promoted in the new design of the NTP SPR and NTP NRD (e.g participatory planning, beneficiary’s counterpart funding in certain activities…);
* Many activities are ongoing (i.e. finalization of curriculum for ISNC training, conduct of training at the local level etc.)
 |

## 3.4 Output 3: Monitoring and Analysis of Multidimensional Poverty

This output envisages 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”.

Table 4. Assessment of Targets under Output 3

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Output Targets** | **EPE Assessment** |
| **Target 1**: MdP approach in formulating poverty reduction policies is (i) introduced and widely publicized by researchers and policy makers at all levels and related National Assembly members; and (ii) used in the unified framework for monitoring poverty and vulnerability.  | **Overall assessment: Highly Satisfactory*** MdP Master Plan was approved; poverty line for 2016-2020 is multidimensional following the MdP Master Plan and operationalized to poverty assessment 2016 as the key for poverty monitoring and targeting;
* Reducing multidimensional poverty (rather than unidimensional) is now the target of poverty reduction policies, including NTP SPR;
* MdP has been widely introduced to researchers and policy makers (including NA members), and publicized by forums, conferences, workshops, study tours, and research reports.
 |
| **Target 2**: Harmonized framework for poverty monitoring, measurement, targeting to support poverty and vulnerability reduction policies making with the application of a MdP approach is in place, including: (i) RIM is improved and regularly implemented and institutionalized; (ii) VHLSS is improved and provides better data in terms of MdP | **Overall assessment: Highly satisfactory*** MdP Master Plan is now the framework for poverty measurement, monitoring and targeting, applied nationwide;
* A framework for monitoring and evaluation of NTPs is also established under the recent Decision 41/2016 of the Prime Minister in replacement for Decision 135/2009. M&E framework under the two NTPs was also in place (shortly after the approval of the new NTPs); for the new NTP SPR, a circular on M&E was drafted and ready for approval.
* Rapid Impact Monitoring system (RIM)has not been completed annually over the past few years, but has now been housed in Institute for Labour Science and Social Affairs(ILSSA)/MoLISA. Rapid Impact monitoring (RIM) has become an important part of the GoVN’s monitoring system for social policies from 2015 onwards;
* A pilot module to measure multidimensional poverty was introduced in Viet Nam Household Living Social Surveys (VHLSS) 2014 and the survey provided sufficient information to measure MdP. This module continued to be used for the next rounds of VHLSSs in order to inform MdP monitoring
 |
| **Target 3**: Reports on poverty and vulnerability analysis with the application of MdP approach are periodically developed (at least every two years); institutionalized and contribute to discussions, policy dialogues and development, and adjustment of poverty reduction policies.  | **Overall assessment: Moderately Satisfactory*** As the MdP Master Plan was approved in Sept 2015, there has been little time for implementation of the activities under this Target but there have been important achievements;
* As per MdP Master Plan, MoLISA has publicized the first baseline multidimensional poverty assessment and plans to do this every two years; Government Statistics Office (GSO) has revised VHLSS series to include the MdP module in 2014, this will provide information for poverty analysis using MdP approaches;
* An increasing numbers of poverty assessment and studies have adopted MdP approaches as the analytical framework, including studies supported by PRPP;
 |
| **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 | **Overall assessment: Satisfactory*** High-level policy forum on poverty reduction for ethnic minorities were co-chaired by NA’s Ethnic Council, CEMA, MoLISA, UNDP to address key challenges of poverty reduction for ethnic minorities;
* Contribution to the Ethnic Minority Poverty Working Group (EMPWG), which 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;
* Numbers of conferences, technical workshops at the national and sub-national levels were organized, especially for the designing of poverty reduction policies in the 2016-2020 period (including NTP SPR, Program 135 as part of NTP SPR, and NTP NRD…).
 |
| **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). | **Overall assessment: Less than satisfactory*** Coordination was made mainly through dialogue within EMPWG and other events organized or supported by PRPP; some additional resources were mobilized to provide additional support for the implementation of Resolution 80 (such as Oxfam for MTR of NTP SPR; FAO and Oxfam for some policy review, etc.). But the level of resources mobilized is relatively limited compared to the expectation;
* An opportunity was missed to involve Irish Aid in a more meaningful manner, in order to capitalize on available expertise, build synergies and ensure the strongest possible quality assurance for the Project;
* There are DP-supported projects in the PRPP provinces but coordination on the ground has been relatively poor (with exception of Tra Vinh where PRPP has worked well with an IFAD-supported project in the province).
 |

## 3.5 Cross Cutting Issues

### 3.5.1 Gender

Ensuring greater participation in the design, implementation, management and monitoring of poverty reduction policies and programs mentioned in the PRPP Project Document as one of the three main challenges to the implementation of Resolution 80. The other two are equity of access for women to services and support from poverty programs, and ensure that the poverty reduction programs are able to gather gender disaggregated information for use in program management. It is recognised that poor rural women, especially ethnic minority women, are disproportionately represented in poverty statistics. Their access to resources and to services is limited and low literacy levels are a common feature.

Mainstreaming of gender into policies, program and development projects is the approach followed in the PRPP, and this is consistent with the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020. The mainstreaming approach is reinforced through the three PRPP Outputs. PRPP Indicators and targets, however, have few specific gender measures: Indicator 2.1 is one and states “promoting gender equity”. In the 2016 Annual Work Plan there a limited number of women specific measures that include: Indicator 1.5 – number of people (men, women and ethnic minorities) consulted…; Targets 2.1 and 2.2 – gender mainstreaming, and; Activities 2.3.01 Ethnic minority women empowerment, and 2.3.07 strengthen and maintain women self-help models. At the policy level, there has been important achievement. Notably, the PRPP-supported Result Framework for the NTP SPR develops indicators disaggregated according to gender, poverty status, and ethnicity and this Framework has been modified for the new NTP SPR to serve as a backbone of its M&E system. Women are also specified as priority groups in the new design of the NTP SPR and the draft circulars and guidelines for implementation of the new NTP SPR 2016-2020 reflects this priority.

At the activity level, gender disaggregated data in the 2013, 2014 and 2015 PRPP Annual Reports shows that women have been involved in some PRPP activities. However, this gender disaggregated data is almost exclusively about training courses and shows that in most cases the attendance of women at training is under 40% of total participants. There is little gender disaggregated data about other activities e.g. livelihood pilots and this makes it difficult to assess if the PRPP has in fact followed a gender mainstreaming approach. During field visits to Dien Bien, Quang Ngai and Tra Vinh provinces the EPE team was informed about several successful activities that were targeted at women but these were mainly training activities. Although the 2015 Annual Report states that: “19,916 women benefited from enhanced income opportunities and better engagement in social economic activities in the community” there is limited evidence sighted by the EPE to substantiate the degree of economic and social benefits. In addition, the EPE’s concern is that there is no evaluation of how women have benefited from the PRPP activities and the gender mainstreaming approach that has been followed.

### 3.5.2 Human Rights

PRRP activities have ensured that human rights have been well addressed and there has contributed to increased beneficiary inclusion, more equitable access to project resources and that all community members have been involved in community planning and decision making. Several policies and instruments have also been developed that ensure human rights principles are well applied. PRPP has also facilitated the use of commune-level SEDPs that has provided the opportunity for all community members to be involved in commune planning and decisions over the use of resources. The PRPP’s communications program activities have also enhanced human rights through a number of poverty reduction policy forum and associated communications activities. These policies and instruments developed form the basis for the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

The most significant of these are: MdP approach that enables poverty to be measured according to income and access to social services as well as assisting to better poverty targeting; and MAF-EM represents an important step in accelerating MDG achievement for the most vulnerable ethnic minorities. PRPP’s assistance to the NA’s Committee for Social Affairs and Ethnic Council are probably the best illustrations of how the Project has contributed to human rights. The project support for the NA’s Committee for Social Affairs has enabled the Committee for Social Affairs members to undertake the Supreme Oversight of poverty reduction policies programs that have led to the preparation of Resolution 76. The NA’s Ethnic Council’s Supreme Oversight report on land use has resulted in the Resolution 112 that has enhanced ethnic minority rights associated with land including improving access to land for poor people.

### 3.5.3 Environment and Climate Change

Environmental sustainability of the NTP SPR production models is an issues covered by Output 2. This is significant as environmental issues associated with agricultural production are coming under increased scrutiny in many rural development projects. Safe use of agri-chemicals on food crops has become a prominent concern for general public, as has the use of better livestock waste management techniques. Livestock training in Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai was reported to have included waste management techniques. These included the use of cattle manure for crop production. PRPP livelihood models in Dien Bien included worm farms and the feeding of the worms to poultry that lived under the beneficiaries’ houses, or in nearby shelters. In this case the promotion of the worm farm and associated poultry model pilot is not a good demonstration of better environmental practice: poultry intensification close to houses has a public health risk. The PRPP livelihoods pilots had a high proportion of cattle, and the EPE assessment that the opportunity for the project to demonstrate better environment management was not fully capitalised upon.

Climate events, especially drought and high intensity storms, are increasing in their severity and influencing small holder production and viability. Farmers in the Northern Mountains are influenced by both cold storms and drought, while in the Centre and South of the country droughts are becoming a major problem. Building the resilience of small holder farming systems to climate risks is a major challenge, and poor smallholders are the most vulnerable to the vagaries of climate change. Tra Vinh has had access to the International Fund for Agricultural development (IFAD) project experience in farmer climate change adaption, but has not fully utilised this opportunity for farmer training. In the other pilot provinces climate change adaption training has been limited. The EPE comment is that given the high vulnerability of the poor small holders to climate change the pilots should have had a much increased emphasis upon climate change adaption training. The experience of the climate change adaption training could then have been utilised in the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

## 3.6 Summary of Project Results

PRPP has experienced an overall satisfactory performance. Out of 16 targets of the projects, 15 of these targets are successfully achieved. For the two remaining targets, some significant progress has been made but the Project has not been able to obtain the expected level of performance. It should be noted that the progress between the MTE and this EPE is particularly impressive. As indicated in Table 5, out of nine targets assessed as Yellow (i.e. some progress but an uncertain attainment of the target) at the MTE were turned into Green (good progress and completion of the target) at this EPE. The two targets assessed Green/Yellow (which was marked by the light green circle below) were turned into Green. With such impressive progress, the PRPP Project has moderately successfully contributed to implementation of the Resolution 80 and NTP SPR 2012-2015. The Project has contributed greatly to the process of reviewing and rationalizing poverty reduction policies in the country and most notably, laid a sound programming platform for poverty reduction after 2015.

Table 5. Progress in Achieving Results and Resources Framework Target Results

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Output 1** | **Output 2** | **Output 3** |
| **Target** | **MTE** | **EPE** | **Target** | **MTE** | **EPE** | **Target** | **MTE** | **EPE** |
| 1 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 1 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 1 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon |
| 2 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 2 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 2 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon |
| 3 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 3 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 3 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon |
| 4 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 4 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | 4 | Trafficlight-green-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon |
| 5 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 5 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 5 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-yellow-icon |
| 6 | Trafficlight-yellow-icon | Trafficlight-green-icon | 6 |  | Trafficlight-green-icon |  |  |  |

Note: (i) at the time of MTE, target 6 of Output 2 (which relates to ISNC was not included); (ii) Target 2 of Output 1 and Target 1 of Output 2 were rated by MTE as between Green and Yellow and hence higlighted as light green in this table.

