

Department of Planning  
and Investment (DPI)  
Quang Binh Province

The logo for GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) is displayed in a red, lowercase, sans-serif font.

**Report on Inter-provincial Workshop**

**Lessons Learnt from Innovations in**  
**Decentralized Participatory Development Planning**

Supported by the Project

**Sustainable Management of Natural Resources  
in Central Vietnam**



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## **I. Overview**

### **I.1. Background**

The concept of Participatory Planning emerged in the 1960s. Since then, participatory approaches to planning have been widely used in many countries and for many sectors. In development planning, concepts and methods of Participatory Planning have been further developed into Village Development Planning (VDP), Community Development Planning or Commune Development Planning (CDP) in many donor-supported assistance projects.

In Vietnam, VDP was first piloted in the GTZ-supported Song Da “Social Forestry Development Project” (SFDP) as early as 1995. By 2002, the VDP method was officially recognized under the Son La Provincial People’s Committee Decision No. 906/QD-UB, and was widely applied in nearly 50% of villages in Son La Province. VDP has become adopted for project planning by a number of international and bilateral donor organizations, such as World Bank, ADB, IFAD, JICA, JBIC, Swedish and Dutch development assistance. Even though, the integration of participatory planning methods (VDP and CDP) into the official planning system of “Socio-economic Development Planning” (SEDP) has been rather slow, so far, the reasons being that there still no comprehensive law on decentralized planning and thus VDP is not yet officially recognized on the national level. In addition full implementation of VDP would require the allocation of special budget lines and additional human resources.

In parallel with SFDP, the Integrated Food Security Program in Quang Binh (IFSP, 1996-2002), the predecessor project of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Central Vietnam (SMNR-CV) developed the concept of participatory-planning into more comprehensive planning tool of Village and Commune Development Planning (VDP-CDP). As from 2004 the SMNR-CV and other projects made strong efforts to integrate the VDP-CDP method into the conventional planning procedures of SEDP. During this process, the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) of Quang Binh in close collaboration with the SMNR-CV project recognized that it will take much longer time for the Government of Vietnam (GOV) to change completely from the conventional (top-down) planning approach to participatory planning. As a more effective way to institutionalize the innovation, it was therefore decided to integrate only certain key elements of the participatory approach into current planning system (SEDP). By 2007, the concept of “Participatory Socio-Economic Development Planning” (Participatory SEDP) had been developed by harmonizing conventional planning and participatory approaches.

As opposed to the more elaborate method of VDP-CDP, “Participatory SEDP” does not require additional funding from the state budget line for planning and it is integrated into the current planning system. The important thing is to improve participatory planning skills for local government staff and this has been supported by SMNR-CV as well as other projects. The guidelines on Participatory SEDP were finalized in a joint effort between SMNR-CV project and local authorities (Department of Planning and Investment) and were finally approved by Quang Binh PPC in June 2008. Since then, the method has been applied in all districts and communes of the province.

The Inter-provincial Workshop on Lessons learnt from Innovations in Decentralized Development Planning was held in Dong Hoi, Quang Binh on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in the above context to share the lessons learnt and get comment for further improvement.

## **I.2. Objectives of the workshop**

The workshop entitled “Inter-provincial Workshop on Lesson learnt from Innovations in Decentralized Development Planning” was held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009 in Dong Hoi City, Quang Binh Province had the following objectives:

- To share information, experience and lessons learnt from Quang Binh DPI, SMNR-CV on participatory SEDP with other provinces,
- To get comments for further improvement of participatory SEDP in Quang Binh Province,
- To learn information and experience on market oriented participatory planning approach in other provinces and projects.

## **I.3. Venue and logistics**

The workshop was organized in Sai Gon Quang – Binh Hotel, with a spacious and comfortable workshop room. The project staff coordinated with DPI staff prepared the logistics works in a most effective manner.

## **I.4. Participants**

The workshop attracted attention and was attended by a number of relevant organizations from the national level (MPI-CIEM), several other provinces (Quang Tri DPI, Thue Thien- Hue DPI, Ha Tinh DPI, and Dak Lak DPI), the provincial level in Quang Binh (PPC, DPI, DOF, Department of Statistics, DPPR project, Project of Poverty Reduction in Central Vietnam) as well as from district authorities (Minh Hoa DPC, Tuyen Hoa DPC, Le Thuy DPC, Quang Ninh DPC, Quang Trach DPC, Bo Trach DPC) and representatives from selected communes and villages. The list of participants is attached as [Annex 1](#).

