VIETNAM WATER RESOURCES ASSISTANCE PROJECT (WRAP)

Ethnic Minority Development Plan for Phase 1

for

Cau Son – Cam Son Subproject

August 2003
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1. **Introduction**

1. Vietnam Water Rehabilitation Assistance Project aims to improve the irrigation system and water management in seven subprojects, providing more efficient, equitable and reliable irrigation services to farmers. The Project is expected to improve access to irrigation water for all farmers in the system, particularly benefiting those at the tail end of the canal system. The Project is designed to increase and improve farmers' participation in irrigation management through strengthening the water user groups in the system. The seven subprojects are in Cau Son-Cam Son, Yen Lap, Ke Go, Quang Hue River, Phu Ninh, Da Ban, and Dau Tieng.

2. In Phase I of VWAP only Cau Son – Cam Son have ethnic minorities living in the project area. There are less than 30 households of ethnic minority groups, which will be negatively affected by the project due to land acquisition. Ethnic minorities will mostly benefit from the project by getting access to more reliable water resources after project implementation.

3. Among the 240.890 inhabitants in the 6 districts affected by the Subproject in Phase 1 only 26.575 people belong to ethnic minorities, which is 11 percent of the total population. The ethnic minorities are from twelve ethnic groups, Nung Tay, San Diu, Hoa, Muong, Tho, San Trang, Cao Lan , Dao, Thai , Kho Mu, and Ngai . Among these groups the Nung is the largest group with a total of 13,313 people (5,53%). The Tay is the second largest group with less than 2 percent of the total population followed by the San Diu with a little more than one thousand people and the Hoa with less than one thousand people. The other ethnic minority groups are few in numbers and live scattered and not in groups. The majority of the ethnic minorities will only benefit from the Subproject.

2. **Legal Framework**


> "The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is the unified State of all nationalities living on the territory of Vietnam. The State carries out a policy of equality, solidarity and mutual assistance among all nationalities, and forbids all acts of national discrimination and division. Every nationality has the right to use its own language and system of writing, to preserve its national identity, and to promote its fine customs, habits, traditions, and culture. The State carries out a policy of comprehensive development and gradually raises the material and spiritual living conditions of the national minorities."


6. Decision 135 from 1998 focus specifically on poverty alleviation for ethnic minorities. The general objectives are: (a) rapidly improving not only the material but also the spiritual life of ethnic minorities in extremely poor villages in mountainous and remote areas; (b) creating better conditions for these rural areas in order to escape from poverty, backward and slow development, (c) integrate the people in the general development of the whole country; and (d) contributing to security, safety, and natural defence. Among the goals for 1998-2005 are:
(i) eliminating hunger and reducing poverty by 4-5% annually (and 25% by 2005),
(ii) supporting infrastructure (domestic water supply, building vehicle roads to commune centers, and promoting rural market development)
(iii) encouraging children to go to school in the right age, providing training to the majority of ethnic minorities, enriching them with knowledge and skills of production, and
(iv) controlling dangerous diseases.

7. The Government has established a Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) directly under the Prime Minister's office, which, together with its many programs address socio-economic and natural resource improvements in upland and mountainous areas inhabited by ethnic minorities, which shows the Government's commitment to improve the situation for the often impoverished ethnic minorities.

8. The World Bank objective towards ethnic minorities is to ensure that the development process foster full respect for their dignity, human rights, and cultural uniqueness. At the centre of the World Bank OD 4.20 is to ensure that ethnic minorities do not suffer adverse effects during the development process, particularly from Bank-financed projects, and that they receive culturally compatible social and economic benefits.

9. The World Bank's strategy for addressing the issues pertaining to ethnic minorities must be based on the informed participation of the ethnic minorities themselves. Thus identifying local preferences through direct consultation, incorporation of indigenous knowledge in project approaches, securing their rights to natural resources and early use of experienced specialists are core activities for any project that affect ethnic minorities.

10. Thus Vietnam's stated policy concerning ethnic minorities is similar in content to the World Bank policy on Indigenous Peoples OD 4.20.

