

QUANG NGAI RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



VIETNAM - AUSTRALIA

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

April 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1	PROGRAM OUTLINE.....	4
1.2	STRATEGY OBJECTIVES.....	4
1.3	STRATEGY PRINCIPLES.....	4
2	INTRA-PROGRAM COMMUNICATION	6
2.1	BETWEEN PROGRAM STAFF AND AMC ADVISORS.....	6
2.1.1	Same language transfer of information.....	6
2.1.2	Written instructions and records.....	6
2.1.3	Reports.....	6
2.1.4	Feedback structures.....	6
2.2	BETWEEN AMC AND DPI.....	7
2.2.1	Agreement on key concepts and approaches	7
2.2.2	Progress Meetings.....	7
2.2.3	Weekly Planning.....	7
2.2.4	Information storage and transfer.....	8
2.2.5	Physical structure of PMU.....	8
2.2.6	Interpreting	9
2.2.7	Communication modalities	10
3	COMMUNITY	11
3.1	COMMUNE LEVEL.....	11
3.1.1	Using existing government networks.....	11
3.1.2	Using existing community networks.....	12
3.1.3	Celebrating successes with the community.....	12
3.1.4	Vietnamese Language Program Newsletter.....	13
3.1.5	Field days and group extension	13
3.1.6	Other Training	14
3.1.7	Contracts and agreements	14
3.1.8	Program brochure.....	15
3.1.9	Learning about participating communes.....	15
3.2	DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS.....	16
3.2.1	Program Name.....	16
3.2.2	Program Logo.....	16
3.2.3	Television.....	16
3.2.4	Radio.....	17
4	LOCAL GOVERNMENT.....	18
4.1	OVERALL STRATEGY	18
4.1.1	Integration with existing approaches and concepts	18
4.1.2	Demonstrating program benefits	19
4.1.3	Formal Meetings	19
4.1.4	Written information.....	20
4.1.5	Informal contacts.....	20
4.2	COMMUNE LEVEL	20
4.2.1	Introduction process for new communes and districts	20
4.2.2	Community links with contact groups and local officials.....	22
4.2.3	Training	23
4.2.4	DDO reports	23
4.2.5	Progress reports.....	23
4.2.6	Program guidelines	23
4.3	DISTRICT AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS.....	24
4.3.1	Program Newsletter.....	24
4.3.2	Government reports.....	24
4.3.3	Study tours	24
4.3.4	Brochure	25

4.3.5	<i>Social Networks</i>	25
4.3.6	<i>Newspaper articles</i>	25
4.3.7	<i>Promoting direct district involvement</i>	25
5	NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION	26
5.1	MAXIMISING INFORMATION	26
5.1.1	<i>Links with other Provincial Programs</i>	26
5.1.2	<i>Links with neighbouring provinces</i>	27
5.1.3	<i>Agency directory</i>	27
5.1.4	<i>Workshops and conferences</i>	27
5.1.5	<i>Email news and discussion lists</i>	28
5.1.6	<i>Snowballing</i>	28
5.2	BROADENING THE PROGRAM'S IMPACT.....	28
5.2.1	<i>Website</i>	28
5.2.2	<i>Newsletter</i>	28
5.2.3	<i>Brochure</i>	29
5.2.4	<i>Hosting Workshops and conferences</i>	29
5.2.5	<i>Visits to agencies</i>	30
5.2.6	<i>Vietnamese language newspaper and journal articles</i>	30
5.2.7	<i>Contribution to planning policy</i>	30
5.2.8	<i>Contribution to rural development policy</i>	30
5.2.9	<i>Contribution to AusAID policy</i>	31
5.2.10	<i>Contribution to international knowledge</i>	31
5.3	ATTRACTING DONOR FUNDS	31
5.3.1	<i>Direct contacts between donors and local government</i>	31
5.3.2	<i>Training</i>	31
5.3.3	<i>Donor feedback</i>	32
5.3.4	<i>Direct guidance and editing of submissions</i>	32
5.3.5	<i>Presentations</i>	32
5.3.6	<i>Involvement in donor missions to Quang Ngai</i>	33
6	REVIEW AND APPRAISAL	33
	ANNEXES.....	33
	ANNEX 1: 2004-05 COMMUNICATIONS WORKPLAN	33
	ANNEX 2: COMMUNICATIONS INDICATOR TABLE	33

ACRONYMS

AMC	Australian Management Contractor
APD	Australian Program Director
ASAS	Australian Small Assistance Scheme
ATL	Australian Team Leader
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CBO	Capacity Building Officer
CPO	Communications and Promotions Officer
CCG	Commune Contact Group
CPC	Commune People's Committee
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCG	District Contact Group
DDO	District Development Officer
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
DPC	District People's Committee
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
FCO	Finance and Credit Officer
GAS	Goal Attainment Scaling
GOA	Government of Australia
GOV	Government of Vietnam
I/EO	Infrastructure and Environment Officer
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEGO	Monitoring & Evaluation/GIS Officer
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NGO	Non Government Organisation
PC/PA/PS	Problem Census/Problem Analysis/Problem Solving
PCC	Program Coordinating Committee
PCF	People's Credit Fund
PDA	Participatory Development Adviser
PDD	Program Design Document
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PLA	Participatory Learning for Action
PMU	Program Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
PPP	Participatory Planning Process
PSC	Provincial Steering Committee for ODA projects
QNRDP	Quang Ngai Rural Development Program
VCBO	Vietnamese counterpart Capacity Building Officer
VFCO	Vietnamese counterpart Finance and Credit Officer
VI/EO	Vietnamese counterpart Infrastructure and Environment Officer
VPD	Vietnamese Program Director
VPDA	Vietnamese Participatory Development Adviser
VTL	Vietnamese Team Leader

1 Introduction

1.1 Program Outline

The Quang Ngai Rural Development Program is a joint Vietnamese and Australian government program with the aim of contributing to rural development, poverty reduction and governance in Quang Ngai Province by empowering poor households to improve their livelihoods sustainably through increased incomes. The program's budget of \$AUS 33 million is spread over 10 years, from 2001 to 2011 and over all mainland districts in the province.

1.2 Strategy objectives

QNRDP is just one among a range of government and international organisations all involved with rural development. As the program's capital contribution is quite small in relation to the overall provincial budget, the direct contribution of program funds to rural development and poverty reduction is correspondingly small. The program's ultimate aim is to maximise the benefits of program funds and it is the role of this document to examine ways in which effective communication can contribute to achieving this aim by enhancing awareness of Program concepts and initiatives and facilitating their widespread and sustained ownership and adoption (PDD, page xxi).

The communications strategy has four main objectives:

First, to enhance understanding and co-operation among program members so that the program operates in a smooth, well co-ordinated manner.

Second, to promote local community understanding and acceptance of program concepts and initiatives and have provision for communities to contribute their own opinions and ideas. With an effective strategy, local communities will adopt program initiatives such as recommendations on income generation activities and the formation of activity groups.

Third, to enhance local government understanding and acceptance of program concepts and initiatives in order to ensure the effective implementation of activities and sustainability of approaches.

Finally, to promote the flow of information between QNRDP and other agencies, donors, and programs beyond Quang Ngai in order to maximise outside funding, broaden the program's impact outside the province and raise the suitability and effectiveness of program activities.

