

**Improved market engagement for sustainable upland production
systems in the North West Highlands of Vietnam**

AGB/2008/002

ANNUAL REFLECTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP REPORT

March 2011



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REFLECTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR PROJECT TEAM AND ACTIVITY LEADERS

NOMAFSI, Phu Tho, 11 March 2011

Outline of activities

The reflection and planning workshop for the project team leaders and activity leaders of the ACIAR North West Vietnam project was organised on 11th March 2011 at NOMAFSI, Phu Tho. The main objective of the workshop was a) to reflect on findings and processes of the 2010 activities, on Mid-Term Review recommendations and plans for 2011 activities, b) to establish a common understanding of, and initial workplan for, the Pilot Roll-Out activities (adaptive research phase).

There were 24 participants in this workshop. They originated from NOMAFSI (7 participants); CASRAD (5 participants); PPRI (3 participants); UQ – CfCSC (6 participants); ACIAR (2 participants), TBU (1 participants) and a mid-term review representative (1 participant). The full list of participants is attached in Appendix 1. The detailed workshop program is attached as Appendix 2.

In the morning, after the welcome and introduction by Dr Le Quoc Doanh and Dr Elske van de Fliert, Dr Pham Thi Sen presented results of erosion and maize ICM trials (1). Temperate fruit ICM trials were then presented by Dr Le Duc Khanh from PPRI (2). It was followed by a presentation by Ms Pham Thi Hang Tho from Casrad. In her presentation, value chain activities were reviewed. Throughout these presentations progress of project's main activities, challenges and recommendations for solutions for future activities were openly discussed.

After the tea break, Dr Ha Minh Trung presented the findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review (see Table 1) followed by plenary discussion facilitated by Dr Elske and Dr Doanh. During the discussion, findings and plans for the future were clarified.

The afternoon session was started by Dr Elske van de Fliert's presentation on Pilot Roll-Out principles and practices. Within the presentation, Dr Elske introduced some initial principles of Pilot Roll- Out and these principles will be developed more in future workshops.

The programme was continued with a discussion held by Dr Le Quoc Doanh. In his presentation, managerial and collaborative aspects of project implementation in 2011 were reviewed and discussed. Within the discussion, participants evaluated the involvement of partners in the provinces and districts: DARD, Extension Department, PPSD, commune and village governments, mass organizations. In addition, recommendations on increasing the participation of all stakeholders' were actively shared. In the end of the afternoon's session Ms Amanda Lugg – project communication officer presented communication strategies and guidelines on how to access the project website.

Table 1: Overview of MTR's findings and recommendation about future project activities

Conclusion	Recommendations
1. The scoping study and diagnostic survey were a good way to gain an understanding of community needs and priorities, and build confidence and partnerships	
2. Farmers' Responsiveness: Farmers in the NW Highlands, including ethnic minorities in remote areas are prepared to change the way they undertake their farming operations, provided they see such changes as likely to yield short-term financial benefits. Longer term environmental consequences are less important in their decision making about what to produce and how.	Inclusion of a farm management economist in the cropping systems team would help to gain deeper insights into the factors underlying farmer responsiveness to various cropping options.
3. Transdisciplinary Approach: The transdisciplinary and multi-institution approach is essential when working with complete value chains. The approach has been well accepted by the partner institutions despite limited prior experience in collaborative R&D initiatives	
4. Project Duration: Integrating a multi-disciplinary research program with an out-scaling component over a four-year Project period will struggle to produce sustainable outcomes.	It is therefore recommended that ACIAR consider extending the Project to April 2014 to allow for an additional round field trial and out-scaling activities in the 2013 cropping season. If an extension is not possible, consideration should be given to modifying Objective 4, since it will be difficult to achieve within the current Project period.
5. Geographic Scope: From an operational perspective it may have been better to focus on a single Province, since there is sufficient diversity within both of the Provinces to interact with a wide range of cultural and agro-ecological combinations.	Cannot cut out one province now, but reduce activities in Lai Chau province

