

**“Lessons Learnt”
from
Integrated Food Security Programs
in South East Asia**

**Mission Report
IFSP Quang Binh, Vietnam**

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List of Abbreviations:

ADB	Asia Development Bank
CEFE	Competency-Based Economics through Formation of Entrepreneurs
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FU	Farmers' Union
FFW	Food for Work
FLA	Forest land allocation
FLUP	Forest Land Use Planning
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
ICCO	Inter-Church Development Organisation
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFSPQB	Integrated Food Security Project Quang Binh
KEFs	Key extension Farmers
MARD	Ministry for Agriculture and Rural Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
P/D/C PC	Provincial/District/Commune People's Committee
PMB	Project Management Board
PPM	Project Planning Matrix
PRM	Project Review Mission
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SFDP	Social Forestry Development Project (GFA)
SHP	Self-help Promotion
TEW	Towards Ethnic Women
TC	Technical Co-operation
VDP	Village Development Planning
VDPs	Village Development Plans
VEWs	Village extension workers
VPO	Village Planning Organisers
WU	Women's Union

1. Introduction

1.1 Objectives of the mission

Since 1996, GTZ has implemented integrated food security projects (IFSP's) in Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ). The projects are based on comparable problems: structural poverty with a high prevalence of malnutrition, little opportunity to generate income, dependence on a subsistence economy, as well as on similar political framework conditions, i.e.: high susceptibility to crises and disasters.

All three projects will have come to an end as integrated food security programmes after two implementation phases and will be converted into technical co-operation projects by the second quarter of this year. Close co-operation with multilateral institutions (IFAD, ADB) has started or is foreseen for the next phase.

An external mission to Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam was organised by GTZ¹ to critically support the process of identifying and reviewing status, impacts and lessons learnt in the projects. Based on these reflections possible recommendations for the further development of project approaches in the countries and the region as well as for the overall concept of integrated food security (IFSP) with regard to poverty reduction, crisis prevention and disaster preparedness should be drawn².

1.2 Methodology of the mission

The methods applied to work out the major lessons learnt from IFSP Quang Binh (IFSP-QB) involved the analysis of project documents³, numerous discussions at national, province and project level, as well as a field trip to the programme area with discussions at district, village and target group level. The most important step was a two day workshop embracing project and counterpart staff, representatives from district and village administration, mass-organisations and target groups. The workshop was facilitated by the mission members and the results are documented in annex 3.

Considering the short period of only five days in the country, the mission could not assume the comprehensive task of an external evaluation but was more an assistance to the projects own review process with regard to important "lessons learnt".

¹ The TOR of the mission (Annex 1) were drafted during a meeting of the principal advisors of the 3 IFSPs (Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam) last year in Bangkok.

² Additional relevance of the study is seen against the background of the BMZ decision to limit in future the duration of IFSPs (financed from Title 68708) to three to five years, and to integrate disaster preparedness, crisis prevention and conflict management aspects more intensively into the project design.

³ Besides the report of the programme review mission from 1999 and the last project progress reports, the mission especially considered the following sources of information:

- a series of sector studies and "lessons learnt" reports which were recently established by the programme in order to prepare for the final internal evaluation report and the hand-over of the project to the local government.
- reports of workshops at village and commune level which were organised by the IFSP Quang Binh in order to draw "lessons learnt" from the perspective of the target group. Both documents were handed over to the mission after arrival in Vietnam.

The method hereby applied was strongly linked to the “appreciative inquiry” approach”; a social research and organisational development method which is based on the conviction that a merely problem oriented view of projects reduces the possibilities of generating new theory and therefore attempt to generate a collective image of a new and better future by exploring the best of what is and has been.

The programme of the “lessons learnt” workshop and the guidelines for the interviews with resource persons (annex 3) reflect the steps of appreciative inquiry:

- “Discovering the best of” (identifying of successes – changes/impacts for people and organisations)
- “Understanding what creates the best of” (analysis of enabling factors for the changes/impact generated)
- “Development of joint visions concerning superior performance” (what could be done more effectively and efficiently and how could this be realised)

In Vietnam, also weaknesses (hindering factors in the past) were identified by the more than 30 participants of the workshop and considered during the formulation of “major lessons learnt”.

The present study strives to condense the results of the workshop, interviews and analysis of documents and to work out some general conclusions concerning the lessons learnt from IFSP Quang Binh Province (IFSP-QB). The structure of the report follows the leading questions elaborated in the TOR of the mission (annex 1).

1.3 Time plan of the mission

The team consisted of Mr. Sigfrid Schröder-Breitschuh, GTZ, OE 0420 (internal evaluation) and Mr. Peter Kaufmann (independent consultant). The team prepared the mission to the three countries during a 3 day period in Eschborn (study of documents, elaboration of study design and discussion within GTZ headquarters (OE 4333 and 2040).

The team arrived in Dong Hoi the provincial capital and programme headquarter on the 3rd of March 2002 and was received by the Provincial Peoples Committee (PPC) and project staff for a working-dinner. The 4th a presentation of the project components and individual interviews with project staff took place. The 5th the mission travelled to the programme area (Minh Hoa and Tuyen Hoa District) where field visits and discussions with target groups were organised. The 6th and 7th the workshop on “lessons learnt” was carried out. The 8th last discussions with programme staff and regional counterparts took place and the mission travelled to Hanoi where the 9th discussions within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) the political partner of IFSP, the German Embassy and various co-operating German TC-projects were organised. (Itinerary of the mission (see annex 2)

Preliminary conclusions of the mission (major lessons learnt from IFSP-QB) were presented and discussed with the workshop participants, members of the PPC in Dong Hoi and with the MARD in Hanoi.

2. Concept and implementation strategy of the programme

2.1 Problem situation

The IFSP-QB started its activities in Quang Binh Province in 1996 in a situation where large parts of the approximately 113.000 people of the two targeted districts Tuyen Hoa and Minh Hoa were suffering from insecure and insufficient rice production and income. The majority of the people regularly experienced food shortages of three to six months per year and 56% of the under five age group were chronically malnourished.

The resource base of the mainly agricultural oriented economy is quite limited in the two project districts. With only 0,3-0,5 ha of cultivated area per inhabitant, very little irrigated land, the sometimes unreliable rainfall pattern, natural disasters (flooding and hurricanes) and a high population growth the rural people are captured in a vicious cycle. The potential for the intensification and diversification of crop and livestock production as well as for the creation of additional income opportunities was not used sufficiently. Over-exploitation of the forest areas presented a long-term risk to the lower cultivation on settlement areas and access to markets and services was hampered by the bad conditions of the rural road network.