# 4. Main Findings

Evaluation of the TA using the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) evaluation criteria of Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, and Sustainability is presented in this section. It is too early to assess the other DAC criteria Impact.

## 4.1 Relevance

### 4.1.1 Relevance at the national level

PRPP is perceived as highly relevant at the national level. This **high relevance** is reflected in the following aspects:

*Supporting the Action Plan to support Resolution 80 and reviewing poverty reduction policies for rationalizing and mainstreaming is highly relevant for PRPP*. After two decades since the early 1990, there has been a plethora of policies and programs on poverty reduction, and this has been an increasingly problematic issue that caused fragmentation and overlaps of different poverty reduction policies. In this context, Resolution 80 has been arguably the most significant background for rationalizing efforts on poverty reduction by setting the directions for poverty reduction policies by 2020. The process of reviewing and rationalizing poverty reduction policies is a resultant consequence of Resolution 80. By supporting this process, the PRPP Project has contributed to what is probably most needed over the past five years in terms of poverty reduction policy making.

*Support the implementation of NTP SPR (guidelines, pilot innovative models and replication, capacity development for implementation at the local levels) is also a relevant focus of the PRPP Project*. The NTP SPR 2012-2015 was the largest poverty reduction instrument of the GoVN in its time. The NTP started in a context that DPs have scaled down substantially their financial support for poverty reduction. As a result, through many DPs remained interested and some committed to continuing the support for poverty reduction agenda of the GoVN, the PRPP Project has been the only significant TA for the NTP SPR 2012-2015. This TA has proved to be important and instrumental for many key policy changes (as discussed in Section 3).

*High relevance of the PRPP Project is also reflected in its support for raising awareness and advocacy for MdP approaches, development of the MdP Master Plan*. It has been widely recognized that after two decades of poverty reduction, poverty has become more multifaceted and other non-income aspects of living standards increasingly important. MdP approaches appeared to be a strategic option in that context. When the PRPP Project started its support on MdP, awareness of MdP was limited in less than a dozen studies using the MdP approach in analysing poverty in Vietnam. A number of conferences, technical workshops, study tours etc were made in the early stage before the TA was made to a technical task force to develop the MdP Master Plan. The EPE consultants considered this as a masterpiece of PRPP in its course.

*Strengthening the roles of the key GoVN agencies, including MoLISA (PRCO) and CEMA; coordination across GoVN agencies, dialogue between GoVN and DPs are among the aspects that are highly relevant for the PRPP Project*. Resolution 80 envisages the coordination role of poverty reduction to MoLISA while CEMA remains the ‘owner’ and implementing agency of poverty reduction for ethnic minorities. Hence, most of the TA support of the PRPP has been allocated to these two agencies (in particular, PRCO of MoLISA, Department of Ethnic Minority Policies of CEMA. The PRPP has supported several policy dialogues at different levels to bring NA’s committees, line ministries and DPs together in brainstorming and discussions, especially those related to reviewing poverty reduction policies, MdP, and the design of new programing for poverty reduction in the country.

*Last but not least, supporting the design of the new phase of poverty reduction policies, mainly the NTP SPR (design and implementation guidelines), is extremely relevant for the PRPP Project*. It should be noted that supporting the design of NTP SPR was not included in the original Results and Resources Framework of the Project. This was recommended after the MTE when the need of TA for designing a new phase of poverty reduction policies to capitalise good practices and lessons learned in poverty reduction over the past two decade was identified. This recommendation was well taken and as a result, the new NTP SPR 2016-2020 exhibits a sound design that institutionalizes many good practices, including e.g. participatory planning, block grants, commune investment ownership, community force account, result-based M&E, operation and maintenance.

### 4.1.2 Relevance at the sub-national level

Relevance at the national level is however less clear. The Project is **highly relevant** at the sub-national level in the following aspects:

*Piloting innovative models as to support the implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015 is a relevant direction to pursue*. In this regards, a number of livelihoods models (that were said to be a block grant modality), policy forums, poverty reduction festivals were piloted in the eight PRPP provinces. More importantly, the Project has tried to facilitate the coordination across different line departments, especially between DoLISA and PCEM, DARD, in the implementation of the NTP SPR. Though the results and effectiveness of these efforts vary, as discussed in Section 3 and further highlighted in Subsection 4.4 below), experiences and lessons learned from these pilots have been useful, both in terms of implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015 and policy dialogue for the new phase of poverty reduction policies.

*The PRPP provinces have contributed to the project results* in at least two important ways. First, new approaches and mechanisms planned at the central level were then experimented. MdP approach in poverty assessment was piloted in PRPP provinces before being finalized to be used for the first poverty assessment using MdP; MAF-EM has been piloted in three PRPP. In addition, many experiments in the PRPP provinces were then discussed at the national-level policy dialogue (and this has been strengthened after the MTE’s recommendation to re-inforce the link between the PRPP activities at the provincial level to the national policy making). The livelihoods models (that is supposed to reflect block grant modality), policy forums, poverty reduction festivals were among the models that have been widely shared at the national-level policy discussions. The development of this link between the central and provincial level in piloting and learning from new ideas, models makes the PRPP Project relevant in its support for the eight provinces.

*Provision of capacity building at the local level, especially toward commune investment ownership (CIO), participatory socio-economic development planning-SEDP, communications skills is another area where the PRPP Project shows its high relevance*. Capacity building on these aspects is important to ensure the effective implementation of poverty reduction policies, including the NTP SPR on the ground. In the second half of the Project, an Inclusive and Sustainable New Communities (ISNC) that is inspired by the Korean Samaeul Undong and represents another boost for local capacity development. Though the experiment if ISNC has remained largely at the central level (for policy dialogue, design of the new NTPs, curriculum development for ISNC training etc.), this represents an important step toward the spirit of community mobilization, self-help, and self-reliant, which would finally foster capacity development for communities.

However, the Project’s relevance at the sub-national level is less clear in the following areas:

*There has been a lack of arrangements for scaling up/replicating the livelihood models*. Being a TA project, there has been a difficult especially at the provincial level to understand this modality in the first half of the project cycle and considered it different from an investment resource for poverty reduction. The nature of the TA project was better perceived in the second half of the PRPP and hence it was generally understood that the PRPP support to innovative models is to try with new ideas and mechanisms for replication. However, there is little evidence to the EPE team that livelihood models (as one of the key activity of the project in the eight provinces) have been replicated or institutionalized at the local level. In addition, the potential for replicating these innovative models does not seem to be promising given the level of innovation is rather limited. Other models such as policy forums, and poverty reduction festivals, exhibited a better level of institutionalization. Hence, the relevance of livelihoods models – as the way these were implemented in practice – is questionable.

In addition, the PRPP coverage is relatively large for the nature of this TA project – where most of key activities (and in fact, achievements) are at the central level casts a doubt on its relevance at the provincial level. Looking at the summary of the project results highlighted earlier, it is reasonable to argue that the most significant results of the project were the outcomes of the PRPP TA at the central level and these outcomes would be a likely without activities on the ground. This wide coverage might be partially justified by the fact that activities in the provincial level are on the Output 2, which is to support the implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015 (and this is highly relevant for the project to support). However, one pitfall behind the relevance of this support at the provincial level is investment into livelihood models. It should also be noted that the context of the NTP SPR 2012-2015 was characterized by Vietnam having a ‘spaghetti bowl’ of programmes and policies and hence supporting the implementation of the NTP is not easy task. This might become even more complex given there were different guidelines (developed by the agencies who ‘own’ the NTP or (subcomponents of it) across activities of the NTP SPR. Hence, the project had a complex and difficult task for supporting the implementation of the NTP SPR on the ground.

## 4.2 Effectiveness

PRPP effectiveness is assessed as high for the national level activities, Outputs 1 and 3, and part of Output 2. Overall effectiveness of the Output 2 activities in the provinces varies considerably and is assessed as moderate.

### 4.2.1 Achievement of Outcomes

The high effectiveness rating given to the national level activities is due to the number of significant policies and associated regulations that the PRPP has contributed to developing. These policies have been featured elsewhere in this report and the most significant of these are Resolution 76, Resolution 112 of the National Assembly, approval of the MdP Master Plan and MAF-EM, the approval of new NTP SPR for 2016-2020 (and the draft versions of implementation guidelines) with a number of best practices institutionalized. While the preparation of these various policies and associated documents is quite an achievement it needs to be tempered by the fact that several of the policies have yet to fully applied.

**Output 1 Effectiveness:**  Mainstreaming of policies into the plans and policy frameworks of the line ministries has been effectively achieved. Under this Output 1, the Decision No. 1200/QD-TTg is the basis of the action plan for implementation of the Resolution 80, which was subject to a MTR of the NTP SPR in 2014 (with many parts of the MTR was the result of independent evaluation supported by the PRPP). Perhaps, the most important achievement under this output is the review of the plethora of poverty reduction policies and programmes, which was marked by the NA’s Resolution 76 – a result from the PRPP’s TA support. Subsequently, line ministries have conducted reviews of the poverty reduction policies (or parts of these policies) that occur under their mandates. There was a growing consensus in these years that the number of NTPs need to be rationalized and many NTPs are in fact the mandates of line ministries and should be streamlined (back) into their state management responsibilities rather than using the NTP mechanism to implement parts of their mandates.

Under this Output 1, it was apparent to the EPE consultants that PRCO has gained an increased visibility and influence as a coordination agency for poverty reduction in the country. It seems that the advisory and coordination role of MoLISA in general and that of PRCO in particular has been growing along the process of designing the new phase of poverty reduction policies, especially the NTP SPR 2016-2020. Regarding the role of CEMA in the field of poverty reduction for ethnic minorities, the milestone is probably the approval of the MAF-EM and step-by-step adaptation of the anthropology-based approach. The high level policy forum (under Output 3) also contributed to strengthening the advisory role of CEMA. However, it does not seem that CEMA has made a great advance in its advisory role in the courses of reviewing the poverty reduction policies, as well as in designing the new phase for these policies.

There has been one unfinished note in terms of mainstreaming poverty reduction policies (including some NTPs) into the mandates of line ministries. This is about how the policy reduction policies have been mainstreamed into the regular budgets and plans of line ministries. What is known is that many policies (and NTPs) were mainstreamed but how has that mainstreaming been translated into changes on regular budgets and plans of the line ministries remains an issue that needs further discussion. The case of MAF-EM is an example. According to the Decision 1557, the ministries concerned have to incorporate target indicators for achieving MDG for ethnic minorities into their plans. But how this has resulted in changes in their regular plans and budgets needs further study – which is unfortunately beyond the scope of this EPE.

**Output 2 Effectiveness:** Attributing any NTP SPR 2012-2015 results due to the PRPP support is difficult to assess. The NTP SPR is such a large program spread over many provinces and PRPP provided support aimed at improving the overall implementation performance. The PRPP contribution to the NTP SPR 2012-2015 was around implementation documents guidelines, development of the Gender and Ethnic Minority sensitive results framework and recommendations to support implementation capacity. Since the MTE there has been a greater emphasis upon the design and the formulation of instructions and guidelines for the implementation of NTP SPR 2016-2020. PRPP’s role in the preparation of the NTP-SPR 2016-2020 has been significant and is assessed by the EPE as a very satisfactory contribution. While policies and documents to provide the platform for NTP SPR 2016-2020 have been prepared the effectiveness of these policies will only be able to be evaluated after the new NTP’s implementation has commenced.