Conclusion	Recommendations
<p>6. Project Phasing: The field crop and erosion trials should have started on a small scale in order to develop systems and procedures, and then expand in subsequent years. This problem appears to be attributable to lack of specificity in the Project design (the number of trials was not prescribed) and over-ambitious target setting during the early part of the Project.</p>	<p>With one-and-a-half years of the Project gone, it now seems necessary to scale back the field trials to improve manageability and quality of results.</p>
<p>7. Technology Options: Zero tillage is among the most promising options for sustainable farming of steep slopes, but has not been seriously considered during the first one-and-a-half years of the Project.</p>	<p>Zero tillage (probably including use of herbicides) needs to be incorporated in the erosion and field cropping trials from now onwards, by omitting one of the less popular treatments such as mini-terracing. Other treatments such as maize variety comparisons and fertiliser treatments could also be dropped in order to focus on three simple treatments at each site: maize farmer practice (ie burning); maize + mulch; and maize + intercrop + zero tillage.</p>
<p>8. Site selection could have been done more carefully. Detailed site selection criteria were developed but their application resulted in selection of some sites that were: (i) not “recently connected to markets” (either not well connected or connected for a long time); (ii) extremely difficult to access; and (iii) included farmers, community leaders and local officials who were less than fully committed to the Project.</p>	<p>Consideration should be given to discontinuing some of these “problem” sites in order to concentrate resources on a more manageable number.</p>
<p>9. Operational Issues: Management of the field trial program has encountered many operational and logistic difficulties requiring intensive support from the UQ team.</p>	<p>This support will continue during the 2011 crop season, but should be phased out thereafter by transferring full responsibility to the Vietnamese partners and reducing the scope of the field trial program with a focus on more accessible areas.</p>

Conclusion	Recommendations
<p>10. Resource Allocation: The maize-based cropping system is the key to livelihoods and far more important than temperate fruits in most areas. Management of the field program for maize ICM and erosion trials is the most resource-demanding part of the Project in terms of personnel and operating costs, and the most critical in terms of timing and delivery of results.</p>	<p>In preparing annual workplans and budgets, it is essential that these activities are adequately resourced, if necessary by cuts to other budget lines. Moreover the number of maize ICM trial sites should be reduced by continuing with those which produce useful results in the first one-and-a-half years. The number of erosion trial sites should be reduced from four to two, both located in relatively accessible parts of Son La Province.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>An exit strategy needs to be developed during the next 12 months, including but not limited to, an extension of the Project life to allow for an additional cropping season in 2013.</p> <p>The exit strategy also needs to specify how responsibility for scaling-out will be transferred from the Project to mainstream institutions (particularly the DARD Extension Department) at Provincial, District and Commune levels, and the support needed to do this.</p>

Appendix 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF WORKSHOP ON REPLETION AND PLANNING FOR TEAM LEADERS

No	Name	Institution
1.	Dr Lê Quốc Doanh	NOMAFSI
2.	Dr Pham Thi Sến	NOMAFSI
3.	Mr Đàm Quang Minh	NOMAFSI
4.	Mr Lê Hữu Huân	NOMAFSI
5.	Mr. Cao Hoàng	NOMAFSI
6.	Ms. Nguyen Thanh Thuy	NOMAFSI
7.	Mr. Đỗ Sỹ An	NOMAFSI
8.	Dr Phạm Thi Vượng	PPRI
9.	Dr Lê Đức Khánh	PPRI
10.	Ms Đặng Thị Bình	PPRI
11.	Dr Đào Thế Anh	CASRAD
12.	Ms Phạm Thị Hạnh Thờ	CASRAD
13.	Mr Lê Quốc Anh	CASRAD
14.	Mr Nguyễn Quang Duẩn	CASRAD
15.	Mr Nguyễn Hoàng Phương	TBU
16.	Dr Ha Minh Trung	Reviewer
17.	Dr Ray Collins	UQ
18.	Dr Gunnar Kirchhof	UQ
19.	Ms Amanda Lugg	UQ (VIDA)
20.	Mr Oleg Nicetic	UQ
21.	Dr Elske van de Fliert	UQ
22.	Ms Le Thi Hang Nga	UQ
23.	Geoff Morris	ACIAR
24.	Thi-Thanh-An.Nguyen	ACIAR

Appendix 2: PROGRAM OF REFLECTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR TEAM LEADERS