3. Socio-Economic Characteristics

11. Repeated consultation with beneficiaries and affected people including ethnic minorities has taken place during project preparation. The latest focus group discussions with ethnic minority were conducted in August 2003 at seven project's communes, which have a relative high concentration of ethnic minorities. The selected communes were Huong Son of Lang Giang district, located at Cau Son dam and spillway; Huong Lac, Tan Hung, Yen My and Xuong Lam in the same district but at the main canals where Giua and Yen Lai (East) are located, Bac Giang province; and Chi Lang town of Chi Lang district and Hoa Lac commune of Huu Lung district, Lang Son province where Cam Son Reservoir and its access road are located.

12. There are two types of communes in the subproject areas. One is located in the plain areas which is mainly inhabited by the majority Kinh people. The other is located at higher elevations, where ethnic minorities live together with the Kinh people. The latter area is mainly paddy cultivation in terrace fields in combination with fruit trees (litchi, longane, apricot, etc.). As common for the region, the ethnic minorities are almost solely living of agricultural production concentrated in the upland and mountain areas. A few collect and cultivate medicinal plants for which income is substantially higher than for paddy. Migration has been high from the area, particularly among young males with higher education.

13. None of the ethnic minorities in the Subproject area live separately to form a pure ethnic settlement. Usually, people mix with Kinh and other ethnic groups, but the fact that there are
pockets of ethnic minorities in the area gives the location a character of ethnic minority habitation, although no single group is dominant.

14. A characteristic of the area is that agricultural cooperatives (AC), which, after introduction of a more free market mechanism, has lost its previous character as the owner of the means of production and collective work (making work-points), has remain a legitimate institution. One of the reasons for the AC present status is its contribution to social fairness and help to people living in difficult situation including the poor by creating jobs for coop members. This is an important factor, which helps the ethnic integration process.

15. Although cultural uniqueness such as dress and some habits still differ from one group to another, the mixture of people living together and not least the educational system have blurred the differences between the groups. With the exception of some very old people, all ethnic minorities people can understand the common Vietnamese language, and most of them can only read Vietnamese. The results of community consultations confirmed that the ethnic minorities in the project areas are in the process of full integration with the Kinh majority.

16. A strong evidence of social integration is that intermarriages between ethnic minorities and the Kinh people have become a general trend. According to a local report, the number of the pure ethnic households clearly decreases due to increasing intermarriages. Thus, if we only take into account the pure ethnic minority households their share, as a percentage of the total population, would be lower than the numbers referred to above. For example, in Tan Hung commune, among its total 38 Tay's ethnic HHs, about 15 HHs are mixed with Kinhs, while among the 54 Nung HHs, only 14 HHs are pure Nung, and the rest are Nung mixed, mostly with Kinhs. Among the total 6 San Diu HHs, only 4 are pure and 2 are mixed with Kinh. In this commune, there was only 1 person of the Muong ethnic group and 2 Cao Lan people, who had recently moved into the location. The younger the household the more they were of mixed origin.

17. The second feature of ethnic integration is that the Vietnamese language and modern (global) costume become widely used by all ethnic minority groups at the expense of loosing their particular ethnic clothes. All the ethnic minority people attending the focus group discussions confirmed that only the old ethnic minority people, their grandparents, still keep wearing their origin ethnic costume, while many of the younger generation even don't have a set of their ethnic costume and barly understand their own ethnic language. In the multi-generation ethnic HHs, the common language usually is Vietnamese instead of the origin one. The reasons for these are: (i) modern dress are much cheaper, more simple, and therefore gives more freedom of movement than the ethnic costumes; (ii) many young ethnic minority people prefer to look like the majority instead of being of a particular group, (iii) the Vietnamese language is taught in schools and Vietnamese is most commonly spoken in areas where production is relatively more developed, wealthier and where more goods are available; and (iv) the ethnic minorities need Vietnamese to extend their communication, improve their goods-and information exchanges, and learn experiences from other people.