Beside insufficient rice production and the lack of purchasing power, food security was further affected by the limited knowledge and inappropriate behaviour with regard to hygiene and nutrition.

2.2 Intervention measures/components with regard to IFSP concept

The concept⁴ to improve food security and the basic living conditions of the target villages consist in a multi-sectoral approach based on the needs expressed by the target groups. The project concept integrated the following components: nutritional knowledge and behaviour, family planning, strengthening of self-help capacities, improvement of the farming systems (agriculture and livestock), forest land use planning, alternative (off-farm) income promotion and infrastructure development. The strategy aimed at increasing the food security of the target group by improving the availability (increase of rice production), the access (income generation) and the use (nutritional education) of food.

Short-term improvement of food security by labour intensive works (food for work) played a significant role during the first phase of the programme and as a disaster response to the flooding in 1999/2000. More than 4.600 t of locally procured rice were employed within IFSP since 1996.

The concept of the programme was in line with the national action plan for nutrition (1995-2000) and is in line with the current poverty reduction strategy of the country. According to the MARD the IFSP-QP concept does indeed serve as a model to design food security and poverty related interventions in other parts of the country.

⁴ The design of the programme was based on joint planning exercises in 1996. Some major adjustments (like village development planning as a major activity) were introduced in the second phase

2.3 Targeting mechanism of the programme

Within Quang Binh province the two most vulnerable districts in terms of food security and poverty, Tuyen Hoa and Minh Hoa, were selected (regional targeting). The target population are the rural residents of the two districts. During the first programme phase (4/1996-3/1999) the activities concentrated on 60 project villages with approximately 54.000 people. During the second phase (1999-4/2002) all villages (about 120.000 people), except the villages in the remote mountainous areas populated by ethnic minorities were reached by the interventions of the IFSP. These villages were deliberately left out, as ICCO (through the local NGO TEW) carried out a rural development programme in the area. However, it seems, that the villages with ethnic minorities were not adequately covered by TEW and are still very much affected by food insecurity.

Beside the “self targeting” mechanism within the framework of the labour intensive works (construction and rehabilitation of village infrastructure with FFW) specific targeting was applied within the nutritional education and rehabilitation programme. Other programme components were not specifically oriented towards vulnerable and food insecure groups.

During the second project phase, interventions were seen more under the general aspect of poverty reduction and improvement of rural living conditions without a specific focus on food security. The project was closer to a rural development programme than to an IFSP.

2.4 Implementation structure of the programme

On the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is the political partner of the project, whereas on provincial level the executing partner is the Provincial Political Committee (PPC). The MARD was mainly chosen because the concept of the project covered many aspects of rural development and because MARD was at the head of the inter-ministerial “National Food Security Committee”. The fact that the PPC has a co-ordination function at Province level and is a politically strong structure made it to be the most appropriate partner for multisectoral project implementation.

Due to the broad range of activities the project has a diversified implementation structure at province and district level and co-operates with a large number of agencies for planning and implementation. Apart from technical Departments, the People’s Committees on different levels and their mass organisations (women union, farmer association, youth union), NGOs, local consultants and the GTZ supported Family Health Project were the most prominent implementing partners.

To promote ownership by villagers and sustainability of project activities, village based implementation structures were built up and supported. As cornerstones of the community based extension and training system “Village Extension Workers” (VEW), Key Extension Farmers (KEF), Village Veterinarians (VET’s), Family Planning and Nutrition Collaborators were trained and supported in their development functions. To sustain project activities cost recovery schemes (e.g. veterinary revolving fund) and the organisation of target groups in associations and “clubs” (“nutrition clubs”, “no-third-child”) were promoted.

2.5 Implementation approach of the programme

From the beginning the project applied a participatory and need oriented approach involving the target group and implementers in situation analysis, planning, implementation and

monitoring and evaluation. During the first project phase, numerous meetings and PRA-workshops were organised to analyse, prioritise and plan activities (IFSP supported micro-projects) at village level.

Participatory “village development planning” (VDP) as an institutionalised and sustainable process of participatory village development was introduced in IFSP-QB during the second programme phase with the help of external consultancy and by using experiences which worked well in the Social Forestry Development Project in Son La Province (SFDP). Capacities for village development planning were built up at Province, District and village level and VDPs were elaborated in all villages covered by IFSP,

To enhance ownership and ensure sustainability, local contributions (labour and material) and maintenance concepts for the supported village projects were requested by the IFSP before starting support. Subsidies, which had played a strong role in the beginning of the project, were reduced step by step during the last years to prepare the conversion into a TC programme.

The programme was implemented in two phases. The first phase (04/96-03/99) was directly implemented through GTZ. The second phase (04/99 –12/2001), which was expanded by 6 month to 6/2002, is implemented on behalf of GTZ by consulting firms (ARGE – IESP Quang Binh: Institut für Projektplanung and GFA Terra Systems GmbH).

After an implementation period of six years and an overall German contribution adding up to approximately 10 Mill DM, the IFSP will come to an end in the middle of 2002. However, a technical co-operation project with focus on the sustainable management of natural resources will continue to give support to Quang Binh Province. This project will be carried out in co-operation with ADB, which will finance the development of the local infrastructure (based on VDP) and provide credit for farm inputs and income generation. Solutions successfully tested within the IFSP can thus be replicated on a larger scale (including the neighbouring provinces of Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Thua Thien-Hue).

3. Status and Impact of the project

3.1 Project impact at target group level

Since the project started, the measurable changes in basic living conditions of villagers in the two districts are impressive. According to project documents, the opinion of our interview partners and the workshop results, the major improvements in living conditions of the target groups were achieved with regard to the following domains⁵:

⁵ Benefits for the people were systematically monitored by the IFSP-QB as far as planned for in the PPM. Unplanned (positive or negative) impact were not followed up. For some areas of interventions (off-farm income promotion, sustainable forest land use) the “chain of impact” in the planning documents is incomplete and the indicators are not specifying the direct tangible benefits for the target groups.

- nutrition and health situation,
- population growth,
- availability of food (through increased productivity of rice production),
- access and marketing (rural infrastructure) and short term access to food (FFW),
- off-farm income
- access to and sustainable use of natural resources (forest land)
- participation in village development and increased organisational capacities.

The improvements in the nutritional status of children under 5 years were related by the IFSP-QB only to the nutrition component of the project. Nutrition Indicators were not used to estimate the overall impact of the programme on an aggregated level.