1.3 Strategy principles

Specific strategies will vary. However, some overall communication principles apply as a means of achieving all of these objectives. In general, concepts and ideas are more readily accepted if:

- Their source is liked and respected. Therefore, program officers will expand their personal links with local people and government officials.

- There is an opportunity for questions and feedback. The most conducive environment for questions and feedback is small groups and informal situations. The program will therefore promote informal dialogue, especially as a follow-up to more formal settings, such as large meetings.
- They are based on existing knowledge and concepts. Therefore, the program will attempt to find similarities between program and local concepts and approaches and use these similarities as a basis for discussion.
- The transferrer and receiver of information share a common cultural and linguistic background. Therefore the program will aim to create the conditions in which this can occur.

2 Intra-Program Communication

An intra-program communication strategy is aimed at ensuring program activities are co-ordinated, duties are understood and accepted and there is scope for ideas and initiatives from all staff members.

2.1 Between program staff and AMC advisors

2.1.1 Same language transfer of information

To facilitate the transfer of information and improve understanding, an effective way to work is for the PDAs to discuss information with the counterpart PDAs and then have them explain it to other staff. This ensures that VPDAs understand and agree and facilitates the transfer of information.

2.1.2 Written instructions and records

During one on one discussions or small meetings, PMU staff and DDOs will note down the main instructions and points discussed and read these back at the conclusion of the meeting. At larger meetings or training, the AMC secretary will write minutes of the meeting and submit these to the chairperson.

2.1.3 Reports

The DDOs will write monthly reports in English and Vietnamese with the following format:

- Introduction
- Status of Projects/Activities
- Additional Activities/Issues
- Follow-Up Actions
- Observations/Recommendations

The reports will be written in English for submission to the PDAs by the 3rd working day of the next month. They will then be translated into Vietnamese to be sent to the district and commune contact groups by the 6th working day of the month.

The AMC Technical Specialists will be responsible for writing field reports, which will be submitted within two working days of the completed field trip. The IEO, FCO and MEGO will write reports for all field trips, including training, connected with infrastructure/environment, finance/credit and M&E respectively. The Capacity Building Officer will write reports for all other field trips at which he was present. DDOs will write the reports for field trips with Participatory Development Advisors or Team Leaders at which no specialists were present.

2.1.4 Feedback structures

Vietnamese staff, particularly DDOs sometimes have opinions on program activities and approaches which are not expressed to program management. Structured annual appraisals of staff will provide one avenue for feedback. The ATL and VTL will review performance of the AMC and counterpart staff respectively and speak with each staff member individually to discuss their successes and note areas for

improvement. This will be a good opportunity for staff to raise concerns or comment on matters affecting their work as well as voice their opinions on program operations in general. The program will also encourage staff to contribute their ideas by:

- Encouraging staff participation in simple 'management' tasks, such as preparing simple presentations, explanations, meeting agendas to local government officials
- Actively seeking the staff's opinion
- Including an 'Observations and recommendations' section in staff reports

2.2 Between AMC and DPI

2.2.1 Agreement on key concepts and approaches

A common understanding between the two partners in the program will be achieved through management level discussion on the implications of key program concepts and principles on program activities. A glossary of key English and Vietnamese terms will be drawn up to assist understanding and will be modified when necessary as a result of discussions and as new terminology is adopted. A more detailed glossary of frequently translated terms will also be drawn up for PMU staff and DDOs so that translation is uniform.

Key program approaches will also be agreed upon, such as the PC/PA/PS meetings, the role of activity groups, the role of credit, agricultural extension techniques and the role of commune contact groups.

2.2.2 Progress Meetings

Progress meetings will be held approximately once every two months between the VPD, VTL, ATL and Madam Hoai, the Chairperson of the Program Co-ordination Committee and Vice-Chairperson of the Quang Ngai Province People's Committee. Such meetings will provide the opportunity for the program to be informed of to provincial government policies and initiatives while raising provincial government awareness of the program. The AMC secretary will take minutes at these and other important management level meetings, which will later be distributed in English and Vietnamese.

2.2.3 Weekly Planning

A weekly planning meeting will be held every Friday morning with the aim of:

- Co-ordinating program activities in the coming week;
- Enabling management staff to gain a broad understanding of program activities outside their own field of speciality;
- Allowing team leaders to keep track of program activities and provide guidance when necessary.
- Confirming times and dates for activities to allow contact groups to be given advance notice of program activities.

The counterpart secretary will note the plans presented at the meeting and will inform the DDOs of plans for each commune and district immediately after the meeting's conclusion. As commune offices are only open in the morning, immediate notification is necessary for the DDOs to be able to then notify commune officials before their

offices close for the weekend. The counterpart secretary will then draw up a written plan in English and Vietnamese listing the activities planned for the coming week, and the times and personnel involved in each activity. This plan will be drawn up by Friday afternoon and distributed to all PMU members and DDOs.

As each member of the management team is unable to decide on their plans unilaterally, a series of brief meetings or discussions will take place on Thursday afternoon (or convenient time) between:

- specialists and their counterparts;
- the PDAs, VPDA's and DDOs. This could take the form of initial discussions between the Australian and Vietnamese Participatory Development Advisors and then 'discussion' with the DDOs using electronic means;
- the Australian Team Leader, M & E Specialist and Communications and Promotions Officer;
- the CPO and Translator.

These smaller meetings need only be brief but are necessary to confirm agreement for plans within each 'sector' of the program before they are tabled at the planning meeting.

On the last Thursday of each month the program leadership will also draw up a monthly plan to be distributed to everyone in the program. On the basis of this plan, each of the DDOs will write a monthly plan of activities in their district in English and Vietnamese for distribution to the PDAs and DCGs/CCGs respectively.

2.2.4 Information storage and transfer

- The AMC and counterpart secretaries will place general program documents such as the Project Design Document, annual plans, manuals and guidelines, laws and regulations on one computer with clearly marked directories for ease of access (through the internal network) from any computer in the PMU office. The AMC secretary will be responsible for updating the directory in the PMU office as new documents are produced and regularly distributing updated copies to the DDOs.
- Each person's computer will have a directory with sub-directories under the names of other program members to facilitate the transfer of files via the internal network.
- Dates will be included in file names to avoid confusion over which files are the most up-to-date versions of the documents.

2.2.5 Physical structure of PMU

The program will make greater use of less formal settings, especially for meetings between AMC and counterpart management. A coffee table set is most commonly used in Vietnam for less formal meetings and is less of a physical barrier between those involved and is thus more conducive to open conversation and receptiveness to other opinions.

2.2.6 *Interpreting*

The program will apply Australian interpreting principles to all dialogues for which an interpreter is used. These principles include:

- dialogue segments of no more than 60 words in regular settings when the program interpreter or CPO are interpreting. Segments should be no longer than 40 words for technical or complex segments, conference presentations or when ‘para-professional’ interpreters, such as the DDOs or Technical Specialists, are interpreting.
- dialogue and interpretation in first person.
- Speech directed at the other party involved in the discussion **rather** than at the interpreter

In addition, the program will assist in clear, precise communication by:

- restricting the use of slang or idiomatic expression
- restricting the amount of digression from the phrase’s central theme
- speaking at a reasonable speed and volume
- waiting for the interpreter to finish interpreting for the other speaker before beginning to speak.