Output Activity 2 is also difficult to assess. The new M&E system has been developed but it has not been effectively used for better poverty reduction program targeting, and program management. The PRPP has not used gender sensitive data for better poverty monitoring and activities designed to target poor and vulnerable women. Moreover the complementary M&E tools e.g. citizen report cards have not been developed for use in better poverty targeting.

Provincial level activities in the pilot provinces have been assessed as moderately effective. The main reason for this is that some of the activities have failed to achieve the Output 2 targets. In contrast some of the Output 2 activities have a high level of achievement exceeding the targets. High level results have been in the Output 2 Activity 5 that has built the capacity for program implementation and management. Training capacity has been developed and applied leading to successful trainee learning in training courses. The suite of community development, awareness and commune planning activities have also delivered useful results. These have been most successful in Tra Vinh province where awareness activities have been expanded. It is also significant in Tra Vinh that commune SEDP will be applied in all the province’s communes. This is a successful and significant result that has lessons at the national level.

Output 2 activities that have less than effective results are the Activity 3 Block Grants and Activity 4 Innovative Modalities. The PRPP has developed a Block Grant method that in the EPE’s assessment does not include the elements associated with a Block Grant aim at promoting empowerment and participation. The Block Grants have been applied in the PRPP following the project’s regulations. Their use has provided little opportunity for the commune members to participate in decision making over how the allocated investment funds will be used. Block Grants in the PRPP have also contributed little to the devolution of financial responsibility to the communes. For these reasons the Block Grant activity is assessed as being less than satisfactory.

Use of innovative modalities that build upon best practice in other programs and projects that can be subsequently replicated in other locations is the stated objective of Activity 3. Although the project document does not explicitly say livelihoods models, as the innovative modality, all the pilot provinces have made extensive use of the PRPP funds to invest in livelihood activities. Unfortunately the implemented livelihood models demonstrate limited innovations, and fail to incorporate best practice from other projects. In both Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai provinces, the PRPP had the opportunity to access best practice models from International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and a major Australian funded project respectively. In both of these provinces these two projects also featured the use of community participative planning for decision making over the livelihoods development. PRRP has used the Commune SEDP method in Tra Vinh, but not in Quang Ngai. Thus the innovative modality activity has not fully taken the opportunity to implement and gain experience with innovative livelihood models. Therefore it is rated as less than satisfactory.

**Output 3 Effectiveness:** This output has the development and implementation of the MdP approach to poverty as its objective. Even though the application of the MdP approach is still in its initial stages the EPE assessment is that is a highly effective. With the MdP Master Plan approved, the poverty line for 2016-2020 is multidimensional. A framework for monitoring MdP has been in place with the MdP assessment process developed by MoLISA to be used for poverty assessment every two years. The GSO’s VHLSS series was also amended to include an additional module to collect information for measurement of multidimensional poverty. MdP has also been applied in poverty targeting. For instance, the new NTP SPR identifies its priority target group by multidimensional poverty.

One important achievement under Output 3 is high level policy dialogues, and conferences, technical workshops were organized. The high level policy forum for poverty reduction of ethnic minorities co-chaired by the NA’s EC, UNDP, CEMA and MoLISA have served as an important platform for policy dialogue on issues related to poverty reduction for ethnic minorities. In addition, there have been several conferences, technical workshops at the national and sub-national levels were organized, especially for the designing of poverty reduction policies in the 2016-2020 period (including NTP SPR, Program 135 as part of NTP SPR, NTP NRD…). The Project also contributed to dialogues within the EMPWG. These activities have contributed to the review of poverty reduction policies (under Output 1), the design of new NTP SPR (under output 2), and the development and approval of the MdP Master Plan.

Coordination of the support from DPs to poverty reduction in general and for the NTP SPR 2012-2015 is an area where the PRPP has produced little influence. This coordination was made mainly through dialogue within EMPWG and other events organized or supported by PRPP. However, such dialogues have not been an effective mechanism for facilitating coordination across DPs. Coordination was not materialized in the provincial level, where there were other DP-supported projects but except the case of Tra Vinh, there were few successful coordination between the PRPP and these projects. This was probably a reason leading to the lack of replication of the innovative models in the PRPP target provinces.

### 4.2.2 Management Effectiveness

Management of the PRPP at the national and also the provincial levels is assessed as being effective. Completion of the main Output 1 and Output 3 tasks that have delivered significant policy documents is a main measure of management effectiveness. The policy documents have been prepared and provide the basis for the implementation of the NTP SPR 2016-2020. Some of the policy documents and guidelines have also assisted the implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-15. The PRPP Project Office has managed the implementation of a large number of project activities (of varying sizes) that have included studies and capacity building. Moreover the PRPP Project Office has achieved a disbursement rate of 97% in 2013 and 2015. This is a very satisfactory performance.

Similarly the provincial PRPP offices have also implemented their planned activities and achieved quite satisfactory disbursement rates. It is common in Viet Nam, especially at the provincial level, that implementation of the project is slow over the first 18 month as the implementers become familiar with the project and its regulations. Once the provincial PRPP management units had completed their initial familiarisation period, timeliness of activity implementation improved.

PRPP management effectiveness is also illustrated by the horizontal and vertical agency relationships that have been developed and strengthened. At the central level strong working relationships were developed with CEMA and MARD that led to a series of documents to streamline NTP implementation. In addition relationships were developed with MPI, Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and MoET that have all resulted in policy and other documents that will enhance poverty reduction programs.

Provincial level coordination between DoLISA, PCEM and DARD has become closer in the pilot provinces. Through the PRPP Provincial Project Office these agencies have combined in the development of documents and for coordinated pilot project implementation. Similar levels of effective coordination between the district agencies were found by the EPE field visits in Dien Bien (Muong Ang district), Quang Ngai (Minh Long district) and Tra Vinh (Tra Cu district). Vertical coordination that involved the PRPP Provincial Project Office, the District agencies, and communes was also strong with the flow of information being a feature.

Management effectiveness is less effective in one regard: at some provinces, the project was perceived as one project of DoLISA, and (hence) the involvement and ownership of other line departments was found limited. In this regard, the Tra Vinh model, where the PRPP management unit is a part of the Standing Office for Poverty Reduction that serves as a secretariat to the Provincial Steering Committee on Sustainable Poverty Reduction, is highly relevant. With that institutional setting, the PRPP was very well positioned to facilitate coordination across line departments as well as to encourage cooperation with other programs and projects for poverty reduction in the provinces. Replication of the Tra Vinh model was recommended at MTE but unfortunately the progress was not as expected at this EPE.

### 4.2.3 Attribution of Technical Assistance to Results

Technical assistance has made a major contribution to policy development and to other technical aspects of the project including capacity development. It is assessed as being very effective. The PRPP provided the line ministries with the opportunity to access some international expertise in specialist topics e.g. multidimensional poverty reduction methods, as well national technical assistance. The policies and associated documents that were successfully prepared have been highlighted previously. Use of technical assistance consultants introduced the line ministries to the model of consultant contracting for policy development. The ministry staff saw this as useful experience that increased their understanding of the relevant policy issues, and exposed them to new concepts. The involvement of private sector consultant and INGOs also demonstrated the benefits of consultation with a wider group of stakeholders in policy development.

Technical assistance for policy development was less than effective in one regard: capacity development of the ministry staff in policy formulation. In fact, provision of TA input relies on mobilization of qualified researchers in GoVN research institutes (such as ILSSA/MoLISA) and private sector consultants. Although this was not an explicit PRPP outcome an opportunity for the various ministry staff to learn at some of the basic aspects of policy development has been missed. In an environment of reduced donor partner funding, and limited GoVN funding for policy development, ministries should take all opportunities to develop the capacity of their staff.

### 4.2.4 Capacity Building

Capacity building quality was assessed as effective with the caveat that there is quite limited formal information available about the results of the PRPP training courses at central, provincial, district and commune levels. The EPE assessed the TOT courses conducted in the three provinces visited. The trainees learned new training and learning skills and methods at these courses and subsequently utilised them in the courses that they delivered. Interactive training methods and use of role play were features of the TOT courses. The trainees in the PRPP TOT courses included staff from a range of provincial departments and this has contributed to the pilot provinces having a core group of trainers, with better training skills. Tra Vinh is an excellent example of this where the staff who attended the TOT courses have subsequently delivered training courses for the NTP-NRD, and to staff in a number of departments.

Farmers who met with the EPE stated that they had learned some new production skills in the PRPP training courses. These farmers had also received training under other projects as well e.g. in Tra Vinh from IFAD. There have been, however, few post course evaluations from the PRPP training courses to assess what the trainees, both departmental staff and also farmers have learned and applied. Evaluations of capacity building undertaken in Program 135 II, and other donor projects implemented by such agencies as IFAD and the World Bank, have shown that training courses have had limited effectiveness: this is due to the application of new skills and knowledge by the trainees following the courses has been low. This is especially for farmer training courses where there have been limited practical applied sessions in the courses.

The PRPP should be commended for the emphasis that it placed upon developing the training and learning skills of the core group of trainers in the eight pilot provinces. Capacity building in the provinces would have been more effective if the PRPP had extended the TOT courses to include more of the district level trainers. It is these district trainers that provide the high proportion of the training to the project beneficiaries, and will do so over the NTP SPR 2016-2020, and also the NTP-NRD, over the same period. Quality of training programs will also be improved through the use of regular post course evaluations.

### 4.2.5 PRPP Communications and Reporting

**Communications.** PRPP communications are assessed as being very effective. At the central level the PRPP Project Office has conducted regular meetings and workshops with other line ministries and poverty sector stakeholders including INGOs and UN agencies. Knowledge of the PRPP progress and results has enabled the various stakeholders to contribute to policy development through the workshops and meetings that the PRPP has facilitated. The PRPP process of communications has represented a change in practice by MoLISA and has created “space for other stakeholders to contribute to poverty reduction policy” (*an INGO interviewee*). Poverty sector stakeholders, as a consequence of this increased openness, have had the opportunity to actively contribute to the preparation of a new phase of poverty policies. It is assessed by the various stakeholders that these new policy policies are better formulated to address the main poverty challenges.

The pilot provinces have instituted provincial communications programs that have been a successful feature of the project. Dialogue between the main provincial agencies through provincial workshops has led to provincial policies and guidelines for NTP SPR implementation. The three provinces visited by the EPE had all successfully conducted workshops that contributed to policy development. It is at the commune and district levels, however, where the most effective communication activities have occurred. The mix of activities at that communes and districts that include the use of festivals, policy forums and workshops has had two outstanding results: (i) community members have actively contributed to policy development, and; (ii) there has been a much greater awareness of the NTP SPR by the community members. This was common finding by the EPE in the communes and the districts of the three provinces visited. In Tra Vinh the use of festivals was assessed by the Poverty Coordination Office as being very effective and was expanded in 2015 to all other communes in the eight districts in the province. Moreover in Tra Vinh core communications groups were established in the pilot communes, and this practice was also been expanded to other communes. The successful PRPP communications experience at all level provides some valuable lessons for the next cycle of the two NTPs. Lessons from the Tra Vinh communications activities should be documented and shared with all poverty reduction and rural development sector stakeholders.

Internal project communications between the PRPP PMU and the eight pilot provinces was also well facilitated through the project’s quarterly meetings. The provincial project staff found the quarterly meetings useful and contributed to better implementation progress. The meetings also enabled them to learn and share technical information.

