

Final Learning Evaluation of the Market Access for the Rural Poor (MARP) Program

Final Evaluation Report¹

Contents

Contents	1
Acronyms.....	3
1. Executive Summary	4
2. Background and Rationale of Evaluation	8
3. Brief Description of MARP.....	8
4. Description of Evaluation Methodology	10
5. MARP Program/Project Results	13
5.1 Project Results of Shan Tea Value Chain (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation).....	13
5.2 Project Results of Spices Value Chains (SNV).....	16
5.3 Project Results of Rattan and Bamboo Value Chains (Oxfam)	18
5.4 Project Results of Ethnic Textile Value Chain (VIETCRAFT).....	21
5.5 Gender-related Observations	23
6. Overall Findings (acc. to OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria)	24
6.1 Relevance	24
6.2 Effectiveness	26
6.3 Efficiency.....	28
6.4 Impact	29
6.5 Sustainability.....	32
7. Conclusions: Overall MARP Program Assessment	34
8. Recommendations	37
9. Lessons Learnt.....	38
Annex 1: Fieldwork Plan.....	43
Annex 2: List of References.....	47

¹The evaluation report has been prepared by the consultants Christian Schoen (cs@mesopartner.com) and Pham Ngoc Linh (phamngoclinh@mcg.com.vn)

Annex 3: Terms of Reference 49

Annex 4: Mini-Survey Questionnaire 55

Annex 5: Detailed Results of Beneficiary Assessment at Program Level..... 57

Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix 59

Acronyms

AEC	Agriculture Extension Service
BDS	Business Development Services
BDSP	Business Development Service Providers
CSO	Community Service Organization
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DOST	Department of Science and Technology
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIG	Farmer Interest Groups
GI	Geographical Indication
HH	Household
HTC	Hiep Than Company
LED	Local Economic Development
MARP	Market Access for the Rural Poor
MCNV	Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MFI	Micro-Finance Institutions
MRL	Minimum Residue Level
MSE	Micro and Small Enterprises
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTR	Midterm Review
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NTFPRC	Non-Timber Forest Product Research Centre
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
PPC	Province People's Committee
PPD	Public Private Dialogue
PSD	Private Sector Development
RNIG	Rattan Nursery Interest Groups
RPIG	Rattan Plantation Interest Groups
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SECO	Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOE	State-owned enterprise
STE	Short-term Expert
ToR	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
VC	Value Chain
VCD	Value Chain Development
VIETCRAFT	Vietnam Handicraft Exporters Association
VIRI	Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute

1. Executive Summary

The overall goal of the SDC Market Access for the Rural Poor Program “MARP” (2013-2016) is to *“reduce poverty of poor households, especially ethnic minorities, through generating additional income and employment in selected value chains in which the poor can participate”*. The two project outcomes read as follows:

- Outcome 1: To increase market access and participation of poor rural household in selected value chains (in agriculture and non-timber forest products)
- Outcome 2: To generate and disseminate knowledge and experiences on value chain intervention at local and national levels, and in specific cases in the Mekong region

Under MARP, four value chain projects have been selected and continuously supported:

- Developing High Quality Tea (Shan Tea) Value Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation
- Leveraging the Spice Sector for Poverty Reduction amongst Ethnic Minority Communities in Vietnam implemented by SNV Netherlands
- Up-scaling of pro-poor Rattan and Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities implemented by Oxfam Hong Kong (later Oxfam Novib)
- Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development of the Ethnic Textile VC implemented by the Vietnam Handicraft Exporters Association (VI-ETCRAFT) and Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI)

After 3 years MARP program implementation SDC commissioned a final learning evaluation contributing to the learning process and providing conclusions and lessons learnt.

The ‘MARP model’ focuses on 1-3 product or commodity value chains per selected project that meet the key requirements: future economic potential, traditionally familiar to farmers, availability of raw material accessible to poor and/or ethnic minority farmers and promising fast impact in terms of market access and income increase. Only value chains were selected for support that had previously been analysed and even partly developed. This increased the chance to go into support activities directly without spending too much time on analysis and research. This again was a pre-condition for a 3-year development project to deliver the expected results during its lifetime. On both levels, the program and project levels lean program management structures have been set up to save costs. Resources and administrative tasks have partly been shifted to public and private partners. In terms of development mechanism, MARP is characterised by an external value chain facilitation approach with the implementing NGOs being the initial value chain facilitators and, after program phasing-out, the capacitated value chain enterprises taking over this role. Project funds are channelled through project partners inside the value chains or in the wider market system, particularly the support structures of the value chains to reach the final beneficiaries. These enterprises and government partners received technical training, partly business advice and partly investment support in production and sales facilities. Using this financial and technical support, market access up- and downstream the value chains is facilitated by the processing and trading enterprises (during project life and supposedly also in future). The ultimate beneficiaries upstream the value chains were grouped and received technical training to upgrade their skills in production, (basic) processing and product variation. As SDC is closing its bilat-

eral program in the agriculture and governance sectors in 2016, the project was designed for 3 years only. Hence, the implementing partners are expected to source funds for next project phases from other sources. The more successful an individual MARP project has performed, the more likely successful fund sourcing will be.

In all four projects and various value chains supported women play an equal role (tea, spices, bamboo) or even more crucial role (ethnic textiles) than men in terms of work contribution and income generation. The project interventions have further enhanced the capacity and skills of both, women and men, their access to services, to information and to future advanced training opportunities.

Overall, the projects of the MARP program are relevant and effective. Particularly the Shan tea and the Spice for Life projects are very efficient leading to an overall program conversion rate of costs to income increase of 1.8, which is a very good result. Impacts have been achieved as intended. All projects successfully target ethnic minorities in upland areas of Northern Vietnam, although the share of poor households reached is most likely clearly below 50%, i.e. not fully meeting the MARP program requirement of a 50% poverty rate amongst the target groups at project start. The sufficiently representative mini-survey during the evaluation (221 respondents) shows average poverty rates of 29% shortly before project start (confirming the baseline data) and only 10% today. This is still a significant reduction of poverty and a great achievement of the program. The reason why poverty rates are lower than expected at program start might be the fact that farmers possessing land use rights for agro-forestry usage do not show such significant poverty rates. Only a third of them could not use their land in a way that it kept their family above the poverty line, before the program started.

In total, the program has reached 24,012 beneficiary households of which 46% are female headed. This is more than double the number of the initially targeted 10,000 households. Per household the MARP program spent 201 USD on average until the end of 2015. The share of management costs across all 4 projects was 24% (without umbrella management costs at SDC), which leaves 3 quarters of the budget for development activities. With disbursements of SDC program funds to the projects of 4,1 million USD at the end of 2015² and a totally accumulated income increase of 8.5 million USD over 3 years the current conversion rate of inputs to outputs amounts to 2,073, which is good for a development project. This does not include the local partner contributions, which account for about 20% of overall budget and would further improve the cost-to-benefit ratio.

The project has apparently triggered crowding-in effects. The final evaluation survey revealed that 19% of respondents have started dealing with specific value chain products supported by the project in 2013 only or later, i.e. after the project has started. Hence, it can be assumed that these farmers have been attracted to the project value chains when seeing the knowledge and income gains of neighbours and relatives.

The most positive impacts, however, are the easier market access, the increase of income and of standard of living. When it comes to monthly household income, the transition from a falling curve in 2012 to a bell-shaped curve in 2016 can be observed. Now the majority of households enjoy a decent monthly cash income (38%: 1-3 million VND and 29%: 3-5 million VND), which is clearly above the income-based poverty rate in Vietnam (700,000 VND per

² At the end of June 2016 SDC is estimated to have disbursed 4.8 million USD to the projects.

household per month). 93% of respondents confirmed that market access is easier or much easier than before project start. Economic conditions have clearly improved within the last 3 years for project-supported households. 92% state that they do much better economically or at least better. Looking at household spending, for all typical expenditures the majority of households spends significantly more today than before project start: food & beverages (92% of HH), clothes & footwear (89%), housing, furnishing, water, electricity (91%), transport (83%), communication (84%), health (80%) and education (84%). Changes in expenditure patterns for health and education are significant in terms of investing into the future of beneficiaries' children and keeping them out of poverty constantly.

MARP provides a valuable example of a balanced approach on how to work with both national and international NGOs and value chain enterprises to reach a large number of producing households upstream the value chain, connect them to final markets and try to build value chain resilience. The higher the business management capacity of enterprises involved, the more successful such an approach could be. Developing business management skills of individual enterprises in parallel to the development of the value chain seems to be a necessity to make this approach work.

In terms of sustainability some value chains are very likely to operate smoothly in the future driven by the self-interest of producers and processors within an enabling environment (e.g. commercial tea, cinnamon, ethnic textiles, bamboo products); others are more vulnerable to external shocks and events (e.g. star anise, cardamom, ancient Shan tea, rattan).

Looking at outcome 2 of the MARP program "generating and disseminating knowledge and experiences", all 4 projects were actively involved in sharing and disseminating activities through sharing workshops, production of knowledge products at project level, design and wide usage of training material for capacitating farmer households. The most striking and professional knowledge products are, however, the short movies on selected project work that were commissioned by SDC and are available on the SDC Vietnam Facebook site. Towards the end of the program one longer (5-10 minutes) movie per project will be produced by SDC using the same international professional filmmaker as for the short movies.

Based on observations and assessments the evaluators give the following recommendations:

- All NGOs involved are encouraged to design follow-up projects and source funds to increase the likely sustainability of results and to create value chain resilience.
- Star anise in Lang Son, cardamom in Lao Cai and Yan Bai and ancient Shan tea in Ha Giang should receive attention when designing follow-on projects to improve impacts and sustainability. External facilitation is still more needed here than in other locations.
- Emergency response of SNV with local stakeholders is more urgent for Star Anise in Lang Son and Cardamom in Lao Cai / Yen Bai due to recent pest and weather events
- MARP knowledge products should be collected and made accessible centrally
- The Lessons Learnt (below) collected by the evaluation team are crucial for the design of follow-on projects and need to be studied carefully and considered for any new design.

The following Lessons Learnt are identified and described at the end of this report:

1. Risks related to climate, weather and pests need to be factored into the design of agro-forestry projects, including mitigation measures

2. Ownership structures of partner enterprises in value chains significantly impact innovativeness and readiness for change and should become a selection criterion for partner enterprises.
3. Avoid designing uniform interventions for different implementation partners in value chains. Interventions need to be enterprise- and context-specific.
4. Lean project management structures require an efficient project management system
5. Include more business management skills support in value chain projects with NGOs as facilitators. Choosing enterprises inside value chains as implementation partners presupposes a wide range of business skills of these enterprises. Hence, business consultancy skills and entrepreneurial experience on the part of the development organisations is required and needs to be factored into program design and considered during implementation, ideally at the level of individual projects to be available constantly
6. Choosing only one lead firm per value chain is risky in terms of sustainability and resilience to external shocks after the project has ended
7. To reach scale, value chain products with high importance for local government need to be selected
8. The facilitation of local government's participation and contribution to the project needs to be led by organizations that have policy advocacy experience, i.e. organizations with credibility like associations, donors or NGO. It is rather hard for individual private businesses to work with local government on policy issues.
9. For every group of ethnic minority women, there is a need to appoint not only a group leader but also core members supporting the operation of the group
10. The MARP model by itself should be considered a lesson learnt. Many features of the program set-up (see model description above) worked well and enabled achieving most expected results. It would be worthwhile, however, to experiment with additional model features in future (business management support, involving buyers as implementing partners) to achieve a more balanced up- and downstream value chain development initiative.

2. Background and Rationale of Evaluation

The independent final evaluation of the “Market Access for the Rural Poor” (MARP) program has been undertaken in accordance with the Terms of Reference for this assignment (see Annex 3). The MARP program will end in June 2016 and SDC will finally leave the country later in 2016. Therefore, early 2016 has been considered the appropriate time to identify and analyse the program achievements and generate lessons learnt. For these reasons, SDC has commissioned an independent learning evaluation. The target audience of the final evaluation are local and national partners, other stakeholders in Vietnam, SDC in its regional country offices in Asia and in its headquarters as well as the taxpayers.

One international and one national external independent consultant conducted the final MARP evaluation. The international consultant acted as team leader, provided overall strategic guidance, was responsible for the overall process, managed the deadlines, conducted parts of the fieldwork and ensured that conceptual framework and methodologies are in line with international good practice. The national consultant brought in national expertise and local knowledge, conducted the other parts of the fieldwork, and supported the international consultant in all tasks.

The final evaluation objectives are:

- Conducting a summative evaluation contributing to the learning process of all partners involved and to the accountability towards the stakeholders and taxpayers
- Representing the results after 3 years implementation of the full MARP program, providing conclusions and lessons learnt to all stakeholders

The evaluation team was requested to look at achievements in the area of outcomes and outputs. A beneficiary assessment was expected to be one key element in the evaluation process. Traditionally, the evaluation should discuss the performance of the 4 MARP projects against the 5 OECD DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability). In line with the definition of the program’s target group, poverty and gender needed special attention. Therefore, roles, capacity and benefit of poor households and female beneficiaries needed to be identified and discussed. The main focus of the evaluation was lying on Outcome 1 (market access in value chains) and less on Outcome 2 (generation of knowledge and experiences) – see chapter 3 for details.

3. Brief Description of MARP

The MARP Program of SDC in Vietnam (2013-2016) is implemented under the current and final SDC Cooperation Strategy (2013-2016), in which Agriculture and Food Security has the main focus. The objective of the Cooperation Strategy is to support decent income generation of poor, ethnic minority women and men in the Northern mountainous provinces of Vietnam. Successful experiences and lessons learnt are to be consolidated to increase impact on poverty reduction across provinces.

Goal and outcomes of the MARP program are in line with this strategic orientation. The overall goal of MARP is to *“reduce poverty of poor households, especially ethnic minorities, through generating additional income and employment in selected value chains in which the poor can participate.”* (SDC HANOI, 2012). The two project outcomes read as follows:

- *Outcome 1:* To increase market access and participation of poor rural household in selected value chains (in agriculture and non-timber forest products)

- *Outcome 2:* To generate and disseminate knowledge and experiences on value chain intervention at local and national levels, and in specific cases in the Mekong region

Although each of the selected value chain projects implemented under MARP has its own set of outputs, the following four outputs at the program level describe the expectations on immediate results of project activities:

- *Output 1:* Critical points and bottlenecks analysed and addressed in the identified value chains.
- *Output 2:* Added values result from newly developed brands and products in selected value chains.
- *Output 3:* Policy dialogue between government and other stakeholders in view of improving environment for pro-poor value chains based on experiences (and research papers and policy briefs if needed).
- *Output 4:* Annual workshops bring together value chain and market access implementers to share experiences.

The main target groups of MARP are rural poor, ethnic minority households (men and women) as actors along value chains, including collectors, pre-processors, traders, enterprises, government agencies and research institutes. The program puts a particular emphasis on economic activities of women. The targeted minimum number of direct beneficiaries benefiting from the project are 10,000 households, of which at least 50% are expected to be poor, ethnic minorities, and female headed.

In late 2012, SDC called for proposals to identify suitable value chain projects to receive support under MARP. A review panel of SDC staff, SECO staff and external consultants analysed the proposal and finally selected five value chain projects:

- Developing High Quality Tea (Shan Tea) Value Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation. This is the only regional project under MARP.
- Up-scaling of pro-poor Rattan and Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities implemented by Oxfam Hong Kong (later Oxfam Novib)
- Improving livelihood of ethnic minority women through sustainable development of the Ethnic Textile Value Chain implemented by Vietnam Handicraft Exporters Association (VIETCRAFT) and Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI)
- Leveraging the spice sector for poverty reduction amongst ethnic minority communities in Vietnam implemented by SNV Netherlands
- Pro-poor high quality red algae value chain promotion in Vietnam, Medical Committee Netherlands Vietnam (MCNV) and Capital Seaweed, (red algae project).

In early 2014, SDC decided to close the red algae project due to the strategic changes of the private company Capital Seaweed, which started sourcing its supply in the Philippines instead of Vietnam. The follow-up proposal of MCNV has not been accepted by SDC, as it did not meet the initial MARP project criteria perfectly.

Taking into account the program information as described above (mainly taken from the program documents, the annual program reports) and adding information and perceptions collected in interviews and discussions the consultants would describe the “MARP develop-

ment model” as follows.

The MARP model focuses on 1-3 product or commodity value chains per selected project that meets the key requirements: future economic potential, traditionally familiar to farmers, availability of raw material accessible to poor and/or ethnic minority farmers and promising fast impact in terms of market access and income increase. Only value chains were selected for support that had previously been analysed and even partly developed. This increased the chance to directly go into support activities without spending too much time on analysis and research. This again was a pre-condition for a 3-year development project to deliver the expected results during its lifetime. On both levels, the program and project levels lean program management structures have been set up to save costs. Resources and administrative tasks have partly been shifted to public and private partners. In terms of development mechanism, MARP is characterised by an external value chain facilitation approach with the implementing NGOs being the initial value chain facilitators and, after program phasing-out, the capacitated value chain enterprises taking over this role. Project funds are channelled through project partners inside the value chains or in the wider market system³, particularly the support structures of the value chains to reach the final beneficiaries. These enterprises and government partners received technical training, partly business advice and partly investment support in production and sales facilities. Using this financial and technical support, market access up- and downstream the value chains is facilitated by the processing and trading enterprises (during project life and supposedly also in future). The ultimate beneficiaries upstream the value chains were grouped and received technical training to upgrade their skills for production, (basic) processing and product variation. As SDC is leaving Vietnam in 2016, the project was only designed for 3 years. Hence, the implementing partners are expected to source funds for next project phases from other sources. The more successful each individual MARP project has performed, the more likely the success of fund sourcing efforts will be.