The interpreter will refrain from showing any emotion or making any comment during the interpreting session, unless their intervention is necessary to clear up a misunderstanding between the two parties. When intervening in a dialogue the interpreter will refer to him/herself by name or point to him/herself to avoid their speech being mistaken as coming from one of the parties involved.

The interpreter will attempt to ensure that those involved in the dialogue follow the above guidelines. However, in some situations the interpreter may not feel they have sufficient authority to enforce the guidelines, in which case the program advisor may need to assist by intervening on the interpreter’s behalf. For example, if government officials speak in segments which are too long to be adequately interpreted, the interpreter may feel that they do not have the authority to request them to stop. In such a situation the program advisor will ask the government official to wait while the phrase is interpreted.

When there are only a small number of people involved, the interpreter and program advisor(s) will arrange the seating so that the interpreter is seated between and slightly to one side of those involved in the discussion. Arranging the seating in this way enables the interpreter to hear and be heard easily and also allows them to be less obtrusive, thereby encouraging direct eye contact between the parties involved.

Simultaneous interpreting techniques will be used in two types of situations:

- Meeting or small workshops in which the majority of the dialogue occurs in just one language. In this case the interpreter will arrange to sit beside anyone who cannot speak that language to whisper a simultaneous interpretation.
- Large workshops to which Vietnamese and international guests are invited. In this instance the program will hire simultaneous interpretation equipment and professional interpreters with simultaneous interpreting experience.

For short speeches such as opening or closing speeches and farewell speeches, the speaker will complete the speech of several hundred words before interpretation begins. In this situation, the speaker can assist with accurate interpretation by providing the interpreter with advance notice of the speech's content.

The program will attempt to ensure that the H're speaking DDO is present at conversations between program officers and H're speaking residents. However, program officers may sometimes need to rely on the interpreting services of a commune official. The officers concerned will recommend the above principles to the interpreting government official and gradually train them to interpret according to these principles. For conversations involving a program officer, commune official and H're speaking resident, whenever possible the program will ask for a second, more junior, H're speaking government official to be present so that the task of interpreting the H're resident's speech is separated from the interests and opinions of the government official.

2.2.7 Communication modalities

Phone: At present there are desk phones in each of the commune, district and DDO offices and most communes have at least one commune official with a home telephone. Sometimes urgent contact needs to be made with the CCG, for example, to advise them of a change in schedule, in which case contact is made through the home telephone. Depending on the individual circumstances of each district and DDO, the DDO and district office will make arrangements for messages to be left for the DDO at the DPC administrative office.

Mobile telephones: There is no case at this stage to issue DDOs or specialist staff with mobile phones as mobile phone coverage is still quite poor in rural areas and program communes receive little to no signal.

Faxes: All districts and some communes have fax machines which are occasionally useful for the rapid transfer of written information. However, as DDO's move frequently between the PMU office and the communes and as the commune officials often require original letters, rather than copies, fax machines in DDO offices and the remaining commune offices is not a high priority.

Email: Email is frequently used and will continue to be used between advisors and DDO staff to transfer documents and information as well as for daily communication. More frequent use will be made of the MSN messenger or similar chat service once more DDOs are established in their district offices.

3 Community

The use of existing community networks to transfer information by word of mouth is seen as the most effective means of communication for promoting community awareness and understanding of the program. Information transferred through dialogue between individuals or small groups is less abstract, more personal, more directly addresses the interests and concerns of the listener, provides scope for questions from the listener, and promotes discussion and the generation of ideas which can flow from this. The information is also more likely to be more readily accepted and understood by the listener because the language used, accent and way of speaking will be the same as their own and the speaker and listener share a common background. The approach will be to focus on developing awareness and understanding among well respected community members with the expectation that will discuss what they have learnt with others in the community.

3.1 Commune Level

3.1.1 Using existing government networks

Communes in Quang Ngai are further divided into villages, hamlets and groups. Little distinction is made between government and public at these levels. Village and hamlet leaders are paid only a nominal amount, if anything, and do not have any decision making authority. They can be seen more as a link between the commune government and local people as their principal role is to transfer information from the government to people. Village and hamlet leaders meet at the CPC periodically and local meetings are mostly called when the CPC would like to inform residents of activities, policies or events affecting the locality. A network of community associations, namely the women's, farmers', youth and veterans' associations also operate in the communes under the umbrella of the Fatherland Front.

The understanding and co-operation of local officials and community leaders within the communes is crucial to broadening community understanding of the program because village, hamlet and community association leaders:

- have wide social networks so their understanding of the program will be transferred to a large number of people
- are often well respected so their opinion of the program will carry a great deal of weight with others
- are a link between the local community and commune government so their greater understanding and acceptance of the PPP will greatly assist in community opinions being reflected back to the commune people's committee.

The program will work to ensure that village, hamlet and association leaders understand and accept the program by:

- Asking them to be invited to initial program presentations;
- Providing them with formal training in PC/PA/PS through a course conducted by the CBO
- Following up this training with further explanation and discussion from the DDO about the PC/PA/PS meetings and the PPP
- Involving them in PRA/PLA activities

- Involving them as facilitators in PC/PA/PS meetings
- Inviting them to field days and group extension sessions, discussing their opinions on the approaches used and encouraging them to discuss the results of these days with others in the locality
- Maintaining contact with them during infrastructure activities and encouraging them to work with activity groups to inform and mobilise support from the wider community within the village or hamlet concerned.

When the program advises the public of activities or events it will do this through the existing local government network (as it has been to date). The program and CCG members agree on the information to be announced and from there the information is passed on down through the various government levels to the people.

3.1.2 Using existing community networks.

Apart from the government and association networks, the program will use social networks to spread awareness within the commune and further afield. DDOs, in particular, will promote the program simply by chatting informally with people in the communes who, in some form or other, are likely to then discuss the program with family and friends. Highly respected people with a wide network of acquaintances, such as teachers and medical officers, are especially important to promoting discussion and information flow within the community.

The program will therefore:

- Work to ensure that participants in the PC/PA/PS meetings have a thorough understanding of the program through the introductory flyer and explanation at the commencement and conclusion of each meeting.
- Encourage frequent informal contact between DDOs and local community, through PLA activities and participation in community events
- occasional attendance of DDOs at village, hamlet or community association meetings.
- Consider methods of involving school children in program activities

3.1.3 Celebrating successes with the community.

The program will celebrate events such as the handover of infrastructure activities, successful conclusion of demonstrations and first successful adoption of income generation activities. In the example of a handover ceremony for an infrastructure group, the organisational process and format will be along these lines:

- PDAs, DDO and CCG agree on the time, date and place for ceremony
- CCG members inform relevant CPC members who then begin to publicise the celebration through the network of village, hamlet and community association leaders. Members of the activity group are invited individually to make sure that they are all aware of the ceremony and the leader of the activity group is asked to prepare a short speech
- At the ceremony the CPC chairman is invited to cut the ribbon. Short speeches are made by a senior commune official, senior program officer and representative of the activity group.

