1. Country and Sector Background

Vietnam’s transport and logistics system has supported impressive economic progress in recent years:

- the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown at 6 percent per year since 2000 and grew by 8.4 percent in 2005, the highest level in nine years;
- there has been a continuation in rapid poverty reduction with poverty rates falling from 37 percent in 1998 to 20 percent in 2004;
- strong export growth of 13 percent per year since 2000 and an increase of 22.4 percent in 2005 although down on the 31 percent achieved in 2004; and
- the top six exports are: oil, garments, agriculture (including rice), footwear, seafood and wood products.
However, with Vietnam’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in October 2006, it is likely that the transport and logistics system will come under increasing strain. When manufacturing firms were asked as part of the Investment Climate Assessment (ICA) what infrastructure improvements would most benefit their business, more than 40 percent highlighted national and provincial roads. For the Mekong Delta, this increased to 50 percent.

Millions of small farmers, thousands of private businesses, over 700 state-owned enterprises and some cooperatives contribute to the vibrant economy of the Mekong Delta. The region produces about 45 percent of Vietnam’s agricultural products on only 31 percent of the country’s agricultural land. More than half of the entire area of the region (2.1 million ha) is under rice cultivation. Known as the country’s rice basket, it produces about half of Vietnam’s rice and 80 percent of rice exports. It also produces about 40 percent of the country’s seafood yield and 50-60 percent of its seafood exports.

**Government Strategy for the Mekong Delta**

The government aims to stimulate growth in the region and reduce the urbanization pressure on Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). This has been successful to an extent and the economy of the Mekong Delta is both growing rapidly and diversifying its products and its markets. To support its growth strategies, the following policies have been encouraged:

- economic diversification: national and provincial governments are promoting economic diversification in order to increase the value of production in an area traditionally dominated by rice;
- agricultural diversification: aquaculture industries, fruit and vegetables, etc;
- downstream diversification: local processing, canning and packing of produce, etc;
- quality enhancement: new central rice collection points, well-equipped fishing ports and International Standards Organization certified seafood packing plants, to reduce product loss and increase value;
- manufacturing and service industries: industrial parks are expanding; and the delta is emerging as a destination for eco-tourism; and
- market diversification: increased international trade and new export markets.

A key part of the Government’s strategy for the region is to promote and help develop the City of Can Tho (population 1.2 million) as an economic hub for the Mekong Delta and a port for the region that will relieve pressure on HCMC roads and ports.

**Transport sector issues in the Mekong Delta**

The region’s strategic freight transport needs are met by the inland waterways system and the road system. There are no railways in the region. The waterways system consists of 4,800 kms of navigable waterways, 1,600 kms for the main corridors, and carries around 70 percent of the freight volume in terms of tonne-kms. The road system comprises 28,000 km, including 1,700 km of national roads, and carries around 30 percent of tonne-km. Broadly, in terms of logistics, the waterways carry the region’s important but lower market value bulk goods, such as rice, cement, building materials and fertilizer, while roads carry goods with higher market value (and more time-sensitive), including seafood, other perishables and manufactured goods.
The 18 million inhabitants of the Mekong Delta rely on just two major routes into HCMC. The road network is dominated by National Highway 1; and the waterway network is dominated by the central waterway through the Cho Gao canal. Both routes are becoming bottlenecks and there is an immediate requirement to provide alternative routes by improving the standard of the rest of the national highways and to provide a Northern and Coastal corridor on the waterways.

The provincial network is also underdeveloped; only 35 percent of the provincial road network is paved, and only 10 percent of rural roads are paved. There are large areas of the delta that are not served by roads and the communities are reliant on the waterways and motorcycle tracks. The high costs of road building in an area where embankments must be high and bridges frequent indicate that accessibility is a real constraint. As a result the level of rural accessibility in the Mekong Delta is the lowest in the country with only 57 percent of the population having access to an all weather road compared to 76 percent for the country as a whole (VLSS 2002 data). Social assessments have highlighted the priority that communities in the Mekong Delta put on road access.

