G O V E R N M E N T   O F   V I E T N A M

Case study of M&E capacity building in Vietnam

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1   Building monitoring and evaluation capacity

As part of its commitment to improving aid effectiveness, the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) has implemented widespread activities to build monitoring and evaluation capacity in PMU and line agency staff as well as in central Ministries. Between Q1 2004 and Q4 2006, these activities, conducted with support from the AusAID-funded Vietnam Australia M&E Strengthening Project (Phase II), included:

- **Basic M&E training** – 522 participants trained of which 59% women
- **Basic IT training** – 96 participants trained of which 56% women
- **Intermediate M&E training** – 221 participants trained of which 52% women
- **On-the-job training** – more than 763 participants of which 48% women
- **Advanced training** - 42 Champions trained of which 36% women
- **Pilot evaluations** – 13 completed with 9 stakeholder agencies and a further 2 under way at Q4 2006. These include two government-donor partner evaluations.
- **Competency testing** – more than 200 participants annually tested for their competency as M&E practitioners.
- **Technical working group meetings** – 20 meetings attended by 492 participants of which 63% men.
- **Workshops** – 11 large workshops on monitoring, evaluation, IT tools and indicators held – 3,849 participants of which 43% women.
- **Study tours** – 5 study tours completed to Thailand (institutional arrangements for M&E of public investment at national level), Japan (evaluation of ODA), Malaysia (participation in Malaysian Evaluation Society Annual Conference), Australia (monitoring of ODA) and Singapore (participation in ADB regional meeting on evaluation for results-based management). 64 participants in all of which 59% men.
- **Regional networking** – liaising with regional evaluation societies and actively participating in the ADB Community of Practice on Management for Development Results (see Box 1).

2   Approach to capacity building for M&E

With support from VAMESP II the Government has adopted an adult learning, competency-based approach to capacity building for monitoring and evaluation. The focus is on understanding the competencies and skills required to perform M&E functions and delivering training and experiential capacity building to address identified gaps in targeted staff. Quantitative competency testing is conducted annually to measure competency changes and evaluate the effectiveness of training programs.

A summary of the modular training program is presented in Chart 1. Whilst most elements in the process are self explanatory, several are new concepts in Vietnam and are defined below:

- **M&E System** – the Pilot ODA M&E system for Vietnam as detailed in the M&E Manual and related references on www.mpi.gov.vn/tddg .
- **Competency Profile** – a diagram showing the capacity requirements (what people need to be able to do) for the M&E system to work effectively, including the sub-skills and knowledge and the relationships of different skills and knowledge.

- **Learning Contracts** - A learning contract is a documented agreement between a learner (an individual), a tutor/mentor and / or supervisor and their leader which specifies an agreed set of learning outcomes directly related to the effective implementation of the M&E System, and the strategies for reaching those outcomes.

Box 1 : Participation in ADB MfDR Community of Practice

VAMESP II was invited to participate in the ADB Community of Practice on Management for Development Results (MfDR). This on-line forum included a special BLOG on Monitoring and Evaluation in Vietnam (see http://adb.org/mfdr/cop) that attracted a debate amongst 20 practitioners interested in learning lessons from Vietnamese experience in developing and piloting a national monitoring system for ODA.

The discussion on M&E in Vietnam was based on a paper co-authored and presented at the Malaysian Evaluation Society Conference by VAMESP II Project Officer. The discussion focused on themes of quality and quantity of indicators; usefulness of indicators; outputs and outcomes; linking planning and budgeting; and factors for sustainability. VAMESP II also presented a paper at the ADB CoP-MfDR's Asia Pacific meeting in Singapore on 30 August 2006.