Time	Activity	Moderator
08:00-08:30	1. Opening and welcome 2. Objectives and schedule of the workshop	Dr Doanh Elske
08:30-10:00	3. Presentations on key results of last year's activities and this year's plans (30 minutes each): 3.1. Erosion and maize ICM trials, Dr Pham Thi Sen, NOMAFSI 3.2. Temperate fruit ICM trials, Dr Le Duc Khang, PPRI 3.3. Value chain activities, Ms Pham Thi Hang Tho	Dr The Anh
10:00-10:30	Coffee break	
10:30-11:00	4. Presentation of findings and recommendations of the Mid-Term Review, Dr Tran Duc Toan and Dr Ha Minh Trung	Dr Sen
11:00-11:30	5. Plenary discussion about the MTR recommendations	
11:30-13:30	Lunch break	
13:30-14:30	6. Pilot Roll-Out: 6.1. Presentation on PRO principles and practices	Elske
14:30-15:00	6.2. Discussion on implementation of PRO activities in NW Vietnam project:	
15:00-15:30	Coffee break	
15:30-17:00	7. Discussion on managerial and collaborative aspects of project implementation in 2011: 7.1. Involvement of partners in the provinces/districts: DARD, Extension Department, PPSD, commune/village governments, mass organisations ... 7.2. Inter-institutional collaboration 7.3. Communication strategy: project website, publications, reports, press releases ...	Dr Vuong

REFLECTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR FIELD TEAMS IN SON LA PROVINCE

NOMAFSI Tay Bac Station, Son La, 14 March 2011

Outline of activities

Reflection and planning workshop for the project field team of the ACIAR North West Vietnam project was organised on 14th March 2011 at the NOMAFSI Tay Bac Station, Son La. The main objectives of the workshop was to reflect on the 2010 activities and agree on plans for 2011 activities, as well to establish a common understanding of the Pilot Roll-Out activities (adaptive research phase).

There were 26 participants in this workshop. They originated from NOMAFSI (7 participants); CASRAD (2 participants); PPRI (1 participants); UQ – CfCSC 5 participants); Tay Bac University (5) representatives of Lai Chau province Mass Organisation (3 participants), Tam Duong and Sin Ho extension officers (3 participants). The full list of participants is attached in Appendix 1.

In the morning, after the welcome from Mr Dam Quang Minh- Director of Tay Bac Station, and the introduction of the Reflection and Planning workshop presented by Dr Elske van de Fleit, Mr Le Huu Huan had a presentation on erosion and maize ICM trials (1). Temperate fruit ICM trials were then presented by Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy from PPRI (2). It was followed by a presentation by Mr Le Quoc Anh from Casrad (3). In his presentation, value chain activities were reviewed. Throughout these presentations progress of project's main activities, challenges and recommendations for solutions for future activities were openly discussed.

The program was then continued by Mr Dam Quang Minh's presentation on all the findings and recommendations from the Mid- term Review workshop. At the end morning session, Mr Minh held a plenary discussion about project activities in relation to provincial and district development priorities. The detailed workshop program is attached as Appendix 2.

In the afternoon session, Ms Le Thi Hang Nga, under the guidance of Dr Elske van de Fliert, had a presentation on principles and practices of the Pilot Roll- Out. After the presentation, participants were divided into small group to discuss the dos and don'ts of the participatory research. The detailed results of the discussion are attached in appendix 3. In the end of the afternoon, the participants continued discussing in groups the role of stakeholders in the Pilot Roll out phase. The group's work outputs are attached in appendix 4.

Appendix 1: List of participants

No	Name	Institution
1.	Đàm Quang Minh	NOMAFSI
2.	Lê Hữu Huấn	NOMAFSI
3.	Trình Duy Nam	NOMAFSI
4.	Hoang Xuan Thao	NOMAFSI
5.	Do Sy An	NOMAFSI
6.	Vũ Hồng Tráng	NOMAFSI
7.	Phùng Quốc Tuấn Anh	NOMAFSI
8.	Nguyen Thi Thuy	PPRI
9.	Le Quoc Anh	CASRAD
10.	Bui Quang Duan	CASRAD
11.	Vu Duc Toan	TBU
12.	Nguyen Hoang Phuong	TBU
13.	Dao Huu Binh	TBU
14.	Dang Van Cong	TBU
15.	Hoàng văn Thanh	TBU
16.	Nguyen Quoc Ai	DARD Sơn La
17.	Nguyễn Thị Nhân	Director of Son La Extension Centre
18.	Hà Văn Lán	Director of Son La PPSD
19.	Hà Văn Yêu	Mai Sơn extension officer
20.	Nguyễn Văn Thành	Mộc Châu extension officer
21.	Lường Trung Hải	Phiêng Luông extension officer
22.	Le Thi Hang Nga	UQ (Translator)
23.	Amanda Lugg	UQ (VIDA)
24.	Gunnar Kirchhof	UQ
25.	Oleg Nicetic	UQ
26.	Elske van de Fliert	UQ