4. Description of Evaluation Methodology

The two key instruments summarizing the methodology are the fieldwork plan (see Annex 1) and the main review instrument, i.e. the evaluation matrix (see Annex 6). The evaluation matrix contains all key questions the evaluation process intended to answer plus indicators, sources of information and methods of information collection. The key review questions are structured according to the five OECD DAC evaluation criteria (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability). In addition, the research field ‘Lessons Learned’ has extended the matrix.

The main sources for answering the evaluation questions have been the project implementers, their private and public sector counterparts and other project partners at national and mostly at the sub-national level and the final beneficiaries. In addition, current and former staff of the overall program management of SDC Hanoi was an important source of information and assessment.

³ The „market system“ is the wider multi-player, multi-function arrangement surrounding the market interrelations between “core” value chain actors, which additionally include the market supporting functions and the regulatory environment (DFID, SDC 2008).

The figure below presents the comprehensive timeline in the form of a work process flow chart, which indicates the different phases of the evaluation, the relevant dates and the key deliverables.

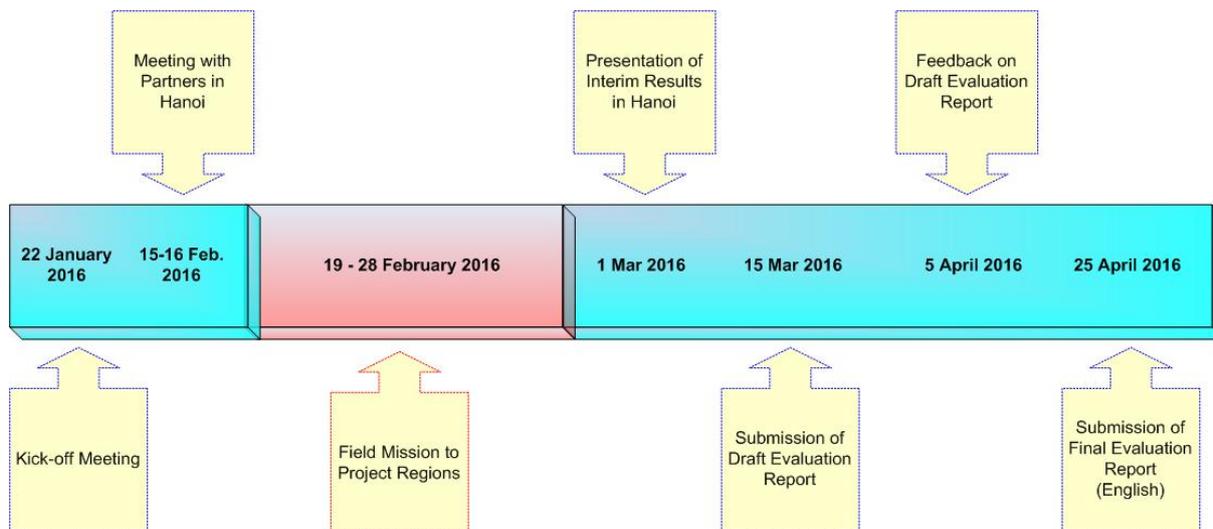


Figure 1: Process flow of Final MARP Evaluation

As preparation for the kick-off workshop on 22 January 2016, the consultants reviewed important program and project documents received by SDC (see Annex 2 for a list of documents) and prepared the key methodology (tentative work plan, draft evaluation matrix, beneficiary survey questionnaire).

A thorough preparation of the field mission has been discussed with SDC and the four project implementers, particularly in terms of exact travel itinerary, dates and times of appointments and the methods to use for collecting required information with given groups of actors. In terms of selecting suitable farmers for Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and interviews, who have the capacity to provide feedback and are selected in an unbiased way, the consultants conducted a random sampling of beneficiaries based on lists per farmer group or commune provided by the projects. Here the attempt was made to select male and female participants in a balanced way.

The field mission took place between 19 and 28 February 2016 and consisted of visits to 5 out of 7 project provinces Lang Son, Hoa Binh, Lao Cai, Lai Chau and Nghe An (see detailed field work plan in Annex 1). The two consultants visited Lang Son province together and split for the visits to the remaining four provinces. The international lead consultant went to Lao Cai (spices, Shan tea) and Lai Chau (Shan tea), whereas the national consultant travelled to Hoa Binh (ethnic textiles) and Nghe An (ethnic textiles, bamboo/rattan). Two or more staff of the respective projects accompanied each visit to a project site.

Value Chains	Provinces visited	No. of interviews	No. of FGD	Participants in FGDs	% of female participants in FGDs	Sharing Workshops
Spices	2 (Lang Son, Lao Cai)	8	5	78	46%	1
Shan Tea	2 (Lao Cai, Lai Chau)	6	3	51	65%	1

Bamboo/Rattan	2 (Nghe An)	9	3	32	84%	
Ethnic Textiles	1 (Hao Binh, Nghe An)	6	3	60	100%	
Total	5	29	14	221	71%	2

Table 1: Field Work Figures - MARP Evaluation 2016

The research approach included interviews and stakeholder consultations with partner enterprises and public counterparts like DARD, AEC or DOST. In addition, individual interviews were held with project staff in Hanoi (15/16 February) and at joint meals or during car rides between fieldwork events.

14 FGDs (2 FGDs in Lang Son, 3 FGDs in Lao Cai, 3 FGDs in Lai Chau, 2 FGDs in Hoa Binh and 4 FGD in Nghe An) were held with final beneficiaries of MARP projects. All FGDs were combined with a questionnaire-based mini-survey to measure economic changes. The FGDs with beneficiaries turned out to be very useful, especially for jointly recalling the activities and support they have received from the MARP projects and to report on it in a structured and comprehensive manner. During FGDs, the evaluation team could immediately crosscheck and clarify the information provided by the beneficiaries.

The mini-survey helped verifying information on MARP project results and asked for data such as income level, sources of income, economic conditions, market access, consumption and saving patterns in early 2016 compared to 2012 (see mini-survey questionnaire in Annex 4). A bit more than a quarter of the 221 respondents are male (29%) and about three quarters female (71%). The results of the mini-survey are presented in the “Impact” (6.4) and “Conclusions” (7) sub-chapters and in more detail in Annex 5 of this report.

The formats applied for collecting information, perceptions and assessments supported the attempt to find answers to the questions in the evaluation matrix (see Annex 6). Direct observations by the consultants during field visits to farmers and partner enterprises or traders helped to create own assessments and shape lessons learnt.

After the field mission, on 29 February/1March 2016 the consultants consolidated the results and prepared a PowerPoint presentation on preliminary results, which was held on 1 March 2016 afternoon at SDC Hanoi. The feedback and comments collected during this presentation event have been considered for preparing this Draft Evaluation Report.

Recommendations in chapter 8 address possible improvements of program implementation and results achievements, elaborate on how to sustain program results in the future as well as the replicability of program design features and implementation practices.

Report section 9 presents Lessons Learnt, which have been identified by asking the respective questions from section 5 of the evaluation matrix, and elaborated thereafter. Each Lesson Learnt roughly contains the following elements:

- Brief Description of Lesson Learnt
- Context and preconditions
- Challenges, negative causal factors
- Success factors, positive causal factors
- Illustration with at least one example from the field

5. MARP Program/Project Results

In the following, the evaluators briefly describe the expected outcomes, key indicators, main activities and achievements of the MARP Projects and give an overall assessment per project.

5.1 Project Results of Shan Tea Value Chain (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

The Project “Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar” (Shan Tea Project) implemented by HELVETAS (4/2013 - 6/2016) is the only MARP value chain project that operates on a regional scale and it is the only one that had not experienced an earlier phase. However, HELVETAS had commissioned a scoping study in 2012 to analyse the Shan tea sector in Vietnam in detail (Cuong Kim Vien 2012).

The overall aim of the project is “sustainable livelihood improvement for ethnic minority tea producers in Phongsaly, Lai Chau, Lao Cai, Ha Giang and Shan State through well-developed value chains”. The impact indicator focuses on „increased levels of income from tea production for ethnic minority smallholders“.

The project tried to reach the following three main outcomes:

- Equitable and beneficial market linkages between smallholder tea producers and processors and between processors and higher value markets are developed
- Tea production and processing quality is Improved
- Enabling environment for sustainable tea value chain development is improved

Initially, the project directly targeted 3,100 poor ethnic minority households, of which 2,600 are operating in Vietnam and 500 in Laos. In Myanmar only a scoping study was to be conducted as basis to define a future high quality tea project in Shan State.

The project’s key indicators at outcome level are defined as follows:

- Income of 3,100 smallholder farmers (revised target: 4,100) from the sale of tea increased by 10% or USD 310,000 compared with baseline
- 8 tea processing companies have contracts with buyers in new higher value markets
- Overall sales revenue of broad leaf tea from 8 processing companies increased by 20% compared with baseline
- 90% of tea leaves supplied by farmer groups to companies complies with defined quality standards
- 4 processing companies have invested in green processing technology
- 3 provincial governments have introduced policy measures supportive
- 4 value chain service providers are active with at least 80% of value chain actors satisfied with support services

Apart from SNV as implementation partner, HELVETAS’ main cooperation partners are tea farmers and tea processing enterprises. Initially, 8 enterprises had agreed to participate in the project. They were selected using the selection criteria: (a) working with smallholder upland farmer groups; (b) interested in targeting higher value markets and (c) potential for sustainable involvement in fairer value chains. Later 6 enterprises remained actively involved until the project end: Tam Duong (Lai Chau), Phong Hai, Bac Ha (both Lao Cai), Quang Binh, Fin Ho (both Ha Giang). The enterprises were considered the project’s strategic entry points

into the respective tea value chains. Besides, good working relations were to be set up with local government, which was particularly important for achieving outcome 3.

Main activities of the Shan tea project in Vietnam focused on (1) developing market opportunities (2) strengthening the market linkage between value chain actors, (3) strengthening tea producers' production and organizational capacities; and (4) strengthening the services to the actors in existing value chains covering the majority of the production zone. In Laos, activity types 1-3 were carried out.

More specifically, the project liaised with the tea processing companies to upgrade their farmers in terms of higher product quality, productivity increase, product diversification, including organic tea products and providing machinery, like grass cutters. It supported the technical upgrade within the companies, including co-funding of Japanese and Taiwanese experts to advise on production processes and technology transfer for new product varieties like Sencha, Matcha and Oolong teas, and the expansion of tea processors' production capacity in scale and depth. It also supported enterprises in product branding and package design, to travel to trade fairs in Vietnam or abroad and upgraded their distribution strategies, including the set-up of a show room of Tam Duong in Lai Chau City. The partner SNV assisted enterprises in terms of green production and organic certification. For all activities, support was provided technically and financially. Resource allocation to the partner companies was according to results-based performance.

The SNV contributions to improve the enabling environment (Outcome 3) included specifically:

1. Technical advice to Lai Chau, Lao Cai and Ha Giang provinces to develop strategic master plans of "Planning and development of tea sector phase 2015-2020".
2. Support to Lai Chau province to review the cooperation between company and tea farmers. Based on this study, the PPC issued a policy to strengthen the farmer-company cooperation to improve added value for Lai Chau tea.
3. Support to Ha Giang province to organize an orientation workshop in 2014, followed by a PPD workshop on "Planning and partitioning land for high quality tea production" in late 2015. The first PPD workshop concluded that organic tea production needs to be developed and expanded in Ha Giang (maximum area for organic tea is 14,000 ha) and tea land should be allocated to companies. The land allocation, i.e. setting up fixed supplier relationships between tea processor and farmers, was previously tested successfully in Lai Chau with Tam Duong Company. The advantage is the more likely enforcement of supply agreements and, as a consequence, stronger investments of processor into "their" supplying farmers. In Ha Giang "Tea land allocation" is expected to happen in the second quarter of 2016. At the same time, new policy for soft loan to tea farmers and tea processor will become active (a result of the 2014 Orientation Workshop).
4. Support the three provinces to conduct review studies and develop action plans to facilitate "Business Development Services" for the tea sector

Although the project initially aimed at supporting ancient Shan tea (forest tea), it quickly became obvious that such a narrow focus would make it impossible to reach scale and arrive at the targeted number of beneficiary households. Hence, the project extended its activities to commercial tea varieties Shan and Kim Tuyen. Today, 15% of forest tea (wild Shan tea)

and 85% of commercial tea are contributing to the household's income increase at production level.

The overall assessment of the Shan Tea project is quite positive when taking into consideration the annual reports 2013 to 2015 of HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, collecting the information and impressions during the field visit and the participation in the tea project-closing workshop on 25 February in Sapa.

	2013	2014	2015
Income increase of HH compared to previous year	164,348	738,254	535,317
Income increase of HH compared to baseline	164,348	902,601	1,437,919
Accumulative Income Incr.	164,348	1,066,950	2,504,866

Table 2: HH Income Increase 2013 to 2016 in Shan Tea Project
Source: HELVETAS 2016

At the impact and outcome level, the project managed to meet almost all indicators fully or even over-achieved them. The number of households reached, capacitated and (63% of them) lifted to a higher income level is more than double than initially planned (6,885 instead of 3,100). The income increase started slowly in 2013, but then accelerated and reached a level of 2,5 million USD in accumulated terms in 2016 (see Table 2 above). For the years 2014 and 2015, the expected amount of 310,000 USD annually was clearly exceeded.

Most other outcome indicators have been achieved fully and some partially. When defining green technology very widely, including production of organic fertilizers for tea cultivation and organic tea production, at least 4 companies have invested in 'green'. All 3 project provinces have already established tea development strategies at provincial level. In Ha Giang, the provincial government has even started to formulate a policy to support organic tea development. Product quality and sales revenues have increased everywhere.

The only indicator that not fully reached is that all supported tea processing companies having contracts with buyers in new higher value markets. This seems to be the case only with 3 companies, namely Tam Duong, Phong Hai and Quang Binh. Moreover, the project could only attract one external service provider to the tea value chains, which is Eco-Link that is preparing Fin Ho for organic certification. The evaluators strongly assume that this indicator does not include embedded services among actors operating within the same value chains.

Implementation in Laos and Myanmar seemed to be more difficult. Companies in Laos only target the Chinese market and were less cooperative (considering the project rather a burden than a support). Besides, the Chinese market demand was strongly decreasing during project life. As a consequence, no noticeable income increase of supported farmer groups could be recorded. In Myanmar it was difficult to find an appropriate national consultant to conduct the scoping study. The result is a study that needed to be rewritten and improved, but seems good enough now as information input for the design of a future program in the country and in a regional context.

The Mid-term review (MTR) in late 2014 criticised that the Shan tea project has not yet conducted a mapping of all key interventions completed as part of the various programs supporting tea in Northern Vietnam. Hence, no synergies could be leveraged. It further ob-

served that the project has not done much in terms of market access and market linkages. Hence, the MTR evaluators suggested a component to be added to the Shan tea project, which aims at a full-fledged marketing and branding strategy and implementation plan for high value added branded Shan tea from the highlands. This would be complemented by a pilot program in Vietnam, providing a high level of visible success with small volumes of exclusive quality product. Furthermore, the MTR evaluators highlight that the consistency of volume and quality of Shan tea production does not ensure the necessary reliability to support a branding promise of Shan tea on large scale. Besides, a general recommendation is to analyze the cross-the-value chain value capture as the evaluators claimed to miss an understanding among the project team on how the value capture is organized in the value chains. Hence, the database for monitoring of how much of the value is actually created at rural poor community level would be missing.

The Shan tea project has decided to not follow-up on most of above recommendations. Particularly, the project decided to not develop a separate intervention on supporting marketing, branding and market linkages for Shan tea. As for most project interventions the private sector would need to take the lead role, which the project could then support (e.g. project staff attending the workshop on marketing, branding and market linkages, show room development of Tam Duong tea company). Other high priority recommendations would be implemented automatically, e.g. further cooperation with SNV (14) or capacity building of farmer producers (16). Neither an ODA mapping on tea / Shan tea programs nor a more intensive study on value capture were considered necessary and feasible. The final evaluators particularly agree that a sound and professional branding campaign for Shan tea would go beyond the time frame and the resources of the project. For this, a follow-up intervention would be sensible.

5.2 Project Results of Spices Value Chains (SNV)

The 'Spice of Life' project implemented by SNV started in August 2013 and will continue until the end of May 2016. It is the follow-up phase of an earlier project that worked between 2008 and 2009 on supporting cinnamon production in Lao Cai. The overall aim of the project is to improve the livelihoods of ethnic minority groups who rely on spices as non-timber forest products (NTFP) in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam by increasing the income derived from NTFP spices, by enabling their market access and linkages within the value chain. The project tried to reach the following three outcomes:

1. Market development and linkages: linking and establishing agreements between smallholder producers and the private business actors.
2. Product quality improvement: introducing sustainable and improved production, harvesting and post-harvesting methods and technologies.
3. Policies that support business and sector development: creating an enabling business environment at the provincial and regional levels from supportive policies that are based on learning and knowledge developed by the project.

The project directly targets 12,000 smallholder spice farmers in 4 provinces (Lao Cai, Ha Giang, Yen Bai and Lang Son) who cultivate cinnamon, cardamom and star anise. Two thirds of this target group are expected to increase their annual income generated through spices.

The key indicators at impact level for the 'Spice for Life' project read as follows:

- 9,000 of spice production households whose annual incomes from spice production increase by 10% from baseline spice income (Cardamom: 3,300; Cinnamon: 3,500; Star Anise: 2,200)
- 50,000 ha (equivalent to 10% of spice producing land) of forest used sustainably for spice production

To achieve these results, SNV partnered with a variety of public actors at province level (DARD Ha Giang; DOST in Lang Son, AEC in Lao Cai and Forestry-Sub-Department in Yen Bai) as well as private companies (Techvina Cinnamon Oil Distillation, Vina Spaex company, Vipagro company).