*Infrastructure bottlenecks in the logistics system include:*

- slow and sometimes expensive rural transport links from farms to freight aggregation points;
- poor access to provincial feeder routes from aggregation points to the trunk roads and waterways in some peripheral areas;
- growing congestion on National Highway 1, the dominant trunk road, and quality deficiencies on other main roads, often caused by bridge loading constraints;
- lack of major northern and southern canals providing high capacity barge routes, which would reduce transport cost and relieve pinch-points on the central canal routes;
- insufficient and poorly managed landing stages which act as interchange points between road transport and waterway transport at commune, district and provincial levels; and
- lack of infrastructure that would allow penetration of 40 foot containers beyond Can Tho.

*Institutional Capacity.* The national road network in the Delta is managed by Regional Road Management Unit 7 (RRMU-7) which is one of four RRMUs under the Vietnam Roads Administration (VRA). The capacities of planning and prioritization are currently poor but the International Development Association (IDA) funded Road Network Improvement Project (RNIP) is providing support to VRA, and their RRMUs, to enhance their network planning, management and maintenance roles. In recent years the allocation for maintenance of national roads has increased substantially from 592 billion VND in 2002 to VND 946 billion in 2004. Maintenance finance has grown roughly in line with capital expenditure over the last five years; however, these allocations still only represent 50 percent of VRA’s estimates of need. The situation is made worse by the outstanding debt that has accumulated in VRA and which has to be gradually repaid from these allocations.

Provincial level roads are managed by the 13 provincial departments of transport which report to the Provincial Peoples Committees. The provinces have also struggled to plan under budget constraint, which has led to debt problems, and get the right balance between capital and recurrent expenditure. There is a lack of accurate provincial level expenditure data but estimates
from the 2004 PER suggest that recurrent expenditure is growing at an average of about 24 percent per annum but that this only accounts for 3-4 percent of total transport budgets. The provinces are reliant on community contributions and labor particularly for the routine maintenance of roads.

The national waterways are managed by the Vietnam Inland Waterways Administration (VIWA). The waterways located in the Mekong Delta are the responsibility of VIWA- South (VIWA-S). VIWA currently has a cumbersome organizational structure which does not respond to the modern requirements for efficient waterways and ports management. VIWA wants to reorganize to give greater accountability to VIWA-S and its waterway management stations; it wants to make the ports authorities more independent and commercial; and it wants to improve cost recovery capability in the sector to cover operations and maintenance expenditures. In 2005 VIWA-S had a maintenance budget of VND 40.5 billion, a 25 percent increase over the previous year but still less than 50 percent of its stated requirement.

**Multi-modal Coordination during Planning.** The last comprehensive Mekong Delta transport plan was produced in 2000. Multi-modal coordination challenges include the building of road bridges with insufficient clearance for waterways vessels, poor bank protection on the waterways causing the road embankments to collapse and insufficient road access to ports and landing stages. Although the waterways sector has a clear set of investment priorities, the road sector suffers from poor prioritization and political interference in investment decision making. Improved coordination between agencies and improved prioritization within agencies is needed.

**Ports Development and Management.** Most port development has been undertaken independently by provincial governments with the advantage of at least some competition, but with the disadvantage of some duplication of facilities. Users of the waterways see the priority to be expanding and enhancing the existing facilities rather than building new ports. For example, they see a need for new berths, additional storage space, container handling equipment, and improved road access. Users also desire the management of the facilities to be more responsive to their needs. At the moment the majority of facilities are operated by provincial enterprises that lack the necessary knowledge or incentives to provide the most efficient and cost effective services.

**Regulation.** Changes in transport and logistics regulatory systems have improved markedly over the last five years and will in the longer term provide a more effective enabling market environment for the development of the logistics industry. As part of the push towards WTO accession, the government has legislated an increasingly open environment for the development of multi-modal transport services. The two main modes operating in the Mekong Delta are open for private truck and barge operators. Private participation in ports infrastructure and operations is at an early stage but there have been improvements and certainly for river ports it is now fairly easy for the private sector to operate facilities. The remaining issues to be solved relate to completion and enforcement of the implementing regulations.