18. The loss of authority and the importance attached to ethnic minority elders and their heads of the family lines in their daily social and economical lives, is another evidences of social integration. All commune authorities and ethnic minority people interviewed reported that the common social and political institutions are more significant than their old ones with the

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1 In one neighbouring commune inhabited by 24 hamlets in which 13.000 people live there are 6.630 ethnic minorities making up 51% of the total population. This is however, outside the project area.
exception of some of their customs, for examples worships or offerings to certain spirits such as
the Earth Genie, which are still popular among the ethnic minorities.

19. The consulted ethnic minority people have also confirmed that in the daily life, they are
totally equal to the Kinhs majority and they were equally allocated land according to 64
Decree/CP like Kinh in their communes/villages, and they participated in local management and
in other decision-making in the same ways as their Kinh neighbours. They found that there was
no ethnic discrimination in their communes.

20. However, the interviewed people consider that the ethnic minorities were generally
poorer than the local Kinhs and in some areas with high concentration of ethnic minority, the
poverty rate was up to 26%, which is partly due to the higher elevation with harder natural
conditions for agricultural production. Another factor contributing to the socio-economic
constrain of ethnic minorities was difference in the size of the households. Whereas the Kinh
people in low areas had an average size of 4.5 persons per household (and 2.5 labourer), the
ethnic minority people in high areas had 5.9 persons per household (with 2.6 labourers). Thus,
ethnic minorities had more mouth to feed. According to opinions of ethnic minority people
consulted, they usually have less domestic assets than the local Kinh and their average education
was lower than average for the commune.

21. According to reports of the communes' authorities interviewed, the poverty rate is rather
low in the selected communes, in all cases less than 10%. The per capita income in their
communes of the year 2002 were reported as follows:

Table 1: Per capita income in Selected Communes in the Subproject Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per capita income of the year 2002</th>
<th>The number of HHs below poverty line</th>
<th>Average land per capita (m²/pers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000VND/year</td>
<td>1000VND/month</td>
<td>Poverty rate (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tan Hung (Lang Giang district)</td>
<td>2,800</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>5.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yen My (Lang Giang distr)</td>
<td>3,200</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>8*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xuong Lam (Lang Giang distr)</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoa Lac (Huu Lung distr)</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data of Vinh Thinh village that has the most ethnic minori HHs: 24 of the total 170 HHs of Yen My commune

The figures above show that the ethnic minorities have the poverty rate just a bit higher than the
commune's/village's average.

22. According to the Women’s Union, half the women in the area have gynaecological
problems and suffer from diseases spread by water. Husbands want sons, and they have many
children, which for 40% are delivered at home by traditional birth attendants. There are few
clinics, and the educational standard is also low among ethnic minority women.
4. Land Use

23. Over 90% of households in the Subproject area were granted long-term land use rights by the State (red book), including residential land, agricultural land, and forestland. The majority have certificate of land use. The average area of allocated annual crops land per capita varies from 528 m²/pers to 400 m²/pers between the communes surveyed. All ethnic minority people consulted have confirmed that they were allocated the rice land equally to the Kinhs. According to the local people the ethnic minorities may in many cases have more land than the Kinhs, because they usually occupy higher elevation where more virgin or forest slope land was claimed for cultivation of upland crops or fruits trees or converted into fruits orchards. The ethnic minorities are concentrated in those places where they were the first settlers and thus possessed more land than the Kinhs, who came later.

24. The irrigation fields of the ethnic minorities are generally mixed with those of Kinhs. It is the result of the “extremely” equal distribution of lands among all the farmers during the early 1990s. This fact could in itself ensure equality in getting irrigation water and drainage service among of all ethnic groups. There have been successful attempts by the agricultural extension officers in the area to diversify cultivation. Recently planting of fruit trees at higher elevation has contributed substantial to increase income for people living in the area. According to commune's authorities, the fruit trees in some of their communes contribute up to 40% of their total GDP and played an increasing important role for cash income among the local farmers including the ethnic minorities.

25. In addition to the land allocated in 1996 for long-term use under the Government's Decree 64CP, each household was also given land for temporary use, which was taken from the 5% reserve land fund managed by the People's Committee. In case of compensation a land-for-land policy will be the preferred option of the project affected people (PAP) whose land will be occupied by the Project. This would be taken from the 5% reserve land, which currently are in temporarily used by other HHs. In their turn, the temporary land users will be entitled to compensation for crops and respective investment put on their land according to entitlements described in the project's entitlement matrix.

