SOCIAL ASSESSMENT
of the Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project (CBRIP)

Hanoi, March 2000

Prepared by Oxfam Hong Kong consultants
for the Ministry of Planning and Investment
and the World Bank

Oxfam Hong Kong Consultants
Lead consultant and author:
Natasha Pairaudeau

Sub-team leader:
Dau Quoc Anh

Research collaboration and contributions:
Phan Lac Tuyen
Nguyen Thi Nghia
Tran Quy Suu
Nguyen Van Linh
Ha Thi Phuong Tien
Le Thi Phi Van
## Acronyms

<table>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CBRIP</td>
<td>Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEMMA</td>
<td>Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Community Facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>CMCC</td>
<td>Commune Management Committee</td>
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<td>DPI</td>
<td>Department of Planning and Investment</td>
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<td>GOV</td>
<td>Government of Vietnam</td>
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<td>GP</td>
<td>Good Practice (World Bank Policy Guidelines)</td>
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<td>ha</td>
<td>hectare</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>HERP</td>
<td>Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction Programme</td>
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<td>IPDP</td>
<td>Indigenous People's Development Plan</td>
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<td>MOLISA</td>
<td>Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs</td>
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<td>MPI</td>
<td>Ministry of Planning and Investment</td>
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<td>NCFAW</td>
<td>National Committee for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<td>PMT</td>
<td>Project Management Team</td>
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<td>PMU</td>
<td>Project Management Unit</td>
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<td>PRA</td>
<td>Participatory Rural Appraisal</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>Social Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBND</td>
<td>Uy Ban Nhan Dan (People's Committee)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>VASIS</td>
<td>Vietnam Agricultural Sciences Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>VLSS</td>
<td>Vietnam Living Standards Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>VMC</td>
<td>Village Management/Maintenance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>VND</td>
<td>Vietnamese Dong (unit of currency)</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WU</td>
<td>Women's Union</td>
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## Vietnamese Terms

- **ap**: remote village; form used in southern Vietnam
- **ban**: ethnic minority or mountainous village; term used in north central and northern mountainous regions
- **ban nghiém thu**: inspection board
- **can bo giao thong va xay dung**: transportation and construction cadre; commune-level cadre assigned to oversee infrastructure work
- **chu ho**: household head
- **Dinh Canh Dinh Cu**: literally, "fixed cultivation, fixed residence": government (re)settlement and development programme for upland ethnic minorities: referred to in this document as the Fixed Settlement Programme
- **doi moi**: renovation
- **du an**: project (usually refers to an externally-funded project)
- **gia lang**: village elder, traditional leader
- **ho goc**: literally 'root households': used in (spoken) Vietnamese to refer to indigenous communities in areas of high in-migration
- **ho khau**: household registration book; required in principle across the country for each household and its members
- **Kiem Lam**: Forest Department staff
- **Kinh**: term used for the (Vietnamese) ethnic majority
- **lac hau**: backward
- **liet sy**: martyr
- **lop hoc**: classroom—refers to temporary classrooms for early grades built in remote villages in some communes
- **mau giao**
literally, "matriarchy"; used to refer to matrilocal and matrilineal customs of some ethnic minority groups

superstition

former Thai and Muong administrative unit

respected person

traditional community meeting house

day care centre

(form district level) Infrastructure Bureau

tradition

swidden or upland field

handicrafts

village

unit of measurement

low level of education

school

commune

Equivalents

1 USD = 14,000 VND (approx. March 2000)
1 sao = 100 m² (in central and south central regions)

Notes: The terms "CBRIP" or "the project" refer to the Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project. "Subproject" refers to any project option chosen by communes from the list of eligible works. Communes within the project area are called "project communes" to distinguish them from "poor communes" which may be any commune on the national list of 1715 poor communes. Terms in Vietnamese are written in italics.
Executive Summary

Part One: Introduction

This Social Assessment was commissioned in order to incorporate social development and capacity building goals into the design of the Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Development Project, or CBRIP. The CBRIP is under preparation by the GOV Ministry of Planning and Investment for funding by the World Bank, and is being designed in support of Government Programmes 133 and 135. Its aims are to enhance the capacity for decentralised and participatory management of small-scale infrastructure works in these regions, provide essential public infrastructure to 532 of the poorest communes in 12 provinces in north-central and south-central Vietnam, and create opportunities for paid off-farm employment. The key element of project design is the direct involvement of commune authorities and local people in all stages of the project cycle. Communes will be allowed to prioritise and choose for themselves the type of small-scale infrastructure they want from a list of eligible works. Budgets will be transferred directly to communes who will then be responsible for financial accounting and project management. This is in line with government efforts to encourage greater decentralisation to local levels. Emphasis will be on the maximum use of local labour and materials and on informing and being accountable to local people.

The aims of the Social Assessment are:

1. to ensure that the project benefits the poorest and most vulnerable in the project area, including ethnic minorities and women; and
2. to strengthen the participation of beneficiaries, including the poorest, women and ethnic minorities, and other vulnerable groups, in all stages of the project cycle.

The Social Assessment is based on findings from four main exercises: a field study in 11 communes in the project area, a questionnaire covering all 532 communes in the project area, a selective survey and two stakeholder workshops, held in Nha Trang.

Part Two: Social and Economic Situation in the Project Communes

Economic and social conditions vary across the project area, from the changing livelihoods of ethnic minority farmers in mountainous areas; to in-migrant communes where indigenous groups are marginalised by pressures to sell land to in-migrants; to coastal and lowland communes which experience poor agricultural opportunities and harsh climatic conditions.

The 30 distinct ethnic minority groups within the project area are among the poorest people within the project area. Similarities between some groups may built upon for planning purposes, despite policies and approaches which to date have not often made use of the local knowledge of these groups. Elements to work into a strategy with these groups include ethnic differences within the communes, low Vietnamese language and literacy skills, and prevalent spiritual beliefs. Some indigenous forms of social organisation—the role of traditional leaders (gia lang) and of women in some matrilineal and matrilocal minority groups—remain strong.
Aside from those people who are economically poor within the project area, and the constraints faced by ethnic minorities, a number of other socially marginalised groups exist, including some types of women-headed households, the disabled, elderly, and children.

Part Three: Key Players in Infrastructure Works

Three types of infrastructure works exist in the project communes: formal government projects built with external funding and assistance, works financed and implemented by local people but motivated by government, and works financed without government funding and built entirely by local people. District administrators are the key players in the first type, although there is a will to hand greater responsibility over to commune level in many districts. The second type are constructed largely by local people, motivated by government’s guarantee to provide social services. The third type are constructed entirely by local people using local forms of social organisation. An opportunity to build upon this type of local self-reliance exists alongside the need to improve local capacity to implement government projects.

Part Four: Participation Issues

The distribution of benefits of infrastructure projects may be uneven across communes and within communes. It is influenced by road access to the commune itself, the distance of remote villages from shared commune infrastructure, the design and layout of infrastructure (such as water supply systems) within villages, insufficient investment, and, most importantly, the existence of appropriate and affordable social services. Some types of infrastructure may be particularly beneficial to the most vulnerable people or groups in the project area. The infrastructure priorities of local people come from the practical needs within their communities, and people rarely separate the interests of individuals within their households from the interests of the household as a whole.

Obstacles and opportunities exist for beneficiaries' greater involvement in all stages of the project cycle under the CBRIP. Consultation of beneficiaries about government infrastructure is presently limited, and knowledge of government policy and programmes is poor. Hesitation to air grievances publicly is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge of procedures for doing so; similarly, there is little knowledge among local people about the budgets for infrastructure works built in their areas. Local design and construction skills are strong in many project communes; these could be incorporated to better fit infrastructure to local preferences, to increase the local labour used on such projects to lower costs and to increase capacity for maintenance through use of local materials. Currently, those government projects that pay for labour pay very low rates, penalising poor households which tend to contribute their labour rather than cash to such arrangements. Administrative delays in project implementation can act against local participation by holding up work in times when local people are free from agricultural labour, or forcing rushed construction through before the rainy seasons. Some experience exists at commune level in hiring contractors, but communities will need to be better aware of bidding and contracting procedures under government programmes to ensure they are
receiving fair treatment. Despite new regulations allowing for the existence of management boards at commune level, these as yet remain limited. Where they do exist, non-officials rarely play a recognised role in bodies set up to manage and supervise projects.

**Part Five: Proposed Strategy**

The strategy laid out in the final section of the report for incorporating the goals of the Social Assessment aims to ensure that vulnerable groups will benefit from the project and to build upon the recognised strengths of the full range of stakeholders currently involved in implementing infrastructure works.

**Commune classifications** are proposed, to provide specific types of support to ensure local people's involvement in the project, such as the type of monitoring required to ensure the interests of all groups in the communes are addressed. Type A communes are those with in-migrants; Type B communes have no road access; all other communes are classified as Type C.

**Ground rules** are recommended for ensuring community involvement in every stage of the project cycle, including a conflict resolution mechanism. Changes to CBRIP design are suggested. Adjustments and additions to the list of eligible works aim to make the list more appropriate to local needs and priorities, and, by placing choice regarding district-level works at commune level, to include local consultation in these type of works. Beginning with a manageable number of communes (and Community Facilitators) is recommended, with other project communes phased in subsequent years.

**A recommended strategy for project preparation** begins with the prompt selection of good Community Facilitators (CFs), selected for their previous experience and proven skills. Training requirements for these facilitators, Commune Management Committees and district technicians in areas related to promoting greater participation are outlined.

**Policy changes** are recommended in existing laws in support of the goals of the Social Assessment, and measures to interlink infrastructure development with quality social services, and increased access to social services by marginalised groups, are recommended.

**A strategy for information dissemination** to communes about the CBRIP is based on disseminating information through multiple channels, and emphasising understanding by the target audiences. The information would be channelled through CFs and mass organisations, through printed factsheets, information videos and provincial printed media. Subproject information at commune and village levels, it is suggested, should be publicly posted in commune centres and villages and regularly updated.

**The strategy for implementation** includes recommendations for organising subproject selection, appraisal and approval, selection of Management Committees at commune and village level, financing mechanisms for subprojects, project design,
use and maintenance, and additional measures for conflict resolution in the case of inaction or impasses.

A monitoring and evaluation mechanism is proposed that takes information directly from village and communes levels (from the public postings) up to central level, as well as indicators that monitor the distribution of project benefits and degree of local community participation. A feedback mechanism is recommended for adapting the project design in response to information from local levels on project progress.

Tasks for the economic team are suggested which aim to contribute to more equitable project benefits and better maintenance.

Finally, risks in implementation of the CBRIP are outlined, and mitigation measures suggested.
Acknowledgements

The Social Assessment Team would like to thank:

Mr. Pham Hai, Director, Department of Local Economy and Territory, and staff of the CBRIP Project Management Unit at the Ministry of Planning and Investment; and Chris Gibbs, Tosca Van Vijfeijken, Social Development and Participation, and Le Nguyet Minh at the World Bank, for their support in carrying out this Social Assessment; also Yoshiko Ishihara, Rural Sociologist, and Josef Ernstberger, Natural Resources Economist, of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations.

At MPI we are particularly grateful to staff of the Project Management Unit for their work inputting the questionnaire data, and to Mr. Nguyen Van Quy for processing the data.

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Authorities in the following districts and communes assisted greatly by preparing for the field studies in their areas, and contributing their ideas and perspectives: Thach Thuong Commune, Thach Thanh District (Thanh Hoa); Xuan Phu Commune, Quan Hoa District (Thanh Hoa); Xa Luong Commune, Tuong Duong District (Nghe An); Dak Nhau Commune, Bu Dang District (Binh Phuoc); Tan Hoa Commune, Dong Phu District (Binh Phuoc); Phan Hoa Commune, Bac Binh District (Binh Thuan); Son Hoa District (Phu Yen); Da Sar Commune, Lac Duong District (Lam Dong); Loc Binh Commune, Phu Loc District (Thua Thien Hue); Son Thai Commune, Khanh Vinh District (Khanh Hoa); Vinh Son Commune, Vinh Thanh District (Binh Dinh), Tra Nam Commune, Tra My District (Quang Nam).

We thank provincial, district and commune authorities in Tra Xinh Commune, Tra Bong District, Quang Ngai Province, and Ta Bhing Commune, Nam Giang District, Quang Ngai Province for making preparations for field research teams to visit. We apologise for being unable to visit due to the severe flooding of November 1999 which prevented access to these communes.

We are very fortunate to have had input via questionnaire from nearly all communes in the project area. We thank those responsible in each commune for taking the time to complete and return the questionnaire.

We are grateful to Mr. Ngo Huy Liem for his hard work in facilitating the stakeholder workshops, and we also thank those participants of the stakeholder workshops for their contributions.

At Oxfam Hong Kong, Project Officer Van Minh Chau, Programme Assistant Nguyen Thi Yen, and Advocacy Officer Vu Hong Anh each accompanied the field teams on one commune visit. Their experience of participatory planning and community-based approaches allowed them to provide helpful input to the field methodology and analysis. Ms. Tran Thi Minh Thu provided crucial administrative backup to the project throughout the field studies: the field trips and stakeholder workshops could not have gotten off the ground without her organisational skills and hard work. We thank Ms. Nguyen Thanh Ha, Oxfam Hong Kong Administrative Assistant, for taking over administrative tasks once Thu left, and Don Tuan Phuong, Administrative Volunteer, for his cheery acceptance of the task of translation. A debt of gratitude is owed to Susannah Hopkins Leisher, Representative of Oxfam Hong Kong in Vietnam, for taking on this project. Without her support and insights, this project would not have been possible.

Finally, the Social Assessment Team would like to thank all of those people in the communes visited who took their valuable time to share their views with us.

This report has benefited from the contributions and insights of many people. Any errors of fact or interpretation however, are entirely my own.

Natasha Pairaudeau
Hanoi, March 19, 2000
Note on Oxfam Hong Kong's Involvement in the Social Assessment

Oxfam Hong Kong has been working in Vietnam since 1988 to help improve the livelihoods of poor people in remote, mountainous areas, with a focus on women, ethnic minorities and the environment. In all Oxfam Hong Kong's work, we strive to implement our agency principles of participation, gender equity and empowerment through partnership with government and non-government organisations at the grassroots and higher levels. Sectorally, Oxfam Hong Kong focuses on food security (irrigation, credit and savings, handicrafts, agricultural and veterinary extension and training, tree planting, and other areas), health (water supply, women's health, traditional health, and other areas), capacity building for partners to strengthen their abilities in long-term programme management and replication, and advocacy on landmines, Mekong river basin development, participatory approaches, and other issues.

When we first learned of this rural small-scale infrastructure project, Oxfam Hong Kong believed that the community-based approach proposed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the World Bank--an unusual approach for a large-budget infrastructure project--had the potential to ensure participation of, and extension of project benefits to, the marginalised. The project's large scale--over 1 million people in over 500 of the poorest communes in the country--meant that the participatory approach could have an impact on a significant segment of Vietnam's poor and marginalised population, much greater than Oxfam Hong Kong could have through our usual approach of working directly with partners at the grassroots level. Because of our belief in the principle of participation, and our interest in advocating a participatory approach at the highest levels of Government, we agreed to take on the task of the Social Assessment.

Oxfam Hong Kong was reimbursed for all external costs associated with the Social Assessment, but all Oxfam Hong Kong staff time was given without charge, as the Social Assessment supports our strategic aim of ensuring that the poor have a "right to be heard".

Susannah Hopkins Leisher,
Representative

20 March 2000
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23.1 Involvement of Local People

23.1.1 Involvement of Local People

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22.1 Key Players in the Local Community

PART TWO: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN PROJECT COMMUNITIES

1.1 The Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project

The Community-Based Rural Infrastructure Project (CBRIP) is under preparation by the Government (GOV) Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) for funding by the World Bank. Its design is being developed in support of Government Programmes 133 and 135, and in response to a number of challenges to implementing satisfactory and sustainable small-scale infrastructure in poor rural areas of Vietnam. Subject to World Bank approval, project implementation is expected to begin in January 2001.

The CBRIP is to be implemented in the context of limited resources, during a period of transition from state-dependence and central control to greater self-reliance and decentralisation of responsibility to lower administrative levels. Within this context, the project aims to address a number of recognised difficulties in extending physical and social infrastructure to poor rural areas of Vietnam:

1. The poor cannot afford essential physical and social infrastructure. A government programme of fiscal decentralisation requires that rural infrastructure be funded by district and commune authorities through funds raised locally. The ability of poorer communes to fund this infrastructure out of local contributions is very weak, resulting in poor access to physical and social infrastructure in these communes. In addition, income gaps between areas mean that the rural poor pay significantly more, relatively, for their infrastructure and services.

2. The ability of commune-level authorities to plan and implement government development activities is weak. Government has been promoting decentralisation through a series of laws, decrees and regulations. On paper, this has given greater power, autonomy and responsibility to districts and communes; moreover, the February 1998 Politburo Directive on Grassroots Democracy proposes that people at commune level should be more actively involved in planning and decision-making. In practice, though, poor flows of information to local levels regarding the new laws, and low capacity on the part of commune authorities to carry them out, mean that they are yet to be fully realised.

3. The poorest groups have difficulty articulating their needs and priorities. Top-down approaches have given the poor little say in the past on the programmes intended to help them. This is particularly relevant for ethnic minority groups, who

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1 Both programmes were launched in 1998, and aim to alleviate poverty through targeted assistance to poor communes. Programme activities of the National Target Programme on Hunger Eradication and Poverty Reduction (HEPR Programme or 133) and the Socio-Economic Development Programme for Especially Difficult Mountainous and Remote Communes (Programme 135) include infrastructure development, the development of sedentary agriculture, improvement of social services and capacity building. The two programmes have many common characteristics, though the second (135) reflects a stronger concern with integrating ethnic minorities into national development. See Nguyen The Dzung, 1999, pp. 24-26, for a detailed explanation of differences between the two programmes, or 'planning frameworks,' as he calls them.

are disproportionately poor in simple economic terms, and live in the more remote parts of the country with distinct languages, cultures and livelihood practices. Putting ethnic minority groups at the centre of development efforts, while respecting these differences, is an ongoing challenge to development initiatives directed at them.

