

Strategic Capacity Building with CAP-IPSARD

Our main partner under the Strategic Capacity Building and National Policy Contribution component has been with the Center for Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD), the think-tank associated with Viet Nam's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Given IPSARD's central role in rural policy development and its mandate to develop a commodity expert group, the immediate priority has been to contribute to the development of appropriate skills and market knowledge. A group of staff from CAP has been working with a team from Prosperity Initiative in our offices since the beginning of 2008 and is completing ten short sector studies and contributing to an in-depth study on Coconuts. The initial success of this partnership was underlined by the signing of an MOU between CAP and PI covering a period of two years.

The poverty impact from this partnership is achieved indirectly and over longer time horizons through improved decision-making and allocation of government resources and private sector investments. The two mechanisms for achieving this are:

1. Information: Making high quality market opportunity and poverty analysis available to a wider community of decision makers in government and business.
2. Advice: Improving the skills of a cadre of staff in key government offices and other service providers so they are able to apply improved approaches to market-based development and poverty reduction work in support of the Government's own objectives and of the private sector.

Through this capacity-building model, IPSARD has strengthened its policy support to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to help address Viet Nam's global market integration challenges. This is best demonstrated by the high level assignment to IPSARD and CAP in November 2008 as the lead government think tank to develop better national rice policy and strategy advice and support in the wake of major challenges in the rice sector associated with commodity boom and export polices during that year. Rice production and marketing lies at the centre of livelihoods and traditional cultures in Viet Nam and affects 10 million rice-growing households in the country. There is no more significant sector in Viet Nam. During 2009, CAP's team located within PI's offices took on this task and the first output is produced the most comprehensive review of the industry undertaken in Viet Nam, a sector itself, and is providing ministerial advice on plans to support the upgrading of crop monitoring systems, post-harvest management and supply chain improvements.

The CAP-PI partnership has proved to be extremely successful for both parties. Detailed planning for 2010 is currently underway, where CAP staff will begin to work in an integrated model throughout the various research and project delivery teams in PI.