5. Project Impact

26. In VWRAP Phase 1, there will be a limited negative effect on ethnic minorities. There will be a marginal acquisition of their land, permanent or temporary. In total, out of 3952 PAP, only about 30 ethnic minority HHs will be marginally affected by loosing less than 20% of their paddy areas (without account of their non-affected slope land) or will temporarily lose land due to rehabilitation of Giua and Yen Lai (East) main canals (about 20 ethnic HHs) and land borrows for rehabilitation of Cau Son dam (8 ethnic HHs).

27. According to results of consultation and focus group discussions with local people, the ethnic minorities as well as the majority Kinhs, express their full support for the Project, even if they would have to loose some of their arable land. They hoped that the rehabilitation and modernization of the system would radically improve the local irrigation conditions. This might allow them not only to improve the rice production, but also to diversify their existing cropping pattern towards cash upland crops for the demanding market. They reported that the cultivation of upland, cash crops brings much higher income, at least one and a half time, and sometimes more than two time higher than for rice. Moreover such higher income usually can be harvested in a shorter vegetation period than required for rice. According to ethnic minorities, who attended the focus group discussions in Tan Hung, Yen My and Huong Lac communes, the
The project will equally benefit them, irrespectively to their ethnic status. The ethnic minorities were also represented in management institutions, including in the PPC where, in a number of cases the Chairman was an ethnic minority person, all contributing to non-discriminate and equal participation of all ethnics in the local social and economic lives. It confirmed that ethnic minorities would be able to benefit from the project in the same ways as the Kinh people.

28. The Subproject's proposed improvement of an access road to Cam Son Reservoir and building of a bridge over the Cau Son spillway was not likely to have any land acquisition impact. On the contrary it would bring great benefits by creating favorable conditions for economic development and enhancement of social relations for the local population and particularly for the ethnic minorities, who live at the relatively more elevated and more remote villages of the Subproject. Some Nung people who attended the focus group discussions of Dong U village, Huong Son commune, Luc Nam district, proposed building a bridge passing the flood spillway in Cau Son which would bring much benefits for the local populations. The most important to them were: (i) the proposed bridge would reduce the frequent risk of human loss caused by the river during flood season, which was observed almost every year, (ii) the bridge would substantially improve local transport conditions and certainly favor marketing of current local agricultural products and contribute to future intensification of market oriented agricultural production of this more remote area with a higher ethnic minority concentration. The most benefited would be the communes Minh Hoa, Minh Son and Hoa Thang of Huu Lung district, Lang Son province, then some remote villages of Huong Son commune, Luc Nam district, Bac Giang province. The people in the mentioned communes of Huu Lung district tend to use Bac Giang roads, passing Thuong river at Cau Son, more than the roads of Huu Lung district, for multiple purposes. (iii) The construction of the bridge would also improve conditions for social and cultural communication which are especially important for ethnic minority people.

29. The local ethnic minority women hoped that with a bridge, their status could be radically improved when they could exercise more economic-and cultural communication with the outside world and have more opportunities to learn production experiences from advantaged farmers, while could upgrade their social awareness. They also mentioned that a bridge would reduce the burden of transport works for women, who are the main person in the household to transport agricultural products to the market.

30. Similar, but to a lesser extend, benefits were expected by both the commune's authority and its ethnic minority people in Hoa Lac commune, Huu Lung district, Lang Son province, from the proposed improvement of the existing access road to Cam Son reservoir. The existing wide of the road is likely to meet the project designed parameter, unless specific alignment would be required. In such a case the exact land requirement will be identified when the detailed technical design will become available during implementation, and the project resettlement policy described in the Resettlement Policy Framework will be adopted. If needed the ethnic minority PAP would be entitled to special rehabilitation assistance.

31. Presently every village have to appoint 3-4 people to be in charge of water. There are landslides in the rainy season, and children and women are in danger of falling on slippery lining slopes. In dry season people have to pay substantial pumping charges for manpower and electricity to get water. Villagers expect these to be improved substantially as results of the Project investment.