1.1.1 Objectives of the CBRIP

### Development Objectives of the CBRIP

1. To enhance the capacity for decentralised and participatory management of small-scale infrastructure works in the poorest provinces of two regions (north-central and south-central Vietnam);
2. To provide essential public infrastructure to selected communes in these regions; and
3. To create opportunities for paid off-farm employment.

1.1.2 Project Scope

The CBRIP targets poor communes where infrastructure is inadequate and where the greater use of public funds is justified by the very limited capacity of these communes to raise funds through local taxation for infrastructure works. This includes 532 communes in 12 provinces in north-central and south-central Vietnam. These communes have been identified by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) or the Committee for Ethnic Minorities and Mountainous Areas (CEMMA) (or both) as among the poorest in the country. CBRIP documents estimate each commune is able to absorb investments of about US $140,000, in three tranches, for small-scale infrastructure works.

Some 33 poor communes situated in national parks were excluded from the project, as it was assumed that infrastructure investment would conflict with environmental protection measures in these areas. Many of these communes are included under a World Bank-assisted project for forest protection.

The list of 532 communes within the project area is included as Appendix 2.

1.1.3 CBRIP Design Features

The key element of project design is the direct involvement of commune authorities and local people in all stages of the project cycle. Communes will be allowed to prioritise and choose for themselves the type of small-scale infrastructure they want from a list of eligible works (hereafter referred to as 'subprojects'). Grants, it is proposed, will be transferred directly to communes. Communes will get up to three grants, disbursed annually, dependant upon performance. Works will be planned,

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3 MOLISA defines communes as 'poor' if more than 40% of total households fall below the 'rice poverty line,' equivalent to 15 kg of rice per person per month. CEMMA uses a combination of criteria including remoteness, status of infrastructure, social indicators, production systems and poverty to define 'poor' communes.

4 Figures from World Bank Aide Memoire, 7 October 1999.

5 Communes in buffer zones may also be excluded, but to date (March 2000) this decision has not been finalised.
managed, implemented and supervised directly from commune level. Emphasis is placed on the use of local labour and materials, to maximise income and employment effects in the communes themselves. The project will provide supports to enhance the capacity to plan, implement, manage and maintain small-scale infrastructure at the commune level, as well as to fully involve local people in these processes. The participatory design of the project, and the objective of improving infrastructure in remote areas, as well as the World Bank directive on resettlement, would preclude any relocation of villages under the CBRIP.

It is proposed that at least 80% of funds provided for infrastructure under the project be spent on commune-level works, and up to 20% in districts with three or more project communes on district-level works that would benefit at least two communes in the district (if these communes decide it is in their interest to do so).6

1.2 Social Assessment

1.2.1 What is Social Assessment?

Social Assessment is a process for ensuring that World Bank-financed development operations are informed by and take into account relevant social issues. The practice aims to ensure development initiatives:

- contribute to poverty alleviation; and at the same time,
- enhance inclusion;
- increase social capital;
- build ownership; and
- eliminate or at least reduce adverse social impacts.7

Social Assessments are expected to cover ‘four pillars’ in support of project operations:

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<tr>
<th>The ‘Four Pillars’ of Social Assessment</th>
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<td>1. Identification of key social development and participation issues;</td>
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<td>2. Evaluation of institutional and social organisational issues;</td>
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<td>3. Definition of the participation framework;</td>
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<td>4. Establishment of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.</td>
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In covering these four areas, Social Assessments should be selective and strategic, focussing only on those variables with operational relevance.

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6 At the time of writing it was not yet clear whether this would involve only project communes, or other communes adjacent to project communes.

7 World Bank G.P. 10.05, Social Analysis through Social Assessment. Material in this section is drawn from this GP as well as from An Overview of Social Assessment, based on a presentation developed by Sue Jacobs of the Social Policy and Resettlement Division of the World Bank’s Environment Department.
1.2.2 Challenges to Implementing the CBRIP

During preparation of the CBRIP, a number of challenges to its successful implementation were identified:

- **weak capacity** of commune-level authorities to implement government programmes;
- **limited opportunity** for the large numbers of ethnic minorities within the project area to articulate their cultural needs and priorities;
- **considerable risk** of project benefits being captured by more powerful interest groups; and
- **high degrees of ownership** being crucial to the success—and sustainability—of the project.

Furthermore, the CBRIP is a community-based, demand-driven project—but on a very large scale. As such, the key requirements of community-based projects (see box) are more important than ever—and pose an even greater challenge to implementation as project management strives to promote a genuine process of community involvement.

### Box 1: Key Requirements of Community-Based Projects

1. Well-chosen and well-trained project facilitators;
2. Sufficient guidelines within which local people can implement the subprojects in their areas;
3. Clear understanding by all players of the concept of community-based development and the assurance that they (or at least some of them) understand and accept the concept;
4. Ability within the community to generate resources to maintain the infrastructure;
5. Measures to identify, learn from and correct mistakes early in implementation; and
6. Monitoring of participation at all levels.

1.2.3 Aims and Objectives

This Social Assessment was designed to add value to the CBRIP by addressing the challenges outlined above. As facilitating increased ethnic minority participation in the project process and project benefits is a key aim of this Social Assessment, it was agreed that an independent Indigenous People’s Development Plan (IPDP) is unnecessary for project preparation.

### Aims of the Social Assessment

- To ensure that the project benefits the poorest and most vulnerable in the project area, including ethnic minorities and women; and
- To strengthen the participation of beneficiaries, including the poorest, women and ethnic minorities, as well as other vulnerable groups, in all stages of the project cycle.

### Objectives of the Social Assessment

1. Collect sufficient information on stakeholders in the project area to assess:
   - the situation of and capacity for participation of beneficiaries in all stages of the project cycle; and
   - the possibilities for and obstacles to project benefits going to the poorest and most vulnerable.
2. Establish indicators, produce a baseline for each indicator, and develop a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

3. Make concrete recommendations to strengthen project design.

4. Identify any possible negative impacts of the project on different groups of the poorest and most vulnerable (including different minority groups, men and women), and propose mitigation measures to protect the most vulnerable as needed.

1.2.4 Report Outline and Structure

This report is in five parts. The introduction is Part One. Part Two explores the social and economic situation of people within the project communes who may be involved in or hope to benefit from the CBRIP. Part Three describes the roles of key players in implementing infrastructure works within communes. In Part Four, participation issues related to the CBRIP are addressed. Finally, Part Five lays out a strategy for incorporating the aims of the Social Assessment into the CBRIP.

Each pillar of Social Assessment is covered in this report, although, in order for arguments to flow logically, the report has not been structured strictly according to the four pillars.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: The “Four Pillars” and the CBRIP Social Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>“Pillar”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identification of key social development...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and participation issues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Evaluation of institutional...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...and social organisational issues;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Definition of the participation framework;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Establishment of a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The design and implementation of the present Social Assessment was guided by World Bank GP 10.05 on Social Assessment, and World Bank Operational Directive 4.20 on Indigenous Peoples.

The Terms of Reference for the Social Assessment are included as Appendix 1.

1.2.4.1 Methodology

1.2.4.2 Components of the Social Assessment

The size of the project area (532 communes) posed a challenge to conducting a Social Assessment that was both truly representative of all the communities involved and of high quality. It was not feasible, within the time available, to conduct an in-depth field study in a large number of communes. Instead, the Social Assessment
was designed to scale up findings from a smaller group of communes through six exercises:

1. **A literature review**: This comprised a desk review of information available on ethnic minority groups in the project area, and a review of other reports and documents relevant to the project. The ethnic minority desk review was compiled from available sources in Vietnamese, French, and English by Mr. Tran Quy Suu of the Department of Rural Sociology, Hanoi Institute of Sociology, and Ms. Luong Thi Thu Hang of the Institute of Ethnology, National Centre for Social Sciences and Humanities. It is found in Appendix 3. Other reports and document reviewed are listed under ‘Sources Consulted’ at the end of this report.

2. **Consultation with colleagues**: Mr. Matt Desmond at the NGO Training Project, and Ms. Mia Hyun, Senior Technical Advisor, National Committee for the Advancement of Women, shared their experiences with training in participatory approaches.

3. **A field study**: A sample of communes within the project area was selected to be representative of ethnic groups, geography, relative remoteness and relative poverty within the project area.

4. **A questionnaire**: A questionnaire survey was sent out to all 532 communes.

5. **A selective survey**: The findings from the questionnaire were cross-checked by a survey in 30 project communes.

6. **Stakeholder workshops**: Two stakeholder workshops were held in order to allow local-level representatives to provide feedback on findings and recommendations from the first part of the field study.

The four main exercises (the field study, the questionnaire, the selective survey and the stakeholder workshops) are described in more detail in this section.

**1.2.4.3 Field Study**

**1.2.4.3.1 Design**

The sample of communes chosen for study was intended to include:

- the main ethnic groups living in the project area;
- both ethnically homogeneous and ethnically heterogeneous communes;
- both coastal and mountainous communes;
- communes relatively far from district centres; and
- some of the very poorest project communes.

Limitations to selecting communes according to this criteria included:

1. A lack of data on the main criteria: although the General Statistics Office had just conducted its 1999 census, which contains information on ethnic makeup within communes across the country, this information had not yet been compiled at the time of the field study, and no information was as yet available in Hanoi on the remoteness of project communes.

2. Time constraints: five days were allocated for each commune, but travel reduced time in the field to anywhere from 3 to 4 and a half days. This limited the ability of the teams to visit more than one very remote commune (for which ten days had to be allocated).
Thus, communes were chosen according to the criteria for which data was available, as well as through calls to provinces and districts for further information. Information supplied was sometimes incorrect in relation to ethnicity, and there may have been a tendency among informants to propose communes that were not among the most remote.
## Table 2: Communes Visited in the Field Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Commune</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Ethnic Group(s)</th>
<th>Distance from Commune Centre to District Centre</th>
<th>Dates Visited</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A and B</td>
<td>Thach Thach Thanh Thanh Hoa</td>
<td>Muong</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 hours by car. Dry-weather road.</td>
<td>November 10-13, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Xa Luong Tuong Duong Nghe An</td>
<td>Kinh, Thai, and (in remote villages) Kh Mu and H'Mong</td>
<td></td>
<td>5 km (15 minutes) by car. All-season road.</td>
<td>November 15-18, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Xuan Phu Quan Hoa Thanh Hoa</td>
<td>primarily Muong, with some Thai and Kinh villages</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 hours by car (dry-weather road), then 1 hour walking.</td>
<td>November 15-18, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Dak Nhan Bu Dang Phuoc</td>
<td>M’Nong and Slieng indigenous groups; in-migrants (mainly Kinh, Tay and Nung)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 hours by motorbike (when bridges out) or car. Dry-weather road.</td>
<td>November 21-24, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Tan Hoa Dong Phuoc</td>
<td>Kinh, Tay and Nung in-migrants</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 hour by car. All-season road.</td>
<td>November 21-24, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Phan Hoa Bac Binh Thuan</td>
<td>Cham (Bani Islam)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 minutes’ drive on National Highway 1 and then gravel road.</td>
<td>November 25-28, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Son Thai Khanh Vinh</td>
<td>Xie Trieng, Rac Glai</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 hours by car (dry-weather road), then 2 hours walk to commune centre.</td>
<td>November 26-29, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>(did not reach commune level)</td>
<td>Son Hoa Phu Yen</td>
<td>Cham (Cham Hroi)</td>
<td>2-3 hours by car. Dry-weather road.</td>
<td>December 2-5, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Da Sar Lac Duong Lam Dong</td>
<td>Cil (Co Ho subgroup)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 hours by car from Dalat city. Dry-weather road.</td>
<td>December 7-10, 1999</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Vinh Son Vinh Thanh</td>
<td>Ba Na</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 hours by car. Dry-weather road.</td>
<td>January 9-13, 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Tra Nam Tra My Quang Nam</td>
<td>Xe Dang</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 hour drive (dry-weather road), then 1½ days’ walk.</td>
<td>January 14-23, 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Loc Binh Phu Loc Thua Thien Hue</td>
<td>Coastal Kinh</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 hour by car. All-season road.</td>
<td>January 24-28, 2000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Field research tools were designed prior to the commune visits. These included a list of guide questions for semi-structured interviews, a number of suggested Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises, and standard formats for reporting findings.

1.2.4.3.2 Teams

The field study team consisted of nine consultants, each hired for their expertise in areas relevant to the Social Assessment. The lead consultant, Natasha Pairaudoue, has training in anthropology and experience in conducting similar research with ethnic minorities in Vietnam. Mr. Dau Quoc Anh is an agronomist and an experienced Vietnamese social development specialist, who acted as a team leader. Social development consultants joining the team were Mr. Tran Quy Suu, of the Department of Rural Sociology, Institute of Sociology, Ms. Le Thi Phi Van of the Institute of Agricultural Economics and Mr. Nguyen Van Linh of the Vietnam Agricultural Sciences Institutes (VASI). Two gender consultants, Ms. Nguyen Thi Nghia of the College for Management Training in Agriculture and Rural Development, Hanoi, and Dr. Ha Thi Phuong Tien of the Center for Family and Women Studies, National Center for Social and Human Sciences, also joined the social assessment team. Dr. Pham Lac Tuyen, Professor of Ethnology at the UNESCO Humanism and Development Centre in Ho Chi Minh City, joined the team as an ethnology consultant.

The consultants divided into two teams for the commune studies. Both teams worked together in the first commune to ensure uniform methodology. Thereafter, each team conducted research in its own assigned communes. Natasha Pairaudoue led Team A, and Team B was led by Dau Quoc Anh. Other members switched teams at several points to ensure a good flow of information and exchange of ideas.

The schedule for the field trips had to be changed several times, due to severe floods in some of the provinces in the project area just before, and again during, the field studies. The field study was originally planned as a six-week trip from mid-November to late December 1999, with a two-day break in Nha Trang for the two teams to exchange information and ideas, re-design research tools, and rest. Because of the floods, however, three separate trips were conducted from Hanoi. The first trip was to the north-central region on November 10-18, 1999. The second trip, beginning in Binh Thuan Province, was cut short after the Nha Trang break, as heavy rains forced one team to abandon their work and return to Hanoi, and the other team to change their schedule. One team then returned to the south-central region on January 9-20 to complete the field work.

1.2.4.3.3 Fieldwork

The studies in each commune consisted of:
1. Group meetings with authorities at district and commune levels, including Departments of Planning and Investment (DPI), People’s Committees and heads of mass organisations;
2. Group meetings with leaders at village levels, in three villages per commune. Village leaders and heads of village-level mass organisations were present at these meetings;
3. Semi-structured interviews with traditional leaders;
4. Semi-structured interviews with a selection of households. Research teams asked three people in each village to identify the poorest households in the village, in order to ensure data was picked up on the range of socio-economic conditions within the villages. In some villages up to 15 households were interviewed; in a few villages, time constraints meant that only three or four household interviews could be conducted.

The research tools were refined during the course of the fieldwork. The field research tools were designed as a series of group meetings and semi-structured interviews, within which the use of a number of PRA exercises was suggested. Very few of the PRA exercises proposed, however, were actually used in the field. Team members found that, aside from being more time-consuming than more conventional research methods, these exercises were not capturing information of good quality on complex issues. Although the use of PRA exercises was limited, an effective participatory approach was used in group meetings, by recording information on flip charts so that all participants could see and challenge or add to the issues being discussed. The approach used in individual interviews was to conduct interviews in as relaxed a way as possible, in order to elicit people's candid views of needs, priorities and problems. In the evenings, team members discussed the day's findings, comparing and analysing what they had heard, and identifying issues to be clarified further. At the end of each visit, a team meeting was held and summaries drawn up of information from each commune directly relevant to the aims of the Social Assessment (see Appendix 4).

1.2.4.4 Questionnaire

The blanket questionnaire was designed in the course of the first ten days of the field trip and sent to all 532 communes in the project area in mid-December.

The questionnaire was designed to gather information:
1. about the potential for participation of different villages and ethnic groups in the project cycle (to further develop findings from the fieldwork);
2. about who has benefited (at village level, and from different ethnic groups) from past projects;
3. to produce a classification of project communes, allowing WB/MPI to plan for different levels of support on the basis of institutional capacity;
4. to produce baseline data for some monitoring indicators; and
5. to assess willingness and ability to pay.

Although all questionnaires were returned, poor levels of response to some questions has meant that the Social Assessment has been unable to achieve objectives 2 and 5. These two objectives required information about infrastructure works constructed without external assistance, the costs and number of works constructed privately, and local contributions. Often such information is only known at village level, which may have caused the poor levels of response.

Baseline data for communes is not included in this report, due to ongoing work at the Project Management Unit on organising both the Social Assessment database and an economic database. However, once this is
completed, the information can be generated from the database at the Project Management Unit.

The questionnaire is included as Appendix 5.

1.2.4.5 Selective Survey

The selective survey was conducted by provincial administrative staff of eight provinces, who received an introduction to this work during the stakeholder workshops. Each surveyor was asked to conduct the survey in 3 communes, for a total of 27 communes surveyed. Of the 27 selective survey forms dispatched, 22 completed forms were returned to Oxfam Hong Kong.

The purpose of the selective survey was to check whether respondents had difficulty in answering any of the questions, and what sources of information were used to gather the data, in order to judge the quality of the information gained through the questionnaire survey. For the great majority of questions, however, surveyors replied that they had no difficulty in answering the question. Replies to the final question in the survey however revealed that while very few questions had been answered using the most local levels or direct sources of information (village level information and field trips were given as the most local or direct sources of information used, but very few respondents gave these as information sources), respondents claimed to have answered a third of the questions from commune level sources.

Table 3: Replies to Selective Survey Question: “Where Did You Get this Information?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>No. of Responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From reality</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From commune people's committee</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From villages</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From district of higher authorities</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From statistics</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through meetings/ field trip</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Selective Survey form is included as Appendix 6. The list of communes who completed the selective survey is found in Appendix 7.