Organising the ceremony and celebration will have the following benefits:

- Increase the program's profile
- Demonstrate that the program is achieving tangible results
- Promote the benefits of activity groups and participatory planning process
- Promote local ownership of the project and encourage adequate operations and maintenance
- Creating a news events, thereby increasing coverage of the program through the mass media (see 3.2.4)

At the conclusion of the ceremony the program will invite the CCG members, CPC chairman, party secretary, village and hamlet leaders of the village in which the project took place and activity group members. If the activity group included approximately 15 members then this would mean approximately 30 people. At a cost of VND 50,000 per person for food and drinks this amounts to a cost of approximately 1.5 million per event. The celebration will help to create goodwill and build a closer relationship between the program, local government and activity group members.

3.1.4 Vietnamese Language Program Newsletter

The program will establish a small quarterly newsletter for distribution within participating communes as well as to district contact groups and key district and provincial level departments and associations. Printing costs will be kept as cheap as possible in order to maximise the readership for the newsletter. Distribution will principally make use of the local government network described above. Newsletters will be handed to the DDO and CCG for distribution to local community leaders who will then distribute them to the community. In addition, with the local government's consent, the newsletters will be made available at other public places such as the people's committee office, school branches, co-operative buildings, post offices and markets.

Content of the newsletter will include:

- an overview of program activities within the past month
- photos showing program activities and people involved, including small photos of the writers of each of the articles
- one or two articles from the program regarding specific issues such as credit – savings funds or the results of demonstration models.
- Several articles from participating farmers regarding their activities and how these compare with past activities and practices.

3.1.5 Field days and group extension

Field days were already used during phase 1 and will continue to be used as an effective way of transferring information and knowledge to households as well as learning about local practices.

Principal features of field days include:

- practical demonstrations of techniques
- participation of households in assessing effectiveness of technologies used in order to adapt the demonstrations to suit local conditions
- household to household presentation of technologies

A group extension approach will also gradually be introduced, in which agricultural specialists assist farmers to compare a variety of techniques applied on local farms and assess which techniques are most suitable to their own circumstances. When appropriate, groups of farmers will also be taken on study tours to observe farming practices in other localities.

3.1.6 Other Training

- **Activity groups**
The CBO, VCBO and DDO will conduct half day courses to train activity groups in their role, rights and responsibilities. The training will be based on a set of written guidelines which will be distributed to group members. If activity groups have already been established in the area then members of these groups may be called on to recount their experiences as part of the training. For example, activity group representatives from a completed construction project will be invited to relate their experiences to members of the new group as part of the training. CCG and DCG representatives will also be invited to these meetings to increase their understanding of the groups' roles and foster co-operation between the activity groups and local government.
- **Infrastructure**
The I/EO and VI/EO, in conjunction with local government officials, will conduct half day training courses to equip infrastructure activity groups or other beneficiaries with the basic knowledge required to supervise construction contractors. Depending on the project, those trained will be asked to then train other beneficiaries following the train-the-trainer approach.
- **Financial Management**
The Finance and Credit Officers will conduct three day training courses for district women's union officials and then contract the women's union to train members of newly established credit – savings groups. Similar to the activity group training, members of already established groups will be invited to contribute to the training course by relating their own experiences and lessons.

3.1.7 Contracts and agreements

Agreements will be signed with demonstration households for the period of time that demonstration models are implemented. The program or its contracted agent, will go through a series of steps as a means of ensuring there is full understanding and consent before any agreement is signed.

After agreement on the contract within the PMU (and, if applicable, between the PMU and contracted agent), in the initial period draft contracts will be sent to the DCG and CCG for their information and comments. Their comments will be taken into account and acted upon if appropriate. After the initial period, when agreement has been reached between the program, DCG and CCG on the basic conditions of the contract, the program will simply notify the CCG and village leader of any new contract or agreement about to be signed and invite them to accompany program officers to discuss the contract. The contract will then be hand delivered to the households, and the DDO and/or CCG member will briefly go through the contract, explaining the more complex points. The contract will then be left with the household

for several days so that they have time to go through the terms thoroughly and enlist any help if necessary.

On the day of signing the DDO and CCG representative will ask the household a series of pre-prepared questions regarding the contract to test that they truly understand and agree with the terms of the contract. The household will also be asked if they would like to add or delete any clauses from the current contract. Contracts and agreements will be witnessed by the village leader.

3.1.8 Program brochure

A printed brochure for distribution to residents of program communes is being prepared at the time of writing and will soon be ready for publication. Given the large number of copies required, the brochures will be photocopied locally on paper bearing the program logo. The program will produce a professionally printed brochure briefly introducing the program. The brochure will cover information on:

- program overview
- program aims
- the PPP
- credit funds
- technical support
- infrastructure support

The brochures will vary slightly for each commune as each brochure will also include the contact details of the local commune contact group and DDO.

3.1.9 Learning about participating communes

Naturally, besides aiming to increase community awareness and understanding of the program, it is essential that the program has a close understanding of the community's in which it is working for it to be able to target its activities properly and co-ordinate their implementation with the local community.

- Commune profiles
The DDOs will collect existing government data on their communes and districts and provide the most relevant data to the team leaders, PDAs and Technical Specialists. Some of this data, such as infant mortality rates, have already been collected from communes for the program's monitoring and evaluation system. However, additional data will also be collected on such issues as income levels, agriculture, land, education, health and other services (such as veterinary services). After the relevant data have been translated, the statistical data will be stored in the DDO offices in hard copy.
- Participatory Learning for Action
PRA/PLA strategies will be employed in all communes to enhance understanding of the local communities by both the program and the people themselves. Initially, PRA/PLA activities will principally be employed as a tool by which the program can gain a greater understanding of participating communes. These activities will preferably begin before the first PC/PA/PS meetings or program activities have

commenced (see section on program introduction to new communes). Secondly, PRA/PLA activities will assist activity groups come to a consensus on suitable activities to undertake, the form of implementation and the type of support required.

- **H're Workshop**
In an effort to learn more about H're culture, a workshop will be organised in which H're people will be invited to present various aspects of their culture to the program, particularly aspects which relates to program activities such as agricultural practices and beliefs. The two DDOs responsible for the current two H're speaking communes, Son Hai and Nghia Tho, will be in charge of organising the workshop, with support from the H're speaking program officer, district and commune officials and interested commune residents. Through their involvement in the preparation and organisation of the workshop, the DDOs will gain a greater understanding of H're culture and language.

3.2 District and Provincial Levels

3.2.1 Program Name

The full program name is quite wordy in Vietnamese while the acronym 'QNRDP' is both meaningless and cumbersome to say for Vietnamese for Vietnamese speakers. The program will devise an abbreviated name to facilitate public discussion and awareness, while still retaining the project's full name for official documents and presentations. Based on examples from other international programs in and around Quang Ngai, potential abbreviated names could include RDP or perhaps RUDEP.

3.2.2 Program Logo

A program logo has already been designed. The program will maximise public exposure to the logo by:

1. Including on program letterhead and other written materials, such as forms, invitation slips, agreements and credit facility booklets.
2. Preparing banners bearing the program logo for display at the head of meetings, field days, celebrations and other program events

3.2.3 Television

Quang Ngai Television has a nightly news and current affairs service following the national current affairs program. Both the provincial and national current affairs programs often features stories on agricultural programs or successes, including brief interviews or comments from farmers involved. There are regular current affairs segments on each district as part of the provincial service. The content of these is the responsibility of district governments rather than the TV station.