## **I.5. Schedule**

The schedule was organized by topics. Topic for the morning working sessions 1 and 2 was the “Integration of participatory elements into decentralized Socio-Economic Development Planning (SEDP)”. For the afternoon sessions 3 and 4 were on “Other Approaches and Experience in decentralized Development Planning”. The workshop schedule is attached as [Annex 2](#).

## **I.6. Moderation**

There was one moderator in the workshop. In addition, the Chief Technical Advisor of SMNR-CV also joined explaining and clarifying topic contents. The moderator warmed up and introduced the presenter and topic being presented or discussion topic. After every presentation, the moderator summarized the presentation contents, raised questions or requested for comments or questions for clarification. He ensured participants following the topic discussed and not losing track from the currently discussed topic. After every presentation, five minutes were used for comments and Q&A. Time was kept strictly by moderator to ensure all contents to be covered and participants to have opportunities to comment or question and get replied. The moderator did not express his viewpoint but involved participants to express their point of view of comments.

## **II. Workshop progress**

### **II.1. Opening remarks**

The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Nguyen Huu Hoai, Vice Chairman of Quang Binh PPC. Mr. Hoai highly appreciated the efforts made by SMNR-CV in improving planning methods in the province as well as the supports in rural development the project has done so far.

His opinions on current the planning system are as follows:

- The current planning system reveals overlapping in roles and responsibilities.
- Planning staffs in district and commune levels do not have proper skills and knowledge.
- The current plans are conducted under the subjective will of government officers and do not reflect local people's needs or requirements.
- The central government has conducted decentralization process; however, it is important to decentralize the planning further to acquire the needs of locals.



The workshop is important because it is the opportunity for people from central provinces to share experience so that each province can improve their planning as well as solve problems in planning process.

## II.2. Integration of participatory elements into decentralized Socio-Economic Development Planning (SEDP)

This part has included key presentations and comments on presentations.

### II.2.1. Keynote speech

Mr. Le Viet Thai from MPI-CIEM delivered the keynote speech. The speech was entitled “Some issues in planning reforms and the draft law on social economic development planning and master plan”.



Some concepts were presented including plan, planning, master plan, decentralization. He emphasized the constraints in the current planning system, i.e. unclear role of government in planning, plan is conducted in give-and-take manner (subsidize through projects), the plan does not clearly reflect the government orientations, time for planning is very short, there is little coordination between line department and different levels, planning is not participatory. In addition, Mr. Thai presented the draft Law on Planning for which he himself participates in the drafting process. This part includes the necessities of Law on Planning, some assumptions, principles and objectives and main contents of the new law.

The last part of the presentation provided some orientations for projects at provincial levels. Main ideas included that projects should conduct current situation surveys and assessments; they should ensure some conditions including financial capacity, database system and initial training. Projects to improve planning need to do piloting, then draw lessons learnt. The institutionalization of project's products on the provincial level is necessary before extending to larger scale.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.1](#) for more information.

## II.2.2. Presentation 2: Innovation of the planning method in Quang Binh: Participatory SEDP

Mr. Tran Viet Dan, Vice- director of Quang Binh DPI, presented the innovations in planning in Quang Binh Province which have been initially developed and are still supported by the SMNR-CV Project.

The first part of the presentation mentions the weaknesses in conventional planning in Quang Binh Province. Conventional planning is conducted to commune level, and the needs of villagers were not reflected in the government plans. Conventional planning does not have clear methods, contents or table systems. Plans in some comments are of poor contents.

The second part of the presentation shows strengths and weaknesses of VDP-CDP. VDP-CDP have been conducted by various ODA projects in the province. The planning is conducted with a participatory approach which reflects local people's needs in the plan. However, the plans are only used for the project's purpose. Every project has its own plan, and the planning may be conducted sometimes at the same village for different projects. Therefore, it is a waste of time and money for planning. It is important to coordinate different projects to share planning results.