1.2.4.6 Stakeholder Workshops

Two stakeholder workshops were held back-to-back on January 5-8, 2000. Nha Trang was chosen as the site for these workshops as it was felt this was the most accessible location for project communes. Mr. Ngo Huy Liem acted as lead facilitator for the workshops. He was assisted by Mr. Dau Quoc Anh, Ms. Nguyen Thi Nghia, and Mr. Nguyen Van Linh, who, as research team members, also presented the team’s findings. Ms. Tran Thi Minh Thu organised logistics and, with the help of Ms. Nguyen Thi Yen, recorded findings from the workshop. Representatives from MPI and the World Bank joined as observers.

Representatives were invited from province, district and commune levels. A total of 18 communes (five of which were communes visited in the field study) from ten districts and ten provinces were invited. Communes were asked to send one
male and one female representative; and districts and provinces were each asked to send one representative.

Attendance, particularly of commune representatives, was poor for Workshop B. Only 6 out of 18 expected delegates from commune level attended. While this allowed for closer discussion than may have been possible with a larger group, reasons given for the poor attendance reflected some of the difficulties involved in ensuring participation of people from remote areas (see Appendix 10).

The purpose of the stakeholder workshops was to gather feedback from commune-level representatives on findings and recommendations from the first part of the field study. District and provincial authorities were invited as observers and asked to listen to the views of the communes, rather than to actively contribute to the commune-level discussions. Views were gathered from participants by asking them to write their responses to specific problems on cards: these cards were then pinned on poster boards and analysed through group discussions. The methodology was refined in workshop B: two separate sessions were conducted, one for commune representatives and one for district and provincial representatives. The district and provincial representatives were then actively involved, when the two groups came together, in analysing the cards produced in commune discussions.

The agenda for the workshops is included as Appendix 8. Appendix 9 provides lists of people invited to the two workshops, and those who attended.

1.3 Overview of Project Area

This section briefly describes the areas within which project communes are situated and provides some basic quantitative information about communes within the project area.

1.3.1 Geographical Overview

The project area covers twelve provinces in two regions of Vietnam.

Nghe An and Thanh Hoa Provinces make up the north-central region of the project area. Within these two provinces, there is a total of 196 'poor communes', as defined by MOLISA and CEMMA, selected for inclusion in the project.

The second, south-central region, consists of a chain of ten provinces following the coast south from Thua Thien Hue. The chain of project provinces edges the Central Highlands Provinces, turning inland south of Dak Lak Province to meet the Cambodian border at Binh Phuoc Province (see map overleaf). A total of 336 communes in the south-central region are included in the project.

Most communes selected to be included in the CBRIP are located in districts clustered up against the western borders of all these provinces in upland areas. This reflects the selection criteria: communes in the uplands, inhabited by ethnic minority groups, number disproportionately among the poorest in the country.
Also included within the project, though, are some communes located in the plains and coastal areas\(^8\) which, in MOLISA's judgement, also experience extreme poverty even though they are less remote. Lowland communes are inhabited largely by the Vietnamese majority (or Kinh people), with the exception of the Cham, who have lived for many centuries alongside Kinh people in lowland areas of south and central Vietnam, but retain their distinctive language and culture.

\(^8\) This includes five communes located in the coastal township of Cua Lo, Nghe An Province.
Map of Vietnam's Provinces
1.3.1.1 Statistical data

As the number of project communes has yet to be finalised, and some data is incomplete, the data provided in the following tables is intended as a guide only.

Table 4: Location of Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High and remote</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountainous</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>525</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire (communes self-reporting)*

Table 5: Population in Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population in project communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average population per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest commune population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest commune population</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire*

Table 6: Villages within the Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of villages in project area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of villages per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest number of villages per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest number of villages per commune</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire*

Table 7: Number of Households within the Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households in project communes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of households per commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest number of households within a commune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest number of households within a commune</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire*

Table 8: Household Size within the Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Size</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Largest</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire*

Table 9: Ethnic Breakdown in the Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population within Project Area</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic minority</td>
<td>700,566</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinh</td>
<td>729,315</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1,429,881</td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social Assessment Questionnaire*

*This total does not match the 532 communes interviewed, as some communes failed to answer this question.*
### Table 10: Distance from District to Commune

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Dry Season</th>
<th>Rainy Season</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average time required to walk from commune centre to district centre</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longest time required to walk from any commune centre to its district centre</td>
<td>12 days*</td>
<td>8 days*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average time required to drive from commune centre to district centre (for communes with road access)</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longest time required to drive from any commune centre to its district centre</td>
<td>4 days</td>
<td>10 days*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortest time required to drive from any commune centre to its district centre</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
<td>3 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sic.
PART TWO: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN PROJECT COMMUNES

Part Two explores the social and economic situation of people within the project communes who may be involved in or hope to benefit from the CBRIP. The first section looks at the economic and social conditions found in poor communes within the different geographic zones in the project area. The second section identifies the ethnic minority groups within the project area, and analyses policy, social and cultural issues relevant to them as stakeholders in the CBRIP. The last section identifies the most marginalised groups within the project communes, and describes factors that make them impoverished or relegate them to weak positions within their communities.
2 PART TWO: SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN PROJECT COMMUNES

2.1 Economic and Social Conditions

Communes (xa) are the lowest administrative unit. They comprise villages, which, depending on the area, may be referred to as ban, thon, or ap (see below). Aside from those communes with migrant and resettled communities, most communes are much more recent entities (constituted in the post-revolutionary period) than villages. It is villages, rather than communes, that are genuine communities in the sense that they are traditional social units with varying levels of internal cohesion; although social ties exist within communes, communes are firstly administrative units.

Resettled villages visited in the field study were whole villages that had moved, and thus (although some villagers had stayed behind or returned to their village of origin) social ties were similar to those in the village of origin. Villages, despite some intermarriage between the ethnic groups, tend to be ethnically homogenous. Marriage is more prevalent between people of the same ethnicity, and this tends to create ties between villages of like ethnicity within the commune and with nearby communes.

_Ban_ is used to refer to a mountainous ethnic minority village (and is a Thai term). Its use is prevalent within the project area in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa. Within communes, however, villages have also been numbered, for administrative purposes. At local levels, villages may be referred to by their name, or by their number, in which cases the lowland term for villages (thon) or a composite term (thon/ban) is used. In some southern provinces, the term _ap_ is sometimes used locally to refer to a village within a commune; strictly speaking, it means a remote village. Some confusion arise in translation in southern parts of the project area, as _xa_ is at times translated as 'village', and _ap_ as 'hamlet'. This may be due to the fact that some hamlets in lowland areas of the south are generally smaller in size and population than those found further north and in more mountainous areas.

Communes within the project area cover a number of geographic zones, from extremely remote mountainous areas through (relatively) more accessible upland areas, to coastal fishing areas. Settlement patterns vary across these regions. In mountainous areas, villages tend to be more scattered, made up, particularly in higher mountain areas, of separate village clusters. Villages in midland areas tend to be built in valley beds with houses more closely clustered together but still with gardens and paddy fields between houses. In lowland areas, villages may have houses quite closely gathered together, with fields outlying. In Cham communes, households are laid out particularly close together. The Cham commune visited had houses arranged along street axes as in a small town, with no agricultural land between them.

As might be expected, there is some variation in livelihood practices across the different geographic zones. To some degree in every project commune, though, the transition to a market economy or some effect of it is likely to be a day-to-day reality: in the field interviews, discussions inevitably came to focus upon the impact of very
recent changes that had taken place or been orchestrated in the communes in the last five to ten years. This section describes the range of socio-economic conditions found within project communes, and highlights the socio-economic disparities that exist between households in each of these areas.

2.1.1 Livelihoods in Upland Areas

2.1.1.1 Customary Farming and Settlement Patterns

H’Mong and Dao ethnic groups customarily inhabit the high mountain areas of the North Central Region and have long been dependent on the cultivation of tubers, rainfed corn and hill rice on sloping, swidden fields. Traditionally, this is supplemented by the exploitation of natural forest resources and rather limited animal husbandry (almost exclusively for household or village use). Until recently, these were largely subsistence economies. Despite some longstanding patterns of trade between the minority groups themselves, very limited trade existed between the upland groups and the lowland Kinh.

Those ethnic groups who inhabit the lower mountain areas (or midlands) of the north-central region (such as Muong, Thai, Tho and Kh Mu) have long traditions of wet rice cultivation. They customarily live in valley beds where paddy cultivation is feasible; this is combined with some upland cultivation and livestock raising (including buffaloes to break land for paddy cultivation). Compared with their H’Mong and Dao neighbours, they have a more active history of interaction with the lowland majority.

However, the connection between ethnicity, elevation, and cropping patterns is not consistent in the north-central region. Some H’Mong communities have grown wet rice for many generations where local conditions have permitted; conversely, some midlanders live in areas where wet rice cultivation is not possible (such as the Muong community in Tan Hoa commune, Quan Hoa District, Thanh Hoa).

Many highland minority groups in the south-central region of the project area also practice slash and burn cultivation. Customarily, this has been the main source of food for the household, and is supplemented by exploitation of forest products for household use. This system is practised by ethnic groups living in a variety of geographic zones, from mountainous zones (the Ta Oi and Pa Co in A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue) to areas that are plateau and low hills (the M’Nong and Stieng in Binh Phuoc, the Co Ho, Cil and Ma in Lam Dong Provinces). However, communities with longstanding traditions of wet rice cultivation can also be found in the south-central region (see box opposite).

Box 2: Traditional Terracing in a Xe Dang Community in Tra Nam Commune, Quang Nam

A Xe Dang farmer in this remote commune owns 5 sao (500 m²) of wet rice fields where she grows either two crops of rice per year or at least one summer rice crop. Her fields and those of households in the village are irrigated by a local system of bamboo pipes and earthen canals created by local farmers. Wet rice and cassava cultivation are both longstanding traditions in the commune. Tra Nam Commune currently has 77 ha of rice fields where local people produce roughly half of their food requirements for their own consumption.

10 The author of boxed cases studies is Natasha Pairaudeau, unless otherwise stated.
Upland minorities in Vietnam are commonly said to be 'nomadic' or 'semi-nomadic'. This stems from the fact that swidden farmers cultivate one upland plot for a period of several years, before leaving it to lie fallow and either returning to a previously cultivated plot, or clearing a new plot for cultivation. Nomadic, however, is a misnomer: during the course of the field research, the only instances found of movements in human settlements in recent times were in response to external events. Many highland communities in the south central region of the project area fled their native villages two decades ago due to wartime disruptions; others were forcibly moved during the same period as part of the Strategic Hamlets Programme. Still other communities have moved further downhill in the last decade as part of the government's 'fixed cultivation, fixed residence' or dinh canh dinh cu programme (hereafter referred to as the 'Fixed Settlement Programme'). Communities may move as a response to illness (such as malaria) in one location: while this type of move may be locally justified for spiritual reasons—to get away from the yang or spirit that causes the difficulties—there may also be practical reasons for these moves, in that people are leaving locations prone to such illnesses. The notion implied by the term 'nomadic', though—that these groups are moving on a seasonal basis, or that whole villages move at the slightest whim, clearing large areas in their wake—is unfounded.

⇒ The CBRIP is not being implemented in areas inhabited by 'nomadic' groups in the proper sense of that word. Upland communities in the project areas are customarily stable settlements; it is farmers' plots, where slash and burn practices are employed, that shift across limited areas.

2.1.1.2 The Fixed Settlement Programme

Government regards the practice of slash and burn cultivation as unsustainable and environmentally damaging, and has programmes to encourage ethnic minorities to change to sedentary and intensive forms of farming. The emphasis is on encouraging wet rice cultivation, wherever possible. In the period of economic opening this has been expanded to include the promotion of commercial animal husbandry, the cultivation of cash crops, and forest tree planting.

Efforts to settle ethnic groups have been stepped up in recent years along with a general ban on the exploitation of forest products. Although the fixed settlement programme has been in place for many years, in local areas people often speak of the campaign to 'settle' in their areas having occurred from 1993 onwards, around which time a firm resolve by government to protect forest land was instituted. Efforts to encourage 'settlement' sometimes contradict forest protection measures, however. In one ethnic Ba Na village, for example, local people had cleared trees to prepare plots of land for planting coffee, whereas under the reforestation programme they had received seedlings from government to reforest barren hills.

Photo: Coffee growing on recently cleared land in Vinh Son Commune, Binh Dinh Province (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

'Fixed cultivation fixed residence' means actual relocation for some communities; for others, it means state-regulated changes in agricultural production. The term dinh canh dinh cu is used widely by highland people when discussing their livelihoods, but they often mean different things by it. Thus in a
H'Mong village in Nghe An Province, the whole village has moved under the programme to a location further down the valley, to a new cultural context in closer proximity with other ethnic groups, to contact with schools and a clinic, and to new agricultural techniques and crops. ‘Dinh Canh Dinh Cu’ is also associated in this village with giving up opium cultivation, with subsequent loss of income. In a Cil minority commune in Lam Dong Province, households have been encouraged to give up cultivation of their swidden slopes, accept the allocation of forest protection plots, and adopt kitchen gardens and coffee cultivation through a subsidised government programme. It is only in some extremely remote areas, inaccessible by car (such as Tra Nam Commune in Quang Nam), that relatively little is known about the fixed settlement programme.

⇒ In many upland communes in which the CBRIP will be implemented, changes in livelihood patterns have been strongly influenced by government development priorities.

2.1.1.3 Socio-Economic Disparity in Upland Areas

Households in relatively accessible upland areas across the project area are growing a number of cash crops. Encouraged by varying degrees of government direction and state subsidies, farmers in the upland communes in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa cultivate sugar cane and fruit trees; coffee, cashews, and pepper are cultivated in highland (including plateau) areas of the south-central region.

Those with better access to knowledge about the new agricultural techniques, and those who can afford the inputs—fertiliser, pesticides, new varieties—are inevitably among the ranks of the better-off. These households are characterised by more labour and capital—both economic and social—than their less successful neighbours. Often, they will have some connection with or position within the administration. The tendency to assign forest protection land to those most able to protect it reinforces the position of these successful households (see box below).
These more successful farmers, who have managed to weather the transition from subsistence upland farming to commercial crops, are cautiously optimistic about their future. They are keenly aware of the constraints placed on them by poor transportation to their local areas, which raises the price of agricultural inputs and prevents them from selling at competitive prices. They are deeply troubled by drops in commodity prices in some sectors (sugar cane in particular) that have been subject to strong state control.

However, there is a marked difference between these households and those which are less able to adapt. In many communes, people described the better-off as those who had 'fixed their cultivation and residence', and the poorer households as those who had 'not yet fixed their cultivation and residence' or were 'not yet able to fix it' (chua dinh canh dinh cu).

Because of shortfalls in the new forms of production, poorer households may retain, or return to, cultivating staple crops on hillsides. In communities where hill slopes are very distant from villages, these people may spend long periods away from villages, which in turn distances them from new types of extension knowledge, and, significantly, from decision-making processes in the commune. Frequently, they continue to depend on gathering firewood, a practice now regarded by those who have improved their lot in recent years as a last resort (as well as sometimes being against the law).

In addition, upland households increasingly use wage labour as an extra income-earning strategy. This frequently consists of agricultural labour within their own communes, but may also take people farther afield. In better-off households it tends to be young people who engage in wage labour, leaving key agricultural labourers (almost always women) to continue with farming. In very poor households, however, it is often key adult labourers who engage in wage labour to earn money for immediate expenses.

- Swidden cultivators are the most vulnerable farmers within the project communes.
- Farmers dependent on cash crops remain vulnerable to the risk of crop failure and, increasingly, to fluctuations in commodity prices in the global economy.
- Among the most vulnerable households in upland minority communes are those which lack the resources to succeed in more intensive and commercialised farming techniques. They may revert to their customary farming practices,

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**Box 3: Forest Protection Land Allocation in a Cil Village**

All the forest protection land for this village has already been allocated. Households with these plots are paid 40,000 VND ha per quarter to protect the trees on the land. Nineteen plots were allocated to this village: the largest allocation to any single household was 33 ha; the smallest was 15 ha. Mrs K., with a family of nine grown children, has a rather large plot. When asked how her family protects it, she says they have built a small hut on the land, and one person is posted there keeping watch, when the weather is fine, to make sure no one comes and cuts any wood. Her household earns 325,000 VND per month for doing this. Mrs. T., by contrast, was not allocated any forest land. It would be difficult, it is true, for her household to free up a member to stand guard over a stand of trees for long periods: she herself, the head of the household, is disabled by polio and walks with difficulty. The two other adults in the household, her younger sister and her brother-in-law, have their hands full with two young children and most of the agricultural tasks—although Mrs. T. herself does manage to do some work tending the coffee plants behind their house. This family lives in a one-room, one-bed house. When asked why she was not allocated a forest plot, Mrs. T. said no one had ever asked her if she wanted one. The People's Committee had held a meeting and allocated the land very quickly, and "many people are away from the village for several days at a time tending their upland plots (ray), so they could not be here when the meeting was held."
possibly marginalising themselves further through distancing themselves from decision-making processes within their communities.

2.1.2 Migrants to the Uplands

In some project communes, in-migration over the years has resulted in the presence of individuals or communities from the lowlands whose livelihoods differ somewhat from those of the indigenous groups. Migration to the uplands began prior to the period of economic renovation (đổi mới) as an organised government programme, with land offered to (primarily) Kinh migrants from the lowlands, sent to 'new economic zones' to open up and develop the more remote areas. Some of these immigrants are now well-established within the communes where they live. Since restrictions on travel were lifted in the late 1980s, a wave of spontaneous migration (of Kinh but also of minorities from Northern Vietnam) has overtaken the organised migrations and is currently causing significant social changes within the communes where it occurs.

2.1.2.1 Established Kinh in Upland Communes

In upland ethnic minority communes, the key players in commerce at commune level are often the few Kinh residents of the commune or district. These are people who may have been sent from lowland areas up to three decades ago to develop the uplands. Many have developed very basic commercial interests to supplement their agricultural production and are now concentrated in commune centres, where they are the proprietors of shops selling basic necessities such as oil and salt. Their activities often extend to the sale of agricultural inputs and the purchase of local produce. In addition, they frequently sell rice or other goods on credit in shortage periods: thus, although these people act as middlemen in the limited commercial transactions of upland areas, they are also considered by some local people to play an important role in sustaining them through times of hardship.