Chart 1 : Summary of modular program for M&E capacity building

	Section 1 Introduction to M & E	Section 2 National M&E system	Section 3 Foundations	Section 4 Planning for M&E	Section 5 Indicators	Section 6 Data for monitoring	Section 7 Data for evaluation	Section 8 Evaluation for results	Section 9 Evaluation for results	Section 10 Reporting	Section 11 Portfolio & sectoral evaluation	Section 12 Results Based Management
Elementary	● Concepts and benefits ● M&E in the investment cycle ● Introduce evaluation criteria	● Legislation ● Decree 131 ● Circulars ● Key principles elements	● Introduction to communication ● e.g. run the Chinese whispers game.	● Logframe –Theory & use ● Monitoring planning & logistics	● Types of indicators ● SMART principles	● Data and information ● Data journey ● Data types ● Collection methods ● Baseline data ● Data collation.				● Communicate findings of monitoring ● Audience ● Presentation of results ● Integration ● Use of AMT.		● Concept & definitions ● Outputs Vs outcomes.
Practice	● Rapid review Elementary ● Introduce tools & methods	● Review relevant legislation ● National system ● Hanoi Core Statement	● Teambuilding ● IT training for M&E teams (no materials)	● Evaluation planning ● Preparing Annual Plan for ODA	● Establish monitoring system for PMU ● Using IT tools for indicators	● Simple tools for data management ● Use of Aligned Monitoring Tool ● Use of PMT	● Review logframe ● Eval Type & Criteria ● Evaluation logframe ● Link eval. & monit. data	● Four evaluation steps I (case study) ● Evaluation Quality Guidelines	● Four evaluation steps II (practice)	● Report writing skills ● Report preparation. ● Evaluation Feedback ● Communicate lessons learned from evaluation	● Concept & definitions ● Portfolio evaluation ● Sectoral evaluation	● Key RBM (MfDR) principles ● Key RBM elements ● How to M & E towards results
Advanced		● International best practice ● Meaning & example	● Training skills (ToT) [stand alone course] ● Teamwork ● Problem solving.	● PMU M&E framework ● Annual Plan for Project ● Programming for Evaluation	● Establish monitoring system for agency ● Indicators for results.	● Using monitoring data to manage ODA projects ● Data analysis ● Interpret data ● Data storage ● Archive data.	● Data analysis & storage ● Interpret results ● Archiving data	● Pilot evaluation (Project I)	● Pilot evaluation (Project II)	● Pilot evaluation (Reports)	● Pilot evaluation (Sector)	● Using M&E results to manage ODA strategy ● Using M&E results for project formulation.

3   Champions network

To support the active adoption of a pilot monitoring system, MPI established a network of Monitoring Champions in 5 Ministries and 7 Provinces, with support from VAMESP II. The experience in 2005 and 2006 is that Champions add considerable value to the M&E work of the Government of Vietnam, are cost effective and increase the outputs of the pilot monitoring system by increasing the number of individuals available to support stakeholder M&E practice.

Following the successful pilot of Champions in 8 stakeholders, MPI appointed additional Champions so that each active stakeholder line agency and PMU had one Champion. MPI appointed new practitioner Champions at two levels:

- **Leadership Champions** – people in leadership positions of line agencies or PMUs that are actively committed to M&E systems and willing to champion the effective use of the national monitoring system being piloted by MPI.
- **Practitioner Champions** – people in line agency or PMU positions responsible for M&E functions that are actively committed to M&E systems and willing to champion the implementation of the national monitoring system being piloted by MPI.   An example of the practitioner champion experience is presented in Box 2.

The function of Leadership Champions is to promote and actively support the adoption of leading practice monitoring and evaluation practices piloted by FERD/MPI through VAMESP II and to ensure effective implementation of government M&E regulations and functions in their agency. Leadership Champions were selected if they had:
- a leadership position responsible for ODA management in a line agency or PMU
- active commitment to monitoring practice for improved management outcomes
- experience in management of ODA projects and the implementation of Decree 131
- experience and active networks in the GOV network for ODA management
- an active approach to team work and capacity building in their agency
- graduated from VAMESP II Intermediate Training modules
- experience managing use of the aligned monitoring format

The function of Practitioner Champions is to promote and actively support the adoption of leading practice monitoring and evaluation practices piloted by FERD/MPI through VAMESP II. Each Champion has clear terms of reference, upper limits to their inputs (typically 4 days per month), defined outputs expected each month, a quarterly work plan and clear accountability requirements. Practitioner Champions were selected if they had:
- a position responsible for monitoring and evaluation in your organisation
- active commitment to monitoring practice
- experience in management of ODA projects and the implementation of Decree 131
- an active approach to team work and capacity building in their agency
- graduated from VAMESP II Basic Training modules or higher
- experience using the VAMESP II M&E Manual
- experience using the aligned monitoring format
- experience and active networks in the GOV network for ODA management

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Box 2 : The work of an M&E Champion in Quang Nam

Quang Nam M&E Champion Mrs Huynh Thi My Nhan started her M&E practice in 2002 at the Provincial Department of Planning and Investment. In 2004 Nhan completed elementary monitoring training provided by MPI through VAMESP II. This led to active involvement with the pilot monitoring of the Rural Electrification Project (Phase II) financed by OPEC Fund. During this evaluation she led field work in several Communes in 2 Districts.

As her tested competency increased, she participated in practice-level evaluation training provided by MPI in mid-2005 and took an active role in the Pilot Impact Evaluation of the Rural Electrification Project (Phase I) financed by OPEC Fund. Following Advanced Training in 2006, and regular monitoring practice with two projects in Quang Nam, she was formally appointed as a Practitioner Technical Champion in mid-2006.