The nutrition rehabilitation and education programme of IFSP-QB is implemented by the district women union via “commune nutrition steering committees” and trained “village nutrition collaborators”. It started in 7/1997 and consisted of mainly three components. 1. Growth Monitoring Program; 2. Nutrition Education and Rehabilitation Program (rehabilitating the health of malnourished children and educating parents in NERP centres) and 3. Community Nutrition Education. The nutrition rehabilitation and education programme reached all project villages by the end of 2001. To enhance sustainability, “nutrition clubs” for parents were initiated. The women union is prepared to continue with the activities on its own.

According to the M&E system the percentage of underweight children from 1-5 years in the project region (<-2 S.D. weight/age) decreased from 56,2% in 1996 to 25% in 12/2001. Data on the changes in chronic malnutrition (height/age) were not available⁶.

According to the IFSP M&E data, all project villages have been reached by family planning activities and approximately 75% of the villagers have a sufficient knowledge about an appropriate birth control methods and more than 50% apply birth control methods efficiently. The average birth rate in the programme area was reduced by more than 0.28% annually between 1997 and 2000. The specific contribution of IFSP-QB to this important change is difficult to assess and has to be seen against the background of the overall reduction of the population growth rate in Vietnam from 3,2 to 1,7% during the last 10 years. Besides the family planning activities, also other IFSP-QB activities (e.g. agriculture, off-farm income generation, self-help promotion) may have contributed to the reduction of the birth rate.

The reproductive and sexual health component was introduced in the programme concept after the PPR in 1999. The activities are implemented on the basis of a collaboration contract between IFSP-QB and the GTZ supported “Promotion of Family Health Project”, which covered already Tuyen Hoa District and included Minh Hoa District in addition. Through training of trainer measures PFHP supported the Provincial Committee on Population and Family Planning to built up a network of family planning village collaborators. PFHP operates only at province and district level. Through the co-operation with IFSP-QB the “village collaborators” were followed up more intensively and specific training measures at commune and village level could be conducted which enhanced the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the family planning programme in the IFSP programme area.

⁶ A baseline survey (without control group) on health and nutrition was carried out in 1996 and a follow up survey in 12/2001. Both surveys were conducted by the National Institute for Nutrition (NIN). As only a draft version of the 12/2001 survey report (with contradicting figures) was available, the mission was asked by the project not to refer to the data in the report.

According to a an impact survey recently carried out on behalf of the programme, the availability of food on household level has considerably increased (over the last five years by 13 kg per month). Accordingly 85% and 81% of the household in Tuyen Hoa and Minh Hoa reported in 2001 to have enough or more than enough food throughout the year (against 32% and 44% in 1998).

However, due to considerably deteriorated market prices for rice (about – 30 % over the last four years), rice production - though crucial for the availability of food for own consumption - has become a non-profitable farm enterprise in the project area.

In all project villages more than 50% of the households introduced new productive cultivation methods in their farming systems. The dramatic improvements in food production are most probably attributable to technical innovations, the introduction of which were also supported by the project like new high yield varieties, integrated pest management and the improved access to extension (through extension officers, IFSP staff and VEW/KEF).

The programme intended to diversify the farming systems and promoted various kinds of cash crops (pepper, peanuts, fruit trees, coffee, vegetables etc.). Income effects out of the promotion of cash crops are still limited as the measures started late and on a relative small scale.

Major sources for household cash revenues in the targeted districts are animal husbandry and off-farm income. The introduction of more productive breeds (sows, bulls, goats, chicken and ducks) combined with village based veterinary services (VET) and drug revolving funds (VDRF) led to an productivity increase of at least 10% for the 60% of households which applied the new techniques. The overall income effect of the livestock activities is still limited and was not monitored in detail.

Various off farm income sources (e.g. improved bee-keeping, tailoring, leaf hat production, rattan and recently mushroom production etc.) were identified and promoted through the programme. Market analysis and systematic methods to analyse the socio-economic, technical and environmental feasibility for non-timber forest products were carried out. The project supported the interested households through training, subsidised provision of inputs (bee-hives, tailoring machines etc.) and organisational development (formation of groups for marketing, CEFE clubs etc.). In addition, CEFE (competency-based economics through formation of entrepreneurs) training of trainer courses and start up business courses for villagers were carried out.

Detailed data on the income generated through the various activities were not available. A considerable number of households in more than two thirds of the villages was involved in the activities and especially for the improved bee-keeping (which was applied by more than 700 people). Significant income effects for participating households are reported⁷. However, the overall impact on household income in the two districts seems to be still modest and it is questionable if poor and food insecure groups have significantly benefited from the activities as no specific targeting was applied.

The rural infrastructure in the two districts was significantly improved since the project started. The project supported the construction and rehabilitation of 700 km of inner- and inter-village roads. Most of the inner-village roads can be used by ox-carts and the majority of inter-village roads by trucks. More than 80% of the roads are maintained by the concerned

⁷ Bee-keeping, already promoted during the first programme phase has a good potential as marketing is not a problem. Income of participating households has increased on average by more than 10%.

communities independently. For some of the technical parts of the roads (culverts, bridges etc.) quality standards were insufficient.

The rehabilitation of the road network has considerably improved the transportation and marketing of inputs and farm products in the two districts and contributed to the overall long-term economic development.

In addition a total of 53 small scale irrigation schemes (partly damaged by the flooding) with an irrigated area of 562 ha were rehabilitated or expanded (176 ha). Systems for maintenance of the irrigation systems based on water user fees are mostly in place. Investments in the rehabilitation of the irrigation schemes have a significant direct return on rice production.

As a short term impact, the access to food for vulnerable groups was enhanced by “food for work” (FFW) measures. A total of 4641 t of rice was used for the rehabilitation of the rural infrastructure through labour intensive works.

The food was locally purchased through GTZ office and distributed to the villages in two instalments (quantities were calculated on the basis of unified work norms). Rice distribution was predominantly carried out during off cropping season. Self-targeting was applied as the value of the rations was below the opportunity cost of rural labour. In many cases the work actually done by the villages exceeded the volume stated in the contracts. Final distribution of food to the participants was independently organised by the villages.

The rural infrastructure projects were identified through PRA exercises. For planning, implementation and monitoring the respective communities had full responsibility. Besides food, IFSP-QB supported them with locally not available material and technical advice, according to the “local subsidy contracts” concluded between village authorities and project. Communities contributed between 20 and 40% of the material costs.