Other Kinh residents of upland communes are teachers, assigned to teach in minority villages. Due to their frequent travel outside their villages, some Kinh teachers involve themselves in trade to supplement their teachers' salaries.

In many places these same Kinh in-migrants play prominent roles in the administration of their communes. This issue is discussed in greater detail in the section that follows, on ethnic minority issues.

⇒ In upland minority communes it is common to find some Kinh residents who have been established for relatively long periods of time within the communes. They tend to hold dominant positions in commerce, education and administration.
2.1.2.2 Spontaneous In-migration

Some upland communes within the project area are currently experiencing rapid in-migration. Two communes visited during the field study (Dak Nhau Commune, Bu Dang District, and Tan Hoa Commune, Dong Phu District, both in Binh Phuoc Province) where in-migration is ongoing. Migrants—most of them spontaneous—continue to arrive in both of these districts at a rapid rate (see box opposite). Many are from ethnic minority groups from the northern provinces—primarily Tay and Nung. Other immigrants encountered were urban Kinh from Ho Chi Minh City. In the two communes visited where in-migration was prevalent, the migrants had only arrived in many cases in the last three to five years, and had yet to reap their harvests; their main intended sources of income, though, are cash crops (coffee, rubber, cashew, and pepper).

Factors pushing migrants from other rural areas include limited agricultural land and little opportunity to make a better life from agriculture alone in their home areas. Spontaneous migrants are often motivated to select certain destinations because of networks of friends and relatives who have migrated to the chosen area. Within the chosen areas, they tend to favour locations with better access to road networks, and where infrastructure is better established.

Box 4: Rapid Influx
In the two communes visited in Binh Phuoc Province, the completion of the main road into the province in 1998 coincided nicely with impressive rises in the price of coffee. The combination has created a migration boom in the area. Provincial authorities put the number of spontaneous migrants into the province each year at 30,000 persons. Organised migration, they say, is now very limited. Tan Hoa Commune in Dong Phu District reported receiving 200 permanent settlers from Cao Bang and Lang Son Provinces in 1998, and a further 70-80 seasonal migrants in the same period.

Box 5: Urban to Rural Migrant
The motorcycle taxi driver explains, as he drives up to Dak Nhau Commune (Bu Dang District), how he came to settle here. Until three years ago he worked as a truck driver based in Ho Chi Minh City. Attracted by the prospects of growing coffee, he bought land and settled here with his wife and four children in 1996. Last year the family reaped their first harvest. While he is concerned at the drop in coffee prices this year (he is expecting to get 12,000 VND/kg of coffee this year against about 20,000 VND/kg in 1997 and 1998), he remains optimistic and says life is better for him here than it was in the city.

Within the communes studied, most migrants claimed to have established themselves by purchasing or renting land from indigenous peoples. There were also a very few informants—some of the earliest arrivals—who reported having been allocated land ("land that no one was using," said migrant informants, or "unoccupied land"). These earlier arrivals may now also be enlarging their holdings through purchase. Some migrants may wage labour until they earn enough to establish their own holdings. Seasonal migration to these areas for wage labour is also common. The Provincial People's Committee of Binh Phuoc also cited a problem of spontaneous migrants clearing (and effectively

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11 There is a history of Tay and Nung groups settling in the south from 1954, and many of the more recent Tay and Nung immigrants have established themselves in the new areas through contacts with relatives and friends who have been there much longer.
claiming) forest land, and expressed great concern with preventing this from happening any further.\footnote{See Hardy, p. 328.}

However, the field study did not produce clear evidence of actual conflicts arising over land use between established and new land users. This was primarily due to the limited coverage that the study was able to make of in-migrant communities.\footnote{Of the two communes where in-migration was on-going, only one had a mixture of in-migrants and indigenous people, and the other was made up entirely of in-migrants.} Within the two communes covered in the study, no respondents spoke of conflicts arising in the course of land transfers, nor was any evidence given of conflicts over land rights caused by earlier government allocations of plots to in-migrants under organised programmes of migration. Other commentators have found it equally difficult to point to clear evidence of conflicts arising in the allocation of land to in-migrants, but it is clear that this issue has yet to be adequately explored.\footnote{See A. Hardy, \textit{Red Hills, (Migration to the Upland Frontier)}, forthcoming.}

However, these movements are clearly creating uncertainty for the indigenous groups living in these areas. Local people in these areas tend to be relatively poor indigenous minority groups, who either continue to live a very simple subsistence existence, or are experiencing some of the problems, described above, associated with the transition to 'fixed settlement'. When spontaneous migrants arrive, indigenous minority groups appear to sell or rent land situated in areas that are (or become) relatively 'central,' through the construction of roads or commercial centres. They thus gradually install themselves on the parts of their own holdings that have, through infrastructure improvements, become by definition more 'marginal'. There was some suggestion that indigenous groups are moving through preference away from areas as they open up and become more commercial, but other sources suggest some indigenous minorities may sell their entire holdings and move to towns in the highlands in response to the arrival of in-migrants in their areas.\footnote{Curiously, no indigenous people interviewed in Dak Nhau Commune claimed to have sold (or transferred) any of their land to in-migrants, and none were landless. Both M’Nong and Stieng villages in this commune are situated on the periphery of the commune, however.} Provincial authorities in Binh Phuoc say that land allocation in that province has not been completed because many people—the Tay and Nung, it is claimed—have cleared land categorised as forest land, and are now using it for agriculture. The provincial authorities cannot forcibly remove these people, whose livelihoods now depend on this land. However, nor can the province change land categories without a ruling from central levels.

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**Box 7: Different views on land acquisition and in-migration**

Some migrants claimed that indigenous people are very willing to sell land, either because they do not have the labour or the industry to farm it themselves, or in some cases, because they are taken by the sudden visible wealth in the area and are eager to exchange their land for short-term gains, such as motorbikes. Others—notably indigenous people themselves—claimed indigenous groups are much more wary of losing their land. One district leader in Lac Duong District, from the local Cil ethnic group, stated that within his district, local people will only rent out land to incoming migrants, but never sell it.

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**Box 8: Different attitudes towards in-migrants and indigenous ethnic groups**

In interviews with cadres and households themselves, clear distinctions were made between the migrant communities—"driven", "ambitious" and "industrious"—and the indigenous groups in the area—"poor cousins", "slow to adapt" and uninterested in or unable to improve their household economies.
Indigenous ethnic groups in areas of high in-migration are without doubt the most vulnerable communities within the project area. Already the poorest households and villages within in-migrant communes, with difficulty in adapting to new agricultural techniques, they are subject to pressures to sell land to in-migrants. This may place them at the periphery of their own communes or may cause them to leave their communes altogether.

Contrary to the proposal made in CBRIP preparation documents, proof of completion of land allocation is not a sufficient criterion to identify in-migrant communes where populations are clearly and permanent established. As indigenous people are selling land of their own free will, the completion of land allocation does not necessarily guarantee that the community will remain well-established if and when land allocation is completed.

2.1.3 Communities in Lowland and Coastal Areas

Poor local conditions limit the success of agriculture and fishing, the main sources of income in these communities. Agricultural production is limited by poor, insufficient tracts of land, and inadequate irrigation. Some poor communes near the coast face persistent difficulties of salinated drinking water and irrigation supply. Coastal communities reliant on fishing are faced by increasingly limited stocks. Harsh climactic conditions—the floods that afflicted lowland and coastal project communes from Thua Thien Hue to Khanh Hoa are an extreme but clear illustration of this—mean that people periodically suffer tremendous setbacks as they try to improve their well-being.

Some poor lowland and coastal communes in the project area are new economic zones. For example, Loc Binh Commune in Thua Thien Hue is a community of people who moved in 1975 from an adjacent commune due to land constraints. These communities tend to be built on marginal tracts of land which are highly susceptible to flooding or other natural calamities.

Box 9: Flood Damage in Loc Binh Commune

Loc Binh is a poor and small coastal commune of Phu Loc District, which is about 40 km from Hue city to the south-east. Until mid 1999, there was no vehicle access to the commune. People’s main mode of transportation was by boat. In the third quarter of 1999, the government invested approximately 10 billion VND to construct a road 14 km in length from National Highway No. 1 to Loc Binh. Before the floods in November 1999, 7 km had been completed and the rest had been cleared and levelled and a sewer system put in place. Thankfully, the commune suffered no loss of life in the two floods in late 1999. However, much property was swept away or seriously damaged. The road was damaged in 30 places. Main bridges and sewers were swept away. The road is being cleared again, but people have gone back in the meantime to relying on their boats. (Nguyen Van Linh)

Photo: This bridge in Loc Binh Commune, Phu Loc, collapsed in the flooding of November 1999. Completed in the same year, it had barely been used. (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

CBRIP preparation documents propose that the satisfactory resolution of all land rights issues be used as a criteria to prove that community members are capable of putting forward proposals that reflect the genuine long-term development objectives of the group as a whole. The World Bank would not finance infrastructure, it is suggested, for newly created communities under the government’s voluntary resettlement programme unless these issues have been satisfactorily resolved (PCD, October 9, 1998, p.12).

Moreover, if settlement of land rights issues is to be used in all project communes to approve CBRIP funds, many communities that are ‘permanently established’ would be excluded from the CBRIP. Land allocation is incomplete in many areas where communities are long- and well-established and there is no in-migration, due to lack of funding, lack of time, capacity and staff to conduct surveys, and lack of commitment to or interest in carrying out allocation.
The better-off households report some improvement in their well-being in recent years. Those with the resources have been able to make some improvements in their household welfare in recent years. In the Cham Commune of Phan Hoa for example, it was reported that some households have significantly increased their stock of animals (cows, goats) and have managed to commercialise their handicraft production (see box above).

However, the poorest households in lowland and coastal areas lack the resources to improve their economic well-being, and are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks. Those households lacking capital to invest in agricultural production are among the poorer households in these areas. In addition, households in lowland and coastal areas must cover the costs for education and healthcare, which poorer households struggle to meet. Sudden expenditures to treat illness, or chronic ill health in the family, is a severe drain on the resources of such households. The poorest households in lowland areas are likely to be indebted, and to resort to strategies such as land rental to cope, thus reinforcing the cycle of debt.

As in the uplands, wage labour is used as a coping strategy for poor households, but creates increasing opportunities for the young and better-off to leave the community. Wage labour in poorer households takes young husbands away from their households, leaving wives to cope alone with raising children and agricultural tasks; it also takes children of poor households out of school and into the working world at early ages. As in the uplands, key adults within the households may be away from decision-making within the community over long periods of time. In many households it is becoming increasingly common for young people to leave the community on a more permanent basis, seeking work in the cities. Better-off households, however, are not weakened by the departure of a family member as are the poorer households; rather, it is seen as an opportunity for that person to make a better life elsewhere. Informants in Loc Binh Commune (in Thua Thien Hue) said that migration to the south has become even more popular from that commune in the wake of the severe floods in November 1999.

\[\Rightarrow\] Coastal and lowland communities are disadvantaged overall by poor agricultural opportunities and harsh climatic conditions. Communes within new economic zones, built on marginal land, may feel the worst effects of these poor conditions.

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Footnote 18: These total costs are higher than in upland areas, where minorities are exempt from tuition fees (although 'contributions' for school upkeep, books and clothes are still considerable) and some health costs.
Within these communities, some households are managing to slowly develop their household economies.

2.2 Ethnic Minority Issues

2.2.1 Ethnic Minority Groups in the Project Area

As a general rule, geographic remoteness corresponds to the degree to which minority groups have contact with the Kinh majority. In turn, this influences the degree to which they are familiar with the Vietnamese language, Kinh cultural norms, and of course, government policies and programmes.

Physical space distances ethnic groups from the Kinh majority; but so too does cultural difference. The Dao and H'Mong can be put with some confidence at the most isolated end of the spectrum; so, arguably, can many Co Tu and Xe Dang communities. At the other end of the spectrum are the Cham, who have lived for centuries alongside the Vietnamese, are very familiar with Kinh norms and share similar livelihood strategies, but retain a distinct language and cultural identity.

The table below shows the ethnic groups within the project area according to the terrain they customarily inhabit, and the level of familiarity with the lowland majority. The geographical classifications used are those commonly accepted by government to classify communes.

One of these categories, 'high mountainous' or 'deep-lying and remote' requires some clarification. The H'Mong and Dao in Thanh Hoa and Nghe An tend to inhabit remote high mountain areas. In the south-central region, however, 'remote and deep-lying' may refer to inaccessibility rather than elevation: this is particularly evident in plateau areas in Binh Phuoc and parts of Lam Dong. The degree of cultural remoteness among such people is still high, but perhaps not as high as among the Dao and H'Mong.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 11: Ethnic Minority Groups in the Project Area</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Terrain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Features</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORTH-CENTRAL REGION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanh Hoa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nghe An</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOUTH-CENTRAL REGION</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thua Thien Hue</td>
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<td>Quang Nam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quang Ngai</td>
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<td>Binh Dinh</td>
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<td>Phu Yen</td>
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</table>
Although there are 54 officially recognised ethnic groups in Vietnam, local ethnic identities are much more numerous and more complex. Local distinctions exist to subdivide the larger ethnic groups; in turn the ways in which people view their own identities are constantly changing. At local levels:

- People may use the name of their subgroup, but deny any association with the larger group within which they are officially included: examples of this are the Pa Co (within the project area they can be found in A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue), supposedly a subgroup of the Ta Oi, but who consider themselves as a separate group; and the Cil (in Lac Duong District in Lam Dong) who insisted they were neither Co Ho nor M'Nong—the two groups into which ethnology textbooks place them—but purely Cil.

Table 12: Small Local Ethnic Groups in the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Local Group</th>
<th>Main Ethnic Group</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ca Dong (or Ka Dong)</td>
<td>Xe Dang</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cham Hroi</td>
<td>Cham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chau Ma</td>
<td>Ma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cil</td>
<td>Co Ho or M'Nong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Lai</td>
<td>Tho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa Co</td>
<td>Ta Oi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa Hy</td>
<td>Ta Oi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rut</td>
<td>Chut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To Rin</td>
<td>Co Ho</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

source: Dang Nghiem Van, 2000

- Ethnic groups may accept a commonly-used name they wouldn’t use among themselves in order to simply things for outsiders: for example, while the terms Man and Meo are commonly used among lowlanders to refer to the Dao and H'Mong respectively, some Dao and H'Mong do not like the use of these terms (both are considered derogatory); other people from the same ethnic groups will use these terms with outsiders in order to simplify matters.

While minority groups are ethnically distinct, they have many cultural and linguistic similarities. Some of these similarities may be rooted in a common ethnic origin. Many groups can mutually understand each other; they may also have similar customs or even shared traditions and festivals. The Muong, for example, are considered by some ethnologists to be ‘highland Kinh’ who went to make a living in the mountains while their Kinh relatives stayed in the lowlands, and their language is very close to Vietnamese. Similarly, the Rac Glai are the highland cousins of the lowland Cham, and the two languages, it was claimed in a Cham commune, are

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* denotes in-migrants.
** North-central region only

N.b. included in this table are 30 ethnic groups and nine ‘small local groups’ (following Dang Nghiem Van, 2000)

sources: Social Assessment and MPI questionnaire
mutually comprehensible. Their cultural ties are also evident in religious ceremonies and festivals in which both groups traditionally participate. Ethnic groups within the same language group may share important forms of social organisation; these may also, however, be found among groups which are not linguistically alike, as described below.

**Similarities may also be rooted in generations of interaction, even if there is no common ethnic link.** Groups which live in close proximity trade and learn innovations from one another. They may have acquired methods of cultivation, forms of dress and customs from one another. For example, Kh'Mu women (though mainly the older women now) wear virtually the same dress as the Thai in Nghe An and Thanh Hoa—a slim embroidered skirt and tight bodice. In this case, though, there is no ethnic link between the two groups. Rather, the Kh Mu live alongside the Thai, Kh Mu women do not weave and thus they purchase their cloth from the Thai. Minorities of the Tay Nguyen plateau (the Xe Dang, Gia Rai, Ba Na, and Ede in the western uplands of the south-central project region) have cultural influences that go back historically to the domination of the Cham under the Champa kingdom.

This process of one group influencing another—including but not confined to the influences that the Kinh majority have on these other groups—is ongoing (see box above).

**In areas of in-migration, there are ongoing changes in ethnic identities.** Many of the northern minorities now found in the south-central region of the project area, in Lam Dong and Binh Phuoc Provinces (Tay and Nung, but also Dao and H'Mong migrants), come with many of the same ambitions as their Kinh counterparts. There is some suggestion that they may be taking more marginal tracts of land than their Kinh neighbours—but there are other reports that some are beginning to consider themselves as migrants first and minorities second.

- **There are 30 officially recognised ethnic minority groups in the project area.**
- **In general, the cultural remoteness of these groups from the Kinh majority is also a function of their physical remoteness from lowland communities; however, there is also one group (the Cham) which is ethnically distinct from, but has lived alongside, the Kinh for many centuries.**
- **Although distinct, there are many similarities between the ethnic groups, particularly those which share a common ethnic origin or have lived in close proximity to one another for long periods. These similarities provide opportunities to be built upon for planning purposes.**
2.2.2 Ethnic Minorities as Stakeholders

2.2.2.1 Government Approach to Ethnic Minority Development

The fixed settlement programme, as described in the previous section, defines the broad strokes of the government’s approach to minority development. This includes discouraging slash and burn cultivation, while encouraging more stable and settled agricultural practices for ethnic minorities; it involves taking steps to integrate ethnic minorities into the economic and social life of the nation, by providing incentives for them to grow cash crops and bringing them closer to social services such as health care and education.

In many areas this approach is highly appreciated by the people it targets, and great changes have taken place in many ethnic minority areas in recent years. Many minority groups practising slash and burn cultivation have themselves recognised the limitations of these practices in situations when there are too many people and too little land; many minorities also view an education in Vietnamese, and greater contact with other services of the State, as being important to their children’s future. In the field study, several villages reported volunteering themselves to be resettled to areas where irrigation is feasible, and where there is greater contact with social services.