Under outcome 1 the project formed and trained farmer groups, helped establishing or revitalizing spice associations and capacitated them on market research and market facilitation, supported partner enterprises to participate in trade promotion events, organised market linkage workshops where spice export companies and farmer group representative could meet and forge agreements, conducted market research analysis for cardamom, cinnamon and star anise and disseminated the resulting market information.

Under outcome 2 the project took measure to improve the product quality, e.g. improving the training/facilitation and advisory skills of public sector partners like AEC or DARD, who again capacitated the farmer beneficiaries using their newly obtained knowledge and skills. Manuals for sustainable spice production and quality management (using both words and images) were developed with the NTFPRC and widely used for ToTs and follow-up trainings with farmers. In addition, the project is supporting Techvina and its supplying farmers on getting all necessary requirements for certifying international organic cinnamon in Lao Cai.

Under outcome 3 the project lobbied with and gave advice to local government to issue new policies that are supporting sustainable spice development in their territory, capacitating the supported spice associations in advocacy and Public Private Dialog (PPD) skills and helped organising PPD events in all 4 provinces and provided business training courses for members of the spice associations.

The project claims to have achieved the following main results until early 2016:

- 10,162 households have increased their annual income by 14,5% on annual average since 2013.
- 210 FIGs were founded and capacitated, whose female members/trainees account for 45%. It needs to be mentioned here that typically households consisting of couples become member of FIGs.
- 700 provincial or district level staff trained in ToTs to share their knowledge with the farmer groups
- The same applied for 3,520 district and commune level staff, of which 50% are indicated to be women
- Provincial spice sector master plans were designed and implemented, regulations on sustainable spice production and processing were developed and promulgated
- Spice associations were founded, reactivated (Star Anise Association in Lang Son) and capacitated.
- The private partner enterprises (Techvina, Vina Spaex, Vipagro) have established better market linkages to supplying farmers

When providing an overall assessment of the spices project, it is necessary to distinguish between the three different spice value chains. While SNV managed to achieve its targeted results in the cardamom and particularly cinnamon value chains fully, the promotion activities in the star anise value chain have not achieved the envisaged results. One reason could be a relatively late start of star anise support activities only in 2014.

When it comes to Outcomes 1 and 2 (market linkages and product quality), reports and fieldwork impressions show great success in cinnamon and cardamom and some minor success in star anise value chains. For the first two commodities, middlemen are mostly cut out and farmer groups are directly supplying to processors. The result is better quality, higher productivity and new product varieties (organic) provided by the farmers against (non-financial and financial) embedded services and higher prices offered by the processor or large traders. In the star anise sector, only 27 out of 40 farmer groups supply processors directly at this point. Strengthening and diversifying market linkages downstream the value chains towards final customers seems to be particularly successful for cinnamon (less export to China, more to Western countries). Cardamom and star anise are still mostly sold to China in unprocessed or only basic-processed form. Star anise oil does not meet the export quality requirements yet.

In terms of Outcome 3 (enabling environment) all provinces seem to have improved their regulations and planning documents for the plantation and harvesting of the respective spices. PPD events seem to happen more often than before in which associations are capacitated to participate actively. It is however questionable whether the Star Anise association in Lang Son will be up to its current and even more to its future tasks.

The goal of target farmers' income increase (14.5% p.a. on average) has been achieved which is a solid result. However, the income increase has not happened evenly across all three value chains and four provinces. As most spices are subject to price fluctuations and vulnerable to climate events, the farmer incomes will not necessarily remain at this high level.

The MTR had recommended to the spices project to continue focusing on up-stream production quality and productivity improvements, leveraging the power of Geographical Indication (GI) for the spice products, mitigating the risks regarding potential programme exposures on essential oil production, pursuing advocacy work successfully conducted to date, setting up an action plan to mitigate traders strategies and coordinating with Oxfam regarding incense sticks joint opportunity optimization. SNV had agreed on all recommendations and followed-up on most of them, except exploring the cooperation with the Oxfam MARP project on incense sticks deeper. SNV specifically supported the spice association to promote GI and branding of local spice products. To mitigate the risk of essential oil production SNV urged the enterprises to improve their fire protection system, upgrade the previously dangerous oven facilities, replace the material mince machines and turn bio-waste into wood briquettes.

5.3 Project Results of Rattan and Bamboo Value Chains (Oxfam)

The 'Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities' project implemented by Oxfam started in April 2013 and will continue until the end of June 2016. Oxfam has been supporting poverty reduction initiatives in Nghe An for over the last two decades and this project is a scaling up initiative of its rattan support in

Tuong Duong district with three additional poor districts (Que Phong, Quy Chau and Con Cuong) being included. The overall aim of the project is to reduce poverty, increase livelihood diversification and enhance resilience of ethnic minorities and women in the poorest and marginalized up-land areas of Vietnam, through pro-poor value chain development of rattan and Lung bamboo. The project tried to reach the following three outcomes:

1. Ethnic minorities and poor women increase their annual income from sustainable production and marketing of Rattan and Lung raw material.
2. Ethnic minorities and poor women increase their annual income through value addition of Rattan and Lung products.
3. Enabling and supportive environment ensures the promotion of pro-poor Rattan and Lung value chain development from local to regional level.

The project directly targets 2,590 bamboo and rattan households in 4 districts of Nghe An Province (Tuong Duong, Que Phong, Quy Chau and Con Cuong) who nurse, cultivate and produce handicraft products from bamboo and rattan. The key indicators at impact level for the 'Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities' project read as follows:

- The poverty rate among direct beneficiaries in project areas in four districts in Nghe An (Tuong Duong, Con Cuong, Quy Chau and Que Phong) is reduced by 10%
- Rattan and Lung pro-poor value chain development in four districts of Nghe An benefits at least 2,500 poor ethnic minority households and targets about 3,000 direct beneficiaries/farmers (1,400 women and 1,600 men) by generating a total annual income of about 510,000 USD/year (+30% from their current total income)

To achieve these results Oxfam and its local partner, VIRI, partnered with a variety of public actors at province level (DARD and DOIT), at district level (Peoples' Committee) as well as private companies (Duc Phong, UMA...).

Under outcome 1, the project formed, trained and provided technical support to farmer groups. Rattan Nursery Interest Groups (RNIGs) were supported to produce 1,231,891 seedlings for sale in the province. Rattan Plantation Interest groups (RPIGs) were established, trained, and supported to maintain more than 89 ha of rattan at the four districts. The total area of Lung-bamboo forest was about 65 ha which was maintained by 3,567 farmers who had received technical training from the project.

Under outcome 2, the project established, trained and supported four rattan/bamboo processing units, i.e. 2 units in Quy Chau district, 1 unit in Tuong Duong and 1 unit in Con Cuong district. Members working in processing units received training on both preliminary treatment (dying and cleaning) and semi-processing of Lung raw. Processing units were also provided with equipment to facilitate their production process.

Under outcome 3, the Provincial strategic plan on "Rattan and Lung development for western districts of Nghe An and orientation towards 2020" was approved by Nghe An's PPC. The plan created a good foundation for future development of rattan and Lung province in general and in project areas in particular. At district level, important decisions supporting development of rattan/bamboo sectors were also developed and approved by local authorities. Besides, private companies like Duc Phong and Ngoc Canh have shown strong commitment and action to deepen their business ties with local farmers.

The project claims to have achieved the following main results until end of 2015:

- 90 ha of rattan was planted and 65 ha forest with Lung bamboo was enriched
- 6 RNIGs were established and supported to produce a total of 1,231,891 certified seedlings and RNIG members have earned additional income of about VND 11.6 million/year each from Rattan seedling production in 2015 (achieved 142% of the income indicator). Technical training was provided to all group members and technical report on Rattan nursery establishment has been published (incl. financial analysis for business development).
- 60 RPIGs with 1,749 farmers were formed and supported to plant rattan. These groups' members received training on sustainable rattan harvesting, extraction techniques. Lung bamboo farmers have received training on Lung-bamboo sustainable harvesting and processing. 56 training courses have been conducted for 1,745 participants (641 men, 1,104 women) on harvesting technique.
- Four rattan/bamboo processing units were established and their members were trained and assisted on processing technique. Processing units were supported to market their products locally and nationally.
- Stronger participation and investment of private sectors in Rattan/Lung production was recognized. Production facilities were set up by private company in the Lung bamboo zone and business contracts were signed between processing units and private buyers to cement their cooperation.
- Provincial government support to Rattan and Lung sector was institutionalized. This would facilitate the future investment in this sector from both public and private sector. Government financial support has been the driving force for the success of rattan (re-)plantation at the poorest district such as Tuong Duong.

When providing an overall assessment of the bamboo/rattan project, it is necessary to distinguish between the two different value chains. For both value chains, Oxfam has managed to achieve its targeted results.

For Lung bamboo value chain, Oxfam has succeeded in raising awareness of Lung bamboo farmers and change their harvesting practice. As the result, farmers have a better knowledge of the Lung bamboo and how it contributes to their livelihoods. With better technical knowledge of the Lung bamboo, farmers were able to take better care of Lung bamboo at their forest, to semi-process Lung bamboo as required by buyers, and to undertake part-time jobs provided by private companies such as Duc Phong. Oxfam would need to work harder with local governments in the coming months to secure their commitment and support to the Lung bamboo sector. This would better ensure the sustainability of the Lung bamboo in project areas after the project ends.

For Rattan value chain, Oxfam successfully established and supported farmers' interest groups focusing on different activities along the chain, from nursery, plantation to processing. All groups received continuous support from the project to enhance technical skills of their members as well as improve the operation of their groups, particularly the handicraft groups who produce final rattan handicraft for sale. Thanks to the P30A financial resources, nursery groups were doing most successfully. Their seedlings were purchased by 30A projects for distribution to farmers for plantation. The plantation groups have not harvested their rattan, yet, groups' members were equipped with all necessary technical skills for plantation and harvesting of rattan. The handicraft groups received a wide range of sup-

port from technical skills for its members, to product design and groups operation and marketing for the group. To some extent, they are expected to sustain the operation serving local markets in the coming years.

Oxfam had planned actions to address the comments of the MTR, where appropriate. All main concerns regarding the supply of raw materials, promotion of uniqueness of materials/products, branding/marketing of final products, policy advocacy and coordination across different players were well addressed by Oxfam. For rattan, interest groups target local markets (traditional sale mechanism prevails) and - for the coming time - would continue to do so. For bamboo, lead firms target international markets and Oxfam helped them to participate in international trade fairs to widen their client base. Similar to most manufacturers in Vietnam, the lead firm produces bamboo products as ordered by international clients (design of products is done by the clients). The scale and focus of the support provided by the project matches the capacity of the lead firm.

5.4 Project Results of Ethnic Textile Value Chain (VIETCRAFT)

The 'Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development' project implemented by Vietcraft and VIRI started in April 2013 and will continue until the end of June 2016. The project was built on VIETCRAFT's and VIRI's projects in Hoa Binh and Nghe An province. The overall goal or intended impact of the project is to enhance income and employment opportunities for raw material growers and ethnic minority weaver groups by upgrading ethnic textile value chains in Nghe An, Thanh Hoa and Hoa Binh provinces: '1,000 raw material growers and ethnic minority weaver groups enhance income and employment opportunities by at least 30% by 2016'. The project tried to reach the following three outcomes:

1. Sustainable production and market access for hemp and silk growing households;
2. Sustainable production and market access for woven fabric by ethnic minority producers;
3. Awareness strengthened on good practices for textile value chain upgrading interventions at the provincial and regional levels of the Ethnic Textile Value Chain

The project directly targets 300 ethnic farmers involved in hemp plantation and sericulture, 200 ethnic farmers involved in yarn processing and natural dyeing and 500 ethnic farmers involve in textile handicraft production. The key indicators at impact level for the 'Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development' project read as follows:

- By 2016, income of the material growers increases at least 30% as compared to the present income
- By 2016, income of the ethnic minority weavers increases at least 50% as compared to the present income
- By 2016, unemployment rate in the project area reduces 5% resulted from the development of ethnic textile value chain

To achieve these results Vietcraft and VIRI partnered with DARD of Hoa Binh and Nghe An provinces and DOIT of Thanh Hoa province, as well as private companies (Craftlink, Kana...).

Under outcome 1, the project formed and built capacity for common interest groups, provided seedlings for hemp and VH13 mulberry variety, conducted technical training on seri-

culture, hemp production, yarn processing, supported groups to develop business plans, provided them with new tools and equipment, established linkages between raw material growers and yarn collectors, hemp/silk producers and private buyers.

Under outcome 2, the project developed training materials, delivered training on textile, product development and design, production and business management, cleaner production, quality management, introduced weavers interest groups to trade fairs where their products were introduced and sold, supported groups to develop business plan, produced booklets on the meaning of traditional weaving / decorating patterns of ethnic groups, worked with Hanoi Art College to assist Chieng Chau group to develop 10 collections, and supported groups to develop market knowledge and market access for finished textile through marketing materials, international and national trade fairs, showroom opening and strategic sales agents established.

Under outcome 3, the project worked with the province to develop plans to support groups in 2016 and organized a regional sharing workshop.

The project claims to have achieved the following main results until end of 2015:

- Having reached a total of 1,074 households working in hemp, silk and sericulture
- Having Developed 350,700m² of new cultivated area with new variety, of which 34.2 ha for mulberry and over 1.5ha for hemp
- 6 sericulture groups, 7 silk weaving groups and 3 hemp groups were established and supported to function. Their members were trained with necessary technical skills and new knowledge on product design, quality management, clean production. Groups were connected with buyers through project introduction or participation of trade fairs
- 4 showrooms were established, put into operation and generate income of about VND 10 million/month, and 2 strategic sales agents are established and well functioning. The number of visitors is about 350 per month
- 1,000 booklets on the meaning of traditional weaving/ decorating patterns of ethnic groups are issued
- 800 marketing material/ catalogues are available and distributed

When providing an overall assessment of the ethnic textile project, it is necessary to distinguish between the three different value chains: yarn, hemp and silk. Vietcraft and VIRI had managed to achieve its target results. Incomes for participating farmers increased from 35% for silk yarn processing to 166% for hemp yarn processing.

When it comes to Outcome 1 and 2 (hemp and silk growing and woven fabric production), reports and fieldwork impressions show success in the development of sustainable production for all products and some minor success in the project's support to gain better market access. For hemp and silk growers, better variety and techniques have provided to growers that result in higher productivity and income to growers. Silk yarn producers have had a stable market due to a high demand of silk on both local and international markets. Buyers made direct contacts with silk producers to place order and purchase in bulk. Had more investment been made on the production of silk to increase both quality and quantity, producers could benefit more. Hemp yarn producers, due to limitation in the production capacity and quality (size of hemp cloth), had a less stable market. Much of their produced hemp was used for the production of ethnic textile products. Woven fabric producers have had

better experienced in terms of product design and product weaving techniques. Some of their woven products (scarves) were highly priced and accepted in the market. Yet, the quality of products is not consistent if a large order is placed with weaving groups. Some groups had secured their markets whilst others need more support to enhance their market access.

In terms of Outcome 3 (awareness strengthened on good practices), four out of five district authorities have committed their support to well-established interest groups and a regional workshop (including at least Lao participants) sharing knowledge, experiences and best practices on textile value chain interventions has been organised.

Vietcraft had taken actions to follow-up on the recommendations of the MTR team, where appropriate. The main concerns with respect to the supply of raw material, promotion of uniqueness of materials/products, branding/marketing of final products, policy advocacy and coordination across different players were well addressed by Vietcraft.

For silk, the importance is the quality of the products. Even if Vietcraft invested a lot into marketing, it would make no sense since the skills of silk weavers, the design of the products, the quality of the silk products are to be improved. Vietcraft would have been capable of more marketing/branding, if required. Their marketing efforts, however, seem sufficient given the level of silk weavers.

5.5 Gender-related Observations

In all four projects and various value chains supported women play an equal role (tea, spices, bamboo) or even more crucial role (ethnic textiles) than men in terms of work contribution and income generation. The project interventions have further enhanced the capacity and skills of both, women and men, their access to services, to information and to future advanced training opportunities.

According to participants in FGD, either the men or the women of a farmer household participated in project supported trainings, each sharing the new knowledge with their partners afterwards. The participation of women in the FGD was certainly determined by the stratified random sampling of the evaluators (who tried to have at least 50% women participating). But during FGDs it turned out that women were in many cases more knowledgeable about the history of their involvement with the project and on how the household turned new knowledge into better yields and income.

During a FGD of the Ethnic Textile project, members shared that women are often reluctant to participate in activities like study trips to other provinces, as they were not comfortable with long-distance travel. Therefore, the participation of either men or women in the project activities would also depend on the physical conditions and personal preferences of household members.

It does not seem that the roles and status of women, their unpaid work load or voice in decision making have been effected in any way by the project, i.e. neither in a positive nor negative way. Depending on the cultural habits of specific ethnic minority groups, additional workload required from women to improve product quality or to tender expanded planting areas could result in having less time for family and household. In some cultural context, e.g. Thai, this could be compensated by the men who would not mind spending more time with the children taking care of them. In other groups, additional workload is shared equally between both sexes.

6. Overall Findings (acc. to OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria)

6.1 Relevance

Relevance is the extent to which the objectives of the MARP program/projects are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies.