The last part mentions the integration of participatory planning approach in conventional planning system. This is a substantial achievement of SMNR-CV project as the participatory elements have been integrated into the SEDP. More importantly, the participatory SEDP has been institutionalized by Quang Binh PPC.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.2](#) for more information

### Comments:

It is important to further “roll out” participatory SEDP. PPC needs to take action in every project negotiation to ensure that all projects use Participatory SEDP to avoid overlapping in planning and to save resources.

The participation of different government agencies in planning process is necessary to ensure plan quality.

Staff in charge of planning in commune level is not full time and some do not have planning skills.

It is important to have enthusiastic planning staff.

## II.2.3. Presentation 3: decentralized socio-economic development planning process

This presentation was given by Mr. Ho Xuan Vinh, officer in Dak Lak DPI. The presentation mentions steps in VDP in Dak Lak Projects including preparation, planning, monitoring and evaluation. It also mentions the difficulties and counter-measures as well as results of the Dak Lak Project on rural Development (RDDL).

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.3](#) for more information



**Comments:**

The project in Dak Lak seems to have made further progress in planning on the village level (VDP), as presented in the presentation. Mr. Vinh explained that the Dak Lak Project (RDDL) has supported participatory planning mostly the at commune level. The presentation mainly mentions about the planning in the newly added villages to the project.

**II.2.4. Presentation 4: Overview on participatory socio-economic development planning at the locality**

The presentation was on the practical implementation of Participatory Planning in Tuyen Hoa District, Quang Binh.

The first part was about planning steps including preparation, implementation, appraisal and monitoring. The second part was on advantages and difficulties. The advantages include having support from higher local government and SMNR-CV project and villagers have experience in planning. The difficulty was mostly delayed progress in plan implementation due to natural calamities.



The Tuyen Hoa District representative also mentioned the good points in participatory SEDP like improving local democracy; the plan is close to actual local conditions. Local people involve more actively in the planning process and they can contribute their creativeness in the plans.

Some lessons drawn from the new planning approach are as follows: it is important to have good instruction and leadership from DPI. Training to planning staff is necessary, and participation of different representatives in villagers are important to ensure good plans.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.4](#) for more information

**II.2.4. Presentation 4: Presentation from Nam Hoa Commune.**

The representative from Nam Hoa Commune gave a summary of the process of participatory planning at village level. The presentation included steps in planning as well as strong points in applying participatory planning at village level.

**Comments:**

The presentation did not mention the priority scoring. DPI requested Nam Hoa CPC studying the scoring system as well as new participatory planning approach carefully

**II.3. Other Approaches and Experience in decentralized Development Planning**

This part mentions the other approaches and experience in decentralized development planning.

**II.3.1. Commune Market Opportunity Planning (CMOP) in Ha Tinh**

Ms. Tuyet Mai, IMPP Project staff, presented the Commune Market Opportunity Planning in the IMPP Project in Ha Tinh Province. The presentation described the

planning methods, the good points and challenges of the methods as well as how to maintain the sustainability of the project result.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.5](#) for more information

**Comments:**

CMOP is mainly a support to small business and advanced households because most of the normal villagers do not have an entrepreneurial mind-set or experience. Poor rural people cannot afford and are not familiar with taking such risks.

It is very important to identify local competitive advantages so that a capacity building plan to improve rural business can be structured.

It will take much time to do market oriented planning.

The current participatory SEDP already follows market orientation to a certain extent, but this has not been well reflected.

The project should rescale so as to focus on agriculture extension for improved market information.

**Question:** the project supports businesses or households through Agribank, and what interest rate or credit underwriting process are applied?

**Answer:** the interest rate applied is normal Agribank commercial interest rate and Agribank conducts its normal credit underwriting process, but the project supports businesses and households to meet bank requirements.

**Question:** Has the project made any effort to integrate CMOP into SEDP?

**Answer:** The project used SEDP as inputs for project plans. No integration has been done so far. However, the project advocated the planning methods to local government officers and advocated on television.

### **II.3.2. Quang Tri experience in commune participatory SEDP**

The representative from Quang Tri explained the new participatory planning process in Quang Tri Province. He outlined a comparison between the conventional planning and participatory planning.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.6](#) for more information

### **II.3.3. Participatory planning activity - Quang Binh DPPR project**

Ms. Le Thi Van Hong, Vice Director of Quang Binh DPPR Project, presented some DPPR project information, the planning process, lessons learnt, difficulties and challenges of applying the participatory planning approach in the context of a larger scale donor-supported (IFAD) investment project.