The program will increase public awareness through television by:

- Contracting a national television station, such as VTV3, to make a 20 minute video documentary introducing QNRDP's scope and location, structure, aims, components, approaches, activities and successes. The documentary will initially

be shown on national and Quang Ngai television but can subsequently be used to introduce the program to any interested parties including, government officials at all levels, program participants and visiting projects. A separate version with an English voiceover will also be made and put on CD rom to send to donor agencies or any other interested organisations upon request.

- Attracting regular news stories regarding the program by:
 - ongoing contact with Quang Ngai TV station and district media offices;
 - creating news events through organising officials celebrations at the beginning or completion of activities;
 - supplying clear results of program initiatives which can easily be covered in short news stories;
 - combining with other programs or initiatives to be part of a larger news event.

3.2.4 Radio

Although radio is generally a lower priority than television, the program will contract a television/radio station to broadcast quarterly programs of approximately 15 minutes duration. In addition, district radio stations will be contacted when the program is involved in newsworthy events or successes in that district.

Unlike the 'Kinh' Vietnamese, local radio will be the most important medium of mass communication for H're communities in the highlands districts through regular H're language programs broadcast on the district radio stations. Similar to the strategy for television, awareness of the program will be increased by:

- Contracting H're programmers in a district radio station to make a radio documentary with input from the program, particularly the program's H're speaking DDO, and participating communes and districts with H're majorities. The DDO and CCG will advise residents in H're speaking communes of the time the program will be broadcast
- In Son Ha district, where there will be three participating communes, the program will co-ordinate with the district radio station to broadcast a monthly segment relating to program activities in the district.
- Attracting regular news stories regarding the program in similar ways to those described for television.

4 Local government

4.1 Overall strategy

4.1.1 *Integration with existing approaches and concepts*

‘Participation’ is not a new concept to Vietnam. Local government already applies community participation in its decision making process. Infrastructure projects, in particular, need to have community agreement before they can go ahead. The format of these community meetings follows a different approach from the program in that the local government usually already has a specific project or activity in mind and is holding a meeting simply to get community approval for what is being proposed. Although the program may not agree with this format, the fact remains that there is some participation and that the local officials themselves, and Vietnamese government in general, feel that they are already employing participatory approaches.

The program’s strategy, then, will not be to present the program’s participatory planning process as something totally new to Vietnam but rather as a new take on an already agreed concept. In that way there is a basis for true discussion on the implications of participation for rural development and the best ways to apply participatory approaches. This strategy will have the following benefits:

- Increase local ownership of the program, including the concepts that the program espouses
- Remove the risk of causing offence by implying that Vietnamese government does not use participatory techniques
- Promotes a feeling of ownership that allows concepts to be more readily accepted than if there is a feeling of them being brought in from outside.

This strategy can be achieved by:

- Avoiding over-emphasis of the word ‘participation’ in program speeches, presentations, documents and names: As the program’s commitment to participation is stated clearly in presentations and is often **referred** to in discussions with local officials, ‘participation’ does not need to be included in names of program positions and activities. As a result, the program will replace the name ‘participatory development advisor’ with the term ‘community development advisor’.
- Encouraging district and local governments to inform the program of the recent achievements and present their plans. Not only does this show respect for the local system but also increases the program’s ability to co-operate with local government and incorporate program activities into local government plans.
- Asking government officials about the current approaches applied to local rural development.
- Assuming a degree of understanding and agreement with participatory approaches when discussing with local officials. Discussions on the role of activity groups, for example, can be based on local government understanding and acceptance of the need for beneficiaries to contribute to public activities.

- Referring to currently used Vietnamese terminology or catch phrases when discussing the program's approach. For example, 'people know, people discuss, people do, people inspect' is a well known phrase used for the Vietnamese government's policy of grassroots democracy. This phrase has already been referred to in some program presentations and training to aid understanding and demonstrate similarities between the program's approach and Vietnamese policy.
- Encouraging DDOs to report back on the comments and feedback of local government officials regarding the program.

4.1.2 Demonstrating program benefits

Local governments at each level are set annual targets by the administrative level immediately above them. The program will seek links between program activities and government targets, such as the target on the number of poor families, and demonstrate how the adoption of program approaches can assist in achieving those targets. This will enable benefits to local governments and the career advancement of individual government officials to be tied directly to the adoption of program approaches and activities.

4.1.3 Formal Meetings

- Program staff or advisors will confer on issues to be discussed at the meetings to make sure they have a uniform position before the meeting commences.
- When program officers initiate meetings they will attempt whenever possible to arrange the meeting at least a few days in advance.
- Before requesting detailed information or when making appointments to interview government officials, program officers will, whenever possible, seek permission from officials in the higher government levels. For example, if information is requested from commune level officials, the program will first check with the Vietnamese Team Leader and district contact group representative. Whenever possible, they will also send a written list of proposed questions. In most cases, these procedures will only be a formality but going through this process will benefit the program by:
 - Putting commune officials at ease that they are permitted to supply information without fear of acting outside their authority.
 - Showing an awareness and respect for the present system and for the government officers' position, thereby increasing the government's respect for the program.
 - Allowing them to prepare information in advance, thereby assisting the program to receive the information quickly and avoiding any potential embarrassment.
- Minutes of meetings between the program and contact groups (or 'Commune Project Management Board' for infrastructure projects) will be taken by a designated secretary from the contact group. The DDO will confer with this person at the conclusion of the meeting, type up the minutes at the commune

office. The DDO will then translate the minutes and send them to the specialist to be included in the field report. This will have the dual benefit of allowing the DDO to concentrate on the content of the meeting and ensuring that there was no misunderstanding during the meeting.

4.1.4 Written information

Brief program documents covering various aspects of the program will be sent to relevant government offices at provincial, district and commune levels. These will either take the form of announcements and explanations on current or upcoming program activities or 'discussion papers' sent before meetings on approaches and strategies.

4.1.5 Informal contacts

The program, particularly the DDOs, will develop informal relationships with contact group members as well as other district and commune level officials. These will provide a good opportunity for informal discussion on program approaches and activities. Senior program officers can help to build the relationship by occasionally inviting government officials for drinks or a meal.

4.2 Commune level

4.2.1 Introduction process for new communes and districts

From 2004, the program will go through an extensive, nine-month introductory process with newly participating communes and districts. By increasing the level of understanding between the program, district and commune governments and commune residents, it is intended that the process will assist in program activities being introduced soon after the completion of the PC/PA/PS. It will also have a number of other benefits including:

- PC/PA/PS meetings which accurately reflect community problems and suggested solutions by increasing the capacity and understanding of DDOs and CCGs and by facilitating community thought and discussion before the meetings commence
- Building relationship between the local government and program, particularly DDO, leading to greater local government co-ordination and co-operation with program activities
- Enabling the program to have a greater understanding of the communities involved, resulting in activities which are more appropriate to local needs.