However, there are also a number of shortcomings to the Government approach to ethnic minority development. The government approach begins with the notion that many ethnic minority practices are ‘backward’ (lāc hâu). This term is written into policy: the general objective of the 135 Programme, for example, reads:

“To quickly improve the material and spiritual life of the ethnic minority people in the mountainous, deep-lying and remote communes with special difficulties; create conditions for these areas to overcome poverty, backwardness and underdevelopment and integrate themselves into the overall national development, this contributing to the maintenance of social order and safety, national security and defence.”

This approach implies that minorities are less advanced than, rather than culturally different from, the national majority. In practice, it has resulted in the approaches and preferences of the majority taking precedence over the needs and priorities of ethnic minorities. Thus, for example, minorities who live in stilt houses are encouraged to build ‘modern’ houses on the ground, although their own architectural designs are more suited to the conditions in which they live. Moreover, many minorities have internalised a notion of their own people as being ‘backward’.

Furthermore, this approach (“improving the spiritual life of minority people”) discourages beliefs and practices which are felt to hinder the progress of minorities and their integration into national life. For many years, local cadres have acted on the basis that there are good customs (phòng tục), to be kept, and bad customs or superstitions (me tin) to be done away with. The motives underlying this approach may be well-meaning, as the example in the box below suggests.

20 In English, the term has a very derogatory connotation; in Vietnamese, opinions vary as to whether it is derogatory or neutral. In the field visits, however, the research team agreed that they would feel uncomfortable referring to minority people as ‘lāc hâu’ in their presence as it would be offensive to them.

However, in some areas these changes have been imposed rather than encouraged; as a consequence, many ethnic minority groups are hesitant to speak of, or defend, their beliefs and traditions.

**Box 13: Illness at their Heels**

In this remote Xe Dang Commune, illness is a great threat. In early 1998, acute malaria caused nearly 100 deaths in the commune. At the time there was not yet a health clinic or health worker in the commune (a commune clinic was built in late 1999). Faced with carrying seriously ill patients a two-day walk down to the district centre, with the risk of them dying on the way, most people turned to traditional explanations and treatments, and thus to sorcerers, who cure patients of illness by ridding them of the particular ‘ghost’ that has afflicted them. These ‘ghosts’ are so feared—and who would not fear a force capable of striking down 100 people with fever—that in the past, communities have sometimes moved away from the area where the ghost struck, in order to avoid further ill fortune.

The challenges to a programme of fixed settlement, then, are to make effective treatments accessible to people in remote areas...and, some believe, to do away with superstitions—sorcerers who have ‘the ghost’ on the tip of their tongue to threaten local people and make them move.

Nguyen Van Linh/Natasha Pairaudeau

⇒ The CBRIP is being implemented in a context where government development approaches often fail to value and make use of the local knowledge of ethnic minorities.

### 2.2.2.2 Ethnic Dynamics within the Project Communes

Communes within the project areas may be inhabited by a single ethnic group or a mix of ethnic groups. They may be:

- **Ethnically homogenous communes**: Greater community cohesion is the rule, although when some villages are very remote they may still regard themselves as not closely attached to the centre. In addition, people of the same line or clan may have interests that diverge just as much as, if not more than, people from different ethnic groups. In remote communes, villages may be so distant from the commune centre that it may be more convenient for them to use a health clinic in another commune. Moreover, they may consider their interests to be quite apart from those of people in the commune centre to whom they regard themselves as only administratively attached, regardless of any ethnic tie between themselves and people in their commune centre.

- **Ethnically heterogeneous communes in the north-central region**: These are commonly communes where one ethnic group inhabits a lower elevation, which for logistical reasons has become the commune centre, with the groups that inhabit higher elevations being more removed from the commune centre. In some communes the centres may be inhabited by Kinh people. Interests of the different ethnic groups—who for the most part form their own villages—are likely to diverge.

- **Ethnically heterogeneous communes in the south-central region**: Communes inhabited by large numbers of Kinh people, or ethnic groups from northern areas, suggest recent in-migration: as explained in the previous chapter, the interests and attitudes of these groups are likely to diverge considerably from the interests and attitudes of indigenous groups. Between indigenous minority groups in mixed communes in these areas, there may be greater levels of cohesion and consensus, as these groups will have lived alongside each other for longer periods of time, and be experiencing the same difficulties.

Some communes may be virtually homogeneous, except for very small numbers of ethnic groups within the population that are different from the
majority ethnic groups. Unless these are northern minorities in communes in the south-central region (again, suggesting in-migration to the communes), this indicates in-marriage of neighbouring ethnic groups into the majority group within a commune.

In general, in implementation of the CBRIP, community consensus can be expected to be stronger in ethnically homogenous communes, where community consultation will be assisted by a common language and shared cultural assumptions. However, ethnic links and shared histories also create similar interests and shared assumptions between different ethnic groups. Conversely, ethnic homogeneity does not guarantee consensus and shared interests within a community.

2.2.2.3 Representation of Ethnic Minorities within the Administration

Although it is commonly held that ethnic minorities are under-represented in local administrations, data from the questionnaire does not support this view. Rather, it shows that the percentage of Kinh cadres in the project area is low in comparison to the percentage of Kinh in the project area overall.

Table 13: Representation of Kinh Cadres within the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Project Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Kinh people</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Kinh cadres</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: Social assessment questionnaire*

Furthermore, the field study suggests that looking at representation merely in terms of ethnicity may be misleading. Having non-minority cadres in key positions in commune People's Committees sometimes does reflect control being actively taken out of the hands of ethnic groups. This occurs especially in situations where cadres are from outside the commune and therefore have less personal commitment to the commune. In other cases, though, especially in remote communes, Kinh cadres have reached their positions having spent long periods within the commune (and often have married within the community). Local ethnic minority communities themselves often acknowledge the need for administrative and Vietnamese language skills: in some communes in remote areas, minority cadres have themselves virtually 'contracted' the very few—literate—native speakers of Vietnamese in their midst to help them figure out regulations and write administrative reports, because they have difficulty carrying out these tasks. These same people may eventually find their way into the administration (see box below). They are likely to have a good understanding of community needs, and a much better understanding of the cultural priorities of ethnic minorities with their respective communes, than more recently appointed Kinh cadres.
Box 14: ‘Seconded’ to the Commune People’s Committee

The research team to Tra Nam Commune (Quang Nam Province) found that several Kinh schoolteachers—all of whom have been living in the commune for over 10 years—have been informally ‘seconded’ by the local Xe Dang people to help them with administrative tasks, and some of them are now being moved, with local support, into positions on the People’s Committees or People’s Councils. Tra My District authorities reported that in other communes in this district (within the project area: Tra Don, Tra Cang, and Tra Leng), school teachers who are long-standing residents have been similarly elected to administrative positions.

Mr. B. is a Kinh teacher who came from Thang Binh District up to Tra Nam Commune 10 years ago, and stood as a candidate for a seat in the commune People’s Council in late 1999. He was elected with 90% of the vote. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Lu, the (Xe Dang) president of the commune People’s Committee, remarked: “Headmaster B. is a university graduate who has ten years of experience working in this area. It is certain that B. can be a great help to the Xe Dang community [90% of the commune population] in implementing the CBRIP, because he is respected by all the community and he has the best educational, social and cultural knowledge of anyone in the commune. He will be a great help to us in his position”. (Dau Quoc Anh/Natasha Pairaudeau)

2.2.2.4 Language and Literacy

Literacy levels in Vietnamese among ethnic minorities are low.

Few ethnic minorities have a written language in which wide numbers of people are fluent. Those that have relatively high levels of literacy in their own languages, such as the Cham, also have high levels of literacy in Vietnamese.

Thai is often used as a common language among ethnic minorities in markets in the north-central region of the project area, although knowledge of Thai may not be widespread among H’Mong women. Between ethnic groups in the south-central region, Vietnamese is more likely to be used as the common language, even though knowledge of Vietnamese, particularly among people from more remote areas, may be quite poor.

Many minority languages are related, but not necessarily mutually comprehensible. The chart below lists the 30 ethnic groups in the project area according to the language groups to which they belong:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>H’Mong</th>
<th>Sino-Tibetan</th>
<th>Tay-Thai</th>
<th>Viet-Muong</th>
<th>Mon-Khmer</th>
<th>Malayo-Polynesian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H’Mong Dao</td>
<td>Hoa</td>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>Kinh</td>
<td>Kh-Mu</td>
<td>Ba Na</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dao</td>
<td>San Diu</td>
<td>Tay</td>
<td>Muong</td>
<td>O-Du</td>
<td>M’Nong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nung</td>
<td>Thu</td>
<td>Ta-Oi</td>
<td>Stieng</td>
<td>Cham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Chut</td>
<td>Co-Tu</td>
<td>Ma</td>
<td>Rac Glai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gie-Trieng</td>
<td>Co Ho</td>
<td>Chu Ru</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Xe-Dang</td>
<td>Co</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Hre</td>
<td>Van-Kieu Bru</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


⇒ There is little to be gained from translation of written materials into local languages.
⇒ For programming purposes, oral materials could be translated into Thai in the north-central region to cover a wide audience
⇒ In other areas, working in Vietnamese with oral translation at local levels would be the best approach to language barriers.
2.2.2.5 Local Beliefs

Although undoubtedly less prevalent than they may have been several decades ago, spiritual beliefs are still held strongly by many ethnic groups. The reasons why many ethnic minority groups have difficulties in expressing their own beliefs have already been mentioned. Across the south-central region of the project areas, in particular, there are prevalent beliefs about spirits. These spirits are understood to be attached to location; people are careful to avoid certain 'polluting' acts in some areas in order to prevent offence to the spirits, thus bringing misfortune. These beliefs make the placement of buildings and other types of infrastructure (especially health clinics, as death, bleeding, illness and childbirth are though to be very 'polluting') rather sensitive.

⇒ Although the degree to which spiritual beliefs are now important to local communities may vary greatly, they remain an important consideration in implementing the CBRIP. If local people are not properly consulted, infrastructure projects may not be fully successful, for reasons that may be difficult for outsiders to understand.

2.2.2.6 Traditional Leaders

Virtually every village visited for the field study had some type of traditional leader or gia lang. This includes minority and Kinh villages.

The Vietnamese term 'gia lang' actually refers to a number of different types of traditional leaders. Gia lang literally means village elder in Vietnamese. However, the gia lang the Social Assessment team met and interviewed were sometimes the oldest man in the village, and at other times a clan or other leader. They include, for example:

- A Muong gentleman in his 80s who was the village historian as much as a key decision-maker. He had served as the head of the traditional Muong administrative unit, as had his father before him.
- An ethnic Cil man in his late 50s in Lam Dong Province. He plays no role in the official administration now, but is a clan head and was (before 1975) the village leader, as was his father before him. He is still consulted on all important village decisions.
- A Cham elder who is also the Party leader of the commune. The village leader is at the forefront of decisions made in the commune, he says, but he also comes to him for guidance. In this Cham Bani (Islamic) community, priests also play an important guiding role within the community.

All these 'village elders' commonly have the respect and trust of their local communities. Men and women frequently spoke of their traditional leaders as having greater wisdom than others in the community. This had come to them through expertise living outside the commune (such as would be gained by war veterans), or through specialised knowledge and education.
The ability of gia lang to articulate the needs and priorities of their communities at commune level is limited. The 'constituency' of these men rarely reaches beyond the village level. Moreover, the extent to which local people are willing to give their gia lang a public profile varies from commune to commune. Some communities stated firmly that the role of gia lang is quite separate from administrative roles, while other gia lang have been elected to People's Councils, or otherwise included within the official channels through appointment to Party or mass organisation posts. In some villages, a gia lang led the village meeting held with the research team: this procedure was justified in these cases by the fact that the gia lang was also the head of the village People's Council or Party cell. In other villages, interviews with gia lang were conducted outside village meetings.

Gia Lang are traditional leaders of communities that customarily designate decision-making roles to men. All of the gia lang encountered in the field research were men. Their attachment to the more conservative elements of their own traditions may mean that they are not necessarily advocates of stronger roles for women within their communities.

⇒ Despite the evidence that traditional leaders play an active role in articulating local needs and priorities, CBRIP design needs to be very sensitive to the fact that these leaders are not always given high public profiles within their own communities.

⇒ The support of traditional leaders within the CBRIP may work in opposition to the promotion of greater inclusion of some groups in the project cycle.

2.2.2.7 Matrilocal Traditions

Several groups within the project area practice traditions of matrilocality and matrilineality. Matrilocality means that men go to live, upon marriage, in their wives' households; matrilineality is the practice of handing property from mother to daughter (rather than from father to son). In these circumstances, a young woman usually has the power to actively choose her partner (or, where arranged marriages still occur, of the bride's rather than the groom's side to make a proposal).

These practices are prevalent within several ethnic minority groups in the south-central region of the project area. In Cil and Cham ethnic groups included in the field study, men customary go to live with their wives upon marriage, and women's property rights are actively recognised within the community. Other groups have combined practices: these may be characterised by residence and property going to either sex, according to convenience, or by a maternal uncle holding an important role as decision maker in family matters.22

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22 These combined practices are taken by some observers to indicate the gradual replacement of matrilineal with patrilineal practices (see Dang Nghiem Van, 2000).
Table 15: Matrilocal and Matrilineal Ethnic Groups within the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice Ethnically</th>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matrilocal and matrilineal</td>
<td>Cham, Cham Hroi, Cil, Ede, M’Nong, O Du, Rac Giai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrilocal/patrilineal and</td>
<td>Ba Na, Chu Ru, Co Ho, Hre, Kh Mu, Pa Hy, Pa Co, Ta Oi, Xe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matrilocal/matrilineal</td>
<td>Dang, Xie Trieng</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The custom does not extend to women being the leaders within the community. During the field study, the Vietnamese term used to describe this tradition was mau he, meaning matriarchy; however, these communities are not really matriarchal. For example, traditional elders in both Cham and Cil communities are male; Cham religious leaders are male and men clearly play a leading role in community decision-making. It was observed anecdotally, however, in both Cham and Cil communities visited, that women within these communities are particularly confident and active within the community.

Box 16: Buying Husbands, Selling Sons

Mrs. K’Tu is from the Cil ethnic group and lives in a commune set in low hills roughly two hours’ drive (or, for her, a day’s walk) from Dalat City. She is 41 years old and has nine children. Her family residence card (ho khau) is in her husband’s name, as is their red book recording the family’s agricultural and forestry plots. This is despite the fact that in ethnic Cil custom, she says, Men have to follow their wives (phai theo vo). She was the only daughter in her parents’ house, so by Cil custom she should have taken her parents’ house. Her parents did not agree with her marriage, however, so she and her husband eloped, and bought land from his parents on which to build a house. When asked if it is more difficult to raise girls or boys in her community, the responds immediately, Girls, of course, because you have to buy sons (phai mua con trai)! Couples who have only sons, by contrast, have ‘lost their root’ (mat goc) and are in a weak position as they lose their sons at marriage. Her sons, however, often return to her household to help out. She is happy to have girls: when they marry and have children, the house is full, busy, and happy. Yes, she says, divorces are not unheard of in this commune, but people rarely look to the law when they divorce. If a man goes, he goes, but the women keep the children and the property—he leaves empty-handed.

Nguyen Thi Nghia/Natasha Paireudeau

Significantly, this practice makes women sometimes less vulnerable than in patrilineal and patrilocal traditions when the family breaks down. Matrilineality and matrilocality strengthen the circumstances somewhat for unwed mothers, divorcees and young widows. Importantly, divorced or abandoned women within these traditions keep their children and their property, unlike in patrilocal traditions in rural areas where women may have to leave their children to their estranged husbands, and move back to their own parents in their home villages. Young widows in matrilocal communities may still be faced with raising a family on their own, but, instead of living with their in-laws, they remain with their own relatives. Unwed mothers may meet with the disapproval of the community, but they are more likely to have a property base of their own.

Women’s customary property rights, however, are not recognised by the state. In communities visited for the field research where mau he is practised, ho khau residence registration books name the husband as the household head; red land allocation books have also been filled out in the husband’s name.

\[\Rightarrow\] Matrilineality and matrilocality are customary forms of social organisation that strengthen women’s position within the community and provide good support to women in vulnerable positions. It is in the interest of the CBRIP to recognise and support such practices wherever possible.
2.3 Poor and Vulnerable Groups

The first section of Part Two has already described the types of households that can be expected to be poor or vulnerable within the different geographic regions of the project area. These include:

- Households which lack the resources to succeed in intensive and/or commercial methods;
- Swidden farmers;
- Households and villages marginalised by distance;
- Indigenous communities in areas of in-migration;
- Inhabitants of new economic zones.

The second section has shown reasons why ethnic minorities can also be counted among the most poor and vulnerable people in the project area.

In addition, some types of households may carry a heavier burden of poverty than others. This is especially true for those households that do not fit in with social norms. It is often these social circumstances that contribute in the first place—either directly or indirectly—to poor access to resources.

Included in this category are certain types of women-headed households. This includes:

- **Unwed mothers**: Women who have been left by the fathers of their children to raise the children themselves—with no legal acknowledgement of the relationship—are ostracised, to varying extents, by their own communities. In addition to this, they often face the practical difficulties of raising children while being the sole adult labourer in the household.
- **Young widows**: If they are living in separate households from their parents (or in-laws), they face many of the same challenges as unwed mothers in supporting a family on their own; they are likely to receive more social and moral support from their communities, however, than unwed mothers. Once widowed, rural women are unlikely to remarry.
- **Divorces**: Divorce is rare in rural communities, for the very reason that it leaves rural women with few viable alternatives. When rural women do divorce, they customarily return to their own parents or home villages. Although some rural divorces are conducted with reference to national law, with divorcees obtaining an equal share of property and custody of children, it is not uncommon to find women who are disenfranchised from the community and have had to leave their children with their husband’s family. Such cases may be particularly prevalent among more remote minority groups (with patrilocal traditions) who rely to a greater extent on customary practice rather than civil legislation.

In addition, social norms, age, and accepted gender roles within the household result in some household members bearing the brunt of poverty within their own households more than other household members.

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23 In communities with matrilocal traditions, women are likely to be less vulnerable should they be divorced or widowed. This is explained in further detail in the section on ethnic minorities.
Women in all households carry the heavier burden within the household in coping with poverty. The dual burdens of agricultural labour and housework fall overwhelmingly on the shoulders of women. Among other problems, this leads to physical overwork and limited time for social activities or participation in meetings and decision-making fora. Those who must sell wage labour earn less than men, and considerably less in lowland and coastal areas (see table below).