**Transport safety.** According to accident data from RRMU-7, in 2005 approximately 1,000 people died on National Highways in the Mekong delta region alone but this is likely to be an underestimate. Many vehicle classes compete for the space (trucks, cars, motorcycles, bicycles,
pedestrians and animal drawn vehicles). Surveys indicate that motorcycles typically constitute 80 to 85 percent of vehicles (excluding bicycles). Paved shoulders or footpaths are either nonexistent or too narrow. Lack of enforcement of land use restrictions in the right of ways makes this situation even worse as people carry on their daily lives at the road side. Consequently, how to reduce traffic accidents and improve traffic management have become major issues.

2. Objectives

The development objective of the project is to:

(i) reduce transport costs and facilitate trade by improving the main inland waterways and road corridors in the Mekong Delta region;
(ii) improve rural mobility of goods and people by providing year round basic access to these corridors;
(iii) strengthen the effectiveness of transport institutions to plan and manage multi-modal transport infrastructure and logistics.

The FY03-FY06 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) for Vietnam identifies this project as a key investment to help narrow the development gap of disadvantaged and lagging areas of the Mekong Delta. The first pillar of the current CAS (FY07-FY11) highlights business development needs for removing multi-modal and logistics bottlenecks, improving the regulatory framework for transport services and to encouraging the role of the private sector.

The program also directly supports:

- the Government’s Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for 2006-2010 in which the transport sector is required to provide better coordination and planning between modes;
- the requirements of World Trade Organization (WTO) accession through an improved environment for trade facilitation and private sector investments; and
- is linked with the IDA-funded customs modernization project and supports the objectives of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) for improved regional economic integration.

3. Rationale for Bank Involvement

The Government of Vietnam, in its increasing awareness of the benefits of efficient multimodal transport and logistics services, has requested Bank support in the financing and planning of multi-modal transport systems in both the Mekong and the Red River Deltas. Despite previous transport investments in the Deltas, Vietnam’s rapid economic growth over the past decade is resulting in serious transport bottlenecks and investment demands that are beyond the reach of government’s own resources. The availability of two major transport modes in waterways and roads and the numerous interfaces between them make the Deltas ideal regions for enhancing multimodal transport efficiency.
This is the first operation of the type in Vietnam and the complex issues involved in the policy and planning for multi-modal transport and logistics services are new to the government. The Bank brings expertise in the various aspects of designing efficient multimodal projects including regulatory frameworks, regional planning techniques, private sector participation and institutional arrangements. This project will serve both as a demonstration of how multimodal transport projects can be developed and designed, and also play a major role in raising awareness of multimodal transport. The Bank has also contributed to a project design that addresses economic growth but also links peripheral areas to the main supply corridors providing opportunities for more socially inclusive growth.

While this project introduces a new approach to transport planning in Vietnam, it further contributes to the development of the Mekong Delta by building on previously financed IDA investments in national roads, provincial roads, waterways and port facilities. These investments have already contributed significantly to improvements to the quality of the transport network reducing travel times and costs and increasing rural accessibility.

4. Description

The Project will have four main components.

Component A: National Road Corridors (US$87.9 million)
The component will improve the standard of national trunk roads connecting the main economic hub of the Mekong Delta. There are two sub-components:

(i) National Road Corridor Improvements, amounting to approximately US$82.55 million, will rehabilitate existing alignment by widening and upgrading the roads to a Class II, Class III or Class IV standard of approximately 94 km of national highways (including 13.52 km under NH 53, 40.85 km under NH 54, and 43.89 km under NH 91). Works will also include construction of 22 bridges, provision of culverts and raising the road levels where required in flood prone areas; and

(ii) Financing for Detailed Engineering Designs and Construction Supervision for the national road component, estimated to cost approximately US$5.32 million.