The intended process to be taken is as follows:

September:

- Formal introductory meeting between program's team leaders and head district and commune officials.
- Recruitment of new DDOs. Training in PLA activities for DDOs as well as other AMC and counterpart employees

- DDO training for district and commune officials in PLA activities. Some PLA activities conducted with district and commune officials and community leaders.
- DDO training on PPP and infrastructure guidelines

October – December:

- DDOs train local government officials in PLA activities
- DDOs and commune officials conduct series of PLA activities in commune
- DDO office arranged
- CCGs and DCGs formed.
- Formal training on PC/PA/PS meetings conducted for DCGs and commune, village and hamlet officials
- January:
- DDO begins work in communes. Informal training and discussion with CCG, village, hamlet and community leaders on PC/PA/PS facilitation
- Training for DCG and CCG representatives on infrastructure guidelines and ASAS and donor submissions.
- DDOs and CCGs begin preparation of ASAS submission

February:

- CCGs and DCGs notified of approximate commencement date for PC/PA/PS meetings.
- Informal training and discussion with CCG, village, hamlet and community leaders on PC/PA/PS facilitation.
- Time, resources schedule agreed upon for PC/PA/PS meetings
- DDO, IEO and PDA assist CCG and DCG with preparation of ASAS submission
- Draft submission completed and sent to IEO/VIEO

March:

- Detailed monthly plan sent to DCG and CCG
- PC/PA/PS meetings commence approximately one week after the meetings in already established communes. Commune officials involved invited to attend meetings and reviews in neighbouring district
- PC/PA/PS meetings conducted co-ordinated by PDAs, led by DDOs but with a large number of village and hamlet officials acting as facilitators. Meetings reviewed. Some households asked to give their impressions on the meetings to contribute to review to help the program make any necessary improvements.
- ASAS submission sent to AusAID

April:

- CBO conducts training needs analysis
- Review of PPP and PC/PA/PS process

May - June:

- CBO conducts any necessary training
- Follow up discussions concerning PPP and infrastructure guidelines
- PC/PA/PS results and future activities discussed

July:

- Activities commence in the commune

A similar process will take place in existing communes in an effort to ensure that local officials have sufficient training to be able to facilitate groups discussions at the PC/PA/PS meetings and sufficient acceptance of the process to reduce bias in the meetings' results.

4.2.2 Community links with contact groups and local officials

Just as local government is crucial in promoting community understanding of the program, commune and district residents are equally important in developing government awareness and acceptance. Regardless of the success of other means of communication, local government knowledge of the program will certainly increase if large numbers of people are talking about it. Similarly, governments will be more receptive to program approaches if they see that these approaches are popular with the public. As stated in the Program Design Document, "an indicator of successful communications at this [district] level will be requests from non-participating communes for assistance to adopt QNRDP's processes and resource allocation procedures" (PDD 8.5.3).

The program will increase the level of contact between the public and local government by promoting the commune and district contact groups and encouraging the public to contact these groups with comments, concerns or suggestions regarding the program. The groups can be promoted by:

- explaining its role and listing names of group members at the end of group PC/PA/PS and any other program meetings
- ensuring that village, hamlet and community leaders are aware of the commune contact group members
- provide a brief explanation of the role and list the names of commune and district contact group members on the notice board in people's committee offices
- encouraging their participation and mentioning their role at field days, training and celebrations
- explaining their role and listing the names of members on program newsletters
- explaining their role as part of radio and television documentaries

Village, hamlet and community association leaders can also be encouraged to become more involved by:

- Providing copies of the local PC/PA/PS results to the village and hamlet leaders concerned and explain how the results can be interpreted.
- Discuss with commune and village officials about using the monthly village and/or hamlet meetings as an opportunity for village and hamlet leaders to learn more about what people are doing, not only to announce activities decided upon by the commune government.

4.2.3 Training

Contact group training depends on the results of a training needs analysis to be conducted by the Capacity Building Officer. However, likely training topics include the participatory planning process, project management, financial management and activity planning. Commune contact group representatives and village leaders will also be invited to attend activity group and credit – savings group training.

The program will provide evaluation sheets to assess the training, conduct any necessary follow-up and modify the course for next time.

4.2.4 DDO reports

The DDO monthly reports to PDAs will also be sent to the commune and district contact groups, outlining their activities during the past month. The reports will include information on the results of program activities, including any statistical data which can clearly demonstrate program successes. In some cases, the DDOs may need to seek additional information or data from the PDAs and Technical Specialists, particularly the MEGO, to improve the quality of the reports.

The program has prepared a format for DDO reports, after consulting with participating DCGs and CCGs. This will both assist the DDOs in writing the reports and increase the contact groups' satisfaction with the reports they receive. Contact groups will be encouraged to provide feedback on the content of the reports to the DDOs and PDAs.

The DDOs will also regularly report informally to the district and commune contact groups regarding their activities in the commune. When PDAs or team leaders visit the communes they will invite a member of the DCG to accompany them or, if it is not possible for a DCG member to go, the PDA will drop in on the district office on the way back from the commune to inform the district of their activities.

4.2.5 Progress reports

The program produces 6 monthly progress reports which will be made available to the district and commune contact groups in each of the participating districts.

4.2.6 Program guidelines

Three program guidelines will be relevant to local government: infrastructure, credit – savings group and activity group guidelines. For practical reasons, these guidelines have been introduced by the Program Management Unit and approved by the Provincial People's Committee without consultation with district or commune level governments. As stated above, commune contact group officials will receive training on the guidelines and will be expected to comply with them.

The first draft of the guidelines have been developed by the PMU and approved by the PCC. Through use and consultation with the DCG and CCGs it is planned for them to evolve and include suggestions from the stakeholders and beneficiaries.

4.3 District and Provincial Levels

4.3.1 *Program Newsletter*

As stated above (section 3.2.2), the program newsletter will include articles from residents of the participating communes. The newsletter will be sent to relevant government departments at commune, district and provincial levels. Apart from increasing government understanding of the program itself, the newsletters will assist in increasing government awareness of community attitudes. Contact groups will sometimes also be invited to contribute to the newsletter and the contact details of each contact group will be included.

4.3.2 *Government reports*

Local governments make annual reports to the government level immediately above them so including information about the program in these reports will increase awareness of the program among those government offices not directly involved. As government reports are very statistically based, the program will increase its chances of being included in reports by providing statistical information. Community associations and other government offices, such as the Clean Water and Environment Centre also produce reports for higher level authorities.

4.3.3 *Study tours*

Once a participating commune has moved into its second planning cycle, the program will arrange with the contact groups to invite other local government officials to attend two program events each year. Senior representatives from each of the communes within the district as well as from any adjacent non-participating districts will be invited to attend:

- A PC/PA/PS meeting and review in the participating commune.
A DCG member will be delegated to accompany members from the non-participating communes to the meeting. A member of the CCG will be delegated to meet the commune officials at the meeting.
- A tour of program activities:
In August the same officials will be invited back to the participating commune in order to:
 - meet the CCG members and DDO to discuss the program's activities
 - attend a demonstration field day or group extension activity
 - meet activity group/and or credit group representatives to talk about their activities

Annual study tours will also be organised to other projects within Vietnam and especially within a day's drive from Quang Ngai. In order to keep the group to a manageable size, especially as the number of participating communes increases, for the most part the program will arrange for 3 to 4 program staff, including representatives from both the AMC and counterparts, and single representatives from each of the participating communes to attend the tour.

The study tours will usually be to other development projects with similar activities but perhaps with new or different approaches from which the program and local government officials can learn.

The program has already successfully organised a study tour for DDOs to Gia Lai province to study local credit funds operating in that province. In addition, the program has established contact with the RIDEF infrastructure project in Quang Nam. Both projects are nearing completion and undoubtedly have some experiences and lessons which would be of use to the program.