Shan Tea Project (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

In terms of target groups the project is widely relevant for ancient Shan tea VC (mostly in Ha Giang) and for commercial tea farming (predominantly Lao Cai, Lai Chau). All tea cultivation is strongly dominated by ethnic minorities of different ethnicities (Mong, Dao, Akha/Ha Nhi, Ta'ang (Palaung), Phounoy and Thai). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of tea farmers was not poor at the beginning of the project (far below 50%). This is equally true for farmers of ancient Shan tea in very mountainous regions of Ha Giang. The baseline study of the Shan tea project (HELVETAS 2013) shows poverty rates of 28% across all three provinces in 2013 (Ha Giang 29.6%, Lao Cai 26.9%, Lai Chau 29.2%). The mini-survey in Lai Chau shows that the poverty rate among the respondents decreased from 31% to 18% and thus confirms the initial baseline results.

In terms of addressing the needs of actors in the value chains, particularly the ultimate beneficiaries, the project is very relevant, as it intentionally breaks the vicious cycle of low product quality leading to low price that does not provide incentives for future investments which again determines a future low product quality. Now with the support of the Shan Tea project, product quality is improved and new products developed jointly by processors in cooperation with farmers and then brought to partly new markets abroad.

Officially, the Shan Tea project targets a fourth outcome on efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation. It is rather unusual to turn two of the final evaluation criteria into a separate outcome. They should be a matter of course in such a development project. For this reason, outcome 4 has not been discussed deeper in chapter 5.1 above.

“Spice of Life” Project (SNV)

The intended effects of interventions in all three spice value chains (star anise, cardamom, cinnamon) are highly relevant due to relatively high poverty rates at project start and the fit with farmers' needs. Around 50% of households engaged in the production of cardamom and cinnamon in the target provinces were estimated in the baseline survey to be poor or near poor (SNV, 2013). For Lang Son star anise farmers the rate was estimated to be a bit lower. This would roughly match with the MARP program requirement that at least 50% of the beneficiaries are expected to be poor. The mini-survey of the evaluation team however shows that before the project start 21% of surveyed households were poor, while today 10% are still registered poor. The big difference between baseline estimates and evaluation survey results can be the selection of communes and farmer groups where the survey took place. For practical reasons, the evaluation team did not travel to the very remote places where the poverty rate is presumably higher. Another reason could be that the poverty rates have never been at 50% but much lower among those farmers who own land and are thus able to cultivate spice trees. It is rather the landless rural ethnic minorities who show the highest poverty incidence.

Moreover, the project shows a high level of relevance when it comes to addressing the needs of the spice farmers. The kind of capacity building received, e.g. new techniques for tendering plants or pre-processing spices, is exactly what was needed in order to increase product quality and productivity. The same applies for establishing direct market linkages with the processors (cinnamon, star anise) or large traders (cardamom) by avoiding the services of middlemen and directly receiving trade relations, embedded services and trust. The result is higher productivity, product quality, prices received and ultimately income. The relevance is not only confirmed by beneficiaries during FGD, but also by public and private counterparts, who all praised the types and mechanisms of interventions.

'Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities' Project (Oxfam)

The project is highly relevant due to high poverty rates at project start and the right fit with farmers' needs. Around 65.57% of households engaged in the production of bamboo and rattan in the target district of Nghe An province were estimated in the baseline survey to be poor (IRC, 2013). This would match with the MARP program requirement that at least 50% of the beneficiaries are expected to be poor. The mini-survey of the evaluation team however shows that before the project started 23% of surveyed households were poor, while today 2% are still registered poor. The big difference between baseline estimates and evaluation survey results can be explained similarly as above.

The project shows a high level of relevance when it comes to addressing the needs of the bamboo and rattan farmers. The kind of awareness raised, capacity building received, seedling provided, is indeed what was needed in order to secure an additional source of income from making better use of forest resources and of land owned. The same applies for connecting private companies with farmers who were trained to process the materials and products as per requests of companies. Yet, the bargaining power of farmers have not been strengthened as expected. Farmers have had little say in dealing with companies who seem to have a dominating role in the project areas.

'Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development' project

With the high participation of ethnic minority women in the poor districts and the fit with women's needs, the two value chains supported by the project are relevant. About 28% of households engaged in the production of ethnic textile in the target provinces were estimated in the baseline survey to be poor (Vietcraft, 2013). This does not entirely match with the MARP program poverty requirement, but the fact that the participation of women was estimated as high as 90% had strengthened the case. The mini-survey of the evaluation team however shows that before the project started 53% of surveyed households were poor, while today 13% are still registered poor. Possibly the selection of the mini-survey locations was not fully representative.

The project shows a high level of relevance when it comes to addressing the needs of the ethnic minority women. For all project beneficiaries, they were to receive support to the types of income generating jobs that are considered traditional. Ethnic women have long been weaving traditional ethnic products for their own needs. Today, they are provided with opportunity to enhance their skills to turn their traditional products into tradable goods. The kind of capacity building received, product design developed, seedling provided, market

linkages established is indeed what was needed in order to enhance to quality of ethnic products for better sales and subsequently income. The same applies for introducing their products to local and international markets.

6.2 Effectiveness

The effectiveness is the extent to which the objectives of MARP program/projects have been achieved, taking into account their relative importance.

Shan Tea Project (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

The effectiveness of the Shan tea project had been realized by reaching the initial target group (ancient Shan tea farmers) and even an extended target group (commercial farmers of Shan tea and Kim Tuyen tea). As described in section 5.1 and confirmed by the mini-survey the set objectives were fully reached pertaining to growth and access of tea value chains in a better enabling environment as well as income increase and improvement of living standards of beneficiaries. Therefore, the project obviously did the right things to achieve its objectives. Implementation features like cutting out middlemen, upgrading farmers, involving value chain firms actively, providing business consultancy and strategy advice to them, triggering business investment through co-funding of new business ventures (show room, new production lines, product branding etc.), seeking government support and facilitating the upgrade of government policies and strategies for the tea sector proved to be effective.

By contrary to the other three projects, the Shan tea project is the most business driven project in its implementation. All funds for development activities are channelled through the partner enterprises into the value chains and are disbursed in a performance-based manner. Those enterprises such as Tam Duong (1,900) and Phong Hai (2,000) that could reach out to the largest number of households have received the biggest part of the funds for development activities.

“Spice of Life” Project (SNV)

In terms of effectiveness the intended target groups have been mostly reached through the project interventions, with the exception of a possible lower share of initially poor households than 50% (see above under Relevance). But the vast majority of beneficiaries are clearly ethnic minorities, when it comes to spice production. The key objectives at impact and outcome level have widely been reached, which is confirmed by the project monitoring and the evaluation survey. There are a few exceptions like particularly for many star anise production groups: market linkages are not that strong yet nor do all products have reached export quality yet. The key enabling factors for reaching objectives in an effective way was the selection of mostly right counterparts, such the cooperating enterprises, the AEC in Lao Cai province or NTFPRC at national level. These partners not only increased effectiveness by working jointly with the project on achieving the objectives, but they also brought their own financial contributions into the overall project budget. A clearly disabling factor for achieving objectives are the external shocks that happened now shortly before project closure, i.e. the plague of insects with star anise in Lang Son and frost damage of cardamom trees in North-west Vietnam.

Counterparts and partners seem to be satisfied with the quality of tools, technical advice, training and other activities delivered by the project. This includes the cascading ToT approach the project was applying by first training officials at higher administrative levels (province), who then trained district commune staff, who then again trained the farmers. In

parallel, company staff was capacitated to reach out to farmers for their supply chain management and provision of embedded services. Another example of effective training delivery is the training material produced by NTFPRC. It does not only describe all techniques and instructions in words, but also in pictures which is increasing the understanding of illiterate beneficiaries among whom are many ethnic minority women.

'Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities' Project (Oxfam)

In terms of effectiveness the intended target groups have been fully reached through the project interventions and the objectives have well been achieved. The key enabling factors for reaching objectives in an effective way was the presence of a lead firm in Lung bamboo value chain and the strong support of the government 30A programs in rattan value chain. The lead firm had not only provided growers with necessary technical training but also purchased semi-processed materials from growers and created job opportunities for landless households. Through 30A program, the People's Committee of Tuong Duong district had provided financial support to the established RNIGs and RPIGs. A clearly disabling factor for achieving objectives is the limitation in market access, market intelligence and product improvement in Rattan finished products.

Counterparts and partners seem to be satisfied with the quality of technical support and training activities delivered by the project. The project has strongly supported upstream activities of both value chains whilst downstream activities of rattan value chains need be strengthened for sustainability.

'Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development' Project (Vietcraft)

In terms of effectiveness the intended target groups have been mostly reached through the project interventions with the exception of a lower share of initially poor households than 50% (see above under Relevance). But the vast majority of beneficiaries are clearly ethnic minorities and women. The key objectives at impact and outcome level have widely been reached, which is confirmed by the project monitoring and the mini-survey. The key enabling factors for reaching objectives in an effective way was active role of the group leader to facilitate and coordinate the group activities. Whilst ethnic minority women have limited knowledge and understanding of economic activities, it is important to have a leader who understand them and be able to support them all the way through. Interest groups whose leaders are active and devoting seem to have benefited more, as these group leaders are always ready to take a step further to explore and realise business opportunities. However, the dependence on a single person is clearly a disabling factor for achieving objectives. Once leaders are chosen, more support will be vested on them. Integrity will be an important quality of these leaders but found missing at one of the group leaders met. As the result, the working of such group has not been as effective as expected.

Ethnic minority women seem to be happy and satisfied with the quality of production tools, technical advice, training and other activities delivered by the project. The opening of showrooms was well regarded by all members. The participation in trade fairs allowed group members to understand the market needs and how well they can address such needs.

6.3 Efficiency

The efficiency is a measure of how economically resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.

Shan Tea Project (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

In terms of time efficiency the Shan tea project has reached, upgraded and lifted the income of its target households already after 2 years project implementation and could thus expand to a larger number of households. Also, other key objectives could be achieved timely, such as expanding to high quality markets.

In terms of cost-efficiency the project set-up and implementation seem to be successful as well. So far the project has disbursed 1.309 million USD over the last 3 years (2013-2015) with a management share of 28% and an average expenditure per ultimately targeted household of 190 USD. The conversion rate as per early 2015 is 1.91, i.e. for 1 USD spent by the project (for both activities and management) the income of target beneficiaries was lifted by 1.91 USD. This is an excellent result.

Looking at the results achieved and the likely sustainability of the tea value chain upgrades (see section 6.5 below) the investment made so far (another 270,000 USD will be disbursed until June 2016) the results clearly justify the costs. This is even more true if additional progress will be made until the project end, e.g. with respect to completion of organic tea certification, successfully penetrating Far Eastern markets with speciality teas and further increasing the income of farmers in Vietnam and ideally also Laos.

“Spice of Life” Project (SNV)

The project has spent 1.4 million USD over 3 years with a management share of 22% and an average expenditure per targeted household of 138 USD. This is a relatively low amount compared to the other 3 projects and underlines the cost-efficient performance of the project. According to the numbers provided by SNV comparing input to output is quite impressive. With 1,4 million USD investment an accumulated income increase of about 4.77 million USD has been achieved. This is an impressive conversion rate of 3.4. This result does not consider the higher production and processing capacities that are expected to generate further income increases in future. The key objectives have been achieved timely, apart from parts of the Star Anise value chain work.

Most implementing partners were the right choice. Particularly the AEC in Lao Cai was capacitated already in an earlier project phase (2008-2012), which was important for a quick start into the second phase. For Cinnamon apparently the right private sector partners were chosen. They seem dynamic and proactive in widening and diversifying market access and investing in new technologies and products. Such investments of Techvina in a organic cinnamon oil production line or Vina Spaex in a high quality star anise production line are underway and will generate revenues and farmer incomes only after the project has phased out.

‘Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities’ Project (Oxfam)

The project set-up and implementation seem to be cost-efficient. The project has spent 1.34 million USD over 3 years with a management share of 25% and an average expenditure per

targeted household of 265 USD⁴. This is a relatively high amount compared to the other 3 projects. With 1.34 million USD investment an accumulated income increase of about 1.058 million USD has been achieved. This is a conversion rate of 0.79. This result does not consider the built capacity and business linkages that will most likely generate further income increases in the future after project end. The key objectives have been achieved timely.

Implementing partners were selected properly. Besides VIRI, which has been in the project province before, other partners were reviewed and selected among the available potential partners. As VIRI is not a lead firm in the rattan value chain, the value chain might face difficulties in expanding its market and diversifying products. Unlike VIRI, Duc Phong Company is a lead firm in the Lung bamboo value chain, which buys raw material from farmers and places orders with handicraft households. Once the project ends, Duc Phong will very likely continue to support the same group of beneficiaries.

‘Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development’ Project (Vietcraft)

The project design and implementation seem to be efficient. The project has spent more than 634 thousand USD over 3 years with a management share of around 17% and an average expenditure per targeted household of 496.73 USD⁵. This is a relatively high amount compared to the other 3 projects. According to the numbers provided by Vietcraft comparing input to output is lower than that of other projects. With 634 thousand USD investment an accumulated income increase of about 172 thousand USD has been achieved. This is a conversion rate of 0.27.

6.4 Impact

The impacts summarize the positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Shan Tea Project (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

The tea project interventions show a full range of positive impacts with regard to strengthening farmer skills, lifting productivity, improving product quality and establishing market linkages, increasing income and improving living standards. The market system is clearly improved in Lai Chau province, which the evaluator could visit, and most likely in the other provinces (following the project documentation and reporting).

⁴ Total beneficiaries: 5,068 (based on Oxfam data)

⁵ Total beneficiaries: 1,278

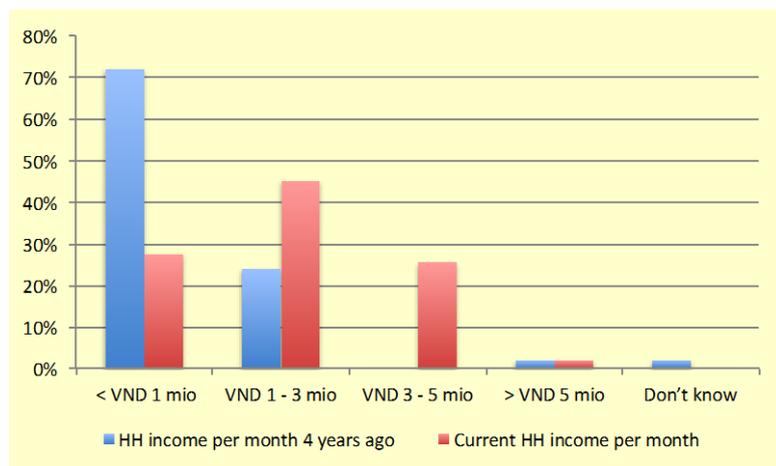


Figure 2: HH Income 2012 vs. 2016

The increase in income of farmers over the last 4 years is depicted in Figure 2, which is based on the evaluation survey figures. In 2012 the graphic resembled a falling curve with almost three quarters (72%) of households earning less than 1 million VND from tea, down to 2% earning above 5 million. In 2016, the graphic looks like a normal distribution with a quarter of farmers earning either less

than 1 or more between 3 and 5 million VND (27%, 25%) but the majority is located in the middle of the bell-shaped curve making 1-3 million VND (45%). Those households earning more than 5 million VND have stagnated at 2%. The other survey results correspond with the income figures. The 51 respondents (65% women) have better access to tea sales markets (98%), appreciate better or much better economic conditions (100%), can afford better goods and services (91%) and save more money every month (63%) than before.

“Spice of Life” Project (SNV)

The project interventions positively impacted income increase, skills and productivity of farmers and in most cases (except for Star Anise) their product quality and market linkages. Market systems have improved for Cardamom and Cinnamon due to stronger linkages between value chain actors (upstream and downstream for Cinnamon VC and mostly upstream for Cardamom VC) and due to improved regulations, policy frameworks and services. The results are less clear for Star Anise for which at least the market linkages are weaker.

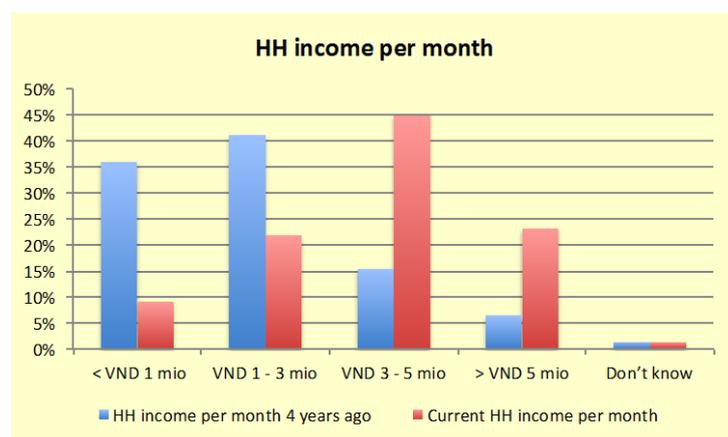


Figure 3: HH Income 2012 vs. 2016

The mini-survey results show that out of 78 participating spice farmers (of which 46% are women) 89% have easier market access, 87% improved their economic conditions and 77% can afford products and services in better quality than before the project has started. 72% are able to save more on a monthly basis than before. The most important result however is shown in Figure 3: households earning 3-5 million

VND per month have increased from 15% to 45% and those earning above 5 million VND from 6% to 23%. On the other hand, the group generating a cash income of less than 1 million has decreased from 36% down to 9%. Important to know for the interpretation of these results is that for most of these households, spices provide the only access to cash income. These results clearly confirm the monitoring data of SNV that show solid increases of monthly household incomes as well.

‘Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities’ Project (Oxfam)

The project interventions positively impacted income increase, quality seedling, technical knowledge improvement and market linkages, though at a lesser extent. Market systems have improved for Lung bamboo and seedling of rattan thanks to the financial support of the 30A program. The results are less clear for the plantation of rattan, which will only be due to harvest early next year and for rattan-finished products, for which the market linkages are weaker.