Component B: National Waterway Corridors (US$86.9 million)
The component will improve the standard of trunk waterways connecting the Northern and coastal delta areas to Can Tho and HCMC. There are two sub-components:

(i) Improvements to National Waterway Corridors, amounting to approximately US$81.44 million will support investments on the main supply corridors to improve the standard and connectivity of the canal network, concentrating on links in both the Northern Trans Mekong corridor (253km) and the southern coastal corridor (148km). These corridors will be improved to Class III standard and include dredging to the required widths and depths, bank protection in selected areas, a ship lock, bridge improvements (raising and rehabilitation) and provision of 24-hour aids to navigation. The improvements will help improve region-wide accessibility, relieve congestion on the
main corridors, reduce transportation costs and support economic development in the provinces; and

(ii) Financing for *Detailed Engineering Designs and Construction Supervision* for the national waterway component, estimated to cost approximately US$5.43 million.

**Component C: Connecting the Poor to the Supply Corridors (US$84.2 million)**
The component will improve the feeder waterways, roads, ports and landing stages at the district and provincial levels to link poorer and more distant producer communities to the main supply corridors. The following four sub-components will be directed to this objective:

(i) *Investments in Provincial Feeder Infrastructure,* amounting to US$73.9 million will focus on connecting the secondary road network to areas of high economic activity centers and areas with high poverty concentration in the Mekong region to the main transport corridors. A total of 205 km of secondary roads, including 78 bridges, will be upgraded to an all-weather standard in the thirteen provinces. Improvements will be carried out along the existing alignments by upgrading the roads through providing structural overlays, or through complete reconstruction where the existing road structure has collapsed or where they are earth roads. The component will also finance the improvement of two feeder canals in An Giang and Ca Mau provinces with a total length of 58 kms. The improvements, estimated to cost US$1.06 million, will include widening and deepening of the canal sections to a class IV standard, bank protection in selected areas, raising of bridges where required and provision of aids to navigation.

(ii) *Investments in Provincial and District Ports and Landing Stages,* amounting to US$5 million, will finance enhancements to existing provincial ports infrastructure, and may include new wharfs, storage areas, road access or equipment to improve existing throughput and efficiency. It will also finance new infrastructure in the form of rural landing stages to facilitate access to rural producers to the main transport networks, and provincial river ports.

(iii) *Design, Supervision and Advisory Services* will support the 13 project provinces in their design and supervision of works, project management, reporting and capacity building requirements. The design and supervision services will be procured by each of the 13 provinces, amounting to approximately US$2.75 million. The other services will finance technical assistance and advisory services for the development of a regional support centre to be based at the Southern Transport College in Can Tho in the amount of US$2.5 million. This support centre will provide provinces with help on general project management but also with their training needs, including budgeting and planning, procurement, financial management and safeguards issues.

**Component D: Institutional Support to Ministry of Transport (US$6.45 million)**
Four sub-components will provide institutional support to the Ministry of Transport (MOT):

(i) *Support to MOT on Developing Multi-modal Transport* To enhance the efficiency of multi-modal transport, the project will support the relevant departments in MOT in the
development of appropriate policies and planning frameworks. The consulting services are estimated to cost US$1.5 million.

(ii) **Institutional support to Vietnam Inland Waterway Administration (VIWA).** To more effectively carry out its roles and responsibilities as managers of the inland waterways network in Vietnam the project will finance support to VIWA. The consulting services are estimated to cost US$1.5 million.

(iii) **Training.** To finance training in the areas mentioned above (US$0.95 million).

(iv) **Project Audit Services,** costing approximately US$1.0 million will facilitate two types of independent audits: (a) *Integrated Project Implementation Audit Services,* in which independent consultants will be procured to conduct semi-annual reviews that provide heightened fiduciary, safeguards and general project monitoring; and (b) a *Project Financial Audit,* in which independent external auditors will conduct annual project financial audits.

(v) **Preparation for future projects** The sub-component will finance the detailed design services for the Northern Delta Transport Development Project, in the amount of US$1.5 million.