**Reporting.** PRPP reporting on the project activities through the Annual Reports is assessed as just effective. The PRPP Annual Reports concentrate on presenting what has been done in the three Output activities. It is assessed that the three Annual Reports (2013, 14 and 15) provide an accurate description of what has been done over each year of the project. Each Annual Report also has a very large appendix that has almost meticulous details for every project activity. The Annual Reports also have sections the present Lessons Learned, Limitations and Recommendations.

Although the three Annual Reports provide an adequate description of project activities it is considered that they provide limited analysis of the status of the project and the PRPP achievements. This is with regard to two important aspects: (i) Implementation progress against the annual plan, including any actions taken to address any slow implementation, and any other issues that have arisen, and; (ii) present initial results beyond the preparation of the various policy documents and completion of activities. The PRPP promotes a results based approach and therefore the reporting should emphasize more upon what the achieved results are, and not just upon outputs such as policies prepared and study reports completed. It is acknowledged by the EPE that the PRPP Results and Resources Framework indicators and targets are quite wordy and several do not define exact targets. This makes results based reporting more difficult.

Some of the reporting is also speculative in some places. For instance in the 2015 Annual Report Section 2.2 Changes in People’s Lives, Page 14 it is reported that…*the number of indirect beneficiaries increased exponentially as the institutionalized policies would lead to an exponential increase in indirect beneficiaries, including state agencies etc*…. The report then states … *The project’s impact has not been measured yet because most of the policies would be applied in 2016*…. The latter statement is a much more objective assessment and is the method that should be followed in reporting.

### 4.2.6 Partnership

The PRPP project has developed a diversified partnership that this contributed significantly to the project achievements. In terms of partnership with GoVN agencies, the Project has maintained partnership with the NA’s Committee for Social Affairs and Ethnic Council, line ministries (MPI (including GSO), MoF, MARD (including NRD Coordination Office and Cooperatives Department), MoLISA (including ILSSA and most notably PRCO), CEMA, MoET, Ministry of Construction (MoC), MoJ, and MoH, and the eight PRPP provinces as CIPs of the project. PRPP’s TA has been supported to all these agencies and PRPP have invited these agencies in various policy dialogue events and consultations. This is a contributing factor to the acceptance of many policy changes supported by PRPP at the central level.

The project has also developed partnership with other DPs, especially through EMPWG, high level Policy Forum on poverty of ethnic minorities, network of INGOs (some of them then co-finance TA inputs with PRPP to ministries such as Oxfam), and few local NGOs where were usually invited to attend policy workshops organized or supported by PRPP. At the province level, a certain level of efforts was seen by the provincial PRPP teams in cooperate with other DP-supported projects (such as the World Bank-supported NMPRP-2 in Dien Bien or IFAD-supported Adaption to Climate Change in the Mekong Delta Project in Tra Vinh). This partnership with DPs has been a contributing factor to many policy-making outcomes at the national level. For instance, PRPP has invited DPs to provide suggestions and comments for the design of new programming for poverty reduction, namely the new NTP SPR 2016-2020, MdP Master Plan, and MAF-EM.

However, the partnership with Irish Aid did not deliver on the expectations of Irish Aid as a co-financing partner, and as an active DP in the area of poverty reduction for ethnic minorities. By supporting the PRPP, Irish Aid committed to follow the UNDP’s National Implementation Modality (NIM) and, according to the formal agreement between UNDP and Irish Aid, UNDP took the sole management responsibility for the PRPP. During the course of the PRPP implementation, Irish Aid identified an opportunity to add increased value by being more involved in the oversight of the Project, and in the management of some strategic activities. Given Irish Aid’s contribution to the One UN Plan and its longstanding support for Program 135, this was a reasonable expectation. Moreover it presented an opportunity for the PRPP to be enhanced through added expertise, wider networking and influencing, and stronger quality assurance. However, the discussion between UNDP and Irish Aid did not result in the deeper involvement of Irish Aid in the PRPP Project (beyond co-financing). The NIM remained intact as the project management modality. Hence it is understood by the EPE consultants that Irish Aid considers this as an opportunity missed. At the end of the PRPP project, Irish Aid informed UNDP of its decision not to provide funding for a potential new phase of PRPP. Arguably, if the formal agreement between UNDP and Irish Aid using the NIM could had been modified to be more inclusive in management of the partnerships supporting the PRPP Project, there would have been greater opportunity for Irish Aid to enhance their contributions.

Finally, it is noted that the Project has maintained an effective partnership with research institutes, both GoVN and private sector, and consultants. With a number of TA contracts, the project has developed a network of qualified consultants who are also trusted by the GoVN agencies and other DPs. This network of researchers and consultant is central to many important policy outcomes of the project, e.g. MTR of the NRP SPR 2012-15, MAF-EM, MdP Master Plan, new design of the NTP SPR etc.

## 4.3 Efficiency

Project efficiency is difficult to assess as there are no benchmarks for a “project” like the PRPP. It is difficult to classify just what “type” of project the PRPP is. It could be considered to be a program implemented by embedded project units. Assessing efficiency is made more difficult by the large number of project activities, of varying sizes, that have been implemented at both the central and provincial levels. Project implementation has also been undertaken by contracted PRPP Project Office staff, as well department staff on an intermittent basis, making efficiency measurement even more of a challenge.

The overall assessment is that the project is efficient and that efficiency improved once the project management staff became more familiar with the PRPP implementation systems and procedures. It must also be recognised that the PRPP Project Office has managed the completion of all the major project activities by middle of 2016. This is quite an achievement.

### 4.3.1 Efficiency of Process and Outputs

Efficiency of process was initially weak, as the 2013 Annual Report mentions and the 2013 work plan was hindered by initial inhibiting factors. These factors were reported to be new staff unfamiliar with the project procedures such as financial management and reporting. Procurement of Technical Assistance consultants was also slow and this contributed to the later than planned conduct of some studies and preparation of policy documents.

Project staff at central and provincial levels informed the EPE that the high number of activities created a real challenge and contributed to some of the slow procurement and implementation. This was compounded by the need for cross ministry and department consultation. Late submission of reports and other documents by the Technical Assistance consultants was also a contributing factor to slow implementation.

### 4.3.2 Timeliness

Timeliness of process has been a definite issue and is extensively mentioned in the PRPP Annual Reports. There are three main timeliness efficiency issues. First is the time taken at the central level to approve the PRPP annual plan. The provinces found that the relatively later approval of the annual plan (usually April or May of each year) led to implementation over a condensed time period each year. But despite the late approval of the provincial annual plans the project provinces were able to implement the majority of all the activities each year– as evidenced by the provincial disbursement rates of 80% to over 90% in 2013 to 2015. Second is the different rates of implementation by the CIPs and the achievement of the 80% funding threshold. CIPs that were faster implementers were constrained by slow progress by the slower CIPs. This slowed implementation across the faster CIPs and reduced implementation efficiency for the faster CIPs. Third is the delay in the procurement and contracting of consultants to undertake the initial projects studies and preparation of policy documents. The main consequence of this delay is that some of the poverty policies and other documents were prepared later than planned and this delayed their use in the various poverty reduction activities that the PRPP supported. One effect being that the policies and documents prepared to support NTP SPR have had limited application over the period 2012 to 2015, and their major role will be for the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

### 4.3.3 Value for Money

Several of the project activities demonstrate value for money and the EPE highlights the MdP development as an excellent illustration of this. The MdP development is ground breaking and involved a series of PRPP supported activities and events that included study tours, consultant services, and workshops. Since its completion in 2015 the MdP approach has been quickly adopted for use by the GoVN agencies, as well by the Asian Development in its project design work, and also by the World Bank. Similarly other smaller PRPP activities such as the MAF-EM preparation and the support for the National Assembly’s Supreme Oversight of Poverty Reduction that contributed to Resolution 76 are also assessed as being excellent value for money. No cost efficiency benchmarks exist for formal measurement of value for money but the EPE assessment is that for the relatively small cost the three PRPP outputs have achieved impressive results.

## 4.4 Sustainability

The sustainability section assesses the likelihood that the policy developments, improvements in organisations, and capacity developed by the PRPP will be sustained. Further adoption and scaling up of the policies, innovations and successful activity results is also assessed. The commitment of the central ministries and provincial agencies to use their financial and human resources to sustain the PRPP results is also a key consideration in the sustainability assessment. Sustainability assessment at the end of any project is a subjective exercise and this applies to the PRPP. Some of the policy developments have yet to applied, and will only fully occur once the NTP SPR 2016-2020 commences implementation. Other main PRPP policy developments, including the MdP, have only had limited time to be applied and it is far too early to evaluate any effects.

### 4.4.1 Policies and Programs in Place

The flagship of the PRPP project is the number of important poverty reduction policies and programs that the Project has contributed its TA to. The names of these policies and programs were featured at different places across this EPE report. Most importantly, the Project has contributed to the process of reviewing the poverty reduction policies and as a result of this reviewing, streamlining and mainstreaming these policies. More importantly, MdP Master Plan was in place and it has laid a new ‘corridor’ for poverty reduction efforts. The new NTP SPR and its implementation arrangements represent another masterpiece of the PRPP TA support. It is arguable that the past few years have experienced structural and dramatic changes in the setting of poverty reduction in Vietnam. Having these policies and programs in place is the most important evidence of sustainability.

### 4.4.2 Organisational Management Capacity and Coordination

Sustainability of organisational capacity at the national level has been influenced by the role of the PRPP Project Office in the management of the project. The responsibility for the management of the PRPP was with the PRRP staff, albeit under the direction of the MoLISA PRCO Director. One of the criticisms of the donor funded Project Management Unit modality with largely contracted staff is that the counterpart government staff have limited opportunities to learn project management skills and gain experience in project management. This situation has applied for the PRPP Project office and for this reason the sustainability of organisational capacity in MoLISA PRCO is assessed as moderate.

In contrast PRPP introduced a new level of interagency coordination that is more likely to be sustained. Coordination between MoLISA, CEMA and MARD occurred in the review and production of several policy documents. This has led to increased discussion over common elements of the two NTPs and is expected to continue. Coordination at the provincial level was also enhanced through the PRPP. The main provincial agencies of DoLISA, PCEM and DARD have coordinated effectively to plan and implemented the PRPP activities in the pilot provinces. As at the national level this inter agency coordination is expected to continue and enhance the implementation of the two NTPs from late 2016 onwards.

Provincial level organisational sustainability is less influenced by contracted staff providing project management services. In the provinces the PRPP Project Office operational manager (from the DoLISA’s Department of Social Affairs) had a regular management role, and other DoLISA staff were also actively involved. These staff benefited from PRPP training and also gained useful project management experience during PRPP. Therefore the EPE assesses the sustainability of provincial management capacity as satisfactory.

### 4.4.3 Livelihoods Models Application

Livelihoods models were the main models featured in the PRPP, although some ISNC self-help models were introduced late in the project. Prospects for the sustainability of the livelihoods models are medium to high. They are all livestock models and follow traditional and well proven production methods, and for the pilot livelihoods activities the farmers benefits from learning the basic production skills. Climatic events: heavy and cold rain storms and drought that impacts upon the feed supply are the main risk to livelihoods sustainability.

The PRPP method of requiring some farmer financial investment in the livelihoods activity is likely to provide the farmers with a higher incentive to ensure that the activity is successful. In some provinces the cattle models involve rotation of the breeding cows to provide more farmers with an animal. While in others the initial capital is repaid upon the sale of animals. These methods also contribute to the sustainability of the livelihoods activities.