Nhan's monthly tasks include collating and analysing monitoring data, providing feedback to PMUs reporting to Quang Nam DPI, updating monitoring records maintained by DPI and reporting progress to her leaders in DPI for the Provincial People's Committee.

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4   Competency testing

In 1975, Donald Kirkpatrick presented a four-level model of evaluation that has become a classic method for evaluation of training and capacity building. MPI uses Level Two of the four Kirkpatrick levels (Level One: Reaction; Level Two: Learning; Level Three: Behaviour; and Level Four: Results) as the basis for competency testing to evaluate the effectiveness of the M&E capacity building program implemented with support from VAMESP II.

Separate testing tools are used for elementary, practitioner and advanced levels of competence. The tools are designed to test knowledge, skills, and attitude relating to monitoring and evaluation. In addition, for assessment of advanced levels of competence, a body of evidence is examined from Champions and other selected individuals.

Competency testing was first conducted for training course participants in 2005 and then in 76 out of 212 active M&E participants at elementary, practice and advanced levels in 2006. These participants came from 5 Ministries and 7 Provinces. The October 2006 results are summarised in Chart 2.

The competency testing results suggest that there are two groups of government and PMU staff with functions requiring elementary M&E understanding – one group with expected attitude and lower than expected skills, and another one with the best possible attitude and higher than expected skills. These data also suggest that knowledge, attitude and skills of M&E practitioners (that is intermediate-level staff) are as expected, with a small group of practitioners emerging as better than expected – people who could be appointed as the next group of Champions.

The results for advanced-level stakeholders suggest that knowledge and skills of M&E Champions are as expected, but that attitudes are higher than expected. This is encouraging as it suggests a sound foundation for the transition from a pilot M&E system to an official system as the monitoring formats and evaluation processes are institutionalised.

Chart 2 : Change in competency results 2005 to 2006
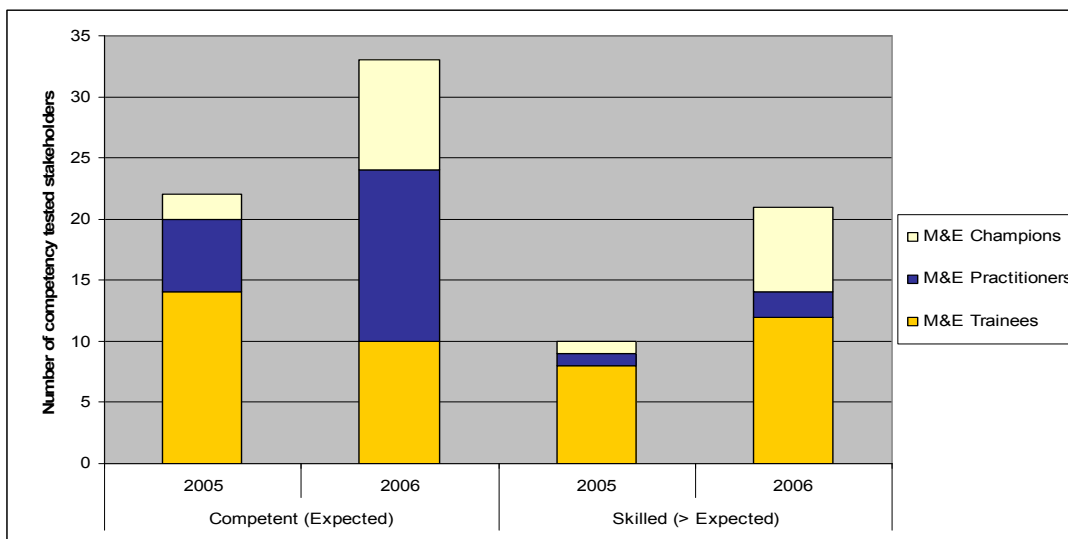
# 5   Resources to support capacity building

5.1   Manuals

MPI has prepared a national manual to support monitoring and evaluation practice, with the support of VAMESP II. A final draft Monitoring and Evaluation Manual was published in English and Vietnamese in Q3 2005. More than 600 copies were produced and all of these were distributed to practitioners. Feedback from practitioners, donors and government staff was favourable and used to inform the preparation of a final version of the manual in Q4 2006. The final manual builds on international leading practice from OECD-DAC, FASID – Japan and the World Bank but emphasises practical tools and methods to help practitioners understand *how* to implement monitoring and evaluation in Vietnam. The final manual has four modules:

- Establishing M&E Systems in Vietnam – a Reference for Leaders
- Monitoring Practice in Vietnam
- Evaluation Practice in Vietnam
- Training resources for ODA Investment M&E in Vietnam

Stakeholders use the manual to support their M&E functions. When conducting pilot evaluations they use the relevant module. Quantitative assessment of stakeholder satisfaction with the manual is conducted annually. Chart 3 summarises stakeholder perceptions of the M&E Manual.