Besides the tangible benefits (transitory access to food and creation of development assets) the involved target groups have also enhanced their internal management capacities as they were fully responsible for planning and organising the work and food distribution.

During the second phase, the project started to promote forest land allocation and forest land use planning (FLA and FLUP). 38.000 ha of forest land were allocated and over 8.000 land title deeds (“red books”) were handed out to the farmers). More than 60% of the project communes have developed land use plans and started to implement them. Benefits are not yet measurable. However, it can be stated that households with low resource endowment participate in the land allocation process only to a limited degree.

The participatory approach of the programme and its institutionalisation through VDP had a significant impact on the self-help capacities at village level. People increased their awareness and understanding of development concepts, changed their attitudes and became more self-confident. Capacities at village level (for planning, implementation and sustainable management) were built up, which may also allow people to find appropriate answers and organisational solutions to future problems⁸.

Capacities for VDP were built up through a TOT approach (project staff, and staff from key district institutions were qualified as master trainers who train commune staff, village heads

⁸ Indicators and procedures to measure the increased organisational capacities of target groups were not systematically developed. The reported cases of villages where development projects were initiated and implemented independently (without direct project support) may serve as a proxy indicator.

and key villagers who facilitate the VDP process at village level). The VDP are reviewed at commune level and submitted to the department of planning and investment (DPI) to be integrated in the routine planning process of the district. After formal approval from the province level, implementation is carried out by villagers with own resources, technical support from district and support from external agencies (IFSP and other development agencies like ADB, ICCO, ARCD).

In 2001/2, VDPs were elaborated in all 260 villages in the project region⁹. However village development planning needs still to be streamlined in an efficient way. District plans and VDPs have to be matched, procedures for the allocation of government resources to the local level need to be defined and the follow up of the plans to be strengthened. Participation of villagers in the process is still limited and depends on the visible benefits coming out of the planning exercise.

The bottom up planning approaches (VDP, FLUP) introduced with IFSP support in the project area had some impact on the ongoing decentralisation process in Quang Binh Province and serves as a model for neighbouring Provinces.

Attribution of impacts:

The considerable changes of living conditions in the two districts can probably only partly be attributed to the project and need to be seen in the context of the general economic dynamic of the country.

Vietnam is considered to be among the nations with strong performance in poverty reduction. With robust average annual growth rates of 7,5%, Vietnamese people have experienced a significant improvement in their living standards during the last years and the number of hungry and poor (according to Vietnam's own poverty standards) has been reduced from 30% in 1990 to an estimated 11% in 2000. The country has become self sufficient in food production and transformed into one of the major rice exporters. National population growth rates have dropped from 3,4% to 1,7% during the same time.

Hence, it is not easily possible to separate the influence of the project from that of the quickly growing national economy and from other development actors in the programme area, like government programmes, IFAD or NGOs. During the workshop on lessons learned, the participants insisted on the fact that the project only contributed to the positive changes and that sometimes its influence was smaller than that of other actors.

⁹ The VDP are elaborated in English and Vietnamese languages and documented within the computerised MIS of the IFSP. The CD with the plans is available for the province and district administration and print outs are accessible at village level. A VDP manual was elaborated to support the application and the dissemination of the participatory planning tool and a workshop on the participatory planning method with national representatives from the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) and representatives of other provinces in Central Vietnam was carried out.

Sustainability and significance of impacts:

Due to the favourable economic and political framework conditions in Vietnam and the high degree of organisation in the villages most of the changes introduced by the programme have good chances to be sustainable.

The participatory village planning, though reflected in the political objectives, still needs further institutionalisation and operationalisation (including transparent procedures and decision making structures and allocation of budget on commune and village level) to mobilise more villagers and to serve as an effective development instrument.

Certain organisational innovations the project has initiated at village level (e.g. community based extension worker, veterinary agents, nutrition collaborators, etc.) have already been taken over by the political structure of the villages and the mass organisations. Villagers are ready to pay for services delivered, so that sustainability can be expected. Maintenance procedures for the improved village infrastructure are in place (trained villagers and community regulations on free labour contribution for road maintenance, water user fees for irrigation structures etc.).

As parts of the operating costs of government extension services and mass organisations were taken over by the programme (travel allowances etc.) efficiency of services rendered could in future decrease although the project had a more restrictive praxis in handling “incentives” compared to the praxis of other institutions. It is further likely that in future some support to the permanent service delivery structures will come from the ADB programme.

Efficiency (cost/benefit ratio):

The efficiency of the various interventions in terms of cost/benefit ratios was not systematically monitored by the programme. It can be assumed that for interventions with short and direct benefits the return of investment for household food security is high¹⁰. For certain interventions (e.g. irrigation schemes) cost/benefit analysis were carried out as the positive return on investment was a criteria for support.

3.2 Benefits for implementing organisations (capacity building)

The main benefits for partner institutions was the strengthening of the technical and organisational capacities of the staff involved at province and district level through numerous short, medium and long term training measures, on the job supervision and systematic exposure to other projects. Capacity building for local project staff, staff from line Departments and Peoples Committees as well as from the mass organisations was a main element of the project concept and a precondition for the successful implementation and future sustainability of the programme.

Through the propagation of participatory methods and village development planning the project started to introduce a new demand oriented thinking in the implementing agencies, a prerequisite for effective supply of services. Other tangible benefits for the implementing organisations relate to improved office equipment and increased mobility and motivation (payment of allowances).

¹⁰ As rice prices have considerable deteriorated during the last years the return has to be calculated with regard to the opportunity costs of “food self sufficiency”.

3.3 Contribution to poverty reduction and cross sectoral issues,

According to the data of the M&E system a number of impressive changes in living conditions of villagers have occurred since the start of the project. Most prominent are the rapid increase in rice production and the significant improvement of the nutritional status of children. Other important impacts are the reduction of population growth, the enlargement of the resource base through additional irrigated rice perimeters, the improved access to the area and more off-farm opportunities as well as the growing self-confidence of villagers to plan and implement their own activities and the creation of sustainable technology transfer systems at village level. All of these changes are likely to have strongly contributed to alleviate poverty¹¹.

However, as no specific poverty targeting (and monitoring) was carried out it is difficult to specify the contribution of the programme to poverty reduction. For some measures (e.g. off-farm activities, forest land allocation¹²), the direct poverty relevance is not evident.