### 4.4.4 Capacity Building

Solid capacity building capability was developed in the eight pilot provinces as mentioned elsewhere in this report. As the core trainers are all provincial and district departmental staff the potential for sustainability is high. The provincial capacity building issue, however, is not around sustainability, it is about the effective use of the more skilled trainers. The provincial agencies need to ensure that the core trainers are extensively used for upcoming training events across all programs especially the two NTPs. Moreover the core trainers should be used to assist other provincial and district trainers to learn better training practice and build a wider cadre of better trainers in each province.

Training for farmers under the PRPP assistance was able to be delivered by better quality trainers as permitted the PRPP regulations. Unfortunately this practice cannot be replicated under the NTPs and illustrates the inflexibility of the national financial regulations. Therefore the positive farmer training experience and lessons from the PRPP are unable to be replicated in the NTPs.

### 4.4.5 Community Participation and Planning

Community participation in planning and management has been a feature in some pilot provinces, as is highlighted in previous sections of this report. Other pilot provinces, however, followed only a limited community based approach. The PRPP, in concert with other projects, has successfully demonstrated the benefits from the commune SEDP process: Tra Vinh (with IFAD) and Dien Bien (with the Second Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project). The EPE has recommended that the commune SEDP process should be prioritised in the proposed new project to support the NTP-SPR 2016-2020 (Recommendation 16 below). Without external financial and technical support by other projects it is unlikely that commune SEDP’s will be instituted in project provinces. Tra Vinh is the exception as it has already committed to extending its SEDP programme.

### 4.4.6 Resources and Finances to Ensure Maintenance of Project Outputs.

Sustaining project achievements is very dependent upon government funding in the post project phase as well as other factors such as the institutional capacity developed by the project. Despite the many useful PRPP achievements the EPE’s review shows that sustainability of some successful PRPP outputs is at risk.

At the national level, how to ensure that good practices institutionalized in the new NTPs would be operationalized on the ground given the current level of local capacity. For instance, experience in executing block grant model (like that under an Swiss Development Cooperation-funded PSARD Project in Hoa Binh province) or Commune Development Fund (CDF) supported by many DPs indicate that capacity development for the commune staff and communities is the requisite condition for success. Capacity development is clearly needed (even most needed) for implementation of the new NTPs but funding this activity is subject to constraints given there is almost no external funding from DPs could be mobilized while the budget allocation for this activity (e.g. as reflected in the approval of the new NTP SPR) is quite limited. There is also a need to continue the work on poverty policy in terms of how to translate the MdP approach into poverty targeting. At this stage, MdP is applied to identify the target audience for poverty reduction policies but how other dimensions (in addition to income) should be addressed and how this is linked to social protection policies remains a challenge that need further policy dialogues and actions.

There is also a risk at the provincial level. Provincial funding to continue successful PRPP activities in two of the provinces, Dien Bien and Quang Ngai, is likely to be limited. In Tra Vinh, however, plans are in place for the provincial budget to fund the successful PRRP activities. These activities include policy forums related to NTP SPR 2016-2020, further enhancement of the commune SEDPs, and regular utilisation of the trainers that were trained under the TOT program. The situation in both Quang Ngai and Dien Bien illustrates project dependency for funding. It also shows that the provinces have not prepared an exit strategy to ensure that the successful PRPP features can instituted. In both these provinces the provincial agencies stated that a follow-on project was required to ensure that there was funding for many of the activities that the PRPP had initiated.

### 4.4.7 Factors to Ensure Sustainability and Replication

The PRPP has developed several new and important poverty policies and associated instruments. It has also led the engagement between the GoVN poverty agencies with a wider group of stakeholders involved in poverty reduction programs in Viet Nam. New and innovative approaches activities to better tackle poverty have been piloted in eight provinces. Despite these successful achievements the main sustainability driver for the PRPP developments is funding at both the central and provincial levels. Now that Viet Nam has reached middle income country status the donor support for poverty reduction programs is much diminished and there much greater reliance upon the GoVN national budget to fund the poverty activities.

**Sustainability Factors.** Institutionalisation of the PRPP policies into the planning frameworks and annual plans is a critical sustainability factor. The PRPP has been successful in this regard due as the ministries have been key partners in the policy development activities. Some of the main policies developed over late 2013 and 2014 have been implemented while others developed later in 2015 have yet to be fully implemented.

For the NTP SPR the first real application of the PRPP developed new poverty policies will occur once the NTP 2016-2020 cycle commences. Although these have been mainstreamed into line ministries there has not yet been the opportunity to fully apply them. The sustainability of the new policies supporting NTP SPR is dependent upon how well they can be implemented and their suitability to address the poverty problems. Experience shows that there may need to be some modifications to enable more efficient implementation, and to ensure that the policies are effective in tackling poverty. Therefore regular monitoring is required of NTP SPR implementation, especially over the first two years. Regular reviews of policies effectiveness should also be undertaken over the last two years of the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

Ministries still lack the capacity to monitor and review policy impacts and further Technical Assistance will be needed to make revisions to the policies. The process of monitoring, and subsequent review, of the new policies are measures that will contribute to the sustainability of the new poverty policies.

**Replication and Scaling Up.** Not all of the successful PRPP pilot activities will funded through the NTP SPR 2016-2020, or other national programs. Many of the pilot activities are also not instituted into regular department practice as they were pilots only and funded by the PRPP. Successful activities identified by the EPE that the PRPP has contributed to and that should be continued in the eight pilot provinces, and also replicated in the other NTP SPR project provinces include (i) Commune SEDP; (ii) Policy forums, especially at the district and commune levels; (iii) Commune Investment Ownership – and capacity development; (iv) Use of MdP approaches to poverty for targeting; (v) Communications and awareness – that includes festivals, commune communication groups; (vi) TOT, and subsequent technical and capacity development training; and (vii) Applied technical training for livelihoods.

The challenge is for replication of the most effective activities and results from the PRPP pilots into the wider NTP SPR and NTP-NRD. Although the PRPP has had a regular program to document good practice and successful activities, and these have been shared and promoted at provincial and national PRPP meetings, there has been no substantive program to share these lessons and successes on a wider scale. The NTP SPR kick off process provides the first opportunity to promote best practice adoption and replication. But there will need to a regular program to support this across all the provinces. MoLISA, CEMA and MARD will not have the resources for this. Therefore any lessons application and replication program will need it be driven through a TA project.

## 4.5 Summary of Main Findings

The PRPP is assessed as having made a significant contribution to poverty reduction. The development of poverty reduction policies has been highly relevant to meeting the rural poverty challenges. These policies and associated methodologies, and have provided GoVN agencies with a range of new tools to tackle poverty. PRPP has been less relevant, however, at the provincial level. Effectiveness of the PRPP has also been high due to the relevance of the policies developed. PRPP outputs have delivered useful initial results in mainstreaming of policies, design of the NTP SPR 2016-2020, and in the development of the MdP. The latter instrument being put to effective use by both GoVN agencies and DPs, while other development such as the NA Supreme Oversight of poverty polices have also enhanced poverty programs. The use of TA to assist with policy development, mixed with DP dialogue has also contributed to positive results. Communications programs at the community level and their synergy with community participation activities have provided important lessons for the NTP SPR. PRPP efficiency has also been satisfactory and central and provincial management offices have implemented a high number of activities and achieved satisfactory disbursement rates. Excellent value for money has been achieved for several significant activities. The likelihood of sustainability is between medium and high for the policies that have been developed. But sustainability for successful activities at the provincial level is at some risk due to lack of funding. This includes the replication and scaling up of the most successful PRPP activities.

# 5. Lessons Learned

**Policy changes cannot be taken place without direct engagement of the policy makers in a technical assistance course**. One determining factor that observed in all the important policy changes induced by the PRPP Project is an active engagement of line ministries who are the end users of the TA inputs. It is easy to list out a long list of DP-supported projects in the country that have spent hundreds of million US$ without producing a significant policy action. In the case of PRPP, it shows that the level of financial resource does not really matter. In fact, it is the way TA needs were identified and most importantly, the engagement of the GoVN agencies, policy makers to make policy changes possible.

**Poverty reduction policy coordination cannot take place without effective enforcement**. Lack of coordination or distant working relationship across different line ministries (and line departments in provinces) has been considered as long lasting weaknesses in the implementation of poverty reduction policies in Vietnam. Experience related to the PRPP suggested that such coordination could take place with effective enforcement mechanisms. At the central level, having NA’s Resolutions such as Resolution 76, Resolution 112 (the two products of PRPP TA support) could serve as an effective enforcement mechanisms that require ministries to work together. The increasing role of PRCO represents another effective mechanism to facilitate and, when needed, enforce through the National Steering Committee (NSC) for Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR). This relates to the Tra Vinh model. Having an Standing Office under the PSC appears to be an effective enforcement mechanism for coordinating different line departments in the course of poverty reduction.

**‘Having less is better than having more’ sounds in irrational for all economists but this is upheld in terms of poverty reduction policies in Vietnam**. Since the course of poverty reduction in Vietnam started in the earlier 1990s, Vietnam has translated in a plethora of policies and programs in poverty reduction. After having the initial effects materialized, poverty reduction policies have become increasingly fragmented and overlapped. In a review by MoLISA (with TA support from PRPP) more than 150 policies were listed in the areas of poverty reductions. Creating synergies across this large number of policies is near impossible. The PRPP Project has effectively supported the process of reviewing these policies and contributed considerably to rationalizing and mainstreaming poverty reduction policies. The number of NTP has reduced from 16 to two with the other former NTPs streamlined into the mandate of line ministries. In addition, the number of by-law products (such as decisions, guidelines etc.) have been substantially rationalized (e.g. there will be near one set of guideline – instead of having several guidelines – on one type of activities in NTPs).

**Self-reliant is growing and there would soon be an active social movement for self-reliant**. There has been an increasingly growing perception that self-reliant is important for sustainably poverty reduction. The recent ISNC contributes partly to this movement but the discussion about the necessity of the poor being self-reliant has been started years earlier. To the knowledge of the EPE consultants, the poor being reliant on external support (and hence lack of incentive to escape from poverty) has been rumoured for many years but it was official brought into the top level policy dialogue in around 2013 or 2014 when this issue was discussed e.g. within the National Assembly and the NSC for SPR. Consultation with line ministries that have worked with the PRPP indicated that the need of being self-reliant (i.e. communities to be self-reliant, the poor and near poor being self-reliant) is very well taken. In the new NTP SPRs, the community force account (e.g. ‘*cộng đồng tự thực hiện’*) has been formalized (by a draft Decree of the GoVN, submitted by MPI), production support would take place in a ‘project modality’ (which is also institutionalized by a draft Decree of the GoVN, submitted by MARD) are the two key mechanisms that reflect the spirit of the poor being self-reliant.

**Good practices have never been institutionalized as strongly as in the new phase of the poverty reduction policies but capacity on the ground is not yet ready**. It is important and encouraging to note that there has been many good practices in poverty reduction institutionalized and the PRPP project contributed significantly to that institutionalization. These are namely participatory planning, community force account, production support through project modality (which is a version of conventional block grant), O&M good practice in e.g. Program 135, CIO, self-help or common interest groups etc. Five years ago, it is not likely to anticipate that such good practices would finally been institutionalized after two decades of DPs experimenting and trying to feed to national-level policy dialogue. In this context, it is worrying to note that the capacity on the ground, according to the EPE consultants, is not yet ready. Concerted efforts for capacity development at the local level is needed, otherwise such institutionalization would represent an operational risk for the implementation of the NTPs.