Chart 3 : Stakeholder perception of M&E Manual
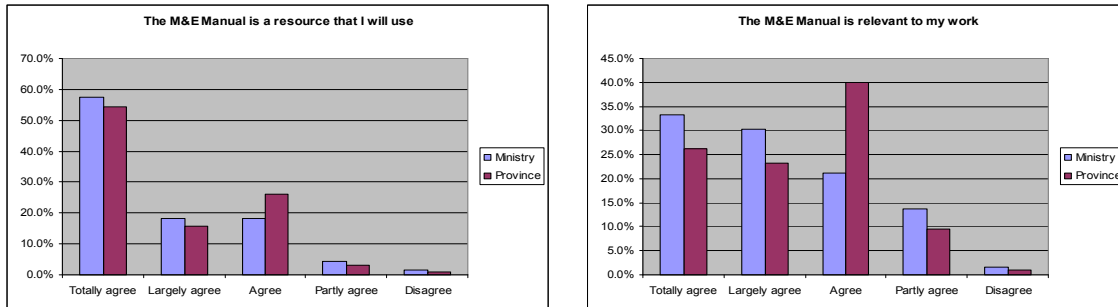
5.2   Training packages

MPI developed training packages for M&E capacity building in Vietnam with support from VAMESP II. These were developed in early 2004, trialled in 2004 and 2005, refined and modified during early 2006 based on 2005 competency testing and widespread reviews with participants; and finally collated into a trainers handbook and resource compendium as the fourth module of the Vietnam M&E Manual. This resource is specifically designed to build capacity for the implementation of M&E components of the new Decree 131/CP on ODA management in Vietnam. The Manual was published in Q4 2006 and is available from FERD/MPI. The training packages available from MPI, and accessible from the national M&E website www.mpi.gov.vn/tddg, include:

- **Competency profiles for Government M&E functions** – profiles of required competencies for each function defined by Government of Vietnam regulations, roles and responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating ODA investments.
- **Elementary modules for basic monitoring capacity building** - trainers guide for 8 sessions, PowerPoint slides, learning games and teaching resources for each session.
- **Practice modules for intermediate M&E capacity building** - trainers guide for 11 sessions, PowerPoint slides, exercises, case studies and other teaching resources for each session.
- **Advanced M&E capacity building** – exercises, case studies, field programs and criteria for assessing outputs from practitioners that can be used as bodies of evidence to guide capacity building and assess proficiency.
- **Course evaluation tools** – simple forms to use at the end of training sessions and field activities to evaluate participant response. These follow the Kirkpatrick approach with a focus on Level 1 (Reaction).
- **Competency testing tools** – formats for M&E competency testing at elementary, practice and advanced levels. These follow the Kirkpatrick approach with a focus on Level 2 (Learning) and Level 3 (Behaviour).

5.3   Website

With support from VAMESP II, MPI established a national M&E website www.mpi.gov.vn/tddg , as introduced in Box 3. As an integral part of the national ODA website, the objective of the national M&E website provides a focal point for monitoring and evaluation resources, news, communication, data exchange and international links for practitioners in Vietnam.   The national M&E website targets 5 audiences: M&E practitioners and Champions, ODA project managers, Government policy makers, Donors, and Normal browsers.

Box 3 : The National M&E website

The national M&E website is divided into 2 sections: a public section, which provides general M&E information and a restricted section, which is designed for VAMESP II and its stakeholders.

The **public section** of the website is designed to be a focal point for M&E in Vietnam and covers:
- Introduction of M&E in Vietnam: introduction, government effort and donor effort in M&E
- M&E News, Events and Activities in Vietnam
- M&E Forum: where participants discuss and exchange experience and opinions on M&E issues of relevance to their work
- A consultant register of M&E practitioners working in Vietnam

- Virtual resource centre containing legal documents relating to M&E, the M&E manual, methods, tools and references, Useful links including national and international about M&E and Case studies and international leading practices

The Restricted section of the website is designed to be a focal point for VAMESP II stakeholders and covers:
- Introduction about VAMESP II and its stakeholders
- News, Announcements and activities of VAMESP II with its stakeholders and counterparts
- Activity plan, outputs and work-in-progress of VAMESP II
- Sharing documents between VAMESP II and its stakeholders
- VAMESP II forum where stakeholders can exchange views and dialogue