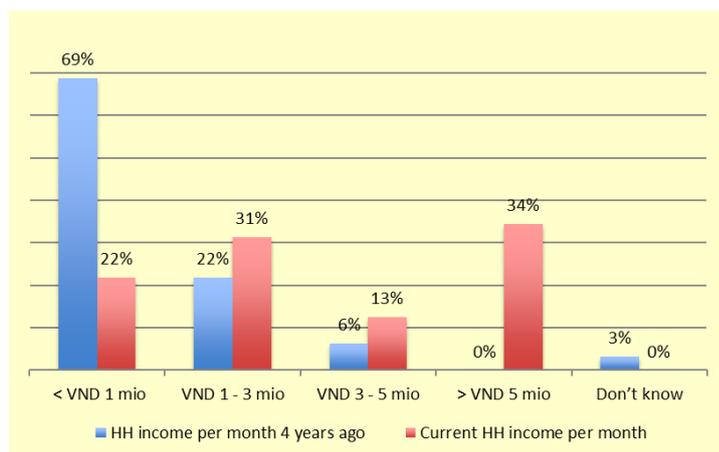


Figure 4: HH Income 2012 vs. 2016

The mini-survey collected responses from 32 farmers (of which 84% are women). All confirmed that they have easier market access, improved their economic conditions and can afford products and services in better quality than before the project has started. 81% are able to save more on a monthly basis than before, which is the highest number of four projects. The most important result however is shown in Figure 4: households earning more than 5

million VND per month have impressively increased from 0% to 34% and those earning from 3- 5 million VND doubled from 6% to 13%. On the other hand, the group generating a cash income of less than 1 million has decreased from 69% down to 22%. Also for these households, bamboo and rattan production and processing provides the only cash income.

‘Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development’ Project (Vietcraft)

Project interventions positively impacted income increase, quality seedling, technical knowledge improvement, and market linkages (more for silk than hemp). Market systems have much more improved for silk than hemp.

The project interventions positively impacted income increase, quality seedling, product development, technical knowledge improvement and market linkages though more so for silk than hemp. Market systems have much improved for silk products from silk yarn to silk finished products. The results are less clear for the weaving of hemp products which both market access and product quality seem to be weaker.

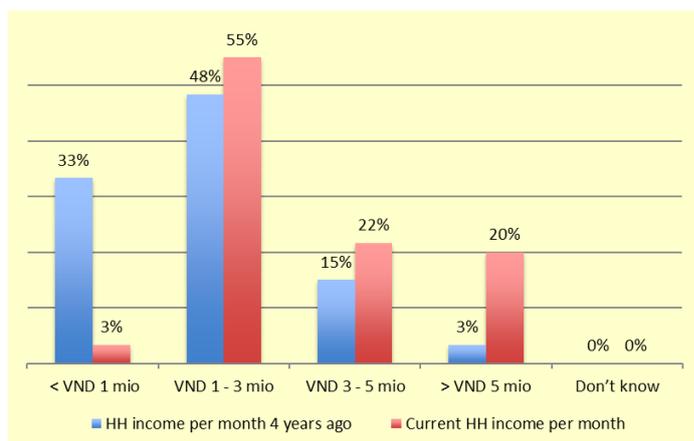


Figure 5: HH Income 2012 vs. 2016

how their income level shifted over the project time. Households earning more than 5 million VND per month have impressively increased from 3% to 20% and those earning from 3-5 million VND rose from 15% to 22%. On the other hand, the group generating a cash income of less than 1 million has decreased from 33% down to 3%. For weaving households, ethnic textile production is mostly the only cash income.

6.5 Sustainability

The sustainability indicates the likely continuation of the benefits from MARP program/projects after the development assistance has been completed. It estimates the probability of continued long-term benefits from the project and the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

Shan Tea Project (HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation)

From the beginning, a self-sustaining higher quality production through investments from processors and producers was expected after the end of the Shan Tea project in 2016 (HELVETAS 2013-1). In Laos, the situation is different. A 2nd phase after 2016 was considered necessary from the beginning to reach self-sustainability. This is of course even more valid for Myanmar. All these predictions turned out to be mostly true.

The market linkages in the tea value chains in Vietnam are likely to self-adapt in future and (to some extent) to be robust and even resilient to external shocks. The recent investments of enterprises into processing facilities (Tam Duong), supplying farmers (all), product development (Tam Duong) or product branding (Tam Duong, Fin Ho) increase the likely sustainability of results achieved. The fact that access to final markets, particularly for new product varieties like Matcha, Sencha or organic tea, are still in the probing and testing phase puts a little question mark behind the sustainability. As stated elsewhere in this report, the business skills of partner companies are very diverse and started to improve only recently with project assistance. Whether the range of companies will be able to always do the right business decision without project business advisor at hand remains open.

The difficulties faced in Laos (less cooperative enterprises, focus on China as key market, slump in demand from China during project life) made it impossible to consolidate the results there. To create better results and their sustainability a follow-up phase is required.

The mini-survey conducted at two provinces gathered 60 participating farmers (of which 100% are women). Results consistently reported that 88% have easier market access, 88% improved their economic conditions and 88% can afford products and services in better quality than before the project has started. Compared to other three projects, fewer participating farmers are able to save more on a monthly basis than before, i.e. only 6 out of every 10 farmers confirmed that they are able to do so. The Figure 5 revealed

For above reasons, a regional follow-up project (Shan tea phase 2), which is currently in the conceptual design and fund-sourcing phase by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, would increase the sustainability significantly. Discussions with potential donors are advanced.

Besides, Lotus Impact, a social enterprise investment fund, has prepared a market assessment study on Shan tea in early 2016 commissioned by SDC (Lotus Impact, 2016-1, 2016-3). The study covers the enterprises Tam Duong Company, Fin Ho Cooperative and Hiep Than Company (HTC), but it misses completeness of information and data. The study comes to the conclusion that the tea companies evaluated as part of their research effort are either not seeking investment or they are not operationally suitable to receive such investment. As a result of the study, Lotus Impact considers building the competence and sustainability of tea companies (and possibly other agribusinesses) by inviting their entrepreneurs and leaders to Lotus Hub6 for nurturing and upgrading Shan Tea companies with the final objective to ultimately attract investment into these companies (LOTUS IMPACT 2016-2). This would professionalize the lead companies and ultimately the whole value chains even further and could create advanced sustainability of project results. Lotus Impact seems keen to move forward, but is first seeking some donor grant to pay for the initial involvement, as the companies would not be able to contribute. Hence, there is a big question mark behind this effort.

“Spice of Life” Project (SNV)

A positive sustainability can only be confirmed for Cinnamon through international market linkages for instance to USA, France and Russia, investments into processing facilities (Techvina, Vina Spaex), into farmer skills of enterprises and into organic spice production. The Star Anise value chain, however, still shows a weak association and partly still weak farmer skills resulting in low productivity and quality. The currently widespread insect attack is another discouraging factor in Star Anise. In the Cardamom value chain, farmer groups are facing serious tree damage and even destruction after the January frost. For all these reasons, sustainability of project results in these two value chains is rather doubtful at the point of this final evaluation.

Already earlier SNV has planned to design a follow-up project that is particularly focusing on Cinnamon and to look for funding sources that would make the implementation of such a project possible, such as DFAT Australia. If this project materializes, the sustainability of project results in the Cinnamon value chain would be further boosted.

As part of the exit strategy of its MARP project, SNV should consider to discuss with local authorities, enterprises/traders and local farmers about solutions to the current difficulties and crisis situations in Star Anise and Cardamom value chains in order to improve chances of sustainability of project results also in these two value chains.

‘Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan/Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities’ Project (Oxfam)

⁶ “Situating in Da Nang and Ha Noi, Lotus Hub is an incubation program based within the University of Da Nang and Foreign Trade University Hanoi respectively. Launched in November 2015, Lotus Hub actively works with entrepreneurs and the local ecosystem to innovate ideas and prototype social businesses”. (<http://www.lotusimpact.com/#!lotushub/cf8j>)

Positive sustainability is likely for Lung bamboo through the sustainability of the lead firm, which now opened a new processing facility right at the material zone to purchase raw and semi-processed Lung bamboo from farmers. With better awareness of Lung bamboo and knowledge of harvesting and maintaining Lung bamboo forests, farmers would continue to benefit from their business relationship with the lead firm. The firm also trained and hired handicraft farmer groups to produce semi-finished handicraft products for export.

For Rattan plantations, sustainability could be better assessed when the planted rattan is to be harvested. Sustainability for finished rattan products is subject to the continued improvement of product quality and varieties. The RNIGs have confirmed to continue nursing other types of varieties as per request of the district and looked out for opportunities to be satellites for larger nursery facilities.

‘Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development’ Project (Vietcraft)

Positive sustainability can only to be confirmed for yarn and silk finished products. Yarn producers have confirmed their interest to increase capacity as the market demand for yarns, particularly high-quality yarns, steadily grows. With better weaving skills and product design silk finished products value has been gradually increased. Most of these groups have somewhat succeeded in connecting with buyers, as the result of their trade fairs participation throughout three years. Future support would be needed to further improve product design and market access of these groups.

For the hemp value chain, sustainability remains questionable. The H’mong hemp groups seem to be in greater need of continued support from product design to produce sales. Together with private companies, Vietcraft has setup a factory in Mai Chau district of Hoa Binh province to source handicraft products locally. If the factory operated as Vietcraft had described, sustainability of handicraft groups in Hoa Binh province would be enforced.

7. Conclusions: Overall MARP Program Assessment

Overall, the projects of the MARP program are relevant and effective. Particularly the Shan tea and the Spice for Life projects were very efficient leading to a conversion rate of costs to income increase of 1.8, which is a very good result. Impacts have been achieved as intended. All projects successfully target ethnic minorities in upland areas of Northern Vietnam, although the share of poor households reached is most likely clearly below 50%. This, however, should not come as a surprise as the baseline studies for most projects have shown poverty rates at project start that do not fully meet the MARP program requirement of a 50% poverty rate amongst the target groups. For projects like “Ethnic Textiles”, the ‘poverty’ indicator has been applied flexibly in combination with the major participation of women and ethnic minorities. The sufficiently representative mini-survey during the evaluation (221 respondents), shows poverty rates of 29% shortly before project start and 10% today. This is still a significant reduction of poverty.

The total numbers of MARP are impressive anyway. The program has reached 23,393 beneficiary households of which 57% are female headed. Per household the MARP program spent 201 USD on average until the end of 2015. The share of management costs across all 4 projects was 24% (without management costs at the SDC program umbrella level), which leaves 3 quarters of the budget for development activities. Partner contributions make up about 20% of overall budget. With disbursements (incl. partner contributions) of currently 4,79

million and total accumulated income increase over 3 years of 6.14 million USD the current conversion rate of inputs to outputs amounts to 1.28, which is very good for a development project.

It is interesting to see that the project apparently triggered crowding-in effects. The mini-survey revealed that 19% of respondents have started dealing with specific value chain products supported by the project in 2013 only or later, i.e. after the project has started. Hence, it is likely that these individuals or households have been attracted by the positive experience of neighbours and relatives in generating income with those value chain products and decided to get involved too. This is clearly a positive program result, too.

When conducting FGD in Quy Chau district, non-beneficiaries have invited themselves to come as they thought that the 'project' is conducting some kind of training for its farmer groups. Participants shared that those who were not engaged in the project are very eager to 'informally' join any learning activities organised. All viewed that training provided has been very useful for them.

The most positive impacts, however, are the easier market access, the increase of income and of standard of living. All these results are expressed in the 2014 and 2015 annual reports of the projects and are verified through the evaluators' mini-survey.

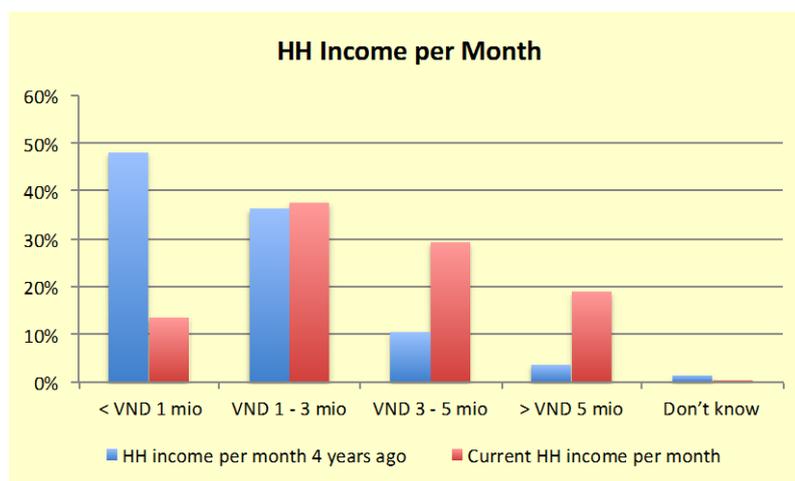


Figure 6: MARP HH Income 2012 vs. 2016

When it comes to monthly household income, we can see the transition from a falling curve in 2012 to a bell-shaped curve in 2016 (see Figures 6 below). This means that previously many households earned very little or modestly and a few households much more, whereas now a few earn very little or very much, but the majority in the middle has a decent income which

is clearly above the income-based poverty rate in Vietnam (700,000 VND per household per month⁷). Market access to be easier or much easier was confirmed by 40%, respectively 53% of the respondents.

⁷ Decision 59/2015/QĐ-CP dated 19/11/2015 regulated the poverty line for rural areas from 2016-2020.

Economic conditions have clearly improved within the last 4 years for project-supported households. 32% state that they do much better economically and 60% that they fair better (see Figure 7). More detailed changes in standard of living can best be assessed by looking at the expenditure and saving side. For all typical expenditures the majority of households spends significantly more today than before project start: food & beverages (92% of HH), clothes & footwear (89%), Housing, Furnishing, Water, Electricity (91%), transport (83%), communication (84%), health (80%) and education (84%). These changes in expenditure patterns are significant, also in terms of investing into the children of these families keeping them out of poverty in future.

MARP provides a valuable example of a balanced approach on how to work with both national and international NGOs and value chain enterprises to reach a large number of producing households upstream the value chain, connect them to final markets and try to build value chain resilience. The higher the business management capacity of enterprises involved, the more successful such an approach could be. Developing business management skills of individual enterprises in parallel to the development of the value chain seems to be a necessity to make this approach work. Business advice and consultancy of implementing partners in the value chains has, however, not been provided sufficiently and not equally across all 4 projects. An NGO like HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation happened to employ staff with business expertise and experience and could utilize his business management background to upgrade tea-processing companies like Tam Duong or Fin Ho. This was however rather ad hoc and spontaneous and not designed and planned in its project document. Other NGOs have not responded in such a professional way to enterprise demand. The technical assistant budget available to the projects could have been used for business consultancy as well. Moreover, according to SDC program management the projects could have asked for further financial support during the implementation, if needed. This option has been utilized by some projects, but not by all. Technical assistance at the MARP program level was focusing on M&E and knowledge sharing, but could also provide business consultancy skills, if requested. In fact, MARP had been designed in such a way that an international consultant would be on the program team to cover the demand for business consultancy skills by the projects. Unfortunately, the program failed to find a qualified expert being available on an intermittent basis and based in the country or region. Therefore, a local consultant was recruited who focused on M&E primarily.

Relying only on enterprises or only on NGOs would mean to shift good project results either upstream the value chain or downstream and reduce sustainability. A balanced outcome would rather be unlikely, as so many other projects have shown in the past.

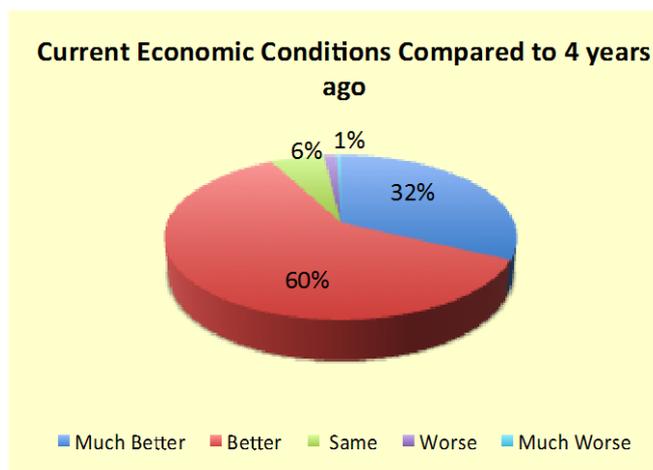


Figure 7: Current Economic Conditions of MARP HH

‘With additional cash income, I could now buy gifts for my grandchildren. They are very happy, which makes me a happy grandmother’, a statement that is shared and agreed by female FGD participants in Nghe An and Hoa Binh province.

Specific value chains in the MARP program will need further attention and external facilitation, such as star anise in Lang Son (up- and downstream), ancient Shan tea in Ha Giang (mainly downstream) or cardamom in Lao Cai and Yan Bai (upstream due to climate events). The sustainability of the other project value chains has been discussed per project above. Some are very likely to operate smoothly in the future driven by the self-interest of producers and processors within an enabling environment; others are more vulnerable to external shocks and events.