**Being a Middle Income Country, Vietnam still depends on TA for poverty reduction policies**. Consultation of the EPE consultants indicated that most of PRPP TA was in line with the mandate of line ministries and it has been made clear that without PRPP TA, these activities needed to be done. However, interviewees from line ministries acknowledged that the TA support from PRPP make it possible to mobilize expertise (that is not usually available in-house). In fact, the PRPP project makes the mobilization of quality and independent technical input available, and more importantly justifiable. TA support was found by the EPE instrumental to ‘trigger’ policy changes.

**Partnership needs to be strengthened with action rather than dialogue only**. The PRPP project has developed a diversified partnership with large number of the GoVN agencies, DPs, INGOs and this partnership was found to be useful for the Project, especially in terms of policy advocacy. However, lessons should be learned from the partnership between UNDP and Irish Aid. If the NIM could have been modified for this PRPP Project to allow a deeper involvement of Irish Aid, there would have been more opportunities to capitalise on the expertise available among other partners, to build synergies with other work, to widen the Project’s sphere of influence and to ensure the strongest possible quality assurance. In this regard, it is noted that if partnership is enhanced by joint action, it becomes more effective and instrumental for policy changes. The partnership with Oxfam is one example which could be built on, as the PRPP and Oxfam co-supported TA for some activities which led to the development of an improved decision to replace Decision 135/2009 on management mechanisms of NTPs.

# 6. Recommendations

Recommendations are presented that will enhance the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of future poverty reduction programs, in particular the new NTP SPR. The recommendations are also framed to recognise the dynamic and changing nature of poverty and socio economic development that will occur over the next five year cycle. Viet Nam has successfully reduced rural poverty over the last 20 years with a series of policies and national programs. As the number of rural people living in poverty falls and there is better information about their needs, poverty reduction modalities will evolve away from the broader instruments that have been applied in the past. The economic and social environment in Viet Nam will also continue to change over the next five year cycle as the Vietnamese economy grows and becomes more integrated into the regional and world through trade partnerships. Economic growth and development influences the ways that poverty can be addressed and provide opportunities to implement more innovative and better targeted poverty reduction methods.

The recommendations are presented in two main parts. Recommendations in the first part are made with the intention of improving the quality of poverty reduction programs. The second set relates to interventions that will enhance poverty reduction over the next cycle.

##  For Poverty Reduction Programs

**1) Enhance the Governance role of the** **National Assembly Ethnic Council and the Council for Social Affairs in poverty program policy development and monitoring.** Positive outcomes were achieved from the PRPP support for the activities that involved the National Assembly. Outputs from the support were an important poverty resolution and improved oversight of poverty and ethnic minority programs. The PRPP experience highlights the role that both the Committee for Social Affairs and Ethnic Council can play in important poverty and ethnic minority monitoring over the course of the next poverty reduction cycle. These two bodies should be adequately resourced to ensure that the role they played with the PRPP assistance can be enhanced and sustained.

**2) Gender approach and activities in the poverty reduction programs must more directly target women and actively involve them in poverty reduction activities that lead to their social and economic empowerment.** Gender mainstreaming approach must much more pluralistic and place much greater emphasis upon activities that recognise the practical and strategic needs of women. There should be more project activities that contribute to enhanced and sustainable social and economic outcomes for women. Inclusion of women in such events as training courses that do not lead to subsequent economic development activities that meet women’s needs is ineffective. (I)NGO and other DP projects have successful gender results and the proposed project should make greater use of this experience to strengthen gender in national programs such as the NTP SPR 2016-2020, and NTP-NRD.

**3) New approaches to Livelihoods development are required in poverty reduction programs if sustainable poverty reduction outcomes and rural transformation are to be achieved.** The PRPP livelihood models adopted traditional agricultural production approaches that have been followed over the last two decades of national poverty programs. (I)NGOs and DPs have some demonstrated innovations that have led to improved sustainable livelihoods. The traditional agricultural livelihood model is out of tune with current and emerging rural development environment. A particular weakness is that not enough consideration is given to the impact of climate change upon small holders. Traditional agricultural livelihood models tend to favour activities that involve men eg cattle, and there is not enough emphasis on income generating livelihood activities for women. Livelihoods development must also embrace non-farm activities and include activities that will contribute to rural transformation such as employment in the rural services.

**4) Use of the new tools for targeting poverty must ensure that they recognise ethnic diversity and the different cultural features and social customs of the many ethnic groups.** New poverty tools and methods such as the MdP enable more precise identification of poverty issues and needs. The use of these tools will now enable future poverty programs to be better targeted at the core poverty issues. New poverty programs must also recognise the social and cultural features of the different ethnic groups. Differing cultural and social features means that poverty programs need to be tailored to better tackle the specific poverty issues of the different ethnic groups. A “one size fits all” approach followed in the NTPs, and other large projects, will need to modified and refined for future programs.

**5) Increase the emphasis upon building the self-reliance of rural communities including greater devolution for the use of poverty reduction investments.** Communities respond well to increased responsibility for poverty reduction activities in their communes and villages. PRPP and other projects have demonstrated this, and Tra Vinh is an excellent example of increased community responsibility and empowerment. Developing community responsibility and building self-reliance should be a feature of future poverty programs. PRPP has demonstrated in pilots that greater community awareness and use of Commune SEDPs are essential components in building community self-reliance. Commune SEDPs enable the community to have a more active role in planning and investment decisions, that leads to empowerment of both men and women. IFAD projects have demonstrated this as has the Second Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project.

##  For Interventions to Support NTPs

**6) UNDP to coordinate the design and implementation of a Technical Assistance Project to support the 2016-2020 cycle of poverty reduction programs, including the NTP SPR.** A new Technical Assistance Project must not, however, be more of the same ie PRPP Phase II. The design of the new Project must take into account that: the nature of poverty in Viet Nam is changing; poverty reduction methods are evolving; international poverty targets have also changed – Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and, there is now more information about poverty and how to tackle it through such instruments as the MdP.

The EPE assessment is that the PRPP has provided an initial sound platform for poverty reduction programs through policy development and the provincial pilots. But the foundation that PRPP has contributed to developing needs to be built upon to ensure that the new policies are effectively applied. The PRPP policies need to be monitored and further developed to meet the evolving poverty challenges. Project design must also consider that over the 2016 -2020 cycle that donor support will continue to reduce and poverty programs will be much more dependent upon GoVN funding and other resources. Poverty policy development for the period for 2020 and beyond must be formulated to meet the future poverty challenges. These will be different to the past.

Therefore the design of the new TA Project must balance meeting the emerging and evolving poverty challenges while also supporting the current poverty programs. Main elements of the new Project will be: (i) continue to enhance institutionalisation of the policies developed by the PRPP eg MdP, Decision 1557; (ii) develop poverty policy for the next cycle for 2020 and beyond - based upon reviewing and utilising international best practice, monitoring and evaluation of the lessons from the implementation of PRPP developed policy and use of better tools and methods eg MdP to identify future poverty policy issues and needs, and; (iii) support the implementation of NTP SPR 2016-2020 especially any initial problems with the new policies, and apply the lessons from PRPP across the two NTPs.

The new Project should also assist MoLISA to align the SDGs with the main poverty programs especially the NTPs, and use the NTP M&E systems to ensure the coordinated and efficient measurement of SDG progress.

### 6.2.1 Key Design Features of the New Project

The following recommendations outline key features that should form the basis for the design of the new Project.

**7) The new Technical Assistance Project should prioritise support for poverty reduction programs at the central level.** The primary focus of the new Project must be upon the central level agencies and their poverty reduction programs. This central level support will be in the three areas outlined in Recommendation 6 above. The proposed project should not include provincial pilots as under PRPP. Provincial activities should be limited to NTP–SPR 2016-2020 implementation advice and support, field research for studies, assistance to document successful poverty reduction activities, and their replication, and for M&E.

**8) The new Technical Assistance Project’s scope of activities should be narrower than under PRPP and primarily be concentrated around the core poverty roles of MoLISA and CEMA.** The emphasis in the proposed project should be upon the priority poverty tasks that MoLISA and CEMA are responsible for. The PRPP experience is that the high number of activities that were implemented created a considerable demand upon project management, and there were issues around timeliness of some activities. By focusing on core poverty program activities and their timeliness the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities will be increased. It is expected that the scope of the new Project will be limited by the donor funds that are available. Therefore the design must focus supporting the core MoLISA and CEMA poverty functions that includes implementation support for the NTP SPR 2016-2020.

**9) Follow a Program approach and make greater use of Ministry staff to manage the new Project.** MoLISA and CEMA staff should take greater responsibility for managing the new Project and follow the program approach that is featured in the Hanoi Declaration for Aid Effectiveness. There are two main reasons for this recommendation. First is that the donor funds for poverty reduction projects are much less than in the past and the GoVN agencies need to assume much greater responsibility for managing poverty programs. Secondly sustainability is greatly enhanced if existing ministry staff manage the project. The skills and knowledge they develop over the life of the project is not lost and can be applied for future ministry programs.

### 6.2.2 Priority Poverty Reduction Program Development Tasks for the new Project

**10) On-going development of the Multi-Dimensional Poverty approach must be a high priority for further assistance provide by the new Project.** The MdP approach has been successfully introduced and has been used by GoVN agencies as well as some donor partners. For the MdP to continue to evolve and to contribute to better poverty targeting, resource allocation and more effective poverty activities it needs to be regularly evaluated and further developed. The poverty dimensions included in the current MdP are still new and their effectiveness in poverty measurement still need to be better assessed. The potential inclusion of further poverty dimensions also needs to be considered. It is expected that further international technical assistance support will be required for ongoing MdP development. The potential for closer alignment of the MdP measures with the SDGs should also be investigated. Any such investigation must also consider the gender and ethnic minority sensitive M&E system that was developed by the PRPP.

**11) Dialogue with donor partners, (I)NGOs and national agencies must continue to be a feature and should be widened and deepened, with a focus on joint advocacy and action.** PRPP’s program of dialogue with the wider development community was a significant feature that contributed to improved poverty policies. The program of consultative workshops and the Ethnic Minority Working Group meetings enabled a much more participative approach to poverty policy development. The new Project should continue to facilitate the wider dialogue with the development community, and should seek to capitalise on the breadth and variety of expertise available, to enhance synergies and to ensure the strongest possible quality assurance. This dialogue will be especially important to gain feedback on the results of the new poverty policies. For instance, if donor partners and (I)NGOs are using the MdP measures, their experience with them will be useful for its further development.

**12) Utilise the Technical Assistance to build the Policy Development capacity in the Ministries.** Policy development is a new concept and a task that most ministry staff have limited experience of. Over the course of the next period of technical assistance for policy support the opportunity should be taken for the ministry staff to learn how to develop new policies. The new Project will contract international and national specialist to lead poverty development and the expertise of these specialist should be better used for policy capacity development of the ministry staff. Involving the ministry staff in policy development will have the advantage of greater ownership of the policies, as well the staff learning how to develop policies. Diminishing donor partner programs in Viet Nam is a reality that ministries need to recognise. The new Project should be well utilised by MoLISA and CEMA to build institutional capacity in strategic areas such as poverty policy development.