Appendix 2: Program of Reflection and Planning Workshop for Field Teams – SON LA

Time	Activity
08:00-08:30	1. Opening and welcome 2. Objectives and schedule of the workshop
08:30-10:00	3. Presentations on key results of last year's activities and this year's plans (30 minutes and 25 minutes discussion each): 3.1. Erosion and maize ICM trials, NOMAFSI 3.2. Temperate fruit ICM trials, Ms Nguyen Thi Thuy, PPRI
10:00-10:30	Coffee break
10:30-11:00	3.3. Value chain activities, Mr Le Quoc Anh 3.4. Findings and recommendations from Mid-Term Review, Dam Quang Minh, NOMAFSI
11:00-11:30	4. Plenary discussion about project activities in relation to provincial and district development priorities, Mr Dam Quang Minh
11:30-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-14:15	5. Pilot Roll-Out: 5.1. Presentation on PRO principles and practices, Ms Le Thi Hang Nga
14:15-15:00	5.2. Exercise and discussion on implementation of PRO activities
15:00-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-16:30	6. Discussion on collaborative aspects of project implementation: 6.1. Involvement of partners in the provinces/districts: DARD, Extension Department, PPSD, commune/village governments, mass organisations, ... 6.2. Communication strategy: project website, reports, press releases, ...

Appendix 3: Do's and Don'ts in participatory research

TO DO	NOT TO DO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plan experiments in Pieng Sang with farmers, prepare in advance in order to have enough time to grow two crops per year -> action now 2. Involve extension officers by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sending extension officers an official dispatch to ask for their participation • Keeping a close contact through active communication • Mr Le Huu Huan will be responsible for designing a ToR/WORK PLAN for the extension officers <p>Payment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monthly work allowance ○ Travel allowance → follows the cost norm of the institution which organizes the event <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Sending periodic reports following the agreed format 4. Paying attention to detail 5. Learning to listen 6. Spending more time in face-to-face meetings and contacts 7. Reading/ following the protocol/guidelines; using data recording sheets <p>⇒ This year we need to implement all Do's.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Researchers and partners do not contact Mr Le Huu Huan regularly 2. Cut and paste wrong statements and data to compose the report 3. Ignore the farmers 4. Use phone as a key mean of communication

Appendix 4: The role of stakeholders in Pilot Roll-Out

Researcher group (NOMAFSI, PPRI, TBU)	State management group (Son La provincial)	Local extension group
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design experiments and rectify mistakes from the first year trials. Important role: NOMAFSI, PPRI Deploy experiments with farmers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise farmers' awareness through training, workshops and meetings. Improve, provide new knowledge via materials or farmers' field schools Provide input (fertilizer, varieties, herbicides,...) Coordinate activities amongst research organizations (NOMAFSI, PPRI, TBU, HUA, farmers...) Organize farmer meetings to collect feedback Generate initiatives and innovations for development (through group activities) Replicate innovations and initiatives (roles played by technique consultants) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The project partners are required to report findings to the specialized agencies of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development The management bodies of the agricultural sector must be involved in monitoring, supervising and evaluating the output of the project. The state management group must be involved in planning activities, training trainers, and building project models. Organize training courses and field trips to visit the demonstrations and disseminate new technologies to farmers Summarize preliminary results of the extended model. Together with other stakeholders plan to expand the model into production reality. Call for investments to apply successful results in a wider scale 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Be involved in project implementation Review & evaluate the effectiveness of the demonstrations Be involved in organizing fieldtrips to visit the demonstrations, workshops in the local area. Disseminate the output to farmers so that they will be able to more actively participate in the future. Conduct workshops to transfer techniques (key role) Extension: consult on capital, plant varieties, infrastructure Continue implementing experiments in different ecological areas.

REFLECTION AND PLANNING WORKSHOP FOR FIELD TEAMS IN SON LA PROVINCE

NOMAFSI Tay Bac Station, Son La, 14 March 2011

Outline of activities

A workshop on reflection and planning for the project field team of the ACIAR North West Vietnam project was organised on 16th March 2011 at the Department of Agrilculture and Rural Development, Lai Chau. The main objectives of the workshop was to reflect on the 2010 activities and agree on plans for 2011 activities, as well to establish a common understanding of the Pilot Roll-Out activities (adaptive research phase).

There were 18 participants in this workshop. They originated from NOMAFSI (3 participants); CASRAD (2 participants); PPRI (2 participants) ; UQ – CfCSC 4 participants); representatives of Lai Chau province Mass Organisation (3 participants), Tam Duong and Sin Ho extension officers (3 participants). The full list of participants is attached in Appendix 1.