4.3.4 Brochure

As stated in section 3, the program will produce a standard brochure for distribution to local communities and government offices. The program will discuss drafts of the brochures with district and commune contact groups as a means of promoting co-ordination on the program and ensuring that the brochures content, format and style of writing are suitable for local communities.

4.3.5 Social Networks

A few senior program officers will meet briefly with representatives from the leadership of each of the relevant provincial government departments as a follow-up to sending the program brochure to that department. A personal acquaintance with the leadership of each government department will help to increase the department's future co-operation with the program.

DDOs will meet informally with numerous district government officials not directly involved in the program.

4.3.6 Newspaper articles

The program will sign a contract with the 'Quang Ngai' newspaper to publish a monthly column on the program. This paper's circulation is extremely limited in the broader community but is distributed to every government office. The column will usually be taken from an article in the monthly newsletter but may be modified to suit government interests.

4.3.7 Promoting direct district involvement

Many government programs are implemented at the district level yet there is variation between districts on the scope and effectiveness of the programs. The district level is therefore the most effective level at which the program can target its support to raise the effectiveness of government programs. The program should establish direct links with the Finance and Planning Office and particularly with the Economic Office (which includes agriculture) in each district and direct its activities at capacity building and institutional strengthening in these offices. Beyond the practical benefits of such activities at both district and commune level, working with these offices will also involve more contact with the DCG and will increase the program's relevance at district level.

5 National and International Communication

There are three objectives to QNRDP's communication strategy at a national and international level.

First, to increase the level of outside funding for program activities by attracting interest from donor agencies in program activities and approaches.

Second, to increase the interest of other programs, organisations and agencies in the program in order to broaden QNRDP's contribution to development policies and practices within Vietnam and internationally.

Finally, to maximise the flow of useful, relevant information to the program and ensure it contributes to the suitability and effectiveness of program activities.

Similarly to the strategy at local levels and within the program itself, a combination of many different forms of communication are necessary to achieve these objectives, from sending brochures to writing academic articles and from conference presentations to face-to-face conversations. In fact, given the number of programs and agencies operating in Vietnam and the vast body of research and activity concerned with rural development in general, there is an infinite amount of scope for communications beyond the program. Therefore, in keeping with the general strategy principles outlined in section 1.3, the program will devote sufficient resources to achieve the objectives while being very mindful of the need to use limited resources wisely and effectively.

5.1 Maximising information

5.1.1 Links with other Provincial Programs

The program will work to gain a greater understanding of other relevant ODA, NGO and national or provincial government programs working in Quang Ngai and will promote the development of links with these programs. Relevant ODA and NGO programs include the World Bank's Community-Based Infrastructure Project and Agricultural Diversification Program, Plan International, World Vision and the Disaster Mitigation Program. Relevant national government programs operating in Quang Ngai include Program 133, which is the National Target Program for Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction, and Program 135, a national program aimed at improving the lives of ethnic minority people in isolated areas.

Apart from informal links, QNRDP will promote the establishment of bi-monthly seminars, held in English, but open to leaders of all provincial or national programs concerned with rural development. It will also arrange for PMU personnel to visit other programs taking place in the commune as well as for other programs to see QNRDP activities.

5.1.2 Links with neighbouring provinces

In general, the program will place greatest importance on establishing links with other program's and activities taking place in Quang Ngai or nearby provinces. This has already begun to occur through contact with the local bodies of the World Bank's community-based infrastructure and Agricultural Diversification Project, the Disaster Mitigation Project, and projects in Quang Nam, Hue and Gia Lai. A focus on local areas minimises program costs while providing the opportunity for relatively frequent interaction and support through visits and study tours.

5.1.3 Agency directory

The program will compile a database on national and international organisations which may be relevant to the program, either as potential donors, partners, source of information or influences on program activities (such as national government agencies).

The directory will be in the form of an electronic database stored in the PMU server computer. Apart from the web page addresses (if any) and contact details and of each institution, the database will include the following fields for sorting purposes:

- region of operation
- type of institution (international donor, AusAID project, NGO, research institution, government office etc.)
- field of interest (agriculture, infrastructure, credit, health etc.)

Donor organisations will be further categorised into funding ranges and funding submissions dates. In addition to the database, the program will maintain a record of funding submission guidelines for all relevant donors.

The data will be compiled by a marketing professional working part-time with assistance when necessary from MEGO, CPO and the AMC secretary as part of the process of compiling the newsletter distribution list. Extensive use will be made of the internet in compiling the directory as it provides easy access to numerous lists and directories relating to development in Vietnam.

While written information is important to obtain and disseminate general information, the program can achieve the above objectives most effectively through interaction and discussion. It will therefore work to determine which of the vast array of programs, agencies and organisations are most relevant and useful in terms of potential donor funds, providing useful information and experience and helping the program to expand its impact. It will foster a close working relationship through visits, phonecalls and emails.

5.1.4 Workshops and conferences

Through AusAID and DPI as well as the internet, email and phone contacts and the mass media, the program will closely monitor conferences and workshops held in Vietnam, Australia and around the region and will aim for program members, including counterparts, to give presentations in at least six conferences, workshops or inter-provincial government meetings per year. Each presentation should include

some introductory slides on the program. In addition, the program will consider supporting any local government officials wishing to present papers or attend conferences at which they refer to the program.

5.1.5 Email news and discussion lists

The program currently subscribes to a Vietnam studies email discussion list which sometimes provide useful, news, information and contacts. The CPO will seek further email news and discussion lists to provide regular news and information on topics relevant to the program.

5.1.6 Snowballing

By placing importance on asking people or agencies interacting with the program for their suggestions on other useful contacts or information sources, the program can continually build on the quality and scope of the information it receives. This technique allows it to obtain some background information about an agency before making contact. An introduction or mutual acquaintance with a third party also facilitates initial contact with any new agency.

5.2 Broadening the Program's impact

5.2.1 Website

A program website will be established to allow international access to information on the program. The opening page should have a function for the user to choose English or Vietnamese. Program activities could then be divided into the four components with links to specific activities and communes within each of these components.

Getting a sufficient number of hits to make the site worthwhile would depend principally on the program's ability to promote itself through other communication means but a minimum requirement for any website is listing on search engines and links from other relevant organisations.

Sections of the website will also advertise projects for which the program is seeking funding. As Quang Ngai province does not yet have its own website, the provincial government will be invited to include information on the province as part of the program's website.

5.2.2 Newsletter

A quarterly English newsletter will be sent to potential donors and other relevant organisations including:

- research organisations
- NGOs
- Multilateral organisations

- Australian businesses and organisations
- AusAID, Hanoi
- Other AusAID projects in Vietnam

A second letter will be published in Vietnamese and sent to:

- relevant central government departments
- university departments and research institutions involved in rural development

The content of the two newsletters will be virtually the same. However, small adjustments may be made to the format and content to suit the readership. Approximately 500 newsletters will be sent electronically. Each edition will include a brief introduction to the program for the benefit first-time readers, followed by an overview of program activities during the past three months. Other content will include:

- general articles on income generation, credit, training and infrastructure activities written by the PDA or specialist concerned
- articles from program officers or DDOs describing particular events or situations
- introductions to team leaders and program employees
- a selection of the best articles from farmers and local officials in the local Vietnamese language newsletter
- photos
- graphs and diagrams
- program contact details

5.2.3 *Brochure*

The program will publish a small, professionally printed brochure (English and Vietnamese versions). The brochure will be distributed to provincial departments and district people's committees and made available at workshops or conferences or other events in which the program participates. One small brochure can be made at an approximate cost of VND15,000 (Six A5 pages at VND 2,500 per page).