Looking at outcome 2 of the MARP program “generating and disseminating knowledge and experiences”, the 4 projects were actively involved in these sharing and disseminating activities through sharing workshops, production of knowledge products at project level, design and wide usage of training material for capacitating farmer households. The most striking and professional knowledge products are, however, the short movies on selected project work that were commissioned by SDC and are available on the SDC Vietnam Facebook site.⁸ Towards the end of the program one longer (5-10 minutes) movie per project will be produced by SDC using the same international filmmaker like for the short movies.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this final evaluation of MARP the evaluators give the following recommendations to SDC and the 4 project implementers:

- At least 3 out of 4 MARP projects seem to have good chances to be continued (after re-adjustment and modification). All NGOs involved are encouraged to design follow-up projects and source funds to increase the likely sustainability of results and VC resilience.
- MARP Value chains that will still need specific support, further attention and external facilitation are such as star anise in Lang Son (up- and downstream), cardamom in Lao Cai and Yan Bai (upstream due to climate events) ancient Shan tea in Ha Giang (mainly downstream / “Shan tea” branding). These value chains should be considered in the design of any follow-on projects or next project phases.
- Emergency response is, however, even more urgent than new project design, As part of the exit strategy of its MARP project, SNV should consider to discuss with local authorities, enterprises/traders and local farmers about solutions to the current difficulties and crisis situations in Star Anise and particularly Cardamom value chains in order to immediately support the farmers affected and improve chances of sustainability of project results in these two value chains. Between submission of draft and final evaluation report, SNV has started the emergency response by working with local partners to develop a mitigation plan for these two products:
 - Cardamom: SNV has started supporting districts in Lao Cai and Yen Bai to conduct 10 training courses for 500 cardamom farmers to rehabilitate cardamom plantation from frost. Besides, SNV has produced a film for disseminating these rehabilitation techniques through local TV to more cardamom-farming households.

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/connectovn>

- Star anise: The project developed training guidelines on star anise disease control and safety star anise harvesting tools. SNV will support 40 farmer groups with the training material and tools.
- The project has produced a variety of knowledge products to share results and lessons learnt (movies, material of sharing events, brochures and fact sheets). It is important to collect those documents and make them easily available and accessible online in one website.
- When it comes to the replicability or non-replicability of program design and implementation features, the ten Lessons Learnt in the final chapter of this report are highly recommended to make available widely, including on the MARP 'legacy' website mentioned above. They include some typical value chain development issues and dilemmas, but also Vietnam specific conclusions and recommendations for future programs. Particularly, the likely follow-on projects to most individual MARP projects are advised to study these Lessons Learnt carefully and take them into account for any project new design.

9. Lessons Learnt

A variety of lessons learnt could be extracted from the findings described above. The evaluators present here those 9 lessons learnt that are considered most relevant for projects working on agricultural, agribusiness or agroforestry support activities using a market-oriented value chain approach.

1. **Risks related to climate, weather and pests need to be factored into the design of agroforestry projects, including mitigation measures.** Fieldwork has shown that two of the three spice value chains are currently battling with external factors that are threatening the productivity or even the sheer existence of the spice plants. In Lang Son, the star anise trees of most farmer groups supported by the project are under attack of an insect that eats the leaves, which reduces the productivity of the trees. Neither farmers nor local institutions have the technical equipment to spray pesticides on the mostly very high star anise trees. The severe snow and frost in Northern Vietnam shortly before Tet 2016 has apparently damaged most Cardamom trees in Lao Cai province and the majority in Yen Bai province. Given that a Cardamom tree needs 4 to 5 years to bear fruits for the first time, this is a serious drawback for the farmers in the region, particularly those whose only cash income derives from Cardamom. Neither the project, nor local farmers were prepared for these events. The project did not anticipate the risks of such an event for project success and sustainability, although in the baseline survey about 70% of respondents considered climate change a real threat for future productivity (SNV, 2013). Still, many Communes like Nam Cang in Lao Cai have not diversified their cash income sources. For the project it is almost too late to respond to the new situations, also given that mitigation measures are not prepared. In the future, such risks need to be considered in the project design and possible mitigation measures well defined in advance.
2. **Ownership of partner enterprises in value chains significantly impacts innovativeness and readiness for change.** MARP projects have cooperated with a variety of different enterprises as entry points in value chains to promote up- and downstream changes. A typical example is the tea project, which worked among others with a newly privatized, formerly state-owned enterprise (SOE), Tam Duong Company in Lai Chau, a current SOE,

Phong Hai in Lao Cai and a cooperative, Fin Ho in Ha Giang. Apparently, all three enterprises have different ownership structures and thus act according to different sets of incentives. This again influences their key business decisions, including human resource recruitment and policy, investment decisions, recognition and reinvestment of profit, supply chain management, marketing etc. These decisions will finally show how risk-friendly, innovative and ready for change an enterprise is or, in other words, how entrepreneurial. In the case of the cooperation partners of the tea project, the SOE was least innovative and ready for change, whereas the newly, fully privatized tea processor was willing to experiment with new product varieties for Japanese and Taiwanese markets, starting to set up its own network of show rooms and investing in green technology. The Fin Ho cooperative is growing in terms of number of production facilities, cooperation agreements (e.g. with another cooperative producing organic tea under Fin Ho brand) and tea product varieties. These examples show that ownership structure is an important characteristic of companies to take into account when selecting enterprises in value chains as implementation partners. It was not in the list of selection criteria in MARP, but should be considered for the future.

3. **A project should avoid designing uniform interventions for different implementation partners in different value chains.** This lesson learnt is closely related to number 2 above. Different ownership structures and their consequences on management decisions are one reason why each private cooperation partner should receive tailor-made, enterprise- and context-specific interventions. But there are many other reasons, like available business skills in the enterprise, the current status and earlier successes of penetrating the market, the capacities of the supplying farmer groups, the nature and novelty of the products (e.g. organic and non-organic) and others. Important for the outside value chain facilitator is to recognize what interventions and support activities are needed to reach the set objectives in cooperation with the business partner in the value chain. One example is support activities with Fin Ho cooperative compared to Tam Duong Company. It is often not necessarily obvious from the beginning, what might work best with a given private sector partner. In this situation and if time and other resources allow, a development organisation can design a couple of smaller activities targeting the same objectives and see what works best in order to scale the successful ones up later. Another example is provided by SNV that interacted with different processors of spice raw material, like Techvina, Vina Spaex and Vipagro. Each company received a slightly different kind of support, depending on their situation. For Oxfam and Vietcraft this lesson was less relevant, as they could not really experiment with different solutions for different enterprises due to the very small number of implementing partners in the value chains.
4. **Lean project management structures require an efficient project management system.** MARP made the attempt to operate lean management structures in order to be able to invest relatively more in development activities. This can be observed at the MARP program level and at most project levels. For instance, the MARP program level does not employ an international staff only responsible for the program, which is unusual for such a complex development program. This requires well designed and very efficiently working management and monitoring systems, ideally supported by appropriate IT solutions. Intended or unintended changes in the development process of the value chains need to be detected early. Hence, indicators need to be defined that serve as early warning signals to be able to recognize and intervene quickly. This is even more important when the projects do not employ own field staff, but need to rely on public and private partners at

value chain level to implement and monitor. The systems need to be in place and used constantly, such as data entry and data monitoring. In the tea project, the cooperating enterprises recorded key data of each household trained by them and supplying them, including training participation, sizes of land cultivated, frequency and quality of delivery etc. These data are then accessible to the project management in Hanoi, can be aggregated and processed into indicators. The MARP program had the difficult task to oversee and monitor a complex program with 4 projects in 7 provinces and a multitude of value chains. Each project had its own monitoring system in place created under guidance of SDC. By this, it was ensured that all systems have similar key features (indicators, data requirements, baseline requirements) to make a comparison possible and a feeding into the MARP program M&E. In order to keep an overview on what is going on in the projects, SDC sent an intermittent expert at annual basis to all projects who checked selected milestones (based on the projects' indicators) to verify the reported results of the projects in their annual reports. The set-up and operate of such an M&E system turned out to be an important element to make such a complex development program work efficiently and effectively.

5. **Include more business management skills support in value chain projects with NGOs as facilitators.** Choosing enterprises inside value chains as key partners for project implementation presupposes a wide range of business skills of these enterprises. Such business skills include supply chain development, product development and diversification, innovation management, marketing, branding etc. Developing country SMEs operating in agribusiness value chains often lack the full range of business skills, which creates additional tasks and efforts for the outside development organisation. However, upgrading business management skills and entrepreneurial experience is usually not a particular strength of most development organisations and NGOs. Hence, upgrading of business management skills in enterprises needs to be factored into the program design explicitly, as it was initially the case with MARP. MARP had intended to mobilize an intermittent international consultant at the program level to meet all business consultancy demand of the projects. Unfortunately, the program could not find such an expert. If the project NGOs happened to employ staff with such expertise and experience, they could allocate him or her to this task. HELVETAS, for instance, could utilize the business management background of the project manager to upgrade tea-processing companies like Tam Duong or Fin Ho. This also made it easier to follow the MTR suggestion of more intensive marketing and branding of products and companies in value chains. Interestingly, when the tea project proposed to support enterprises in business skills and business plan development, many of them seemed not willing in the first place, but appreciated the advice later on. The other three projects struggled more with the challenge to provide business management advice. Business advice and management coaching is a continuous and reiterative task that is taking place during each project team visit to the project locations and partner companies. This is why business consultancy skills ideally need to be at the project team level with the implementing agencies like in the case of Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation and not at the program level at an intermittent basis. This needs to be considered for future program design, as well.
6. **Choosing only one lead firm per value chain is risky in terms of sustainability and resilience to external shocks after the project has ended.** If the selected company collapses or loses interest in developing its suppliers, the whole chain might collapse or reshape in a way that is not in line with the development objectives. The MTR calls this observation

“market dependence” (Charbonneau, J. et al. 2015). There is a multitude of examples in MARP, as in most project value chains only one single firm has been supported and capacitated to become the lead firm. For instance, Tam Duong or Fin Ho play this prominent role in the value chains they are operating in. The same applies for Vina Spaex and star anise in Lang Son. However, the most obvious examples are Duc Phuong in Nghe An and Capital Seaweed for red algae. In the latter case, the risk even became reality during project life, leading to a discontinuation of SDC support and a cancellation of the red algae project. Cooperating with and strengthening two lead firms within a value chain bears other risks, though. The competition usually drives them to underinvestment in the capacity of their joint suppliers, as capacity building creates positive externalities, a typical market failure. Ways out of this dilemma need to be tested situation-specific. For instance, a project could try to build up co-opetition between two lead firms to mitigate the risk of one firm failing. Whether this works depends on the firms involved and the rest of the value chain. The above described risk is even increased, if a company or individual has cross-invested into a couple of lead firms of different supported value chains in a given sector, which are all supported by a project. In the worst case a domino effect could topple a variety of project value chains at the same time. Such a cross-investment situation is given for commercial tea value chains in Northern provinces, where a large trader holds considerable shares in Tam Duong, Bac Ha and Quang Binh tea companies, which are all supported by MARP.

7. **For reaching scale, value chain products with high importance for local government should be selected.** Local government is in charge for creating a conducive business environment, including regulations on land usage, taxation and trading as well as the necessary provision of infrastructure. A supportive government is particularly important for all agriculture and agroforestry value chains, as their development requires land usage, partly huge areas of land. In order to receive local government support, the product or commodity promoted needs to be on its priority list or have a good chance to get there early in project life. For many MARP products this was the case from the start, such as for star anise in Lang Son or tea in various Northern provinces. The situation is a bit trickier, when the same land is used for different purposes, such as Cardamom (NTFP) that is planted in or around forests. Here local government needs to grant access and cultivation permission for producing a NTFP on forestland. Only when regulations, policies and land usage rights are in place, a larger number of farmers dares to invest their often small savings into planting commercial trees and crops.
8. **The facilitation of local government’s participation and contribution to the project needs to be led by the organization that has had policy advocacy experience.** The different level of local government’s support and endorsement of the project result at the Bamboo and Rattan project is an interesting example of the possibly best way to approach local government. Having worked with Tuong Duong district of Nghe An province for nearly 20 years, Oxfam had gained a high level of trust from the local government. Consequently, the district authority has politically and financially supported project activities implemented at the district level. In another district of the same province, Oxfam via a private company was not successful in gaining local government’s support despite of continuous effort from the appointed private company. It might be the case that the local government does not have the urge to respond to request from a private sector. Had Oxfam taken charge of the dealing with local government, the result might have been different. With prior working relationship with provincial authorities, Oxfam could have

more leverage to require for support and commitment from respective district authorities.

9. **For every group of ethnic minority women, there is a need to appoint not only a group leader but also core members supporting the operation of the group.** The recent experience of Vietcraft when working with the only group leader of a H'mong group reveal the domination of the group leader in implementing group activities. The group leader would have the privilege to plan most of the activities to suit her own schedule, rather than arranging the work for the benefit of the group. In such case, the immediate appointment of an additional core member to share the group workload has resolved such unexpected problem. Besides, with limited experience working dealing with suppliers and buyers, it would be important to capacitate groups of ethnic minorities in basic business skills and management.
10. **The MARP model by itself should be considered a lesson learnt.** Many features of the program set-up (short duration of 3 years, sound selection criteria of projects in a tender process, previously analysed value chains, the external value chain facilitation approach with implementing partners in the value chains, lean program management etc.) have worked well and enabled to achieve most expected results (most of the upstream the value chains) within this short time frame (see the MARP model description in chapter 3). There are some additional features that would further enrich this model. Business management skills support (see Lesson Learnt 5 above) would strengthen the partner enterprises to take on their facilitation role during and after program life. Another interesting feature would be to involve buyers (export/import agencies, wholesalers, distributors) in the production country and/or the country of the final foreign markets as implementation partners and not only processing companies. Buyers should be on board to better access the markets and at the same time shape product design and quality consistency upstream the value chains (see Viet Insight 2016). Without active involvement of buyers, developing the value chains up- and downstream within a 3-year period is very challenging – at least for some sectors. It would be worthwhile to experiment with these two additional features in future value chain projects/programs.

Annex 1: Fieldwork Plan

Fieldwork in Hanoi

Date	Time	Activities & key meeting partners	Location
15/2/2016	AM	9:00 – 11:30 Meeting HELVETAS project staff	Hanoi
	PM	14.00 - 16.30: Meeting with SNV officers	
16/2/2016	AM	9:00 – 11:30 Meeting with Oxfam Project staff	Hanoi
17/2/2016 (Wed)	AM	9:00 – 11:30 Meeting with SDC Hanoi	Hanoi
	PM	Meeting with spice export companies from Spice project	SNV Office, La Thanh Hotel, 218 Doi Can, Hanoi
		13.00 - 14.00: Meeting with Techvina company (Mr. Hai)	
		14.00 - 15.00: Meeting with Vina Spaex company (Mr Que Anh, Ms. Lisa Huyen)	
15.00 - 16.00: Meeting with Vipagro company (Mr Minh)			
18/2/2016 (Thu)	PM	14:00 Meeting with spice national partner (Non-Timber Forest Product Research Centre) – Dr. Phan Van Thang	SNV Office, La Thanh Hotel, 218 Doi Can, Hanoi

Fieldwork in Lao Cai and Lai Chau

Date	Time	Activities & key meeting partners	Location
19/2/2016 (Fri)	AM	Travelling from Hanoi to Lang Son	Lang Son City
	PM	13.30 - 17.00: Meeting with local counterparts, project partner	
20/2/2016 (Sat)	AM	7.00 - 13.00: 2 FGDs with farmer groups in Van Quan district (2 FIGs w. 15 participants each)	Van Quan district
	PM	14.00 - 18.00: Travel back from Lang Son to Hanoi	
23/2/2016	AM	7.00 - 12:00 Travel Ha Noi - Bao Thang	Bao Thang

Final MARP Evaluation

(Tue)	PM	12.00 - 13.00 Lunch in Bao Thang	Bao Thang
		13.00 - 14.00 Visit cinnamon factory	Bao Thang
		14.00 - 17.30 FGD w. cinnamon farmers in Nam Det, Bac Ha	Nam Det
		17.30 - 19.30 travel from Nam Det to Sapa	
24/2/2016 (Wed)	AM	7.00 - 8.30 travel from Sapa to Nam Cang commune	Sapa
		8.30 - 11.30 FGD with 1 st cardamom group in Nam Cang	Sapa
		12.30 - 13.00 Lunch	Sapa
	PM	13.00 - 15.00: FGD with 2 nd cardamom group in Nam Cang	Sapa
		15.00 - 16.30: Travel to Sapa town	Sapa town
		16.30 - 17.00 Meeting cardamom trader	Sapa
25/2/2016 (Thurs)	AM	8.00-12:00 Sharing workshop on Spice Project	Sapa town
	PM	13.30 -17.30: Sharing workshop on SHANTEA Project	Sapa town
26/2/2016 (Fri)	AM	7.30-9.00 Visit Tea processing factory of Tam Duong Tea Company & Meeting with management staff of Tam Duong Tea company 9.00-12.00 FGD w. tea farmers in Sung Phai commune, Lai Chau City	Lai Chau city
	PM	13.30-14.30 Visit tea showroom of Tam Duong company in Lai Chau City' 14.30 - 17.00: Meeting with SHANTEA partners in Lai Chau: - Lai chau PPC; DARD management staff; Tam Duong Tea company - Local government of Lai chau city & Communes	Lai Chau city

Final MARP Evaluation

27/2/2016 (Sat)	AM	7.30-9.00 Traveling from Lai Chau city to Ban Boo commune 9:00 – 10:30 FGD w. Tea farmers in Ban Bo commune 10.30-11.30 Visit high quality tea processing factory in Ban Bo commune	Ban Bo commune, Tam Duong district, Lai Chau province
		Lunch in Ban Bo	
	PM	14:00 – 16:00 FGD in Ban Bo Commune 16:00 – 18:00 Travel from Ban Bo Commune to Lao Cai City	
28/2/2016		9:00 – 12:30 Travel from Lao Cai City to Ha Noi	