**13) Supporting the implementation of the NTP SPR 2016-2020 must be the initial priority for the new Technical Assistance Project.** Implementation of the NTP SPR 2016 -2020 faces risks as it includes new policies that the national and provincial implementers are unfamiliar with. Therefore assistance will need to be provided to the national and provincial implementers, especially over the first two years of implementation. The proposed Project should provide pro-active assistance that is based upon close monitoring of implementation.

### 6.2.3 New Project Support for better NTP SPR 2016-2020 Results

The following recommendations present several areas where the NTP SPR 2016-2020 needs to be supported to improve its poverty reduction performance.

**14) Prioritise the identification of the successful results and ensure that these are shared across whole NTP SPR, and that there is a program of technical support to assist their replications**. Applying the PRPP lessons and replicating the successfully activities across the NTP –SPR 2016-2020 and the NTP-NRD must also be a high priority task for the new Project. The spread of the PRPP success stories is quite limited and requires a rapid program of sharing to ensure their reach across the NTPs. The EPE observation is that some of the pilot provinces have failed to recognise their most successful pilot results. New Project support is needed to better review the pilot achievements and subsequently document these for promulgation, adoption and replication. See Section 4.5.6- Factors to Ensure Sustainability and Replication to see successful activities that the EPE has identified.

**15) Make more effective use of the M&E system for program management and poverty targeting in the NTP SPR**. Much better use of the Gender and Ethnic Minority Sensitive M&E system that was developed with the support of the PRPP needs to be made. NTP SPR management at the central and provincial levels must use the information from the M&E system for better program management and also for reporting. The M&E information will indicate to the managers how the effective the poverty reduction activities have been and assist them to make decisions over better program resource use and targeting: better targeting of women should be a feature. Technical assistance from the new Project should first focus on assisting the program managers to use the data that the M&E system generates. The proposed M&E system development to align with the SDGs should only proceed if, and when, the current M&E system is being effectively used to manage the NTP SPR.

**16) Support commune SEDPs as the basis for the planning of poverty reduction investments and activities**. Strengthening of community based participatory planning in the preparation of the commune SEDPs has been a successful PRPP assisted feature. Tra Vinh and Dien Bien provinces are two excellent examples where the communities have been actively involved participatory planning of the communes’ annual plans. These successful experiences in community based participation should be built upon across the NTP SPR 2016 -2020, as well as the NTP-NRD. Several donor partners have initiated commune SEDPs programs in the provinces, and Hoa Binh province is one of the most successful. For many reasons, however, the SEDPs in other province have not been sustained after the completion of the projects. Notable examples are Chia Se and RUDEP. Currently there are a number of donor partner and (I)NGO projects working on commune SEDPs in provinces and these should be coordinated with. For instance the Second Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project has almost 240 communes where commune SEDPs have been successful prepared. The IFAD projects in six provinces are assisting the commune SEDPs to align with the NTP-NRD.

**17) Agricultural production livelihoods development should adopt and apply models that have been successful in Donor Partner and (I)NGO projects**. There must also be include a much greater emphasis upon climate change adaption and risk management, safe use of agri-chemicals and better livestock waste management and sanitation.

Agricultural production model development in the PRPP has followed a quite traditional approach and has yet to really embrace the more successful models from other projects implemented by INGOs and DPs. There should be a much more active program to identify the best models from these other projects and apply them in the NTP SPR. Model development also needs to include several new elements that recognise customer demand for safe food products, better public health practice and increasing vulnerability of small farmers to climate event. Assisting farmers to better manage risks, especially climate change, is the most significant of these. The experience of IFAD and other DP’s projects can be used to prepare a climate change adaption capacity development program for farmers. Livestock development forms a high proportion of the NTP SPR production development activities. Managing livestock waste to reduce the risks to household and community health, and environmental pollution is increasingly being recognised as an essential aspect of small holder livestock development. Livestock development models therefore must include waste management and sanitation training. Similarly crop production models must address safe agri-chemical use.

**18) Develop capacity of trainers in better training and learning methods at both the provincial and district levels**. PRPP has demonstrated an effective method to improve training capacity through the training of provincial trainers in better training and learning practice. This capacity development program should be expanded to facilitate better training across all the NTP SPR provinces. The new Project should ensure that a core group of trainers is developed in each province and that these core group trainers develop the training capacity of the district level trainers.

**19) Community Development, Communications, Participation and Empowerment in the new NTP SPR**. The PRPP achieved useful results with the suite of closely related communications, community development, and community participation activities that have contributed to the enhanced empowerment and self-reliance of communities members. These successful should be prioritised in the NTP SPR and the new Project should assist their adoption.

**20) Continue the community focused development initiated in the PRPP with the aim of building greater self-reliance and empowerment of the local communities.** Successful PRPP pilot community development results demonstrate the importance of a community focused approach. This successful experience should be applied across all the NTP SPR communes, using the range of lessons learned from the PRPP pilots e.g. from the ISNC activities. The PRPP has shown that community groups can be weaned away from the grant input support method that was common under previous phases of poverty reduction programs e.g. Programme 135. The range of community based activities that the PRPP has applied and piloted includes the Commune SEDPs, the communication events, and building the self-reliance of the community groups. The new Project should assist the pilot provinces, especially Tra Vinh, to prepare success stories and disseminate these stories.

**21) Build upon the community communications program activities that were successfully used in the PRPP.** Communications has been a particularly successful feature of the PRPP and the successful methods should be more widely applied. The communications program through policy forums has enabled beneficiaries to contribute their ideas on policy development needs, festivals have increased the participation of communities and increased awareness of poverty policies and village workshops and meetings have led to greater sharing of information. These various methods have also enabled women to have enhanced roles in policy discussion and to increase their awareness of poverty reduction program activities. Communications has been an integral theme of the successful community development approach promoted through the PRPP and this has included the successful use of commune SEDPs in some provinces eg Dien Bien and Tra Vinh.

**22) Much greater emphasis must be placed upon achieving Commune Investment Ownership for all the communes’ investment activities.** Commune investment ownership is a vital to developing the self-reliance of the communes and to their empowerment. In the PRPP, and the associated Irish Aid investments in the pilot communes, the capacity of the communes to manage the larger investments has been well demonstrated. The proposed Project should promote greater devolution of investment responsibility to all the NTP SPR communes to full commune investment ownership status.

**23) Only institute a Block Grant model where it enables the community a greater role in the decisions about their investment priorities.** The use of the block grant model must be consistent with community participatory planning approach and should allow the community to make flexible decisions over their investment priorities. The current block grant model developed under the PRPP is too mechanistic and limited in its scope and does not align well with the community participation and empowerment results that the PRPP pilots have achieved. The block grant approach should be better integrated with the commune SEDPs where the community members know the fund allocation and decide over the best use of the funds.

# Appendix

## Annex 1. PRPP End-of-Project Independent Evaluation Framework

| **Dimension** | **Issues to be addressed** | **What to look for** | **Data and information sources** | **Data collection methods** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Relevance*** | * What changes in the *external and internal project context* have taken place (poverty situation) since the Mid-Term Evaluation
* Relevance of results and their alignment with policy over the life of the project and with current policies
* In particular, have the GoVN’s priorities, policy directions and needs from that of the project changed?
* Is the project still aligned and consistent with national strategies and priorities.
* Is the project still aligned and consistent with strategies and priorities of the One Plan and of Irish Aid
* Is it consistent with the human development needs and challenges of the country?
* Is the project relevant to the policy priorities and strategies of the target provinces and the local context of the districts?
 | * Are the ‘issues to be addressed’ in the project document still relevant since the Mid-Term Evaluation?
* Relationship with project frame work measures
* Are the project outputs and activities still relevant, at all levels from the central to the local?
* Does the project work planning process ensure the right activities are identified, at all levels from the central to the local?
* Are the types of TA and CB support provided still relevant?
* Are the project’s implementation and management strategies and arrangements still relevant?
* Ability to contribute to guiding future policy and project development – for DPs and GoVN.
* Poverty policies and strategies in the SEDPs
 | * Mid Term Evaluation Report
* DPO, project document;
* Project annual workplans;
* Project annual and quarterly reports;
* Project TA outputs;
* Government decisions in supporting Resolution 80/ NQ-CP;
* UN documents and outputs (HDR, MDG reports);
* Stakeholder interviews (GoVN, IA, UN agencies, DPs, NGOs, local authorities, project beneficiaries)
* SEDPS
 | * Desk review of project documents;
* Review of other context reports (on poverty, institutional context etc.);
* Interviews with GoVN partners: MoLISA, CEMA, NA, EC , line ministries etc.;
* Interviews with UN agencies, IA, DPs and NGOs;
* Field visits: discussion with local officials and local people (interviews and FG discussions);
 |
| ***Effectiveness and efficiency*** | * Findings/recommendations from the Mid-Term Evaluation regarding effectiveness and efficiency.
* Cost-effectiveness and related alternatives used in the project management and implementation
* How effective and efficient has the project been in moving towards it’s 3 outputs, and in undertaking the associated activities?
* Better alignment of the national and provincial organisations with their mandates
* Degree to which the TA and CB contributed to the outputs
* Were the modalities used for TA and CB support effective and efficient?
* Project’s contribution to vertical and horizontal synergies between NIM and CIPs
* Partnerships between entities at all levels
* Project contribution to effective cooperation and coordination?
* What was the contribution of project results to development results and the One Plan outcomes?
* Gender mainstreaming approach, its efficiency and effectiveness
* Equity of benefits to the community including poor and vulnerable groups
 | * What progress towards the anticipated outputs (and targets) has the project achieved since MTE?
* What changes can be observed as a result of these outputs?
* Management and organizational efficiency of the project agencies at national and provincial levels
* What is the project’s progress in undertaking identified activities?
* How effective and efficient have the TA and CB modalities used been?
* What performance benchmarks can be established – for both efficiency and effectiveness
* Effectiveness benchmarks – what represents “success”?
* Vertical and horizontal features of partnerships, effectiveness, what synergies and what cooperation issues?
* Extent to which TA and CB inputs to observed outputs
* How effective and efficient have the implementation and management arrangements been?
* Implementation performance as assessed by timeliness and input output measures
* Quality of partner consultation and decision making
* How effectively has the project planned, monitored and adapted to changing context/conditions?
* In addition to the project initiatives, what other factors may have affected the results (attribution)?
* Were there unintended and any emerging results (positive or negative) of the project initiatives?
* Have the target women and men beneficiaries of the project been reached?
* Are there differences in the benefits received by women to that of men: access to resources and participation in planning and decision making?
* Modalities employed to better target women and men beneficiaries
* Does effectiveness and efficiency differ across the central and the local levels?
 | * Mid Term Evaluation Report and Management Response
* Annual and quarterly workplans:
* Project progress reports;
* Project TA outputs;
* TA and CB reports
* Government decisions;
* UN reports;
* Stakeholder interviews (GoVN, IA, UN agencies, DPs, NGOs, local authorities, project beneficiaries)
 | * Desk reviews of secondary data;
* Interviews with GoVN partners, DPs, IA, UN staff;
* Field visits to selected provinces
 |
| ***Sustainability****[[2]](#footnote-2)* | * Degree to which the project’s outputs will be met and continue after the lifetime of the project
* Degree to which project modalities (systems and procedures) and ways of working will be carried over into the regular work of GoVN beyond the lifetime of the project
* Commitment of GoVN to support outputs
* Relationships between partners
 | * What evidence of progress is there that project outcomes are becoming institutionalized[[3]](#footnote-3) or mainstreamed in the regular work of Government at the national and sub-national levels (will develop some institutionalization measures)?
* What legislation, what regulations?
* How far have project modalities and ways of working been adopted in the regular work of GoVN at the national and sub-national levels?
* Policies to maintain human resources in national and provincial agencies
* Has the project contributed to sustainable linkages between GoVN partners within the national and sub-national levels?
* Has the project contributed towards building strengthened linkages between central and local partners?
* Has the project contributed to strengthening the linkages between GoVN partners and DPs for poverty reduction?
* Has the support to communities sustained after the end of the Project?
 | * Annual and quarterly workplans:
* Project progress reports;
* Project TA outputs;
* Government decisions;
* UN documents and outputs (HDR, MDG reports);
* Stakeholder interviews (GoVN, IA, UN agencies, DPs, NGOs, local authorities, project beneficiaries).
 | * Desk reviews of secondary data;
* Interviews with GoVN partners, IA, DPs, UN staff;
* Field visits to selected provinces;
* Case studies (e.g. RPPP support for designing NTP SPR 2016-2020);
 |
| ***Lessons learnt and Recommendations*** | * Lessons learnt in terms of ensuring the project’s relevance in a changing context
* Lessons learnt in terms of provision of TA, CB, and policy advising;
* Recommendations for improving the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of support to poverty reduction in Viet Nam for the next cycle
* Proposals for future interventions such as areas of interventions, types of TA, CD and policy advising support; partnership and implementation strategy
* Lessons over social and gender development strategies and methods for enhanced poverty reduction results
* Rights based outcomes lessons –especially for women and other vulnerable and resource poor groups
 | * What are the lessons in terms of adjusting the project activities in response to the changes in the GoVN needs and priorities?
* What lessons could be drawn from provision of capacity building? What are good practices in providing TA?
* What are good practices in policy advising by PRPP?
* What recommendations could be made in terms of ensuring/enhancing relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of support for poverty reduction in the new programming of poverty reduction in Vietnam?
* That are areas for future interventions (for poverty reduction) and how these interventions should be made (e.g. types of TA, CD, policy advising, partnership, implementation strategies and arrangements)
* Lessons for future partnership relationships: DPs and GoVN, Inter Ministry and also Provincial agencies
* Change in access to resources, participation in community activities, change in community roles and economic benefits
 | * Stakeholder interviews (GoVN, IA, UN agencies, DPs, NGOs, local authorities, project beneficiaries)
 | * Interviews with GoVN partners, IA, DPs, UN staff;
* Field visits to selected provinces;
 |