Gender specific aspects were taken into account to a certain degree. For some activities (e.g. training) women quotas were defined and measures with a specific relevance for women (e.g. certain off-farm activities, vegetable gardening) were developed. In other areas (nutritional awareness, family planning) the consideration of the gender aspect would have demanded to target more intensively men. Impact indicators do not always show the expected benefits by gender and the consequences of project measures on the workload of women and their “caring capacities” (e.g. through participation in FFW and new agricultural activities) were not considered explicitly. The professional project and counterpart staff is predominantly male.

A positive impact on the environment may be expected from the forestland allocation and the forestland use planning (protection and sustainable use of forests) and the promotion of sustainable cropping techniques (e.g. introduction of agro-forestry systems and integrated pest management).

3.4 Time span to generate the impacts

For certain interventions the time to achieve impact was very short (increase of rice availability through promotion of improved varieties and appropriate cropping techniques, improvement of the rural infrastructure) whereas in other areas (diversification of agriculture/cash crops, off-farm income promotion and nutritional education) it took and will still take more time to produce some tangible effects. Sustainable forestland use management started relatively late and so far only the preconditions (land allocation) to generate future impact are achieved.

The specific socio-cultural and psychological factors of the Vietnamese society, the strong political will at national level and the fairly well organised mass-organisations even on village level permit for social changes in behaviour which may be quicker and deeper than in neighbouring countries. The Vietnamese case shows therefore some specific conditions, which are not replicated in the two other countries of the sub-region (e.g. Laos and Cambodia). Under these particularly favourable framework conditions for development the

¹¹ According to classification of the government, the percentage of poor and very poor households was reduced from 76% (Tuyen Hoa) and 56% (Minh Hoa) in 1996 to 39% and 42% in 2001 respectively.

¹² There is a tendency to allocate land to families with a sufficient resources endowment (labour force) as this is a prerequisite to effectively protect and to use the land. Poor households (e.g. female headed households) may be left out of the forest land allocation process.

conversion of the IFSP programme into a normal technical co-operation project could have started earlier.

3.5 Political relevance of the programme

IFSP-QB had predominantly gained political relevance at the end of the second phase by its contribution to the discussion on participatory planning methods in the context of the overall decentralisation process. The implementation of the VDP concept (training of staff at different levels on participatory methods, systematic analysis of problems, development of options and participatory decision making) contributed to the promotion of democratic procedures in the programme area.

The experiences made with VDP in the framework of IFSP-QB provide a sound basis for further expansion and institutionalisation of the approach (e.g. in the three provinces covered by the ADB programme).

The project has played an important role in the national discussion on food security policy. Being member of the ACC working group of the FAO, the German team leader ensured an organising and moderating role and contributed to the conceptual discussion and in the development of a preliminary draft of a food policy paper.

The exposure visits of government staff responsible for food security from all provinces in Vietnam to IFSP-QB allowed to make the concept of the project known. In the same sense the project organised seminars in neighbouring provinces to ensure the transfer of lessons learnt to relevant provincial staff, thus contributing to knowledge transfer within Vietnam. The video about the project helped to inform a large audience in Vietnam about the project. It was shown on the national television and the project distributed copies of it to many partners.

As food security lost its importance with the rapid increase in food production, the “National Food Security Committee” was dissolved in mid 2001, and the national discussion switched to other areas. Today other topics (poverty reduction and natural resource management) attract more attention from decision makers on national level and from donor agencies. The distance between the project and the capital, the high workload of the project advisors and the lack of integration of counterpart staff in this discussion limited the project’s impact on the national level.

There is a lack of co-ordination on the German side to efficiently ensure that its concepts and strategy are systematically introduced in the national discussion. More intensive collaboration between different projects is necessary. The programme approach of the German development co-operation will probably solve a part of this co-ordination problem.

3.6 Contribution to disaster preparedness and mitigation

In Vietnam the concepts and strategies for disaster preparedness and mitigation do already exist at national and provincial level and well-trained and experienced organisations, the military and police forces can act quickly and efficiently. In disaster situations the country needs more material help than advisory services.

There were no specific technical inputs of the IFSP to disaster preparedness and mitigation. However, the programme had contact to the provincial disaster preparedness and mitigation committee and food aid was provided and used for FFW after the flooding in 1999 which affected also parts of the programme area.

4. Analysis of enabling factors

The stated impacts of IFSP Quang Binh will be further discussed with regard to enabling and hindering factors with regard to aspects, which were specifically defined in the TOR of the mission.

4.1 *Selection of components/interventions, targeting and implementation approach*

Selection of intervention measures on village level was a combination of results of the PRA process during the first phase of the project and priority setting on national level (e.g. various national agricultural programmes were supported). The VDP process started only in 2000 and had little impact on the selection of project measures. During the workshops it was therefore strongly recommended (as a lesson learnt) to start with PRA and VDP from the beginning to enhance the need relevance of the promoted measures.

The project followed a more general rural development approach covering a broad range of sectors (health, nutrition, agriculture, horticulture, livestock, forestry, off-farm income, infrastructure development and self-help promotion). Within these sectors a wide variety of measures were supported. The activities in the agriculture and livestock sector ranged from promotion of rice, maize, pepper, vegetable gardens, agro-forestry, fruit trees, ducks, chicken, goats, cattle to veterinary services on village level. There was no concentration in project planning and implementation on measures having comparatively highest effects on improvement of food security. Also the PPR in 1999 did not contribute to focus the project activities in agriculture.

Already well-known technologies (like improved varieties, improved rice cropping technologies and small scale irrigation) were promoted on a large scale to intensify food production within the programme area. The resulting substantial increase in rice productivity and production contributed essentially to the short-term improvement of food availability at household level. However, the tremendous production increase in the Mekong Delta deteriorated market prices for rice during the last years and turned production above subsistence level in a non-profitable farm enterprise.

The diversification of agriculture was based on the dissemination of concepts developed at national level which seemed to be suitable for the target area. However, the project did not follow a farming system approach in order to focus its activities in agriculture. The concept incorporated also activities with only long-term impacts like improving animal breeds, planting fruit trees or agro-forestry systems, which have only a limited direct contribution to food security. The success and sustainability of some of the supported measures could not be fully ensured within the two IFSP implementation phases. The range of activities (specifically within the agricultural component) was too wide and a stronger focus on key activities would have been recommendable in order to cope with the restricted implementation capacities of partners and to generate a maximum of impact in the limited time available.¹³

¹³ There was an intention to streamline the activities in the second phase, but the programme felt to be bound by the indicators in the planning documents (and the contract of the consulting firm with GTZ). The "farming systems approach" is, however, an important conceptual component of the follow-up TC project on Natural Resource Management. Preparatory works, such as a systematic assessment of the existing farming systems, will be completed before the end of the IFSP.