Fieldwork in Hoa Binh and Nghe An

Date	Time	Activities & key meeting partners	Location
22/2/2016	AM	7.30 Leaving Hanoi for Na Phon 10.30 Arriving at Na Phon 10.30-11.00 Visiting a weaver at Na Phon 11.00-11.30 Visiting a showroom at Na Phon	Mai Chau, Hoa Binh
	PM	14.00-16.00 FGD at Na Phon. 17.00PM Check-in at Thai Binh hotel in Chieng Chau	
23/2/2016	AM	8.00 Leaving Chieng Chau for Pa Co 8.45 Arriving at Pa Co 8.45-10.00 Visiting material processing households 10.00-11.00 Visiting textile handicraft households 11.00-11.30 Visiting showroom in Pa Co	
	PM	14.00-16.00 FGD at Pa Co 16.00 Leaving for Hanoi	
24/2/2016	PM	17.00-19.00 Travel from Ha Noi to Vinh Check in Hotel	Vinh, Nghe An

Date	Time	Activities & key meeting partners	Location
25/2/2016	AM	7.00 – 11.00 Travel from Vinh to Tuong Duong 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Oxfam's partner – VIRI 12h00 – 13h00 Lunch at Tương Dương	Tuong Duong, Nghe An
	PM	14.00 – 17.00 Work with Oxfam project in Tuong Duong, FGD, interview the beneficiaries of RNIG, RPIG, and handicraft production groups of rattan value chain 17h00-20h30 Travel from Tuong Duong to Quy Chau	
26/2/2016	AM	7.30-10.30 Work with Oxfam project in Quy Chau, FGD, interview the beneficiaries of harvesting, processing and handicraft production groups of Lung value chain 10h30 – 11h30 Visit the Rattan/bamboo processing facility of Duc Phong in Chau Thang commune 12h00 – 13h30 Lunch in Quỳ Châu	Quy Chau, Nghe An
	PM	14.00-17.00 Work with VIETCRAFT project FGD, interview Hoa Tien Silk handicraft production group 13.00 Pick-up at Oxfam's project site 13.30 - 14.00 Visiting a household 14.00 - 16.00 Focus group discussion at Hoa Tien village 16.00-16.30 Visiting showroom in Hoa Tien village 16.30 Leaving for Dien Kim commune	
27/2/2016 (Sat)	AM	8.30-9.30AM Visiting a household 9.30-11.00AM FGD at Dien Kim commune	Dien Linh, Nghe An
	PM	14.00 -17.00 Work with Oxfam's partner – Duc Phong Company 19.00 Go to Vinh airport. Back to Hanoi	Vinh, Nghe An

Annex 2: List of References

- CHARBONNEAU, JACKY, TRAN NAM BINH 2015, External Evaluation of Project 7f-08348.01.03, A Mid-Term Evaluation Conducted On Behalf Of The Swiss Agency For Development And Cooperation (SDC), “Market Access For The Rural Poor Through Value Chain Promotion (MARP)”, Final Version Dated April 21, 2015.
- COMMITTEE OF DONOR AGENCIES FOR SMALL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT 2001. Business Development Services For Small Enterprises: Guiding Principles for Donor Intervention (Blue Book), 2001 Edition, February 2001.
- CUONG KIM VIEN 2013, Processing Company Assessment Of Shan Tea Value Chain In Northern Vietnam, Developing The Value Chain For High Quality Broad Leaf Tea For Poverty Reduction In Northern Vietnam, Laos And Burma.
- CUONG KIM VIEN 2012, Scoping Study On Shan Tea Sector In Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Lai Chau, And Yen Bai, prepared For HELVETAS, 15 December 2012
- DFID, SDC 2008. The Operational Guide For The Making Markets Work For The Poor (M4P) Approach,, A Publication Financed By The UK Department For International Development (DFID) and The Swiss Agency For Development And Cooperation (SDC), October 2008
- HELVETAS 2016, Progress Report Of HELVETAS Vietnam For Period From Jan 2015 To Dec 2015; The Project Of “Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains For Poverty Reduction For Ethnic Minorities In Northern Vietnam, Laos, And Myanmar’; Ref – 1006-23231 E-81017457
- HELVETAS 2015, Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains For Poverty Reduction For Ethnic Minorities In Northern Vietnam, Laos, And Myanmar, Ref – 1006-23231 E-81017457, Annual Progress Report 2014, Progress Report Of HELVETAS Vietnam For Period From January 2014 to December 2014.
- HELVETAS 2014, Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains For Poverty Reduction For Ethnic Minorities In Northern Vietnam, Laos, And Myanmar, Ref – 1006-23231 E-81017457, Annual Progress Report 2013, Progress Report Of HELVETAS Vietnam For Period From March 2013 to December 2013.
- HELVETAS 2013-2, Baseline Study for the project of “Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam. Laos and Myanmar.
- HELVETAS 2013-1, Developing High Quality Tea Value Chains For Poverty Reduction For Ethnic Minorities In Northern Vietnam, Laos And Myanmar Shantea 2013-2016, Project Document, Market Access For The Rural Poor Project (MARP) In Consortium With SNV March 2013
- LOTUS IMPACT (2016-3), Market Assessment On Coffee, Rice And Tea Through An Impact Investing Lens In Viet Nam Swiss Development Corporation & Lotus Impact February 2016
- LOTUS IMPACT (2016-2), MARKET ASSESSMENT, Vietnam Sustainable Agriculture, January 2016
- LOTUS IMPACT (2016-1), Market Assessment – Shan Tea For Swiss Development Corporation & Lotus Impact, Draft, January 2016
- MOE AUNG 2014. Report For Scoping Study On Tea Sector Development and Issue In Shan State, August – November 2014.

NYEIN CHAN WIN 2014. Tea Rapid Assessment In Shan State, HELVETAS Myanmar, Powerpoint Presentation, Debriefing At Program Office, Yangon, 20-Jun-2014

OXFAM 2013. Nghiên cứu cơ bản cho dự án 'Mở rộng dự án phát triển chuỗi giá trị Mây/Lùng cho phụ nữ và dân tộc thiểu số nghèo tại bốn huyện tỉnh Nghệ An', prepared by IRC Consulting, 2013

SDC HANOI 2015. SDC Hanoi Management Response, MTR of MARP Project, March 2015, SCO Hanoi and MARP Implementing Partners

SDC HANOI 2012, Project Document, Market Access For The Rural Poor-Through Value Chain Promotion, 30th July 2012, Prepared By Sdc Hanoi, Supported By Peapros Consulting Jsc

SNV 2014. Activity Report, Training Course For Quality Control (Qc) Staffs Of Tam Duong Tea Company, 05-06 April, 2014

SNV 2013-1. Scanning Report, Survey On Tea Processing Technologies In Five Selected Processors, Final Version, Hanoi, December 2013.

SNV 2013-2. Baseline Survey, Project "Leveraging the Spice Sector for Poverty Reduction in Northern Vietnam Ethnic Minorities", Ha Noi. December 2013.

VIETCRAFT 2013. Báo cáo điều tra cơ bản 'Dự án cải thiện sinh kế của phụ nữ dân tộc thông qua phát triển bền vững chuỗi giá trị dâu tằm tơ và dệt vải', September 2013

VIET INSIGHT 2016. Shan Tea In Southeast Asia, Ideas For Future Development. 1st Draft Report, 8 April 2016.

Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Learning Evaluation of MARP projects for International Consultant

1. Introduction

The Swiss Cooperation Office for Vietnam (SCO) is the representative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). It is responsible for the coordination of Swiss Development Cooperation of the Swiss Government in Vietnam.

The 3 years program Market Access for the Rural Poor through Value Chain Promotion Programme (MARP, 2013-2016) aims to reduce poverty in poor households, especially those of ethnic minorities, through generating additional income and employment in selected agricultural value chains in which the poor can participate. MARP focuses on two outcomes: i) *Increased market access and participation of poor rural households in selected agricultural value chains* and ii) *Knowledge and experience of value chain intervention generated and disseminated at local and national level, and in specific cases in the Mekong region*. Under the first outcome, MARP expects to increase income of at least 10,000 poor households, especially rural ethnic minorities and poor women, generate over 1,000 full-time jobs or equivalent and moves at least 3,000 households out of poverty. There are four projects to aim at improving eight agriculture value chains: Shan tea, rattan, bamboo, silk, hemp, cardamom, cinnamon, and star Anisee in 8 provinces in Vietnam - Nghe An, Lao Cai, Ha Giang, Lai Chau, Hoa Binh, Thanh Hoa, Yen Bai, and Lang Son. The projects are as follows:

- Developing High Quality Tea (Shan Tea) Value Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.
- Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan and Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities implemented by Oxfam Hong Kong.
- Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development of the Ethnic Textile Value Chain implemented by the Vietnam Handicraft Exporters Association (VIETCRAFT) and Vietnam Rural Industries Research and Development Institute (VIRI).
- Leveraging the Spice Sector for Poverty Reduction amongst Ethnic Minority Communities in Vietnam implemented by SNV Netherlands Development Organization (SNV).

Under the second outcome, successful models and experiences that improve market access for the poor will be widely shared and exchanged at local and national level and in specific cases in the Mekong region. This is expected to contribute to a favourable policy environment for agricultural value chain development, and to trigger replication and expansion of successful models leading to additional income and employment generation.

In 2014, an MTR was carried out to review the full MARP portfolio. As SDC is now in its last 5 year strategy, it is time to look at the key achievement of the program and draw lessons learnt to stakeholders.

2. Objectives

The MARP program will come to an end by June 2016, in which 4 projects under the program will close one by one from March till May. This summative evaluation will contribute to the learning process of all partners involved and contributes to the accountability towards the stakeholders and taxpayers.

The objective of the mission is to represent the results after 3 years implementation of the full MARP program, provide conclusion and lessons learnt to all stakeholders.

3. Scope and methodology

3.1. Scope

The team will look at the achievement of the projects up to date, focusing on outputs and outcomes. The team should also assess the target beneficiaries of the projects and assess if the poor, ethnic minority and women are appropriately engaged in the value chain.

The evaluation will cover mainly 5 DAC criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. To achieve the above objectives, the team should offer answers to the following key questions although not only restricted on them:

Relevance

- Are the outcomes and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the objectives achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives?
- To what extent is the target group reached?

Efficiency

- Was the program cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?

Impact and sustainability: assess the overall impact of the projects and the likelihood of improving the market system to benefit the poor in each of the intervening value chains

- What are the main positive changes created by the MARP projects?
- Can the linkages facilitated by MARP projects be able to self-adapt to grow and strengthen in the long run? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the program or project?

Poverty and Gender: assess the roles, capacity of and benefit brought to poor households and female beneficiaries of MARP

- What is the impact on poor households and women due to the intervention implemented?
- Have women's household unpaid workload increased? How has women's status in the household changed as a result of the intervention, taking into consideration ethnic and social norms of the community that the project works with? Have women been able to have a greater voice in the decision making process, particularly in terms of economic decisions that affect the household?
- Have the interventions helped women to have greater access to services / training / information to advance economically?

Lessons learnt: What are the lessons learnt to all partners from the MARP program in terms of design, implementation and monitoring?

4. Methodology

The team will work in close collaboration with SDC and MARP project implementing agencies, SNV, HELVETAS, Vietcraft, and Oxfam and also the beneficiaries. The team will use literature review, discussions, and interviews with related stakeholders besides above mentioned agencies - local partners, private sector, beneficiaries, relevant donors/NGOs, etc. Given the context that SDC program in Vietnam is phasing out, while an external independent team is selected, a learning approach together with partners should be taken to capitalize the program and bring lessons learnt to all partners in the program.

The detailed methodology and process will be developed by the review mission, but with consideration of the following guidance:

1. The methodology will be developed based on the review of all important documents and literature sent to the MTR members by SDC and the MARP projects team in advance.
2. The methodology to be applied will be presented to SDC and MARP project partners in a kick-off meeting to ensure that the methodology is sensitive to the potential concerns of beneficiaries participating in this review.
3. Ensure that all analysis and recommendations are based on available records, evidence and interviews.
4. SDC, HELVETAS, SNV, Vietcraft and Oxfam will support in organizing all meetings with related stakeholders.

5. Team and qualifications

The team will comprise one international consultant (team leader) and one national consultant.

The main responsibilities of the team leader are:

- Develop the methodology for the review based on providing a robust evidence-base, and where appropriate administering a short simple questionnaire, which will be tested and fine-tuned as appropriate.
- Provide overall strategic guidance and be responsible for the overall process
- Allocate tasks to the team members
- Supervise and guide the team members in implementing their tasks and be responsible for the overall quality control of the report
- Coordinate with SDC; SNV, HELVETAS, Vietcraft and Oxfam
- Write the final report

The main responsibilities of the national consultant are:

- Fulfil tasks defined by and work under the supervision of the team leader
- Conduct interviews at the field level
- Liaise between team and Provincial authorities, facilitate work of team at field level
- Help the team leader in understanding the Vietnamese situation and context
- Interpret for the team leader in discussion with the Vietnamese partners, where needed
- Translate the evaluation report from English into Vietnamese

The team should have the following experience:

- Experience of evaluating multi component private sector development programmes and an understanding of evidence based evaluations
- Considerable and proven experience in both implementing and evaluating value chains and in the implementation of making market works for the poor approach and methodology;
- Experience and deep knowledge on agriculture, market development and small agribusiness in Vietnam
- Experienced on project management and implementation
- Ideally knowledge of constraints faced by local enterprises in Vietnam.
- Experience of Agribusiness in Vietnam and the region would be a distinct advantage
- Capable to work in a multi-cultural environment, especially with ethnic minority groups
- Experience in farmer groups, community based organization and capacity development at the farm level
- Very good communication skills
- Fluent in English (writing, speaking) and Vietnamese

6. Timeframe

To have an overview on the geographical areas of the 4 MARP projects and its value chains, table 1 is provided for the team to assess the overall time needed not only for working in the field but also for traveling time.

Project	Implementing agency	Value chain	Provinces
Developing High Quality Tea (Shan Tea) Value	HELVETAS	Shan tea	Lao Cai

Chains for Poverty Reduction for Ethnic Minorities in Northern Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar			Ha Giang
			Lai Chau
Up-scaling of Pro-poor Rattan and Bamboo Value Chain Development for Women and Ethnic Minorities	Oxfam	Rattan	Nghe An
		Bamboo	Nghe An
Improving Livelihoods of Ethnic Minority Women through Sustainable Development of the Ethnic Textile Value Chain	VIETCRAFT and VIRI	Hemp	Hoa Binh
		Silk	Hoa Binh
			Thanh Hoa
			Nghe An
Leveraging the Spice Sector for Poverty Reduction amongst Ethnic Minority Communities in Vietnam implemented	SNV	Cardamom	Lao Cai
			Ha Giang
			Yen Bai
		Cinamon	Ha Giang
			Lao Cai
			Yen Bai
		Star Anisee	Lang Son

From the size of the MARP program and its geographical coverage, it is suggested that the team will be split out for the field trip and one interpreter will be provided to the team leader to cover the language barrier where appropriate.

The team is encouraged to propose a schedule they think most effective and efficient for such portfolio. Based on the number of partners in the field for MARP projects and travel conditions, tentative schedule is estimated as follows:

		Working days		Note
		Consultant 1	Consultant 2	
Hanoi	Desk study + meeting SDC + methodology + kick off meeting	4	4	Starting 18 Jan 2016
Ha Noi	Work with all partners	2	2	
Lang Son	Star Anisee	2	2	Test questionnaires
Lao Cai	SNV (cardamom, cinnamon), (reserve - Shantea)	3 + 1 for Shan tea		After desk study, team will confirm the reserved day for Shantea in Lao

Lai Chau	Shan tea	3 days		Cai HN-Lao Cai : 4h Lao Cai – Lai Chau: 2h Lai Chau – HN : 7h
Hoa Binh	Work with hemp and silk project – Vietcraft		2	
Nghe An	OHK (rattan/bamboo) + Vietcraft (silk)		4	To be discussed with Vietcraft and OHK
Hanoi	Wrap up (prepare presentation – debriefing with SDC and partners)	2	2	
Home base	Writing and Finalising	6	6	
Reserve		4	2	
Total		27	24	

Note:

- Of the 6 days writing and finalisation, the national consultant should cover the translation to Vietnamese of the final report. The international consultant is responsible for the writing and revising with 2 days support from national consultant due to the splitting role for field visit.
- Of the 4 days reserved from the international consultant, one day will be used as resource person for the capitalisation of AFS portfolio 1994-2016.

7. Deliverables

- Presentation of the findings and lessons learnt (after the field trip)
- A draft report in English submitted to SDC (within 2 weeks of field trip)
- A final report in English and Vietnamese (max. 30 pages, excluding annexes) including executive summary (max 3 pages) submitted to SDC.

The report should be concise and self-explanatory. The report structure should be agreed at the kick off meeting.

8. Reference Documents:

1. All Project Documents of MARP portfolio and MARP itself
2. Project and program annual plans and progress reports and end of phase report (draft available in Jan 2016)
3. Verification reports for all projects
4. MTR report + management response

Annex 4: Mini-Survey Questionnaire

M A R P F i n a l E v a l u a t i o n - M i n i S u r v e y
M e a s u r i n g E c o n o m i c C h a n g e s o f B e n e f i c i a r i e s

We are conducting a survey on the impact of MARP, particularly in terms of changes in market access, income and living standards of beneficiaries. The results of this survey will be used for the final evaluation of the MARP program. We kindly ask you to answer the questions below. All information that you provide will be treated with confidentiality.

Date:	/ / 2016	Surveyor / Interviewer:	
-------	----------	----------------------------	--

A. LOCATION

1. Province	2. District	3. Commune	4 Village	5. Ward

B. INFORMATION ABOUT RESPONDENT

B.1. Basic Information

1. Name	2. Sex	3. Age	4. No. HH Members	5. Classified as Poor HH
	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female			2012 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No 2016 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

B.2. In the production of which of the following products are you mainly engaged to generate income? (*One answer allowed*)

- Tea Bamboo/Rattan Ethnic textiles Spices None of them

B.3. When did you start dealing with the specific product indicated above?