32. In addition, ethnic minorities are eager to participate in Project construction in order to earn cash income from temporary jobs. The local administration as well as ethnic minority
farmers expressed a wish to have improved slopes, bridges, and local infrastructure for which the community was willing to contribute labour.

6. **Strategy for Local Participation and Consultation**

32. Several rounds of consultation with representatives from all the ethnic minority groups took place during project preparation over a period of almost a year. People are now aware of the project and information on the Project has been disseminated together with its resettlement policy concerning compensation in case of land acquisition. The first visit to the districts in relation to the social impact assessment took place in August 2002 and consultation continued in March, June and August 2003. There was full endorsement of the Project by farmers from the different ethnic minority groups, and they looked forward to improvement of the system and hoped to get rid of the present use of manpower for pumping water. In each of these consultations 10-35 farmers participated, and people were eager to express their opinion.²

33. Furthermore, district officials have twice been engaged in collecting data on possible Project impact on ethnic minorities, and the absolute number of affected people in the Project area has been reduced after the technical design has been completed. The officials, some of whom belong to ethnic minorities, also endorsed the Project, which they envisioned to contribute to socio-economic development in the location. Full support for the Project was also expressed at the workshop in July 2003 as part of the pre-appraisal mission. An outcome of the workshop was a new counting of the ethnic minorities in the subproject area. The result of this new investigation is incorporated in this EMDP.

7. **Feedback from Farmers**

34. All farmers including ethnic minorities agreed to make contributions to the repair, upgrading and/or new building of tertiary, on-farm, canal, as well as to water management, distribution, and maintenance and protection of the canal after the ditch system is completed. Farmers also emphasised the importance of canal closing for construction in the dry season. As ethnic minorities will only be marginally affected by the Subproject, these groups had no particular concern, which differs from that of consultation in the area as a whole (see Summary of Social Impact Assessment).

8. **Strategy for Ethnic Minorities to Participate in Project Implementation and Monitoring**

35. During project's implementation, the ethnic minority people will together with other Kinh farmers take part in implementation by providing labour for digging, moving soil, concrete filling, building and protecting the construction, undertake simple construction under the guidance of technicians, and participate in the construction monitoring, maintenance and protection of canals after construction has been completed. Women could participate in management and distribution of water at the level of tertiary canals, particularly if the newly modernized irrigation system does not require nightly work, which was considered inappropriate for women, particularly mothers.

² Participants at these consultations were farmers and representatives social organisations such as: (1) Chairman of the Front, (2) Representative from former soldiers association; (3) Women's association, (4) Farmers association, (5) Association for Agricultural Promotion, (6) Association of old age people, (7) Youth Union, (8) and representatives from local government such as secretary/assistant secretary, (9) chairman/or vice chairman of People's Committee, (10) Head/deputy head of hamlet/ward, (11) Commune cadastral, (12) Head of cooperative, (13) Heads of irrigation schemes, and (14) Heads of ethnic minority groups.
9. Ethnic Minorities and Water Management

36. A long-term strategy for water management should involve ethnic minorities, particularly as they are living in higher elevations, where water has to be pumped manually. The cost was a burden for poor farmers as it adds to the expenses for this basic good. Due to the particular social organisation among ethnic minorities, in which women have lower educational standards than men, water management should consider involving women in training. If successful, ethnic minority women should be given opportunity to have presentation in water management staff as well.

10. Conclusion

37. The repeated consultations illustrated that there is no ethnic cultural separation or discrimination including socio-economic concern, for which the project should have to take particular care concerning ethnic minorities. On the contrary, the improvement of small bridges, canal banks and other minor infrastructure, would be highly welcome and improve living conditions of the local ethnic minorities. No particular mitigation concerning land or other restoration measures will be required, except for selecting among the two sides of canal the bank that possibly requires less land acquisition than the other. No severe resettlement impact on ethnic minorities is envisaged. However, in case that land will be acquired, the ethnic minorities prefer the option "land for land" to cash compensation. Thus, when possible, land for land should be the option for land loss compensation for ethnic minorities.