In the morning, after the welcome from Dr Dao Ngoc Huong, Dr Elske van de Fleit and Mr Do Sy An made introduction objectives and the schedule of the workshop. Mr Le Huu Huan presented results from erosion and maize ICM trials (1). Temperate fruit ICM trials were then presented by Mr Nguyen Van Chi from PPRI (2). It was followed by a presentation by Mr Le Quoc Anh from CASRAD (3). In his presentation, value chain activities were reviewed. Throughout these presentations progress of project's main activities, challenges and recommendations for solutions for future activities were openly discussed.

Within Dr Dao Ngoc Huong's presentation, he expressed that in the future, the Ha Giang Yellow maize variety should be developed in Sin Ho at a large scale by 1-2 ha. Also, we will have to continue carrying on research to complete procedures of cultivating maize on a sloping land, cultivating 2 crops in a year and using inter-cropped plants to increase the economic effects. After Dr Dao Ngoc Huong presentation, Mr Do Sy An presented his initiatives on using Hmong beans as a inter- cropped plant with maize and growing rows of guatemala grass to prevent erosion in Giang Ma. In terms of the temperate fruit component, monitoring of pests and diseases as part of IPM should be implemented in new peach and plum orchards. Ideas on enlarging the orchard's scale were also shared.

In the afternoon, Mr Do Sy An presented all the findings and recommendations from the Mid- Term Review and also facilitated a plenary discussion about project activities in relation to provincial and district development priorities. Ms Le Thi Hang Nga under the guidance of Dr Elske Van De Fleit introduced concept of the Pilot Roll- Out that was

followed but the long and productive discussion on ways pilot roll-out can be implemented. At the end of the workshop, Mr Le Huu Huan held a discussion on local stake holder's participation and coordination. During the discussion, all participants agreed that local stake holders: DARD, Plant Protection subDepartment, extension centers of all levels should be more actively involved in all the activities. The detailed workshop program is attached as Appendix 2.

Appendix 1. List of participants

No	Name	Institution
1.	Lê Hữu Huân	NOMAFSI
2.	Do Sy An	NOMAFSI
3.	Nguyễn Văn Thảo	NOMAFSI
4.	Nguyen Van Chi	PPRI
5.	Nguyễn Xuân Đạt	PPRI
6.	Le Quoc Anh	CASRAD
7.	Bui Quang Duan	CASRAD
8.	Đào Ngọc Hưởng	DARD Lai Châu
9.	Nguyễn Trường An	Lai Châu extension Station
10.	Hà Anh Dũng	DARD Lai Châu
11.	Lê Văn Thức	PPSD Lai Châu
12.	Nguyễn Duy Giang	Sin Ho extension offier
13.	Giang A Nâu	Giang Ma extension officer
14.	Phạm Văn Nam	Bản Bo extension officer
15.	Le Thi Hang Nga	Translator
16.	Amanda Lugg	VIDA
17.	Oleg Nicetic	UQ
18.	Elske van de Fliert	UQ

Appendix 2: Program of Reflection and Planning Workshop for Field Teams – Lai Chau Province

Time	Activity
08:00-08:30	1. Opening and welcome 2. Objectives and schedule of the workshop
08:30-10:00	3. Presentations on key results of last year's activities and this year's plans in Lai Chau Province (30 minutes and 25 minutes discussion each):: 3.1. Erosion and maize ICM trials, Le Huu Huan NOMAFSI 3.2. Temperate fruit ICM trials, Mr Nguyen Van Chi, PPRI
10:00-10:30	Coffee break
10:30-11:00	3.3. Value chain activities, Mr Le Quoc Anh, CASRAD 3.4. Findings and recommendations from Mid-Term Review, Do Sy An, NOMAFSI
11:00-11:30	4. Plenary discussion about project activities in relation to provincial and district development priorities, Mr Do Sy AN
11:30-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-14:15	5. Pilot Roll-Out: 5.1. Presentation on PRO principles and practices, UQ
14:15-15:00	5.2. Exercise and discussion on implementation of PRO activities
15:00-15:30	Coffee break
15:30-16:30	6. Discussion on collaborative aspects of project implementation: 6.1. Involvement of partners in the provinces/districts: DARD, Extension Department, PPSD, commune/village governments, mass organisations ... 6.2. Communication strategy: project website, reports, press releases, ...