Table 16: Wage Labour Rates by Gender within Project Communes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Men (VND)</th>
<th>Women (VND)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high and remote</td>
<td>13,973</td>
<td>10,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountainous</td>
<td>14,703</td>
<td>11,745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowland</td>
<td>13,765</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal</td>
<td>12,800</td>
<td>10,263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average rate</td>
<td>13,810</td>
<td>10,695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.b. rates given for one day's labour excluding lunch
source: Social Assessment questionnaire

Children often bear the brunt of poverty in poor rural households. In upland ethnic minority areas, children have difficulty continuing school beyond primary levels due to language difficulties (they must often repeat classes), distance from secondary schools, and household labour demands. In lowland areas, labour demands as well as higher costs of education prevent poor children from continuing their education to higher levels. In turn, children are the first to suffer the effects of poor nutrition and poor access to adequate health services.

The disabled are likely to be among the poorest members of the community. In rural communities the disabled are unable to contribute to household well-being to the same extent as the able-bodied. They often find it difficult to marry, remaining in their parents' households into adulthood, or, if they do marry, they may find partners who are disabled themselves. These individuals, but also these types of households, are routinely among the most disadvantaged.

Elderly households, although rare in rural areas, may be particularly vulnerable. In upland communities where traditions of extended families remain strong, it is uncommon to find elderly couples living apart from younger generations, but in some cases this may occur. The departure of younger generations from poor lowland and coastal communities to seek work elsewhere results in greater numbers of elderly households in these types of project communes.

⇒ In order to ensure project benefits reach the most marginalised, the CBRIP must explicitly address the needs and priorities of the poorest and most vulnerable households and people in the project area.
⇒ Rural poverty is often associated with a lack of available labour within the households, and thus the poor households identified here will often be the least able to spared labour to work on the CBRIP.
Part Three describes the roles of key players in implementing infrastructure works within communes. Different players are involved in infrastructure works, depending on whether the works are:

- Formal government projects, built with external funding and assistance;
- Works financed and implemented by local people, but motivated by government; or
- Works financed without government funding and built entirely by local people.

The first section briefly describes these three types of infrastructure works, and aims to clarify what is meant by the term ‘capacity’ in relation to these works. In the second section, key players in the different types of infrastructure works are identified, strengths in implementing, operating and maintaining government or externally-funded programmes are highlighted, and elements integral to successful organisation and implementation of infrastructure works from grassroots level are emphasised.
3 PART THREE: KEY PLAYERS IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 ‘Projects’ and Local Works

When authorities and local people were asked to speak about the small-scale infrastructure works with which they had been involved, it became evident to the research team that ‘projects’ (du an) were being automatically understood as government initiatives, while many other works were going completely unmentioned. The research teams walked along footpaths, crossed simple bridges, and saw traditional communal houses and basic village classrooms that local people did not think to count as ‘infrastructure’. Once the teams expressed an explicit desire to discuss ‘things people do themselves’, as well as government programmes and those projects that lie somewhere in-between, the picture changed significantly.

Infrastructure works within the communes fall roughly into three different categories:

1. **Projects built with external assistance.** These include those funded through government programmes, those funded with bi- or multilateral assistance, and NGO projects.
2. **Locally-financed works motivated by government policy.** This includes physical infrastructure the construction of which has been motivated by government commitments to provide the necessary services. Commune schools and village classrooms\(^2\) were the main examples encountered in the field study.
3. **Works financed and built entirely by local people.** Examples of such works were found in every commune visited in the field study. Simple, locally-built infrastructure works are constructed with no reference to government for several reasons (see box below).

**Box 17: What Motivates People to Built their Own Simple Infrastructure?**

Simple infrastructure may be financed and built entirely by local people:

- to fulfil customary community religious or cultural purposes: such as communal houses (nha rong) or religious buildings;
- as traditional schemes with local technologies and materials: these, such as bamboo gravity drinking water systems, are the precursors to the physical infrastructure now provided in other places through government programmes;
- in the absence of government infrastructure construction: communes which do not yet have electrical connections, for example, and villages and households which cannot afford the costs of connecting from the commune centre, may use small, privately funded hydropower generators to bring power to their communities. In some places these amount to private electricity networks running throughout the village. Wells are also often built privately by individual households, or by clusters of households; or
- because they are not funded under government programmes: bridges are included by government within road networks, but many remote upland villages are accessed by crossing streams or rivers situated off the main road networks. Wooden or bamboo bridges (or sometimes ferry services\(^2\)) are sometimes constructed by the local community in these cases. Footpaths are not routinely funded through government either, and are thus cleared and maintained entirely at local level.

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\(^{24}\) Primary schools covering grades 1-5 are located in or near to communes centres. Some communes have lower secondary schools (grades 6-9) but this is less common. Increasingly, classrooms are being built in villages in order for young children to be able to attend the lowest grades without having to travel long distances. Village classrooms (lop hoc) are satellites of the central commune school (truong hoc), and teachers in village classrooms are supervised by the head teacher of the central school.

\(^{25}\) A service also organised and paid for by villagers through local contributions, in the case witnessed by the research team.
While the capacity to implement, operate and maintain government or external projects was relatively low in many communes, another type of capacity—the local capacity to organise and implement infrastructure works from grassroots level—was quite strong in communes visited in the field study. Moreover, communes with no road access (or, to a lesser extent, seasonal road access), where the benefits of infrastructure projects and economic transition have been the slowest to reach, are the very regions where self-reliance, and the incidence of simple works organised within the community, are the highest.

⇒ An opportunity to build upon local self-reliance exists alongside the need to improve local capacity to implement government projects.

3.2 Key Players in the Different Types of Infrastructure Works

3.2.1 In Projects Built with External Assistance

These projects are most often characterised by plans and priorities that have been determined from higher levels before they are implemented in the villages. The exceptions are some NGO projects which tend to operate much more closely at commune and village levels, beginning with the drawing up development plans.

District Departments of Planning and Investment currently play the lead role in planning infrastructure projects within their respective communes. They rely on their respective Infrastructure Bureaux at district level (Phong Giao Thong va Xay Dung Co Ban) for implementation. District-level People’s Committees are in charge of project management throughout the project cycle, and villages and communes must refer to them for any maintenance that cannot be done at local level.

Cadres working within district Infrastructure Bureaux who were interviewed in the field study were technically trained, but inexperienced in community development approaches. Moreover, there appears to be little co-ordination between their technical work and social mobilisation efforts of mass organisations.

Evidence of very limited implementation of government programmes in the most remote communes was attributed in such communes to the low motivation of district-level authorities to travel to these communes. There are no financial incentives for district-level cadres to reach the distant communes, and long periods away from the district may take them away from small-scale business or other income-earning activities used to supplement state salaries.

As a consequence of top-down management and directives from district level, Commune People’s Committees lack experience in management of government projects. However, there is widespread recognition at district level that more responsibility needs to be placed in the hands of the commune. Districts, however, are unsure how to go about this. Many district level cadres expressed a wish to hand greater responsibility over to communes, but are uncertain about communes’ abilities to take on this work. Those districts that have tried to hand
responsibilities to the communes have in some cases taken it back again as they felt the communes were not handling the duties well. A top-down approach also creates heavy workloads for the district. Said one Infrastructure Bureau chief, “I do everything from design to audit—but I would prefer just to manage.”

**Nonetheless**, the basic structures are in place to pass responsibility for management, implementation and accounting down to commune levels. Communes have accounts in district treasuries, and their own accountants at commune level. They may also, as mentioned below, have persons who work at commune and village levels on *ad hoc* management and inspection boards.

**On a project-by-project basis, a person or persons within the commune are appointed to be commune-level representatives (can bo giao thong va xay dung) of the district Infrastructure Bureaux.** Those appointed to these positions are Commune People’s Committee members(s), who work part time and are paid expressly for this work (in Thanh Hoa Province, payments of 40,000-180,000 VND per month were reported). These people are primarily contact persons at local levels, responsible for organising local labour contributions.

**In some projects, there exist inspection boards, with representatives from village and commune level.** This is in line with Decree 24. However, these did not exist in every village nor for every project, and in many cases inspection was being done by cadres alone.

Commune mass organisations do not appear to be currently involved in any way in infrastructure projects, except in some NGO projects. They do however play a role in mobilising and informing people on other issues; the Women’s Union, Youth Union, and Fatherland Front were repeatedly stated to be the most active mass organisations.

**Positions on People’s Committees and in mass organisations in some communes are held by a small group of closely related people.** The research teams visited several communes in which the head of the Women’s Union was the wife of the Commune People’s Committee chairman, and other relatives led the mass organisations. The same pattern was often noted at village level. While it is clear in some communes where cadres are closely related that they represent the interests of a narrow group of people, in some minority communes where proficiency in Vietnamese is low, this matter is more difficult to judge (see box above).

**Women are especially poorly represented within formal institutions at village and commune levels.** It is very rare for women to hold positions other than posts within the Women’s Union.
Table 17: Women’s Representation in Commune-Level Institutions

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall percentage of female leaders in project area</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of communes in the project area with more than 2 female leaders</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest number of female leaders in a project commune</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest number of female leaders in a project commune</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*source: social assessment questionnaire*

⇒ The will to hand greater responsibility for implementation and management over to commune-level authorities exists in many districts, and should prove to be an asset in implementation of the CBRIP, as long as the project provides clear guidelines as to how this responsibility can be handed over effectively.

⇒ Players exist at commune levels and below, whose experience—albeit limited—is appropriate to tasks required in implementing the CBRIP from commune level. This experience can and should be built upon.

⇒ Strengths of mass organisations in mobilising local people for other types of activities are another opportunity for implementing the CBRIP well.

⇒ Because of the risk that cadres at commune and village levels may only represent the interests of a narrow group of people in some communes, the inclusion of non-officials in management and maintenance of the CBRIP is vital.

3.2.2 In Locally-Financed Works Motivated by Government Policy

In most of the communes visited, primary level classrooms had been built by local people using their own funds. The classrooms are built on the understanding that, if the local people provide the structure, district education authorities will provide a teacher.

Organisation and management of these works is generally done from village level. In the examples discussed in the field study, management of these works was undertaken by village leaders, with the active involvement of teachers and parents of school children in design and construction of the classrooms, and subsequent maintenance. In some villages, only parents of school-aged children contributed to construction; in others, all households were asked to make a contribution. The quality of such classrooms varied from very simple shelters (see photo below) to a sturdy wooden Thai stilt house which had been purchased (at considerable cost) by villagers from a household which had left the village.

Photo: A very basic education: a teacher and his classroom in Tan Hoa Commune, Dong Phu District, Binh Phuoc Province. The classroom was built by Tay and Nung in-migrants. (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

⇒ This arrangement, when the provision of teachers can be guaranteed, appears to work well as a way of encouraging local people to construct and in some cases cover the costs of simple infrastructure. It also implies that without such guarantees, people will be unwilling to construct schools or clinics.

⇒ Villages constructing such works are able to develop workable maintenance systems for these projects.

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*26 Responses based on asking communes to state gender of leaders of the People's Committee, People's Council, Party and mass organisations at commune level.*
3.2.3 In Works Financed and Built Entirely by Local People

Most works financed and built by local people are organised from village level, but they may also be organised inter-village, or by a whole commune. The latter is more common in communes of uniform ethnicity, where a common cultural or religious need creates closer community cohesion.

Box 19: 'Respected People'
When asked about the possibility of appointing or electing non-officials to project management boards, respondents in Vinh Son and Tra My said that it is possible, and they do it already for works they construct themselves. Many people suggested that ‘respected people’ (nguoi tin nghiém) who were trusted locally should be selected for these positions. ‘Respected people’ include village elders (gia lang) and clan leaders (chu ho), but also people with high levels of education including young graduates who have returned to their communities. Such people may have publicly pointed out weaknesses in the administration in the past when others felt unable to do so. Said one man, ‘It is only these people who can prevent corruption.’

Examples of this type of project which were discussed in the field study often had well-organised management boards. Positions were elected and the makeup of the boards depended on the type of works constructed. Thus, to serve a cluster of Ba Na households in Vinh Son Commune (Binh Dinh), the households concerned elected the most educated man among themselves to chair the board, a woman as a cashier and a village elder (gia lang). As this was an arrangement between households that did not extend to the whole village, it was felt there was no need to include the village leader. In Tra Nam Commune (Quang Nam), a bridge construction committee to repair a bridge across a stream to serve a whole village included the village leader, a gia lang and several villagers who did not hold official administrative positions.

Local consultation on these works tends to be extensive, and local people are well aware of many aspects of the construction of these works. As they are organised and implemented from local levels, general knowledge exists within villages about the works, and meetings appear to be organised and well-attended. The small scale of the works and levels of local awareness make it relatively easy to come to local agreements regarding contributions and to assign responsibilities for maintenance.

Although local architectural skills were strong in many of the communes visited, many communities also have experience of contracting outsiders to construct infrastructure works. Ethnic minority groups may even contract Kinh people to build their ‘traditional buildings’ (such as some Thai and Muong minority houses and Cham mosques).

Photo: Each of the three mosques in this Cham Bani commune in Binh Thuan Province was built with local contributions. Contractors were hired from outside the commune to carry out the work. Commune and village authorities managed and supervised the project. (photo N. Pairaudeau)

Photo: A village meeting house in a Ba Na community, Vinh Son Commune, Vinh Thanh District, Binh Dinh Province: It was constructed in 1996 with local management and community contributions of money and labour. The cost of materials was covered from two sources: people’s contributions (20,000 VND/household) and the government forest protection fee. A village meeting was held to

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27 There is a total of 30 hectares of forest under village protection; each protected hectare earns the village 50,000 VND per year.
discuss the construction, facilitated by the traditional leader and village leader. Fifty households attended, both husband and wife in some cases. A management team was elected with a leader, vice-leader, and cashier. Kinh builders were hired to carry out the construction, and villagers actively participated by preparing the ground and transporting materials. Construction was completed within two months. The management team continues to guide people in maintenance of the communal house. The house is used for all village meetings as well as for traditional festivals. Youths practice every day at a football ground in front of the house. (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

**Levels of maintenance for this type of works are high.** For those works that rely on local architectural and design skills, repairs are easily made to these works as the knowledge of repairs exists at local levels and such repairs can be carried out entirely using local materials.

People may be more willing to get involved in projects they fund and build themselves, because they know what the money they commit to the project is used for. Some informants stated candidly that they were not particularly willing to contribute their labour or financial contributions when called upon to do so by commune cadres, as they perceive that local cadres are rich through taking cuts from these programmes.

While these locally-constructed infrastructure works operate very well from an organisational standpoint and involve high levels of local participation, local people expressed concerns about the quality and safety of some of them. With higher levels of investment, they felt they could, for example, build bridges that would be safer than the precarious bamboo ones, piped water and electricity systems that would require less maintenance, and better schoolhouses and classrooms.

**Box 20: Children are Vulnerable when Waters are High**
Children are particularly vulnerable when river crossings are inadequate. A young girl pupil in a village of Xa Luong Commune, Tuong Duong District, Nghe An, had drowned in the previous rainy season when the small wooden ferry used to carry passengers to and from the village had capsized in high waters. One of the research teams was stranded for several days in a mountainous district of Phu Yen Province during the torrential rains that accompanied the second major flood in central Vietnam in late November; the first news to reach this district of deaths due to the flooding was, tragically, of children swept away by flood waters. All of these children were on their way to schools outside their villages.

Photo: Indigenous bamboo water supply systems in a Xe Dang village, Tra Nam Commune, Tra My District, Quang Nam Province, and in a Thai village, Xuan Phu Commune, Quan Hoa District, Thanh Hoa Province. (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

Photo: Locally-made bridge in Son Thai Commune, Khanh Vinh District, Khanh Hoa Province. Seemingly precarious, this bridge, built by local Rac Glai and Xie Trieng communities, is nonetheless impressive: it spans 200 m and is 10 m above the river bed. (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)

In all interviews regarding local works, though, people voiced strongly their satisfaction with the process. The common characteristics of these works are that:

- They are initiated from local level;
- Local people are consulted and better-informed about these works than they are about externally-assisted projects;
- They make good use of local skills in construction and expertise in design;
- Although local resources are very limited, local people proved themselves very willing to make labour contributions, and to continue with contributions for maintenance;
- Local people were able, and willing, to make some small cash contributions.
⇒ Precedents exist for the involvement of non-officials in management and maintenance of infrastructure works, and local people can easily identify capable people within their communities to do this.
⇒ Local-level consultation and high levels of awareness of infrastructure works within the community contribute to successful projects.
⇒ Experience already exists in many communes of contracting outside expertise to assist in infrastructure construction. People with this experience can be identified and incorporated into the CBRIP.
⇒ In most communes there is existing local knowledge of construction using traditional designs that are well-adapted to local conditions, and of maintenance of these works using local materials.
⇒ Greater transparency increases local people's willingness to be involved in project implementation and to contribute to maintenance.
In Part Four, participation issues related to the CBRIP are addressed. The first section examines how different beneficiaries (identified in Part Two) may benefit from infrastructure projects more, or less, than others. The second section looks at the involvement of beneficiaries in each stage of the project cycle.
4 PART FOUR: PARTICIPATION ISSUES

4.1 Small-Scale Infrastructure: Who Benefits?

The CBRIP is intended to be 'community-based'. Thus, central aims of the project are to ensure that activities supported have broad-based support of and ownership by the communities, and to make as many households as possible within the selected communes the primary beneficiaries of the project. This requires special attention to ensure that decision-making is open, transparent and driven by the communities, and that project benefits reach all segments of commune populations, including the poorest and most vulnerable. This chapter examines some of the main challenges to achieving these aims.

Box 21: Selection of Project Communes

The two research teams were frequently placed in the 'line of fire' when it came to discussing with district authorities the communes chosen for inclusion within the CBRIP. Mention by the research teams of the communes included in the project—which district-level authorities appeared in most cases to be hearing for the first time—were often met by expressions of surprise or dismay. It was not clear to district authorities why some communes on the list of 'poor communes' had been chosen for inclusion in the CBRIP, while other communes on this same list had not. In some districts, requests were made for all poor communes to be included in the project; in others, the claim was made that poor communes excluded from the CBRIP were in fact poorer than those included.