- 2012 or earlier 2013 or later I don't recall

B.4. When dealing with this product in which economic activity are you specifically involved? (*Multiple answers allowed*)

- Input Supply Raw Material Production Pre-processing Processing Collecting/Trading
 Others:.....

B.5. During the last 3 years (since 2013), how did your efforts to find market and sell the product to customers develop compared to before?

- Much easier Somewhat easier No difference Somewhat harder Much harder

C. INFORMATION ABOUT INCOME AND LIVING CONDITIONS

C.1. What was approximately your household income per month 4 years ago (2012)?

- < VND 1 mio. >VND 1 mio to 3 mio. >VND 3 mio to 5 mio > VND 5 mio
 Don't know

C.2. What is approximately your household income per month now (2016)?

Final MARP Evaluation

< 1 VND mio.
 >VND 1 mio to 3 mio.
 >VND 3 mio to 5 mio
 > VND 5 mio
 Don't know

C.3. How would you assess your current economic conditions compared to 4 years ago (2012)?

Much Better
 Better
 Same
 Worse
 Much Worse

C.4 Do you feel that you can afford more and better quality goods/services than 4 years ago (2012)?

Yes, for sure
 Maybe, not sure
 No, certainly not

C.5 Which of the following goods/services are you buying more/in better quality today compared to 4 years ago (2012)?

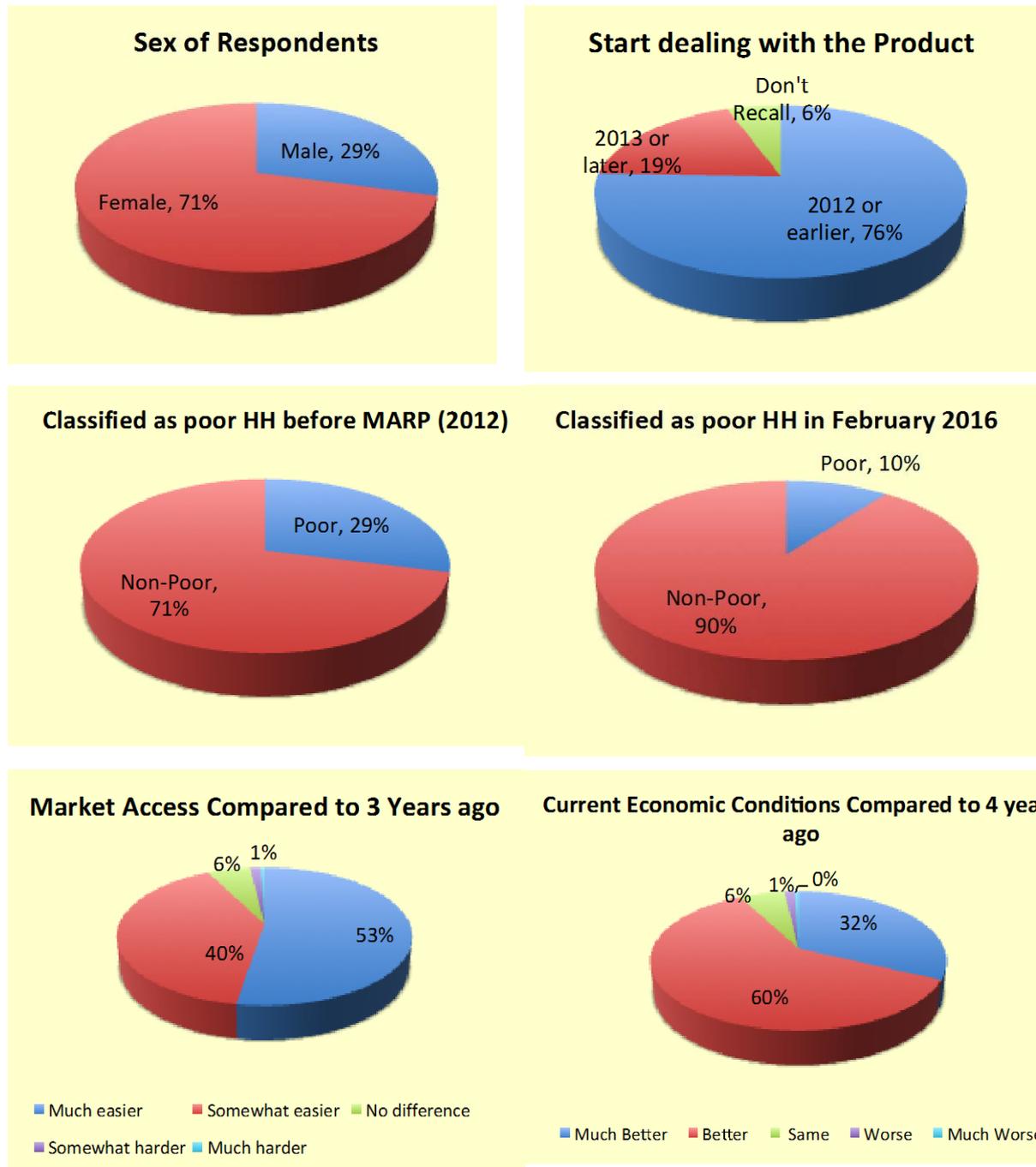
1. Food & Beverages	2. Clothes & Footwear	3. Housing, Furnishing, Water, Electricity,	4. Transport	5. Commun-ication	6. Health	7. Education
<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More	<input type="checkbox"/> More
<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same
<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less	<input type="checkbox"/> Less

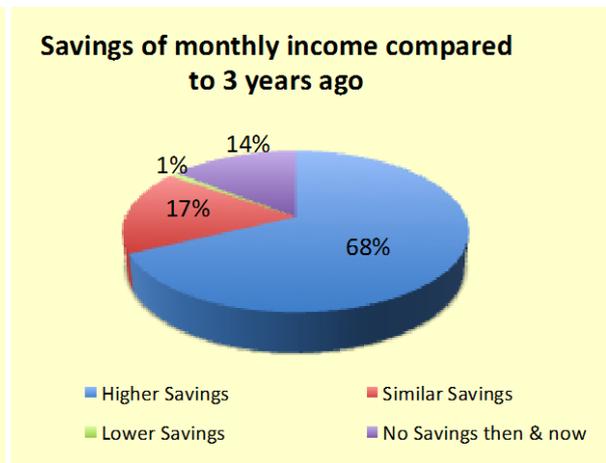
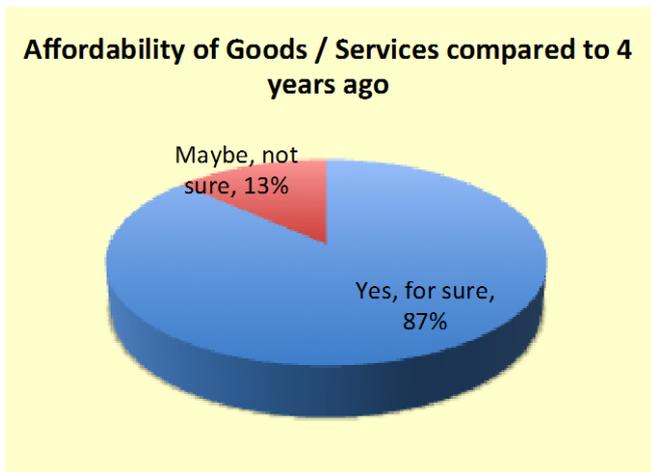
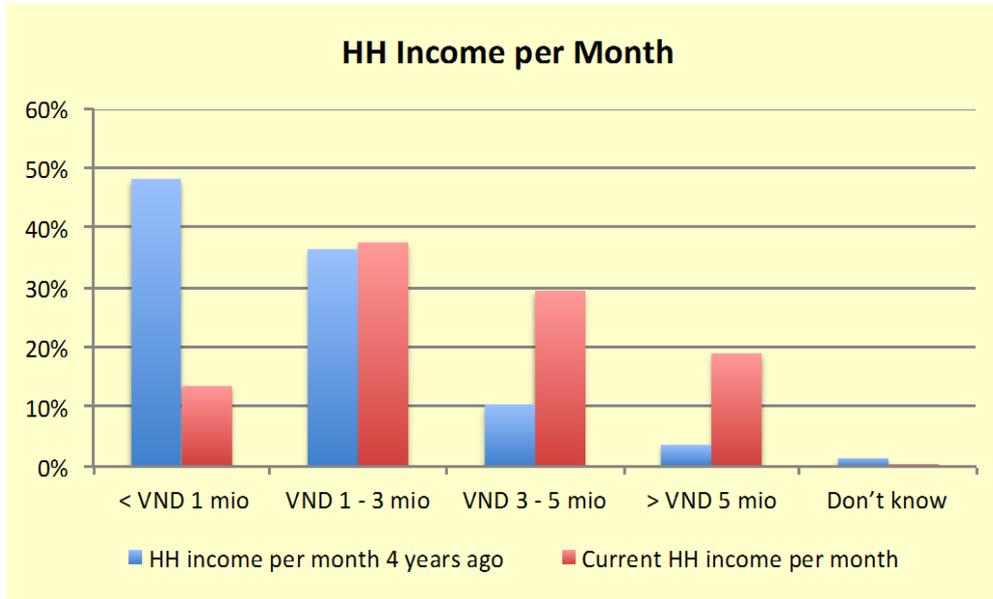
C.6 Do you think that your household is saving a higher/similar/lower amount of the monthly income compared to 4 years ago?

Higher Savings
 Similar Savings
 Lower Savings
 No Savings then & now

Annex 5: Detailed Results of Beneficiary Assessment at Program Level

Overall program results (summative results / N = 221)





Annex 6: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation/Assessment Questions	Indicators (Selection)	Sources of data	Method
1. Relevance			
1.0 Are the outcomes and outputs of the programme consistent with the intended impacts and effects? Do they address the stakeholders' needs that were identified?	Congruence of outcomes/outputs with intended impacts/effects Plausibility of results chains linking project design elements Fit with stakeholders' needs	Counterparts Project teams Program Management Program document Project documents	Document review Interviews Consultants' Assessment
1.1 Did the intervention strategies address the root causes of the identified problems? Were the timeframe for project implementations and sequencing of project activities logical and realistic?	Congruence between project strategies and root causes Time availability for experimentation and implementation	Project document Program document Baseline report Annual Reports VC Studies Program Management Project teams	Document review Interviews Consultants' Assessment
1.2 Do the counterparts have a shared vision and understanding of the projects, the expected achievements and the accompanying strategies? Have the counterparts taken ownership of the project concepts and approaches since the design phase?	Statements of the counterparts on vision and ownership Contributions of counterparts to design and implementation	Counterparts Project teams Program document Project documents	Document review Interviews
1.3 Is the strategy for sustainability of impact defined clearly at the design stage of the programme and projects?	Availability of exit strategy in program/project documents	Project document Program document Program Management Project teams	Document review Interviews

1.4 Have the MARP projects / program taken up the MTR recommendations and, if yes, how? By this, did the project performances and results improve?	Recommendations implementeda	Annual reports Program Management Project teams	Document review Interviews
2. Effectiveness			
2.0 To what extent were the objectives achieved? What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? To what extent is the target group reached?	Progress towards indicator targets for objectives	Annual reports Program Management Project teams Counterparts	Document review Interviews
2.1 Have quantity and quality of the outputs produced been satisfactory? Are the counterparts and partners satisfied with the quality of tools, technical advice, training and other activities delivered by the projects?	Progress towards indicator targets for outputs How quality compares to international standards How counterparts and partners assess quality	Annual reports Program Management Project teams Counterparts	Document review Interviews
2.2 Have the projects identified and analysed critical points and bottlenecks in the value chains? Have market failures and government failures been identified and addressed that hinder markets to work effectively, especially for the poor?	Bottlenecks, market failures, government failures identified	Annual reports VC Studies Log Frames Project teams	Document review Interviews Consultants' assessment
2.3 What are major bottlenecks, limitations, and challenges, both internal and external, that affected the results? What planned results did the projects not achieve and why? If some projects were more successful than others, why?	Statements of project staff, counterparts and partners on bottlenecks and limitations Negative effects of internal and external factors on activities and progress	Annual reports Program Management Project teams Local counterparts Other local partners	Document review Interviews
2.4 How have gender considerations been mainstreamed throughout the project cycles (design, planning, implementation, M&E)?	Extent to which improving gender equality is explicitly addressed in project studies/assessments/strategies/activities	Annual reports VC Studies Program Man-	Document review Interviews

	Statements of project staff, counterparts and partners on gender mainstreaming	agement Project teams Counterparts Beneficiaries	FGD
2.5 Has there been any inter-agencies cooperation with other agencies operate in the same geographical areas to increase the projects' effectiveness?	Coordinated/joint activities with other agencies Activities in same sectors/areas of work contributing to shared objectives (concertation) Effects of such coordination and concertation in terms of the projects' and other agencies' objectives	Annual Reports Program Management Project teams Counterparts	Document review Interviews
3. Efficiency			
3.0 Was the program cost-efficient? Were objectives achieved on time? Was the programme or project implemented in the most efficient way compared to alternatives?	Cost of MARP program/projects compared to aggregated impact Procedures in place to be cost-effective (i.e. bidding, cost-sharing, charging for market services etc.)	Counterparts Program Management Project teams	Document review Interviews Consultants' Assessment
3.1 In general, do the results achieved justify the cost incurred? Did the selected implementing partners provide good value for money in delivering services?	Cost of interventions compared to (potential) impact Financial contributions of counterpart	Annual reports Program Management Project teams	Document review Review of budget Interviews
4. Impact and Sustainability			
4.0 What are the overall impact of the projects and the likelihood of improving the market system to benefit the poor in each of the intervening value chains? What are the main positive changes created by the MARP projects?	Impact on Income Impact on Market Access Impact on Living Conditions	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Annual Reports Beneficiaries	Document review Interviews FGDs Mini-Survey

4.1 Did the programme achieve systemic change in the markets / value chains in which it intervened?	Level of transformation Scale of impact Institutionalization of best practices	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Beneficiaries	Document review Interviews FGDs
4.2 Can the linkages facilitated by MARP projects being able to self-adapt to grow and strengthen in the long run? What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the program or project?	Resilience of Program Results Adaptability of Value Chain Linkages	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Annual Reports Beneficiaries	Document review Interviews FGDs
4.3 What are the roles, capacity of and benefit brought to poor households and female beneficiaries of MARP? What is the impact on poor households and women due to the intervention implemented?	Impact on Income Impact on Living Conditions Impact on Expenditure Patterns and Saving Behaviour	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Annual Reports Beneficiaries	Document review Interviews FGDs Mini-Survey
4.4 Have women's household unpaid workload increased? How has women's status in the household changed as a result of the intervention, taking into consideration ethnic and social norms of the community that the project works with? Have women been able to have a greater voice in the decision making process, particularly in terms of economic decisions that affect the household?	Changes in status of women	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Annual Reports Beneficiaries	Document review Interviews FGDs
4.5 Have the interventions helped women to have greater access to services / training / information to advance economically?	Female participation in trainings / demand for services	Counterparts Program Management Project teams Annual Reports	Document review Interviews FGDs Mini-Survey

		Beneficiaries	
4.6 What have the programme and the projects done to evaluate and assess the impact of its approach and specific interventions?	Availability and quality of M&E system	Annual reports M&E Plan Results Chains Counterparts Program Management Project teams	Document review Interviews
4.7 What is the level of satisfaction with the programme/projects' results among all beneficiaries of the project (primary beneficiaries, government, NGOs)? What are unexpected (positive and negative) results in addition to the planned outputs specified in the project document?	Perceived Success and Failure Level of Satisfaction Unexpected Results	Beneficiaries, Local Government, Counterparts Consultants' Assessment, Program Management Project teams	FGD Interviews Deliberations
4.8 How effectively has the project leveraged additional local government and donor resources, partners and initiatives to ensure continued efforts after completion of the program/projects?	Comparison of the project's investments and related investments of partners and other initiatives Interest of organisations to invest in the continuation of specific projects or parts of them	SDC Other donors, NGOs Program Management Project teams Counterparts	Document review Interviews
4.9 Have the projects developed feasible strategies for sustainability of those interventions that hold potential to become sustainable? How effective and realistic are the exit strategies of the projects? Have the projects gradually been handed over to provincial/district partners?	Presence and plausibility of sustainability strategy Extent to which the strategy has been started to be implemented Extent to which changes aim to be systemic	Project documents Program Counterparts Project teams Program Management Counterparts	Document review Interviews
4.10 What are the knowledge products produced?	Availability and quality of exit strategy	Project Document	Document re-

<p>Has the overall program knowledge and experience been effectively transferred to national partners? How could this have been done better?</p>	<p>Availability and quality of knowledge management, incl. knowledge products</p>	<p>Counterparts Project teams Program Management Available knowledge products</p>	<p>view Interviews</p>
<p>5. Lessons Learned</p>			
<p>5.0 What are the (positive and negative) lessons learnt to all partners from the MARP program in terms of design, implementation and monitoring?</p>	<p>Availability and quality of (positive/negative) lessons learned</p>	<p>Project teams Program Management Project teams Counterparts at national and province level Consultants' Assessment</p>	<p>Interviews Deliberations</p>
<p>5.1 What activities or measures seem to be replicable and could be up-scaled? Why? What are important framework conditions and preconditions under which these measures worked?</p>	<p>Replicability</p>	<p>Project teams Program Management Counterparts at national and province level, Consultants' Assessment</p>	<p>Interviews Deliberations</p>