38. The results of public consultation and ethnic minority focus group discussions repeatedly confirmed a process of continuing integration of the local ethnic minorities with the Kinh majority group. The ethnic minorities felt no discrimination, and local social and economical institutions ensured equality status of ethnic minorities in the local societies. Intermarriages were common and the educational facilities contributed to assimilation. Even though, the Government policy on the Ethnic minorities provides some priorities to ethnic minorities, particularly poverty alleviation programs, and exemption of certain types of contribution usually are observed among ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities would, on the other hand, like to participate in project construction and be paid in cash. Ethnic minorities should also like to be involved in Water User Associations as well as be represented at the board of IMC after completion of VWRAP.

39. The project's safeguard policy towards ethnic minorities could therefore be achieved without specific problems.
Annex 1:

Ethnic Minorities in Cau Son – Cam Son Subproject

Groups with more than 100 people in Phase 1 of VWRAP

Nung: There are 4895 or 2.05 percent of the Nung people in the Subproject area. The Nung speak a Tai-based language. They are closely related to the Tay, whose territory they largely share, but the Nung are later arrivals in Vietnam. The Nung are traditionally patrilineal, with limited social roles assigned to women. They are Buddhists, but have experienced some Neo-Confucian influence and a significant degree of acculturation into Vietnamese society. This acculturation was acquired gradually over a long period of time, and has been less disruptive and disorienting than the more rapid assimilation imposed upon some other ethnic minority groups. The Nung has also had their own writing system, probably since the 17th century.

Available data suggests that the Nung have educational, health, and economic levels that are well above average of ethnic minorities, but still lag behind Kinh and Hoa and are probably not quite as well-off as the Muong, the Tay, or the Thai. The Nung literacy rate is 71.4 percent, placing them sixth among the 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam. Over 70 percent of Nung have attended school. Nung life expectancy is 60.9 years. With an infant mortality rate of 67 per thousand and a crude death rate of 10.3, they are clearly above average for ethnic minorities, but not among the very best off.

Tay: There are 3241 or 1.36 percent of Tay people in the Subproject area. The Tay are the largest of the ethnic minority groups in Vietnam with about 1.400,000. They speak a Tay language but have gone through a gradual process of assimilation, and they are fairly successful and effective participants in Vietnamese society. Many Tay were active supporters of the Viet Minh, and the Tay have from the earliest days been well represented in the People’s Army of Vietnam. There has also been more intermarriages between Tay and Kinh than between Kinh and most other ethnic groups.

There are many Tay with college education, and a significant number with advanced degrees. The overall literacy rate of 83.1 percent (in 1989) is second only to Kinh. Their standard of living is also well above average for ethnic minorities. Life expectancy is 65.5 years, and infant mortality of 51 per thousand is among the best in the country.

Nevertheless, the Tay live in provinces where the resource base has in places been severely depleted and at least 20,000 Tay (possibly many more) have spontaneously migrated to the central uplands. Also, because of the well-developed concept of private property that existed before the revolution, the collectivisation movement and the subsequent decollectivization process of recent years has led to an unusually high number of land disputes in Tay homelands such as Cau Son-Cam Son.

San Diu: There are 1410 or 0.59 percent of this relatively small group of ethnic minorities in the Subproject area. The San Diu people migrated to Vietnam from Quandung in China in the 17th century and speak a Sinitic language. They have a patrilineal form of social organisation. They

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have specialized in wet rice and have some experience in sericulture. Their literacy rate is only 30 percent.

**Hoa:** There are only 488 or 0.20% of Hoa (Chinese) people in the Subproject area. In Vietnam the Hoa are among the largest ethnic minority group with a total around 1.150,000 mainly urban people living in the South. The Hoa are not only among the most prosperous group in Vietnam, they are in many measures better off than the Kinh majority. They have the lowest infant mortality rate of 30.5 per thousand compared to 38.5 for Kinh and their literacy rate is 81.7. Although the Hoa people had their economic prominence severely reduced in the north after 1954 and in the south after the mass exodus that took place in 1977 and 1978 as the consequence of the border war between Vietnam and China, they are now emerging to play a major economic role in the country.