Please refer to the presentation in [Annex 3.7](#) for more information

**Question:**

Are there any differences between plans prepared under DPPR project and SEDP?

**Answer:**

Plans prepared under DPPR project are similar to SEDP and there are some additional tables to identify important value chains.

### **II.4. Discussion**

The participants actively gave comments on innovation of participatory SEDP and new approaches of participatory planning.

The major points of the discussion are summarized in [Annex 3.8](#).

### **III. Conclusions**

The workshop has been successful and achieved the objectives set. Participants had opportunities to share their experience in participatory planning and new approaches on planning.

The workshop was conducted with good time management. Some participants commented that "this is the first workshop strictly following the schedule and can finalize on time".

The logistics and preparation works have been conducted in a considerate manner. All participants expressed their appreciation with the organization, moderation and content of the workshop.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: List of workshop participants

No.	Full Name	Organization	Position
1	Nguyen Huu Hoai	Quang Binh PPC	Vice Chairman
2	Hoang Ngoc Hoa	Quang Binh PPC	Vice head of administrative office
3	Phan Cong Khanh	Quang Binh PPC	Officer in charge of agriculture and forestry
4	Tran Quoc Loi	Department of Statistics	Vice Director
5	Tran Viet Dan	Quang Binh DPI	Vice Director
6	Nguyen Dinh Kha	Quang Binh DOF	Vice head of Investment Division
7	Le Viet Thai	CIEM, MPI	Senior Officer
8	Pham Quynh Sam		Moderator
9	Ms. Le Thi Van Hong	DPPR	Director
10	Vo Hong Quan	Dong Hoi City PC	Vice Chairman
11	Dr. Hans J .Wiemer	SMNR-CV	CTA
12	Truong Quoc Dat	SMNR-CV	M&E staff
13	Le The Luc	Phong Nha – Ke Bang Project	Vice Director
14	Nguyen Duy Manh	ABD Project	Vice Director
15	Pham Quoc Oai	Department of Finance in Dong Hoi PC	Vice Head
16	Le Van Uy	Quang Tri DPI	Senior Officer
17	Nguyen Thi Thuong Huyen	Quang Tri DPI	Officer
18	Thai Van Thanh	Quang Tri DPI	Officer
19	Bui Quyen	Thua Thien Hue DPI	Head of Administrative Office
20	Phan Thi Tuyet Mai	Ha Tinh DPI	Senior Officer
21	Phan Manh Hung	Division for Foreign Economic Affairs, DPI	Manager
22	Nguyen Hoai Nam	Division for Administration, DPI	Manager
23	Ong Vo Thanh Duc	Division for Foreign Economic Affairs, DPI	Officer
24	Co Doan Huong	Division for Foreign Economic Affairs, DPI	Officer
25	Ho Xuan Vinh	Dak Lak DPI	Senior Officer
26	Ong Dinh Phuc Minh	Minh Hoa Finance and Planning Division	Manager
27	Ong Dinh Thanh Hai	Hoa Hop CPC	Chairman

28	Ong Ho Thanh Ngoc	Tuyen Hoa DPC	Chairman
29	Ong Pham Thanh Hong	Tuyen Hoa Finance and Planning Division	Deputy Manager
30	Nguyen Van Loi	Nam Hoa CPC	Chairman
31	Vo Khac Hoa	Le Thuy DPC	Chairman
32	Nguyen Huu Lang	Le Thuy Finance and Planning Division	Deputy Manager
33	Nguyen Van Vuong	Lien Thuy CPC	Chairman
34	Tran Hai Chau	Quang Ninh DPC	Vice Chairman
35	Ha Thanh Hoa	Quang Ninh Finance and Planning Division	Officer
36	Hoang Xuan Thiet	Xuan Ninh CPC	Chairman
37	Dau Minh Ngoc	Quang Ninh DPC	Chairman
38	Tran Thi Hue	Finance and Planning Division	Manager
39	Duong Van Tuong	Quang Xuan CPC	Chairman
40	Phan Van Con	Bo Trach DPC	Vice Chairman
41	Nguyen Huu Thang	Finance and Planning Division	Deputy Manager
42	Ngo Duc Thang	Hung Trach CPC	Vice Chairman
43	Nguyen Minh Duc	SMNR-CV	Office Manager
44	Ms. Hoang Thi Hoa	SMNR-CV	Translator