Thanh Hoa was the one province visited where clear criteria had been laid out by the Department of Planning and Investment for inclusion of communes in the CBRIP. In that province, two large donor-assisted projects are planned, and 110 communes regarded as the 'poorest' communes in the province are included either in the World Bank-assisted CBRIP (25 communes), or are served by a CIDA-supported project.

However, it should be noted that while some district authorities made convincing arguments for their poor communes to be included in the CBRIP, either now or at a later date, doubts were raised in other districts as to districts' abilities to make these choices wisely. One district chairman argued at length over the inclusion of one of the two 'poor communes' in his district in the CBRIP, and not the other. Discussion with informants working with an NGO in the excluded commune, though, reduced the credibility of his position on the matter. These informants claimed that the excluded communes already receive the lion's share of NGO and other donor assistance—so much so that they were frustrated by the overlap in the efforts of different agencies, and what they regarded as a waste of funds. The district chairman's strategy, they claimed, was to 'saturate' one commune with aid, before moving on to other communes in need. They doubted the wisdom of this strategy. It has also been mentioned at higher administrative levels that, while consultation of levels further down is important, final decisions on project communes must rest finally with Hanoi, in order to ensure that decisions are not made on the basis of bias or privilege at more local levels.

The province with the greatest uncertainty about which communes had been selected for the project was (in the experience of the Social Assessment team) Binh Phuoc. Our contact with Binh Phuoc provincial authorities in relation to the questionnaire revealed that the province had drawn up a list of project communes different from the list we obtained in Hanoi (and had initially sent out the questionnaire based on this list). Binh Phuoc's list included all communes within the province classified as 'poor' by MOLISA and CEMMA. Taken that it is important to ensure that communes in national parks (and possibly buffer zones) are not included in the project, and that every commune moves through real processes of consultation and participation of local people, it will be important from the start that the names of the communes included in the CBRIP are clear and agreed at all administrative levels.

4.1.1 How Road Access to Communes Influences Infrastructure

Communes in highland areas with road access have had an influx of funding for infrastructure projects in their more remote villages. This occurs primarily under the resettlement programme, and, where present, NGO programmes. Poor villages within this type of commune are not being excluded; indeed, in one
commune (which has had infrastructure works built both through an NGO and through the fixed settlement programme), people in the central (and better-off) villages questioned, "Why do infrastructure projects always go to the H'Mong and Kh Mu [in the villages at the commune periphery], and not to us?"

However, in the most remote highland communes—those without road access—government infrastructure projects are very few. Infrastructure in such communes built under the resettlement programme or 135 is more limited than in more accessible upland communes. People in Tra Nam Commune, Tra My District (who had no projects under the fixed settlement programme and only one 135 project introduced in late 1999), put this down to the lack of incentive for district-level administrators to carry out these projects in communes such as theirs, which lies a two-day walk from the district centre ("district cadres get paid the same amount if they drive up to a closer commune and implement a project there as they do if they walk two days to get here. So why should they begin their work here?"). These projects thus reach the 'remote' communes with road access, but have not yet reached those areas that are truly remote.

4.1.2 Remote Villages' Access to Shared Commune Infrastructure

The location of shared commune services in the commune centre makes access difficult for distant villages. Commune clinics, primary and secondary schools and communal meeting houses are generally built in the administrative centre of the commune. It is to the commune centre, too, that the main roads are built and that electricity connections, where they exist, arrive first. This pattern follows logically from the fact that the most central and accessible village in the commune routinely serves as its administrative centre. However, poor transportation from villages to commune centre—which was a feature of all of the highland communes and some of the lowland communes visited—means that the more distant villages are poorly served by this system. Their distance from the commune centre usually indicates that they are the poorer villages in the commune; the distribution of infrastructure benefits also means they are the least well-served by the commune infrastructure.

Some efforts have been made to place schoolhouses and classrooms within reach of the most remote villages. In many villages, simple classrooms had been built for the earliest grades (anywhere from one to three grades) so that the youngest children do not have to undertake long journeys in the early years of their schooling. Children from farther villages still face difficulties in getting to higher primary and lower secondary school grades in the commune centre.
Clinics, however, are often located far from remote villages. The central point in
the commune is often judged too
far for people from remote villages
to reach, especially when the sick
have to be carried on foot (see
box opposite). Informants from
remote villages said that they
would like to have a second clinic
within their commune, closer to
their villages.

4.1.3 Access for Households
within the Village

Access to infrastructure works
is poor for some households
within the villages. This occurs
often in villages where groups of
houses are concentrated in clusters distant from one another, or houses are widely
scattered. It is especially difficult to spread the benefits of water supply systems
equitably in such situations. The case study in the box below illustrates—among
other problems—the difficulties that may arise due to widely spread households or
household clusters.

Box 23: The Trouble with Water Supply in a Mountain Village

The first problems arose in the meeting to prepare for construction. People couldn’t agree: neither on where to
place the water tank, nor on mobilising local labour. Many people felt that building the tank next to the village
leader’s house would be too costly—and anyway, they said, it isn’t the village centre. Once the village leader
explained that this was a technical requirement, they reluctantly agreed, but they still had their doubts. Getting
local people to work on the project was difficult: some people were not willing, as they thought that their
houses were too far away for them to bother; they would benefit less, they said, so why should they have to
work as much as everyone else? Emotions ran high on this issue that some people—those living at
the periphery of the village—refused to go to the meeting even to discuss the matter. One of these people, Mr.
C., went to his field instead. When he was informed that he would have to pay money if he hadn’t attended the
meeting, he replied that he was poor and didn’t have money, and he wouldn’t use the water.

The second problem arose in implementation. The village leader didn’t have a clear idea of how much water
was available and how many households would be able to have pipes to their houses, but he went ahead and
got the whole community to contribute their labour for construction. When the construction was completed, it
turned out there were no water pipes leading to the six farthest households. These families complained that
they had had to work as much as others but didn’t receive the same benefits; it had not been made clear to
them at the start that they would not benefit directly.

The third problem arose in maintaining the tank and pipes. Each person had to pay 2 kg of rice/year for
maintenance and replacing materials. However, the vice-leader was the only person charged with managing
this work. He was responsible for protecting and repairing the tank; if anyone broke anything, that person was
obliged to pay for the repair. The vice-leader thus received 2 kg of rice from each villager and extra from
anyone responsible for specific damage. He spent the money himself without asking the secretary or the
cashier. Many people said, ‘But there has been no damage or repairs, so why do we still have to pay?’ (Tran
Quy Suu)
4.1.4 Insufficient Investment and Foregone Benefits

Local people cannot benefit from infrastructure projects if the amount of investment is not enough to solve the problem at hand. In some cases, externally assisted small-scale infrastructure has failed to solve problems properly for the community because the financing of the solution was not sufficient to solve a very expensive problem (see box opposite).

Similarly, local people cannot benefit from schoolhouses and clinic buildings unless the corresponding services are appropriate and of high quality. Informants stated that services in clinics could, in their view, be improved, and their remarks suggested that the current view of healthcare remains largely a curative one. When asked if a health clinic was among their priorities for improving the infrastructure in their communes, a typical response was, “Yes, we should build/upgrade the clinic, but only if we can make sure there are enough medicines there.” Obstacles to providing appropriate basic education for ethnic minority children in Vietnam have been widely documented.

4.1.5 Ways in Which Poorer Households May Benefit Less

The poor can only benefit from schools and classrooms as long as they can afford to send their children to school. In the lowland and coastal communes visited, where parents must pay the costs of schooling after primary levels, it was observed that children in poor families rarely continue schooling after grade four or five, because the costs of tuition are prohibitive. Although minority children are exempt from tuition fees, their parents still have difficulty meeting the costs of schoolbooks, clothing and contributions for school maintenance.

The costs of connection of villages and households to the national electricity grid is out of reach of many villagers. Though many commune centres within the sample were connected to the national electricity grid, very few outlying villages have been able to afford to pay for the connection from the commune centre to their villages. In some communes, wealthier households can afford the sum required of them, but their poorer neighbours clearly cannot. As the connection is paid for out of the accumulated contributions of the whole village, projects are stalled as a consequence. Several informants remarked upon the disparities between rural and urban areas with regard to connecting to the national grid: “City people are much wealthier than us, and they can afford the relatively low costs they pay for electricity connections. We are very poor in comparison, and we cannot be expected to afford the same costs.”

Box 24: Water Supply Receives Attention—but Not Enough—in Phan Hoa Commune

In this Cham commune in Binh Thuan Province, local people have relied in the past on digging wells and using water from a stream to get water for drinking. The commune is not far from the sea, however, and the water is very saline; it is not suitable for drinking, only washing. Households rely on purchased drinking water, which they buy about 2 km away for 200-500 VND per thung (one thung is 20 litres). This is sufficient for a family of 5-7 people for 24 hours. However, there are many households which simply cannot afford to pay for water. What do they do? They just drink salty water.

Assistance to improve the water supply has been extended to the commune through both donor (UNICEF) and NGO projects. This has consisted, though, of limited efforts with limited funds—deeper wells in new locations. The new sources of supply are saline too. Local cadres reckon the only way to supply fresh water to the commune is to pipe it in—from a considerable distance away. This is an expensive venture that they have not as yet been able to have funded, and clean drinking water remains a key problem in the community.

(Nguyen Van Linh/Natasha Pairaudieau)
Box 25: Who can Afford to have Electricity Installed?

In Village 7 in Thach Tuong Commune (Thach Thanh, Thanh Hoa), one household had spent nearly 5 million VND to install a private hydropower network. Meanwhile, villagers were being asked for a contribution of 200,000 VND per household to connect to the grid, but some households in the village could not afford this. This rate had already been subsidised for people in village 7, due to the remoteness of their village (it is the farthest village from the commune centre).

Although the benefits of improved road access are widespread within a commune, better-off households tend to benefit more than the poor, simply because they have the resources to do so. The better-off can afford to purchase new seed varieties, fertilisers and pesticides which allow them to make better use of irrigation; they are more likely to own motorbikes which, when roads improve, give them better access to the outside; and they are more likely to have commercial interests which will be improved significantly when central roads are upgraded.

4.1.6 Migrants and Infrastructure Benefits

In areas of in-migration, migrants are quick to make use of any infrastructure improvements. Migrants are especially drawn to areas once improvements to infrastructure related to their commercial interests are made (market centres, roads, irrigation). In Bu Dang District of Binh Phuoc Province, it was observed that migrants had bought land and installed themselves where roads have been built or improved; a market centre that was completed two years ago has become a hive of migrant commercial activity.

4.1.7 Infrastructure of Specific Benefit to Vulnerable Groups

Safe river crossings are particularly beneficial to school children. The danger that unsafe crossings pose particularly to children on their way to school has been discussed in Part Four.

Kindergartens are especially beneficial to ethnic minority children. Several studies within Vietnam have shown the effectiveness of kindergartens in improving the quality of learning for ethnic minority children in subsequent grades. This view was reiterated in the field study: numerous ethnic minority informants either said they wanted a kindergarten to help their children get a head start in schooling, or that they appreciated the recent construction of a kindergarten in their community.

Kindergartens (mau giao) and day care (nha tre) are of great benefit not only to the children who attend them, but to their parents and older siblings. This is true in many areas where people continue to depend on upland cultivation for their livelihoods, but it also applies to areas where opportunities for day labour are growing. In both cases, adults may spend entire days a long distance from the home. It is common practice in highland areas to solve the problem of childcare by getting older children to look after their younger siblings. The older children often forego school in order to do this. Local kindergartens and day care centres allow parents to work more freely, and children (both the younger and older siblings whose parents can afford the costs) to attend school. Such services are particularly beneficial in single adult households where it is unlikely another adult child carer is present.
**Water supply projects reduce one of women's work burdens.** Across the communes visited, collecting water is primarily a woman's task, and women may spend several hours a day collecting water when there is no local supply. It is one of the many tasks that contribute to women's heavy workloads. In those communities where water supply has already been improved, women and other members of the community repeatedly stated that the improvements had made the greatest change to women's lives.

**Accessible clinics make a big difference to the elderly.** Elderly people interviewed in the communes sampled routinely ranked clinics as a high priority.

**Toilets in public buildings are particularly beneficial to women.** Female teachers pointed out that schoolhouses and other public buildings do not have public toilets in many communes. They said this creates unhealthy areas around their schools and is a great inconvenience for themselves.

**Public village meeting houses may help to include more marginalised households in processes of consultation.** Except for those minority groups which have traditional meeting houses within their villages, at present most village meetings are held in the village leader's house, or the 'nicest' house in the village (which often belongs to the village leader). Some respondents said they would like to have public meeting houses at village level (rather than meeting in a private house), because this could prevent public benefits (like a village television) from becoming private by being located in one household. Others said meetings held in a public place might encourage broader participation (at least of men) in public meetings.

**4.1.8 Benefits and Potential Losses from Road Improvements**

**Better roads can lead to a multitude of improvements for communes.** Improvements both in commune-to-district roads and in inter-village roads can bring a number of benefits. The sick can reach treatment more easily, children's access to schools is improved, and, when paved, roads double as places for drying rice, cassava and other produce.

Photo: Rice drying on the road through Thach Thanh District, Thanh Hoa Province (photo: Dau Quoc Anh)
Most significant of the changes roads bring, though, are increases in the prices of agricultural produce, and lower input costs, due to better transportation (see box opposite).

However, better roads can benefit loggers at the expense of the rest of the community. It was clear in two field locations that illegal logging was taking place. It was not overly disguised in either commune, despite the fact that in at least one of the communes the local forest protection officers (Kiern Lam) were heavily armed. In both cases, the activities of loggers were actually damaging the roads, creating discontent among locals not involved in such activities. In Xa Luong Commune, Tuong Duong District, loggers had turned the recently surfaced road into muddy pits, by continually dragging logs down it. Local people resented this: they had contributed labour to maintain the road, but felt they were doing this not for their own benefit, but only to have the loggers destroy the road. In Bu Dang District in Binh Phuoc Province, the road through the district had two major steel and wood bridges which had collapsed and are no longer passable by four-wheeled vehicles. Although some informants denied it, others said this was due to heavy logging trucks passing over the bridges: while the truck companies were called upon to pay for the repairs, this process was very slow and in the meantime, local people had to suffer the consequences.

**Box 26: Roads and the Price of Rice**

To reach Dak Nhau Commune in Bu Dang district involves a drive of up to three hours on a very rough and rutted dirt road. When it rains it is very difficult for trucks or other four-wheeled vehicles to reach the commune. When the steel-and-wood bridges are out (which happens when heavy trucks—logging trucks, some said—travel over them) it is virtually impossible for four-wheeled vehicles to make it to Dak Nhau which is situated at the edge of the district. Farmers in the commune have been planting cash crops for the last 10 years—first coffee (introduced to the area ten years ago) to which they have now added coffee (introduced in the last 5 years). As the production of cash crops has increased, farmers have grown less and less rice, to the extent that many households now rely entirely on purchasing rice. However, poor road access means it is very expensive to buy rice in the commune—it costs 3-4,000 VND per kg. When the bridges are out, the trucks cannot get through at all and the price of rice can shoot up to 5,500 VND/kg—which is where it stood when the research team visited.

**Box 27: How to Make Old Wood**

On each of the two days we drove up to the most remote villages of Xa Luong Commune (Tuong Duong District, Nghe An Province), we saw, on average, 10-15 buffaloes being led down the road, pulling heavy timber logs behind them. The dirt road has been levelled in the last year, but was already deeply pitted in some places. Curiously, the men leading these buffaloes would lead the animals through the pit, allowing the logs to linger some time in the mud; they then sloshed muddy water over the ends of these logs. This, we were told, is 'instant ageing': through this process, it is hoped, logs will look old enough that, if the logger is stopped on the way down the hill, he can convince the authorities that he is hauling acceptable, old wood and not timber that has been recently felled.

### 4.1.9 Local Priorities

In order to gain a better understanding of local priorities for infrastructure, the research team asked district and commune authorities and people in the villages to rank their priorities for subprojects projects proposed under the CBRIP. This was done using a set of ranking cards much simplified from the list of eligible works. They were asked to rank projects based on the priorities they perceived for the community (for authorities) or for themselves (for individuals). After ranking, people were then asked to explain the reasons behind the choices they had made. It was intended through this exercise to find out if different administrative levels and different types of people (men, women, different ethnic groups, the
elderly, the poorest households) had different priorities for infrastructure, based on their position, their gender, their age or their socio-economic status.

Distinct priorities based on gender, age, or even economic status did not clearly emerge, however, from the rankings. It could be argued—and the research teams spent several long evenings discussing this and making adjustments—that the rankings needed to distinguish more clearly between individual and household interests. However, when this was tried, it didn't make much difference: individual respondents continued to rank priorities based on the interests of their whole households, rather than (what an outsider might view as) their individual interests.

Moreover, regardless of who was being interviewed, the question was answered based on the infrastructure works people did not yet have in their villages or communes. Gender, age and economic differences emerged only in the reasons people gave for ranking their priorities as they did.

Although the ranking exercise did not produce the type of information that was hoped for, two important lessons emerged:

- Although when pressed, local people could speak of problems specific, for example, to women or to the elderly, when referring to their own households most rural people find it difficult to separate the interests of individuals within their households from the interests of the household as a whole;
- People’s priorities are practical needs based on local conditions.

4.2 Local Involvement in Small-Scale Infrastructure

Part Three, section two, described how different players were involved in different types of infrastructure works, and identified the organisational strengths that each of these works relied upon. This section assesses in more detail the involvement of beneficiaries in all stages of the project cycle.

The project cycle includes a number of processes. These include: information dissemination, planning and design, implementation, management, maintenance, handling conflicts, and financial oversight. Consultation should run throughout the project cycle. Barriers to, and opportunities for, local involvement are identified for each step.