Though some components and activities were integrated on project level (e.g. nutrition and vegetable production, infrastructure component and small scale irrigation etc.), generally the integration was restricted by the subject matter oriented programme organisation and limited exchange between the sectors at province level. Integration of activities at district and village level was encouraged by the decentralised implementation structure (IFSPQB district teams) and the participatory VDP process.

In the programme concept, food security (and poverty) targeting was applied only on the basis of statistical averages (the two Districts belonging to the very poorest Districts in the whole of Vietnam). The decision, at the beginning of programme implementation in 1996, not to cover the poorest villages of the Districts (mountainous regions with ethnic minorities) was based on the assumption that these areas would be adequately supported by NGO's which was apparently not the case. Therefore, at the end of 1999, several "ethnic minority villages" were integrated in addition to the original planning. In the field of agriculture and off-farm-promotion the interventions did not specifically focus on food insecure and vulnerable households (e.g. households with malnourished children, women headed households etc.). Self-targeting for the labour intensive works (FFW for infrastructure construction and rehabilitation) was applied and worked well.

4.2 Establishment of ownership and promotion of partnership

All project components were implemented in collaboration with local partner and strongly supported by local leaders. The financial support of the project, regulated by contracts, enabled partner institutions to intensify and enlarge their ordinary development activities in the villages. These contracts allowed a shift in responsibility from the project to the implementing agencies. On the other hand this procedure may have reinforced the dependency of the Vietnamese partners from the German contribution to the project.

As the project was in line with the overall policy orientations of the government, its implementation philosophies and strategies, the acceptance and the ownership of the project by staff at national, province and district level was high¹⁴. District Peoples Committees in both Tuyen Hoa and Minh Hoa have actively assigned related agencies to co-operate with IFSP in implementing activities and have even committed themselves to replicate successful activities of IFSP on a larger scale, showing policy impacts of IFSP's activities.

The project organised a series of seminars to inform partner organisations at province and national level about the approach, concept, implementing strategies and methods, successes and experiences of the project. Also these activities have contributed to increase the ownership.

The budget management of the project,¹⁵ as well as the system of allowances, which are lower than those of other donors in the country, and those of other German funded projects, provoked some discontent at provincial level.

¹⁴ The political orientations in the country have developed towards a gradual shift from subsidised state to market economy, giving more room for decentralised decision making and grass-root democracy (decree 29/ from 1998). Further a more explicit poverty orientation (poverty reduction strategy paper) and the will to reduce regional disparities (specific consideration of mountainous areas) were positive framework conditions for the IFSP.

¹⁵ The financial management of IFSP-QB followed the rules and regulations of GTZ and it seems that the irritations are routed in a misunderstanding on the side of the Vietnamese partner concerning the modalities of the German contribution (direct funding).

At village level, ownership was promoted through participatory ways of identification, prioritisation, planning and monitoring of the village projects or supported development measures. The national principle “people know, people discuss, people execute, and people verify” was applied well within IFSP-QB. To promote the self-help capacities of the target group, significant local contributions in labour and material were demanded by IFSP before starting support. Also operating and maintenance concepts for the village infrastructure were requested.

The programme contributed to changes in the attitudes and behaviour of villagers. Paternalistic structures could partly be overcome and the target groups take increasingly own initiatives for development at farm and community level.

The allowances provided by IFSP for training measures may have created biases in the selection of trainees. (It was mentioned, that participants in IFSP’s short-training courses were often relatives or friends of village heads or commune leaders, many of whom were interested in receiving allowances rather than new skills).

4.3 Project structure and steering of project implementation

On the national level, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) is the political partner of the project, whereas on provincial level the executing partner is the Provincial Political Committee (PPC). MARD was mainly chosen because the project concept has a multisectoral approach and covers also other aspects than agriculture. The PPC has at province level the co-ordination function which made it the most appropriate partner.

Due to the broad range of activities the project has a diversified implementation structure at district level and collaborates with a large number of agencies. Apart from technical Departments, the People’s Committees on different levels and its mass organisations (women union, farmers association, youth union etc.) NGOs, local consultants (e.g. NIN) were the most prominent implementing partners. The project could successfully involve all major development players at district level and thus achieve fast implementation.

To ensure proper implementation of the activities, contracts were signed between the various partners institutions (e.g., AEC, FU and Veterinary Centre, WIU) and IFSP which specified the services to be delivered by the different organisations and the support of the project to the implementers. This collaboration arrangement based on contractual basis could however hamper the full ownership of the district partners and their long-term commitment (they simply provided service as long as requested and paid for by IFSP).

The large group of different implementing agencies and the follow up of the contracts demanded a high input of co-ordination and control on different levels and absorbed a lot of energy of the project.

The IFSP-QB steering committee, which met twice a year, is chaired by the vice-chairman of the PPC. Other members are the head of the foreign affairs department, the 2 chairmen of the 2 District steering committees, the project director, the vice-director and the two German advisors. Implementing partners were not part of the committee, though this was a recommendation of the PPR in 1998. In each of the two districts, a district steering committee co-ordinated the project’s activities.

On the project level, the management board, consisting of the project director, the vice-director and the German advisors assured overall project co-ordination functions. During monthly M&E meetings (as introduced at the beginning of the 2nd phase), project progress is

reviewed by comparing operational plans with the M&E reports from the responsible persons for the different components and decisions are taken for further project implementation. Implementing partners and the responsible persons for the results were not part of these meetings.

At village level, steering of project activities was very much in the hands of the official authorities (village head, representatives of mass organisation). The implementing strategy with its planning focus and use of village authorities and elected collaborators for different project components was in line with the political culture of Vietnam and therefore easily accepted by the different stakeholders. As the IFSP-strategy reflected, materialised and operationalised decisions and decrees of the government, the acceptance in political circles, mass organisations and people's Committees was given.

The decentralised project structure (two district offices with interdisciplinary implementation teams) and the project headquarters in Dong Hoi was an important condition to effectively reach the target groups. During the workshop, a further decentralisation with the project headquarters in one of the two districts was recommended from some participants. This would have increased the efficiency of service delivery at target group level but would have negatively affected co-ordination and capacity building at province level.