## Annex 2. List of Key Policies Supported by PRPP

According to the PRPP Comprehensive Report completed by the PRPP Project in August 2016, there has been at least 81 polies, both at the national and sub-national level, developed and became into operation under the support from PRPP. Below are some of the most important policy decisions (see the above report for more details):

**Key policy decisions at the central level**

1. Decision 1200/QĐ-TTg dated 31/98/2012 of the PM on the approval of 80/NQ-CP;
2. Resolution 76/2014/QH13 of the NA on sustainable poverty reduction until 2020;
3. Decision 2324/2014/QĐ-TTg dated 19/12/2014 on approval of the action plan to implement Resolution 76/2014/QH13;
4. Resolution No. 112/2015/NQ-QH13, dated 11/27/2015 on strengthening land management of former state forestry land by farms, organizations, households and individuals;
5. Decision 41/QD-TTg on management regulations of the NTPs period 2016-2020;
6. Decision No.1614/QD-TTg approving the Master Plan of "Transforming from uni-dimenstional to multi-dimensional poverty for the period 2016-2020";
7. Decision No. 59/2015/QD-TTg on the issuance of the criteria and the poverty line according to the multidimensional approach applies to the period from 2016 to 2020;
8. Decision No. 311/QD-MOLISA dated 20/03/2014 on approving the plan to transform from uni-dimenstional to multi-dimensional poverty for the period 2016-2020;
9. Decision 102/2009 /QD-TTg on direct assistance to poor families in particularly difficult areas to be assessed, reviewed and adjusted;
10. Decision 1557/QD-TTg dated 10/09/2015 on the approval of the MAF-EM;
11. Decision No. 200/QD-CEMA dated May 5, 2016 to issue the action plan to implement the Decision 1557/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister;
12. Decision No. 1559 / QD-TTg issued the criteria for especially difficult communes for the period 2016-2020;
13. Decision No. 1772/2016/QD-TTg approving the NTP SPR period 2016-2020;
14. The policy of supporting near poor households by relevant ministries;
15. Master plan on the human resource development ethnic minorities and mountainous areas toward 2020;
16. Decision No. 2356/QD-TTg, dated 12/04/2013 issued action program to implement the Master plan on the human resource development ethnic minorities and mountainous areas toward 2020;

**Circular and guidelines for implementation of the NTP SPR 2012-2015**

1. Circular guiding the implementation of Program 135, 2012-2016 (Project 2 of the NTP SPR 2012-2015);
2. Inter-ministerial Circular (CEMA-MOF) guidelines on implementing immigrants, sedentary ethnic minorities for 2015
3. Inter-ministerial Circular for implementation of Project 1 under the NTP SPR 2012-2015 toward commune investment ownership and community development
4. Inter-ministerial Circular 02/2014/TTLT-BKH-BTC on integration of different policies and programs in supporting poverty reduction in the poor districts and communes
5. Inter-ministerial Circular 05/2013/TTLT-UBDT-NNPTNT-KHĐT-TC-XD on implementation of the Program 135 with regards to production support, infrastructure devlopment for the Program 135 communes.
6. Inter-ministerial Circular 68/2013/TTLT-BTC-BLĐTBXH dated 21/5/2013 on management and usages of the funds under the Project 3 and 4 of the NTP SPR 2012-2015;
7. Circular 52/2014/TT-NNPTNT dated 29/12/2014 of MARD to issue guidelines for implementation of the production support under Project 1 of the NTP SPR 2012-2015;
8. Guidelines on the operation and maintainance of the infrastructure work in the Program 135 and the 30a poor districts.

**Some guidelines on the pipelines for the new NTP SPR 2016-2020**

1. Guideline for planning of the NTP SPR as an intergal part of the social-economic development planning (SEDP) at the local level;
2. Guideline for monitoring and evaluation of the NTP SPR 2016-2020;
3. Guideline for infrastructure development using the special investment mechanism;
4. Guideline for policy dialogue forum;
5. Guideline for production support and replication of poverty reduction models.

## Annex 3. Consultation Agenda and List of People Met

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| **Development partners** |
| 1 | Mr. | Nguyen Tien Phong | Asisstant Country Director | UNDP |
| 2 | Ms. | Nguyen Thi Ngoc Han | Programme Officer - focal point | UNDP |
| 3 | Ms. | Fiona Quinn | Deputy Head of Development, Irish Aid | Irish Aid |
| 4 | Mr. | To Ngoc Anh | Senior Adviser, Irish Aid | Irish Aid |
| 5 | Ms. | Pham Thi Hanh Nguyen | Programme Officer - focal point | Irish Aid |
| 6 | Mr. | Dao Minh Chau | Senior Programme Specialist | SDC |
| 7 | Ms. | Nguyen Thanh Van | Programme Officer | UNESCO |
| 8 | Ms. | Nguyen Thi Oanh | Programme Officer | ILO |
| 9 | Mr. | Nguyen Hoang Linh | Programme Officer | FAO |
| 10 | Ms. | Nguyen Thi Tu Uyen | Senior Programme Manager | DFAT |
| 11 | Mr. | Vu Thi Quynh Hoa | Head of Campaign and Advocacy | Oxfam |
| 12 | Ms. | Nguyen Thi Nhan | Specialist | CARE |
| 13 | Ms. | Luong Minh Ngoc | Director | ISEE |
| 14 | Ms | Han Kyul Sam Cho | Deputy Director | KOICA |
| 15 | Mr. | Trinh Quang Vinh | ODA Specialist | KOICA |

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| Government agencies |
| 1 | Mr. | Ta Huu Nghia | Cooperative Department | MARD |
| 2 | Mr. | Nguyen Dinh Anh | NRD Coordination Office | MARD |
| 3 | Mr. | Duong Van Ba | Vice Head, Dept of Student Affairs | MoET |
| 4 | Mr. | Bui Tien Dung | Official, Dept of Student Affairs | MoET |
| 5 | Ms. | Be Thi Hong Van | Vice Head, Dept of EM Policies | CEMA |
| 6 | Mr. | Nguyen Van Tan | Vice Head, Dept of EM Policies | CEMA |
| 7 | Ms. | Hoang Thuy Quynh | Dept of EM Policies | CEMA |
| 8 | Mr. | Pham Trong Cuong | Deputy Director of the SA Dept of the NA Office | NA |
| 9 | Ms. | Nguyen Thu Tra | Official at the SA Dept of the NA Office | NA |
| 10 | Mr. | Doan Huu Minh | Project Manager, PRPP | MoLISA |
| 11 | Ms.  | Le Thi Tuyet Nhung | National Deputy Director, PRPP | MoLISA |
| 12 | Mr | Luu Quang Tuan | Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs | MoLISA |
| 13 | Ms  | Nguyen Thi Lan Huong | Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs | MoLISA |
| 14 | Mr  | Tran Duc Nghiep | Department of Financial and Monetary | MPI |
| 15 | Mr  | Nguyen Tuan | Department of Financial and Monetary | MPI |
| 16 | Mr. | Nguyen Van Tuong | National Technical Coordinator, PRPP | PRPP |
| 17 | Ms.  | Hoang Thi Thu Huong | Accountant, PRPP | PRPP |
| 18 | Mr. | Colman Ross | Former Senior Technical Advisor, PRPP |  |

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| Provinces of Dien Bien, Quang Ngai, and Tra Vinh |
| 1 | Vice chairman of PPC (Quang Ngai) |
| 2 | Leaders of DoLISA; Social Projection Department |
| 3 | Leaders of PCEM; Dept of EM Policies |
| 4 | Representatives of DPI, DoF, DARD (Dept of Rural Devp and Agri Extension Center) |
| 5 | Representatives of IFAD ADM Project (Tra Vinh) |
| 6 | Representatives of World Bank NMPRP2 (Dien Bien) |
| 7 | 4-5 line department officials trained by PRPP |
| 8 | Vice chairmen of district (Muong Ang in Dien Bien; Minh Long in Quang Ngai; Tra Cu in Tra Vinh) |
| 9 | Representatives of district DoLISA/PCEM/DARD, district Dept for Finance and Planning |
| 10 | Representatives of district Women Union and Farmer Association |
| 11 | Chairmen/Vice Chairmen of communes (Muong Dang in Dien Bien; Long Mai in Quang Ngai; Ngoc Bien in Tra Vinh) |
| 12 | Other CPC official (office staff, accountant), representatives of commune WU and FA |
| 13 | 2-3 head of villages per commune |
| 14 | 10-12 farmers per commune |

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 (see UNDP (2011) ‘Outcome Level Evaluation: A Companion Guide to the Handbook on Planning Monitoring and Evaluating for Development results for Programme Units and Evaluators’). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is early in the post project period to assess sustainability – but the 2017 SEDP cycle can be used to assess what continues after the project’s support [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Noted that Institutionalisation has many different indicators and these may differ between stakeholders: DPs, GoVN, Provincial agencies. and the community [↑](#footnote-ref-3)