5. **Financing**

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<th>Source:</th>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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6. **Implementation**

Capacity building activities under the project will be carried out in line with an agreed framework developed by the transport donor partnership group in Vietnam. This partnership sets out sectoral areas in which each development partner will concentrate, as well as the regional focus for training support. The Mekong Delta is a focus area for IDA. The project will also facilitate integration of the Greater Mekong Sub-region for which coordination will be required with ADB and the Mekong River Commission.

Partnership will also be important for the various government agencies if multi-modal transport and trade facilitation are to be maximized. The project steering committee under the project will address the inter-modal and inter-ministerial coordination activities of the project.

The Ministry of Transport (MOT), through its Department of Planning and Investment (DPI), will be the executing agency for the Mekong Transport Infrastructure Development Project.
(MTIDP). The MOT will have overall responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the project, reporting to the Government of Vietnam (GOV) and fulfilling the requirements of the World Bank.

The MOT will establish a Project Steering Committee (PSC), which will be chaired by a MOT Vice-Minister and consist of representatives of Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Ministry of Finance (MOF), State Bank of Vietnam (SBV), DPI, VRA, VIWA and the 13 Provinces. The PSC’s mandate is to address cross-ministerial issues, multi-modal issues and to oversee project management and monitor the implementation progress of the overall project. A Project Coordination Group will be formed to act as the secretariat for the PSC and be responsible for overall coordination and oversight of implementation of the Project, including:

(i) Coordination and liaison between the Project Implementing Agencies and other ministries on behalf of the PSC;
(ii) Coordination of the review of the technical and financial audit reports, social and environmental monitoring reports, the Project evaluation and monitoring reports, other Project related studies and reports;
(iii) Ensuring that the Project related policy and institutional reforms are achieved; and
(iv) Monitoring the Project’s physical and financial progress.

Direct responsibility for project implementation and day-to-day management oversight will be allocated to 15 operating sub-organizations (PMU-1, PMU-W, and 13 PPMUs). A summary of the responsibilities of each implementing agency is set out below:

(i) Project Management Unit - No. 1. PMU-1 and its consultants will have responsibility for all aspects of the national roads corridor component, including planning, programming, budgeting, design, procurement, implementation, supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and coordination/liaison with IDA. It will be responsible for the award of and signature to, contracts for national highways. PMU-1 will engage consulting services to assist it in the design and supervision of the national highways program;

(ii) Project Management Unit - Waterways. PMU-W and its consultants will have responsibility for all aspects of the national waterway corridors component (including bridges). The responsibilities are as with PMU-1 above. PMU-W will also be responsible for managing the Institutional Strengthening component, which will include the engagement, contracting and supervision of the various technical assistance/consulting services and training packages; and

(iii) Provincial Project Management Units (PPMUs) - The PPMUs within Provincial Departments of Transport (PDOTs) under the Provincial People’s Committees (PPCs) in each of the 13 project provinces will have responsibility for all aspects of their respective provincial roads, bridges, feeder canal and landing stages works programs. The responsibilities are as with PMU-1 above. The PPMUs will engage consulting services to assist them in the design and supervision of their provincial roads and feeder canal programs. Overall support to each of the 13 provinces will be provided under Advisory Consultants engaged by PMU-W, and
will be responsible for oversight, advice and assistance to the local consultants to be engaged by the PPMUs.

The Technical Control & Quality Management Bureau (TCQM) within MOT will provide assistance for review and approval of technical designs and cost estimates, as well as for monitoring the quality of the works, for the national components.

Consulting services will be engaged to further support project implementation, namely:

(i) Regional support consultants (to support capacity building at the PPMU/PDoT level and overall support to PPMUs and local supervision consultants (see above - Component C4ii);
(ii) Support to MOT for developing multi-modal transport (Component D1);
(iii) Institutional support to VIWA (Component D2);
(iv) Training (Component D3);
(v) Independent audit (to carry out Integrated project implementation audit and external financial audit for all project implementing agencies (Component D4i and D4ii)

To simplify procurement and management arrangements, PMU-W will contract and manage all of the above consulting services packages. Component D3 will also be managed by PMU-W but, through Ministerial Decree, the training department in DPL will be responsible for the overall coordination of the training program.