## Annex 2 Workshop Agenda

### Lesson Learnt from Decentralized Participatory Planning

Date / Time: April 16, 2009, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Venue: Saigon Hotel, Dong Hoi city, Quang Binh

Organized by DPI Quang Binh in collaboration with GTZ project SMNR-CV

Time	Content	Responsible
7.45 - 8.00	Registration of Participants	Steering Board
8.00 - 8.15	Welcome and Opening Speech (Nguyễn Hữu Hoài)	Leader of Quang Binh PPC
8.15 - 8.25	<u>Introduction to the morning working session:</u> Integration of participatory elements into decentralized Socio-Economic Development Planning (SEDP)	Mr. Pham Quynh Sam (Workshop Moderator)
8.25-9.00	Renovation of the Vietnamese national Planning Law and its Implementation on decentralized levels (followed by 5 min Q&A)	Mr. Le Viet Thai (MPI - CIEM)
9.00 - 9.35	Innovation of the planning method in Quang Binh: Participatory SEDP (followed by 5 min Q&A)	Mr. Tran Viet Dan (Vice- director of Quang Binh DPI)
9.35-9.50	Tea break	
9.50 - 10.25	Decentralized Development Planning and budget Allocation in Dak Lak province (followed by 5 min Q&A)	Mr. Sy (DPI Dak Lak)
10.25 - 10.45	Participatory SEDP on District Level: Presentation of leader of Tuyen Hoa DPC	Representative of Tuyen Hoa DPC
10.45-11.05	Participatory SEDP on Commune Level: Presentation of 01 commune in Tuyen Hoa	Representative of pilot commune in Tuyen Hoa
11.05 - 11.30	Plenary Discussion	Mr. Pham Quynh Sam (Workshop Moderator)
11.30 - 13.30	Lunch	
13.30 - 13.40	<u>Introduction to the afternoon working session:</u> Other Approaches and Experience in decentralized Development Planning	Mr. Pham Quynh Sam (Workshop Moderator)
13.40 – 14.25	Short Presentations of Hue and Quang Tri (20 min each, followed by 5 min Q&A)	Representatives from Hue and Quang Tri DPI
14.25 - 15.15	Short Presentations of Tra Vinh and Ha Tinh (20 min each, followed by 5 min Q&A)	Representative from Tra Vinh and Ha Tinh DPI
15.15 - 15.30	Tea break	
15.30 – 15.50	Presentation of Quang Binh DPPR project	Mrs. Le Thi Van Hong (Vice-director of DPPR)
15.50 - 16.30	Plenary Discussion	Mr. Pham Quynh Sam (Workshop Moderator)
16.30 - 16.50	Options and Recommendations for the way ahead: Market Orientation, Strategic Planning and Regional Competitiveness	Mr. Le Viet Thai Dr. Hans J. Wiemer
16.50 – 17.00	Workshop Closing	Mr. Tran Viet Dan DPI Quang Binh

**Annex 3.1**  
**Annex 3.2**  
**Annex 3.3**  
**Annex 3.4**  
**Annex 3.5**  
**Annex 3.6**  
**Annex 3.7**  
**Annex 3.8 Selected Comments**

1. It should not be focused on annual plan but five-year plan. The five-year plan will be revised and approved by the National Assembly.
2. Planning staff should understand the participatory planning approach well.
3. It is important to simplify the planning process.
4. The participatory approach can be applied for planning on commune level in which different sectors in the commune can be involved.
5. It is important for DPI to work with communes to identify appropriate indicators.
6. Plans on village and commune level should be integrated in government SEDP.
7. Coordination in different sectors in commune level is very important to produce a good plan.
8. It is important to unify the tables in plan.
9. During the project duration, the guidelines and manuals are important for later application.
10. It is important to have planning software and database.
11. When plan is mentioned, people often think about infrastructure investment, and others like public services or budget mobilization have been ignored.
12. Most communes have just focused on changing the planning approach and they have not paid attention to plan contents.
13. In the future, the plan will be replaced by orientations.
14. SMNR-CV has made great efforts in integrating participatory planning into conventional planning. Quang Binh has institutionalized the new planning approach as “Participatory SEDP” and has already applied in one planning cycle in all communes.