4.4 Co-operation management with other projects and development agencies

Main donors and other development partners with which the project established co-operation were: IFAD, ADB, other GTZ projects and NGOs (ICCO/TEW) and FAO (food security group). With these organisations contacts were established to clarify intervention zones (TEW), to inform mutually about ongoing activities (IFAD) to learn from experiences and to take over approaches/methods (SFDP) or to co-operate for the implementation of components (PFHP).

At province level, co-ordination management of the different development players through the provincial planning unit (PMI) was not very intense, but an informal structure with regular meetings was in place. Co-operation with other development players depended largely on initiatives of the German CTA.

Co-operation of the IFSP-QB with the GTZ supported "Programme on Promotion of Reproductive Health" was formalised in a contract (based on this, the national family planning programme was implemented in both IFSPQB districts). The GTZ project on Promotion of small and Medium Enterprises supported IFSP-QB in CEFE training. During the second IFSP-QB phase, a very close co-operation (e.g. exchange visits of staff and counterparts from the projects, use of consultants) with the Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) implemented by GFA, was established. IFSP-QB profited from the experiences of this project specifically in the areas of VDP and FLA and FLUP.

At national level, concept discussions with the GTZ supported "National Poverty Alleviation Programme" took place and the programme had close contact with the German Embassy.

Co-operation with FAO (ACC) was temporarily intense within the national food security group. The team-leader headed this group between September 1999 and June 2001 and participated in the elaboration of the draft policy paper on food security.

Co-operation with ADB is foreseen to play a major role in the future. ADB could profit from the village development planning approach promoted by IFSP, as the VDPs give indications for poverty oriented community based activities, which could attract funds by ADB. In order to

intensify the collaboration with the ADB and to impede that contradictory approaches might endanger the project's successes, a consortium of GTZ and GFA have entered the bid for the implementation of the TC-component of the ADB.

Preconditions for a successful co-operation with others were the existence of attractive concepts, strategies and methods developed within IFSP and demonstrable successes and well-grounded experiences. Another important point is the capacity to abstract experiences from village level to consequences for political orientation on national level, including necessities for institutional reforms.

This makes close links between village level work and advisory functions on national government level necessary. It is not easy for the staff of a food security project, which is confronted with a high burden of tasks and limited capacities, to successfully bridge the gap between local experiences and the policy level and to stay in close contact with the national level. Big distances and lack of efficient communication facilities hamper interests and efforts. Good co-ordination for this type of work is necessary between GTZ offices, the different projects at national level and the projects on local and regional level. Thematic discussion groups according to main topics in the national context (poverty, food security, decentralisation etc.) could be formed in this respect.

4.5 Project specific innovations

The programme concentrated less on the development of new technical solutions but on the creation of organisational requirements for the dissemination of existing concepts and packages in the two districts.

The innovations disseminated by the project were especially linked to participatory planning procedures at village level. The Village Development Planning (VDP) has been introduced in all villages of the programme area. The participatory village development approach is an innovation, which increasingly attracts interest from other donors and provinces. In the fields of Forest Land allocation (FLA) and the Forest Land Use Planning (FLUP),¹⁶ the innovations introduced consisted in a number of "administrative shortcuts" which have accelerated the process of land distribution to private households by a factor of more than 10. Today, the two project Districts are by far the most advanced Districts in FLA in the whole of Vietnam

Other examples for methodological innovations, which were successfully adapted and introduced to the programme area, are the nutritional education and rehabilitation concept (which was based on the concept of "Save the children US) and the system of "barefoot veterinarians" (which was developed after a visit to IFSP-Kampot in Cambodia).

The introduction of available and in other context already tested methodological and organisational innovations in the programme area allowed the IFSP-QB to achieve a broad coverage relatively fast as appropriate partners for implementation could be identified.

4.6 Impact monitoring and learning cycles

A rather comprehensive M&E system, based on the indicators of the strategic planning (PPM) was put in place during the second phase of IFSP with the assistance of external

¹⁶ These innovations were taken over by the GFA forest project in north-western Vietnam (*Social Forestry Development Project, SFDP*). It seems that a rather good collaboration and exchange of experiences exist between these two projects. There was only limited need to adapt these methodological innovations to the specific conditions in Central Vietnam.

consultancy. It consisted mainly in the monthly collection of data by the implementing agencies, which were channelled through the “result responsables” to the M&E officer of the project who updated the M&E data bank on a bi-monthly basis.

The M&E system is computer based and allows presentation of data at various aggregation levels (commune, district and project level). The data base includes also all village development plans with indicators, targets and achievements. The system allows for a user friendly presentation of data and can be used to convince people about project successes. However, apart from the German advisor and the M&E officer project staff and implementing agencies are not familiar in the use of the system.

The M&E system aimed more at steering and reporting purposes than to support a continuous learning process within the project. The regular M&E meetings did not include the implementing partners who were the most relevant actors and who could have learnt most out of it. The same applies to the steering committees on provincial and district level. M&E in IFSP-QB concentrates to check at result and purpose level the achievements against the planned targets. Unplanned (positive and negative) impacts, changing environment (frame conditions) and the development within the project organisation were less considered.

“Learning loops” were supported to a certain degree through the organisation of bi-annual replanning and M&E-meetings. The major recommendations of the PPR from 1998 were considered and the strategy for the second phase adapted accordingly.

Apart from the PPR, additionally specific studies were carried out twice during project implementation to critically review internal project progress, impacts and areas for improvement. The surveys were generally executed by local consultants and present a rather critical insight into project’s strategies and achievements. The lessons learnt study could base major parts of its conclusions on the studies and the workshops of stakeholders on village, commune and district level. **The rather systematic approach of the project to summarise lessons learnt and to transfer the knowledge to the relevant partners can be considered as an example for an ending project in order to secure sustainability (and knowledge management).**

4.7 Public relation and strategic marketing of the programme

The strategy of the IFSP-QB to disseminate its experiences was very valuable. The professionally made video of the project is convincing and attained some attention on national level. The visits from other provinces of Vietnam to the programme, the organisation of provincial and national seminars and the supporting role for the FAO working group on food security policy are some aspects of the strategic marketing of the IFSPQB which helped to make the project’s experiences and successes known to a broad audience on national and regional level.

5. Preconditions for successful conversion into TC

The IFSP-QB prepared the conversion into a “normal” TC project with focus on sustainable management of natural resources in a consequent manner during the second phase. Within the various components subsidies were reduced stepwise and the part of communities own contribution was increased.

Capacity building (training, exposure) for partner staff and village representatives played an increasingly important role and the village based service delivery structures were further strengthened.