7. **Sustainability**

The sustainability of the Project will depend on quality construction, the subsequent management and maintenance of the network and the ability for MoT and provincial agencies to plan and operate multi-modal transport networks. The quality of construction will be addressed as set out in section B4. The Project will address management and maintenance issues on the waterways through a technical assistance program and the roll out of a River Management Information System. The technical assistance program will also seek to find ways of increasing cost recovery in the waterways sector. For provincial infrastructure, a regional support center in Can Tho, established under this Project, will provide the facilities, equipment and training to improve maintenance management. As national roads maintenance is being addressed through the IDA funded RNIP, that Project will focus on investments in the rehabilitation of national road network in the Mekong Delta region.

There are also technical assistance programs to assist relevant agencies with the planning of multi-modal transport and in providing an enabling regulatory environment for service provision. These services will also support provinces develop sound management plans for port facilities, looking at the options for private concessions, before investments are approved by MoT and IDA.

8. **Lessons Learned from Past Operations in the Country/Sector**
Multi-modal planning. There is little previous experience in planning and managing multi-modal infrastructure investments in Vietnam so for this project the Ministry of Transport decided to plan and prepare the project as a single operation. In this way it hoped to maximize the synergies between the two modes.

Provincial Level Decentralization Initiatives. Experience from previous projects suggests that provincial ownership of investments is reduced, as are the benefits from capacity building initiatives, where a central implementing agency carries out the works. The provincial components of this project will be fully decentralized. Technical assistance is included in the project to support all implementing agencies at the provincial level. Various assessments of the provinces have been carried out and where Provincial Project Management Units and Provincial Departments of Transport are assessed as weak increased levels of technical assistance support will be provided.

Institutionalizing training activities – previous projects have tended to conduct training activities through project consultants which has limited the longer term sustainability of these initiatives. This project will train using MoT/GoV approved curriculum and through MoT training institutes.

Corruption and collusion – this project addresses the risk of corruption and collusion through a plan to improve transparency and fairness in procurement which builds on the one MoT has approved for RT3. The main elements of the action plan include an integrated project implementation audit with consistent enforcement, wider advertising of bid opportunities, a register of de-barred bidders, provision for complaints, dissemination and training, disclosure of contract award information, and greater community participation in planning and procurement. Project consultants will also support with preparation of bid documents, provide reports on contractor qualifications and produce independent bid evaluation reports.

Quality of construction – Quality has been an issue in past projects through a combination of poor design, supervision and construction quality. This project will achieve construction quality through: (a) additional emphasis on construction supervision through training and by oversight by an independent advisory consultant; (b) carrying out independent integrated audits which include technical quality as well as financial management; (c) encouraging local communities to become more involved in monitoring procurement and construction activities; and (d) implementing the plan to improve fairness and transparency in procurement.

Sustainable Maintenance Practice – the most significant risk for inadequate maintenance finance is at the provincial level. This project will support a national initiative, supported by other development partners, to build capacity at the provincial level for improved network management and maintenance. National roads maintenance is being supported by the IDA funded RNIP. Waterways maintenance will be supported through this project by initiatives to improve cost recovery and the development of maintenance management tools.
9. Safeguard Policies (including public consultation)

<table>
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<td>Environmental Assessment (OP/BP 4.01)</td>
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<td>Projects on International Waterways (OP/BP 7.50)</td>
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10. List of Factual Technical Documents

- FY03-FY06 Country Assistance Strategy (CAS)
- East Asia Integrates: A Trade Policy Agenda For Shared Growth – Chapter 9: Trade in Sectors Important to the Poor: Rice in Cambodia and Vietnam and Cashmere in Mongolia
- Government’s Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) for 2006-2010
- Vietnam: Deepening Reforms for Rapid Export Growth (Draft)
- Vietnam Living Standards Survey 2002

11. Contact point

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Tel: (202) 458 - 5497
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* By supporting the proposed project, the Bank does not intend to prejudice the final determination of the parties' claims on the disputed areas
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