5.2.4 *Hosting Workshops and conferences*

The program has already successfully organised an international livestock workshop. Apart from providing some valuable information for program activities and contributing to the national and international debate on livestock issues and techniques, the workshop greatly increased the program's profile and enabled it to establish contacts with organisations which it might be able to call on for assistance or co-operation in the future.

The program will continue to organise workshops on at least an annual basis and will vary their content, format and location according to the circumstances at the time. Topic specific workshops will be organised when there are particular topics or issues of special importance to program activities at the time. Beyond these, general 'lessons learned' workshops will be held approximately every two years in one of the major urban centres which will give the program the opportunity to present an overview of its activities.

5.2.5 Visits to agencies

When either of the team leaders or program directors are required to go to travel to Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City for other purposes (such as for a meeting with AusAID or MPI), they (with the assistance of the PDAs, VPDAs and CPO if required) will arrange to also meet other agencies or programs during their visit (as has often been done in the past). Before their visit they will send a one page summary on the program. At the meeting they will then use this summary sheet to give a short presentation to the agency concerned.

5.2.6 Vietnamese language newspaper and journal articles

When the program has clear findings it will report on these to national level Vietnamese and English language newspapers including the 'Agriculture' newspaper, Vietnam Economic Times and Vietnam News. It will aim for two national newspaper articles to be printed about the program in each language per year.

5.2.7 Contribution to planning policy

The most effective impact that the program may have on government planning is likely to be through DPI/MPI. This can occur in three ways:

- Through discussing and co-ordinating with counterpart staff and through playing a part in reforming commune and district plans, which will ultimately influence the provincial plan. In the event of the program contributing to reform in DPI planning practices, it can assist in finding a national audience for the reforms by supporting counterpart and other DPI personnel in identifying and presenting papers in national fora.
- Twice a year a delegate from the Ministry of Planning and Investment is scheduled to attend the Program Co-ordination Committee meeting. When he is in Quang Ngai, AusAID and senior program management will take the opportunity to explain further about the program and learn more about national planning policy and practices.
- When the ATL and VTL visit Hanoi they should see the MPI representatives responsible for this program to keep them informed on progress.

5.2.8 Contribution to rural development policy

1. Similar to planning policy, the most effective way that the program can impact on rural development policy is through the Quang Ngai Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). One of the program counterparts is head of the Planning Office at DARD and will work regularly with the program, particularly the PDAs and VPDAs, to plan and implement many income generation activities. The program can impact on national level policy by co-ordinating well with the DARD official and support them in presenting program related activities or findings at a national or inter-provincial level.

2. A delegate from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is also scheduled to attend PCC meetings. The PDAs, VPDAs and DARD counterpart will attempt to arrange a meeting with the minister or delegate when he is in Quang Ngai.

5.2.9 Contribution to AusAID policy

The ATL reports regularly to AusAID and attends regular meetings with AusAID and other AusAID funded programs in Vietnam. Through reporting and analysing the program's successes and difficulties, the ATL can contribute to AusAID's policy development on such topics as implementing PPP in development projects, co-ordinating with local government in Vietnam and implementing agricultural extension in rural Vietnam.

AusAID also sponsors conferences and events to which program officers can attend and make a contribution. One such event is the 'Vietnam Update' conference, held annually at the Australian National University. The program will contact AusAID to be informed of these and other AusAID events and strategically choose to attend events at which it can make the biggest contribution.

5.2.10 Contribution to international knowledge

A contribution can be made to a range of fields of study through having articles published in international academic journals. The program will aim to have two journal articles published per year.

5.3 Attracting donor funds

5.3.1 Direct contacts between donors and local government

Direct contact between donors and local government will be facilitated by:

- Inviting potential donors to workshops, conferences in Quang Ngai and arranging for them to meet any local government officials which have submitted funding proposals either before or after the workshop.
- Providing donor contact details to DDO, CCG and DCG so they can ring and follow up on proposals themselves if necessary.
- Accompanying local government to meet donors if necessary.

5.3.2 Training

One day training courses will be held twice a year for one district and one commune representative on preparing funding submissions. The courses will be held in the PMU office, or in an outside conference room if necessary.

The courses will be part of overall preparations for donor funding submissions and training and will be held approximately two months before donor submissions are due. They will be aimed at instructing government officials on how to meet the donor criteria and increase their chances of their proposals being accepted. The course will be prepared and presented jointly by the CBO, IEO and VIEO. AusAID feedback on previous proposals and the types of projects given preference as well as experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of previous projects.

The course will include information on the differing requirements and priorities of donor organisation and be held in conjunction with training on QNRDP's infrastructure guidelines.

5.3.3 Donor feedback

The program will ask donors for indications on the field which they are most interested in funding and request feedback from them in the event of a funding proposal being rejected. This information will be passed on to the local government concerned and used to inform the training courses.

5.3.4 Direct guidance and editing of submissions

Approximately three weeks before ASAS submissions are due the program will invite local government officials to send in draft submissions for review by the PDA, IEO and VIEO. A few days after receiving the submissions the program will hold a brief meeting with the government officials concerned in which they point out any shortcomings in the proposal and provide guidance on how to overcome them.

The program will demonstrate to the CPC and DPC how PPP can assist them in receiving international donor assistance for a particular project. The participatory approach is being applied in various forms by many projects and international donor organisations. A crucial aspect of approval for funding submissions is the ability to demonstrate the demand for, and contribution in, the project among the local population. The program can encourage and support local government submissions for donor assistance and when providing the support can demonstrate how the participatory planning process, particularly data from the PC/PA/PS meetings can greatly help the submission to be approved. Training on how to produce good submissions, obtaining feedback from AusAID, getting guidelines from other donors and distributing them to local government, will also be used to improve the success rate of external funding submissions.

5.3.5 Presentations

The program will make presentations to inter-donor organisations and forums. An important forum is the International Support Group, run by the Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development. This group includes the United Nations, World Bank, AusAID and several other bilateral donors such as those from Germany, Japan, Holland and England. The program can learn of the group's activities and arrange a presentation through AusAID.

5.3.6 *Involvement in donor missions to Quang Ngai*

Through regular contact with the involved local agencies, through information from AusAID and direct contact with the donors themselves, the program will learn of bilateral and multilateral missions to Quang Ngai, such as World Bank and ADB missions. It will apply to meet with the mission delegates and take them to visit some program activities.

6 Review and Appraisal

There will be an annual appraisal of the communications strategy, particularly as it relates to communication within the program and province. This will take the form of the team leaders consulting with stakeholders such as program staff, contact groups and government agencies associated with the program, such as the Women's Association, to seek their opinions on program communication in the previous year and then agreeing on any necessary changes.

The effectiveness of particular forms of communication, such as Program brochures and newsletters, will be reviewed by the DDOs with support and guidance from the PDAs and VPDAs. The results of the review will then be summarised in a brief report to the team leaders.

Annexes

Annex 1: 2004-05 Communications Workplan



Annex 2: Communications Indicator Table