The institutionalisation of the participatory village planning process (VDP) was promoted and it is likely, that the funding requirements for village based infrastructure and the capital needs for the intensification and diversification of agriculture will be partly covered by the ADB programme in future. Forestland allocation as a prerequisite for the sustainable management of the natural resources is already implemented on a large scale in the programme area.

Attention need those IFSP components for which neither continuation of support is ensured within the new TC project or by ADB (e.g. nutritional education) nor full sustainability is achieved¹⁷.

Problems could further emerge if incentives (per diems etc.) paid by IFSP-QB to involved implementers in the past will not or not to the same extent be taken over by the TC project or ADB in future.

¹⁷ Even if the nutrition collaborators under the Women Union continue the activities, follow up/supervision will still be requested.

“Food Security and Nutrition” is Objective No. 1 of the ADB project on “Livelihood Improvement in Central Vietnam”. In order to ensure know how transfer in this field, the IFSP has organised in March and May 2002 three major workshops in Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Hue Provinces, with about 40 participants each from the implementing organisations of the ADB project. Further “Nutrition Workshops” are planned at District level.

6. Major conclusions and “lessons learnt” from IFSP Quang Binh

1. A stable development oriented government represents an ideal partner for a project working in line with its major policies. The **development orientation of government staff and agencies** represent a strong support for a development project.
2. The combination of a strong, stable and development oriented government and the orientation of project activities along identified needs can make **mass organisations of the people** on local level an effective and efficient implementation partner. Mass organisations of the rural people speed up considerably project implementation and allow for a wide range of activities and large impacts. Democratic, social, political and financial control need to be ensured to sustain the development orientation of leaders of mass organisations and to support effectiveness and efficiency in the execution of their mobilising and management functions.
3. **Ownership of government** staff and administration can be easily created if activities of the project are in line with the overall political orientation of the government, its implementation philosophy and strategies (and with the capacities of the staff).
4. Government **policies constitute a framework** for the implementation of development activities. Implementation strategies **have to be adapted to local conditions and specifically tailored to the priorities** and capacities of the villagers.
5. Active participation and ownership on village level depend on **participatory planning and implementation strategies**. Needs oriented procedures and decentralised decision making which integrates the different stakeholders in planning, implementation and evaluation are the basis for the creation of ownership. Projects have to be limited to the role of facilitation and in case of conflicts to mediation support.
6. **Village development planning (VDP)** is an important step towards the institutionalisation of participation and should have been promoted by the project from the beginning on. To mobilise people and be effective, plans at higher level have to match the prioritised community needs and resources needs to be allocated to the local level.
7. Strong **community contributions** in kind, labour and / or cash are another prerequisite for the creation of **ownership at target group level** and thereby of responsibilities for the different development investments and efforts. When existing needs and demands are targeted, even in poor and food-insecure situations local, contributions which are necessary for a sustainable project success can be mobilised.
8. Democratically elaborated and decided **rules and regulations** (e.g. for village infrastructure, forest land use management) facilitate participatory management and maintenance systems and support capacity building of villagers.

9. **“Village development workers”** (like the VEW, VLA, nutrition and family planning collaborators) are a strong support for quick and efficient project implementation. With the support of government and people’s mass organisation they can build the cornerstones of a village extension and training system if the new technologies and extension messages are easily understandable and adoptable. The promotion of target group based service delivery structures is an important condition to achieve sustainability of the programme.
10. The sustainability of **village based service delivery structures and cost recovery schemes** (revolving funds for veterinary drugs etc.) depends on the involvement of the villagers in its design, implementation and management. Proper and democratic selection of village development workers, control of capacities, clear definition of tasks and functions, regular practical training and supervision are necessary for the effectiveness and efficiency of the system. This includes as well that overheads and running costs of the system have to be taken over by the villagers to be sustainable. Outside support has to be limited to the initial stage.
11. **Village clubs and associations**, if part of local culture and supported by local authorities and expertise from village technicians as well as people’s and government organisations, can play an important role to sustain the development efforts of the project. The village collaborators have to be closely linked to these structures.
12. **Implementation strategies and activities of local collaborators** have to be **harmonised**. Steering of these activities on local, district and province level is necessary. Implementing capacities can be fully used when close collaboration and co-operation procedures are in place.
13. **Capacity building** has to be ensured on all levels from district to village and has to integrate methodological (e.g. planning) and technical aspects (e.g. cropping techniques). The training programme has to take into account the different functions of the different stakeholders (facilitation and mobilisation skills, planning methods, technical expertise, etc.). Specifically practical training, sharing of experiences between different villages during meetings on communal and district level and exposure to “best practices” in and outside the programme are appropriate instruments to optimise the effects. Capacity building needs a strong support during the whole life time of a project.
14. The identification of **income generating activities** needs intensive studies on potentials, market conditions and given capacities of villagers and supporting agencies. Sufficient time and often professional support from outside is necessary. Too often activities with limited market outlets and / or locally available resources and capacities run the risk to discourage villagers and to lose limited investment capital.
15. The impact of project activities on vulnerable and food insecure groups has to be reflected (**poverty targeting and monitoring**). Activities have to be designed accordingly and specific targeting mechanisms to be carried out. Mass organisations can be used for the identification of most vulnerable groups in villages (poverty ranking).

16. Project **components need to be in line** with and directly linked to the **concept of food security** (availability, access and use of food). During the lifetime of the project, the measures need to be continuously streamlined and focused (according to the “levelling effect” on food security). The promotion measures have to be appropriate to the institutional, financial and human resources capacities as well as to the time span available.
17. The **choice of innovations** to be disseminated in the villages has to take into account the **time span for impact and sustainability**. Measures like the introduction of new (but available) rice varieties have a quick effect on production, which mobilises the people and need no further project support.
18. The IFSP has prepared the **conversion into a “normal” TC project** during a rather long period (step wise reduction of subsidies, strengthening of capacity building etc.).
19. To build up ownership on provincial and national level **effective co-management between the different partners** has to be established and transparency ensured.
20. **A decentralised project structure** offers opportunities to intensify project support to districts, communes and villages. Co-ordination, steering and implementation can thus be facilitated.
21. A participatory **M&E-system** should involve actors on all levels and ensure transparency about project progress. A well functioning M&E system is an efficient support to steering and reporting and foster learning cycles among the stakeholders on planned and unplanned impacts and the enabling and hindering factors.
22. **Information and public relation** concerning project activities and specifically its approach and successes have to be intense enough to ensure a good level of information for co-operation partners and political decision makers.