4.2.1 Consultation

Consultation of local people is a critical component of the CBRIP design. The most basic tenet of the project is that local people be allowed to decide for themselves what types of infrastructure they require. Villages, and then communes, would need to reach agreement on project proposals. As the arrangement implies competition between villages within one commune for the same resources, this is particularly important. Local consultation would continue to be important through all stages of the project cycle.
Public ‘consultations’ do not always serve to include people in decision-making. Commune and village meetings to transmit information from higher levels down should in principle be different from local level consultations. Local informants said, though, that when they are ‘consulted’, this is basically no different from meetings in which information is transmitted to them with no opportunity to respond.

True local consultation is strongest at village level. Consultation of local people is stronger and more effective at village level, particularly for those works carried out with no external assistance. In minority villages, these processes are facilitated by the fact that they take place in local languages.

The ability of remote villages to have their concerns represented at the commune centre is weak. This is due to distance, which in turn leads to the concentration in upland communes of cadres’ positions in the hands of people (and ethnic groups) from the commune centre.

The advice and views of traditional leaders (gia lang) are important in guiding local people’s decisions. Many gia lang play important roles as ‘key consultants’ in village-level decisions. However, degrees of local comfort with making this person a visible public figure vary: some gia lang are kept quite separate from the administration, and their communities claim that, while their opinions are important, they do not appear at administrative meetings but are consulted much more informally. This, for some groups, seems to be a comfortable way to maintain a strong customary community figure without his stepping into the area reserved for the official administration. Other gia lang, it was observed, play leading roles in meetings—but this is primarily when they hold positions in mass organisations in addition to their traditional positions. Either way, their influence remains strong and their wisdom and experience respected: in one village, for example, a consensus could not be reached if the gia lang was away from the village.

Women are frequently excluded from village decision-making. Women do not attend village meetings in many communes. Often, only household heads are invited and household heads are seldom women. This practice was found to be prevalent in many communes visited.

However, women with relatively high education are visibly more involved in community decision-making. Better education for women makes a real difference in enabling them to participate in local decision-making, and in bringing other women in their communities into the circle of decision-making. As the case below illustrates, even if they are not actively advocating the inclusion of other women in village or
commune activities, they have a positive effect on other women within their communities.

**Box 30: Education Widens the Circle**

Although several women attended the meeting of village leaders, the women in this Kh‘Mu village were rather reticent to take the lead in discussions. One exception was Mrs. M. She is in her 30s, the daughter of a former village leader, and, unusually for women in this community, her father supported her to continue her studies up to university level. She spent a year in university in Hanoi, a rare thing in this community even among men. Unfortunately, after the first year, her family could no longer afford to support her and she was obliged to return to the village. It cannot be said, though, that her education was wasted: it has opened opportunities to her within the village and commune, and has made her a great benefit to her community. She is a Women’s Union leader and a cashier within the village, and she plays an active role in village meetings. People—regardless of their sex—defer to her because she knows a fair bit more than most people about affairs outside the commune. A more subtle influence she exerts was witnessed when the research team and village cadres sat down to a joint meal. In other villages, women routinely disappeared at this point: she stayed, and because of her presence, two other women came back, pulled up stools and joined in the discussion.

Households which spend long periods away from the village may also be excluded from decision-making. Households for whom seasonal migration, wage labour or work on upland fields are important livelihood strategies, and single adult households in which one adult carries a particularly heavy work burden, are often unable to attend important meetings. It is not thought appropriate in many places for wives whose husbands are away for long periods to attend meetings in their place—or indeed they may not feel comfortable doing so; people who wage labour far away or work on distant upland fields may spend periods of several days to weeks outside the village at certain times of year, and thus may not be present at village meetings. Young widowed women or single mothers may be the recognised heads of their households, but they are also among the busiest people in the village and the least likely to be able to attend meetings.

**4.2.2 Information Dissemination**

*The CBRIP would require the dissemination of information to explain the ground rules of the project to local people. Although the results of consultations such as this Social Assessment are intended to bring local-level views into the process of project design, ultimately these rules will have to be transmitted, in some form, down from higher to lower levels.*

Knowledge of government policy and programmes remains very poor. This is true regardless of ethnicity, though levels of knowledge are particularly poor among ethnic groups which live in the most remote areas, or the most remote villages within a commune (see box below). In the latter cases this is due both to sheer distance and to language barriers.

**Box 31: Gender and Knowledge of Government Policy and Programmes**

Women in remote areas, and from some ethnic groups, are disadvantaged both by lower levels of Vietnamese language comprehension than men, and poorer access to already poor information flows: they are much less likely than men to attend village meetings.

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28 This applies equally to widowed men with young children but the incidence of such households is much lower (it is much more common for young widowers to remarry than young widows).
Nonetheless, people are hungry for information. Everywhere the field teams visited, local people said they wanted greater access to information about practical things that concern them, and greater knowledge of how other people across the country solve problems similar to those they face themselves.

**Box 32: We Want to Know...**

"We want to know what is happening outside the commune. We want to know if farmers in other parts of the country have the same difficulties as us, and what they do to solve them."

(woman in Da Sar Commune, Lam Dong, Binh Phuoc)

"We do not get enough information here. When the floods happened [in central Vietnam in November 1999], we did not know here for a week, until someone went to the commune centre."

(woman in Xa Luong Commune, Tuong Duong District, Nghe An)

Basic information about government policies and programmes must travel through every administrative level to reach local people: once it gets to the village, it may have been reinterpreted several times. Information from higher levels is routinely transmitted through commune meetings to village leaders, and then from village leaders to heads of household, who are then charged with carrying the information home to household members. This information flow was the rule in all the communes studied, and there were few examples of villagers (besides village leaders) attending meetings at commune level.

Among the limitations of this system, leaders from remote villages may not be able to attend the meetings. Within many communes, villages are connected to the commune centre by dirt paths or roads which become impassable in wet weather. If an important meeting occurs on a miserable day, leaders from these villages may simply miss out on the meeting, or have to ‘catch up’ later. This greatly reduces their understanding (and, consequently, the understanding of their constituents) of the matter discussed. In turn, commune-level authorities have difficulty reaching these villages. They too are faced by poor roads, but they also have limited budgets for travel within the communes—one cadre said he paid out of his own pocket for transport to villages within the commune. This means commune cadres may visit remote villages very infrequently to inform them of meetings.

In addition, village leaders may have difficulty understanding and retaining the information transmitted to them at commune meetings. This problem is often described with reference to ethnic minorities as a problem of ‘low levels of education’ (trinh do thap). The problem is not one of low aptitudes, though, but of village leaders having difficulty retaining information transmitted in Vietnamese when their language abilities are poor. Furthermore, it is not just ethnic minorities who are unable to retain information transmitted at meetings. Informants who were native speakers of Vietnamese also claimed to have difficulty in retaining information, as there is little opportunity to ask questions in these meetings, and thereby to check that the messages have been properly understood.

Furthermore, household heads must routinely rely on one person to pass on information to them that will have an important impact on their families. A village leader who passes on the information clearly and diligently is a great asset to his community and highly valued; conversely, a leader who is less than diligent in passing the knowledge he gains on to his constituents (or is unable, for a number of reasons, to do it well) can severely limit the participation of households in his village in state programmes.
Moreover, household heads may not transmit this information clearly down to other household members. The most marginalised members within households are likely to receive the least information about government programmes and policies. They may learn of government programmes and policies, if they hear about them at all, at several removes from the 'source', and thus they tend to be the least informed people in the community.

Aside from the information transmitted through formal meetings, other channels exist through which information is received from beyond the commune. Newspapers and magazines are routinely received in commune centres and, to a lesser extent, by village leaders. These materials, though, do not circulate widely within communes or villages, a reflection in ethnic minority villages of low levels of literacy in Vietnamese. Increasingly, radios and televisions are appearing and were found in the field study even in the most remote of villages. An increase in radios has been made possible through a government programme that enables people in mountain areas to buy them at subsided prices. Some televisions have also been given to villages through the resettlement programme, but others have been acquired by the better-off households in the villages, and connected through sheer determination (see box above).

Despite the existence of electronic media in many communes, however, very limited development-related information appears to be picked up through these media in rural areas. Locals appear to be using radios and televisions primarily for entertainment.

4.2.3 Planning and Design

The CBRIP aims to address the needs and priorities of ethnic minorities and other vulnerable and marginalised groups. This would include incorporating the local knowledge and cultural priorities of ethnic minorities and the needs and priorities of marginalised groups into project planning and design. The preparation documents also suggest the possibility of using traditional and regional designs for public buildings such as schools and health centres.

Issues of cultural importance to ethnic minorities are too often overlooked during project preparation. Spiritual or customary beliefs may not seem important, or indeed may not even be evident, to outsiders, but they are likely to be very important to local people. As one (ethnic minority) district chairman stated, this is not merely a sentimental issue being raised, but a practical necessity if projects are to be successful: "If planners listen to minority people and respect their customs, infrastructure projects are much more cost-effective. In the past, many projects have
been built without asking the views of local people, and then the projects have never
been used."

Recognising and paying attention to these cultural differences may be an
especially difficult task for contractors and technicians who are accustomed to
working only within the bounds of their particular areas of technical expertise.
As the same minority chairman (above) remarked; “Technicians need to respect the

customs of local people when they build infrastructure. For
many ethnic groups it is
important to consult people
beforehand about the best
place to put a building. When
they tried in this commune to
build the clinic on a
graveyard, local people
protested—this is not
superstition (me tin); it is an
important belief that must be
respected."

By the same token, design features may be culturally specific. As modern as a
new house or building may appear to a contractor or an outsider, if it does not fit in
with local requirements, customs and ideas of comfort, it may not be used and may
end up a well-meaning, but ultimately wasted effort (see box above).

Despite some strong local design and construction skills, traditional and
regional designs are not used in government infrastructure works. Local
designs are tolerated for schools and classrooms, but were never seen in any of the
communes used in clinics or other works built with government assistance.

However, some project approaches have been able to incorporate the needs of
specific groups into project design. Consultation on project design with those
interest groups most directly affected has had very positive results. This specific type
of consultation was not found to be widespread, but one single example may
illustrate how effective such consultations can be in producing designs that work for
the people who use them most. In preparation for an NGO-supported water supply
project in Tuong Duong District, Nghe An Province, it was decided that, as women in
Tuong Duong, like women across the country, are the main collectors and users of
water, they might have specific ideas and requirements for the planned project. This
assumption proved to be right. They emerged from a preparation meeting with
precise plans for where the taps and showering rooms should be placed.

4.2.4 Implementation

Important elements of subproject implementation drafted into the CBRIP design
include an emphasis on the use of local labour and local materials wherever
possible. Once subproject choice has been finalised at commune level, it is
anticipated that bidding will go out to contractors.
Local people are routinely underpaid for their labour. When local people are asked to contribute labour or cash for infrastructure projects, the rate calculated for a day’s labour is well under the market rate. This unduly penalises the poor. Poor people rarely have cash available to pay the contribution, so they usually pay in labour. It is only better-off households which can afford to pay in cash.

Conscripted labour is sometimes confused with programmes which have a budget to pay for local labour. In communes visited, local people routinely contribute their labour (10 days per year is the standard) to road maintenance and sometimes to other locally-agreed projects (school maintenance, etc.). For some specific donor and government projects, however, budgets have been set aside for local labour, but authorities had required people to work their ‘voluntary’ days before reaching into the budget set aside for this purpose.

Currently, communes must experience delays if they want to make use of local materials (especially wood). It takes a long time to get permission to use local materials (such as local wood) for construction of infrastructure. Other building materials have to be brought in on roads that are often very poor. These delays sometimes push the schedule into the rainy season, delaying work until conditions are dry enough again.

Delays in disbursement of funds and cumbersome appraisal and approval procedures can hold up project construction. Funds often do not become available until after the dry season (the best time for construction). Poorly-timed disbursement results in projects carried out in a hurry. This reduces opportunities for local consultation and involvement, as well as reducing the quality of the infrastructure works.

While communes in remote upland areas can be expected to have little experience of hiring contractors for infrastructure construction, in more accessible uplands and many lowland areas, such experience may already exist. Contracting for infrastructure works financed locally has already been mentioned in Part 3. Some communes may also have experience of bidding procedures through programmes with external aid (see box below).
### Box 36: Training and Infrastructure Bidding in Loc Binh Commune, Thua Thien Hue

In this coastal Kinh commune, 40 km from Hue city, commune cadres have received a considerable amount of training related to management and participatory planning. Several commune-level cadres attended an 18-month course in law, policy and economic management skills in Hue, and a two and a half month course for commune management held by the province. Commune Women's Union and Fatherland Front cadres have also participated in training workshops in the district. Three Women’s Union cadres, who stood for seats in the Commune People’s Council last year, participated in a 4-day training course in women’s capacity and leadership at the grassroots level. This was held by the district WU (through the NCFAW). All cadres in this commune are educated to at least grade 5.

In 1999, in the course of an NGO-funded project in all 6 villages of Loc Binh Commune, the commune project management team (PMT) had a chance to make a bidding selection for construction of a kindergarten valued at 75 million VND in Tan An village. This PMT was headed by the Commune People’s Committee secretariat and vice-headed by the head of the commune WU and representatives from all villages. The PMT prepared the invitation to bid and, after careful consideration, they chose a construction company of Phu Loc District. The PMT also invited technical experts from district level to be consultants for technical design monitoring, planning and appraisal together with the NGO’s project officers. Meetings were held to garner ideas from local people, who also actively monitored construction. Finance was reported to the NGO and publicised in the commune.

The head of Loc Binh WU remarked that the financial regulations of government are much more complicated than those of the NGO. She added that, with the experience acquired, the commune should be able to manage implementation of the CBRIP.

(Dau Quoc Anh)

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### Box 37: Pay Cut

Contractors cannot always be relied upon to give a fair deal to local labourers. Two problems were cited in this regard. Complaints were heard from some communes that contractors hired outside workers—claiming the work was ‘too technical’—but local people professed they could have done parts of this work themselves, but weren’t hired. In a more extreme case, contractors profited from a labour budget allocated by paying local labourers less than the amount available, and not disclosing sums to local people.

#### 4.2.5 Management

CBRIP documents anticipate that skills and capacities of commune leaders to manage a process of participatory planning and implementation will be limited, and that mass organisations would be involved in the process of planning and management of infrastructure works, with independent bodies overseeing the projects.

The existence of commune-level management boards is very uneven. Decree 24 stipulates that boards for management, finance and supervision must be formed within the commune once a project is approved. In practice, their occurrence is irregular. In remote communes this may be explained by the fact that districts frequently take over management when they judge the communes lack the experience to do so. The remark of one district-level cadre is typical, “We would

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29 It should be noted that this practice is within the provisions of Decree 24 (Regulation of voluntary contributions). See article 9, para 3: “Where such a commune [faced with particular difficulties] fails to meet conditions for the establishment of the project management board, a district level project management board shall be set up to organise the management of each commune’s projects.”
like the communes to take a more active role in infrastructure projects and we have tried to encourage them to do so. But they don’t have enough experience and we end up doing most of the work ourselves.”

Many districts expressed a genuine desire to hand more project responsibility over to communes. It cannot be too hastily assumed that, just because many districts retain management responsibilities, this reflects a desire on their part to continue to control the process. While such motivations clearly do exist in some quarters, genuine expressions were also heard from district authorities of the desire to hand over more work to the communes.

Non-officials rarely play a recognised role in bodies set up to manage and supervise projects. As seen in Part 3, members of commune and village management boards for government projects are almost exclusively drawn from the ranks of cadres. These management boards are sometimes no more than an extension of the Commune People’s Committee. Nonetheless, on several occasions local people expressed the desire to include people who are not part of the administration in the supervision of government projects; and they recognise, through the practice of putting these people on the boards of works they built themselves, that it is effective.

4.2.6 Maintenance

CBRIP documents recognise that much local infrastructure fails to be adequately maintained, and that more in-depth knowledge is needed about local capacities for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Maintenance is particularly poor for infrastructure built under the resettlement programme. Local infrastructure projects built under the resettlement programme form part of a package of incentives to encourage people to either move location and/or change their production patterns. Such projects are very much viewed locally as a gift from government, with little incentive for people to maintain the projects, and little sense of ownership.

Although nominal boards exist in some communes to inspect projects at handover, communes feel they do not have the expertise to judge the quality of construction of projects handed over to them. The example in the box below illustrates the types of difficulties faced by commune-level boards at project handover.
Very few government infrastructure projects have formal local-level committees in charge of maintenance. Structured maintenance committees which gather contributions from local people were more prevalent among NGO-assisted projects.

Local people do what they can to make repairs, but for any repair they cannot fix themselves, they must appeal to district level or hire technicians. Appealing to the district causes delays as money must be found from district level. Hiring technicians privately may be costly, but also, local people may not be assured of quality (see box below).

Box 38: “If it looks nice then it’s fine with us”: quality inspection in a rural commune

Construction in villages—be it an electricity system, a school or a clinic—needs to be inspected before it is handed over, and maintained thereafter. In Tan Hoa Commune in Dong Phu District, Binh Phuoc Province, there are always 2 people from the village and one from commune level in the inspection team (ban nghiem thu): none of them, though, has expert knowledge in design or construction. Many types of construction, such as electricity networks, puzzle villagers as they have had no experience of them before. Even commune cadres, who have worked in industry or construction for many years, feel they do not have enough expertise to do a proper quality inspection at handover, so they know what they are getting: “...We only pay attention to the appearance; if it looks nice then it is fine; we do not know about durability or absorbability. We only know what the construction unit side says to us; we have never been trained in construction inspection...” says the head of the Industry-Transportation-Construction Committee (Tuong Ban Cong Nghiep—Giao Thong—Xay Dung) of Tan Hoa Commune. At present, inspection consists of simply handing over written documents: the quality of the construction is not checked by the commune people as they do not have the expertise to do so. (Tran Quy Suu)

Box 39: Troubles with Maintenance

In Tan Hoa Commune, people speak of two main problems with maintenance. The first is that local people can only maintain simple works such as levelling the road surface or whitewashing local buildings. Other, more technical, works such as moisture prevention, or repairing wires, have to be done by hired persons. These technicians cost dearly. Moreover, local people do not have the ability to judge the technical quality of their work: they have found in the past they have contracted shoddy work which in turn has needed frequent repairs. Secondly, they say they are too poor—as recent migrants to this community who are just establishing themselves—to contribute money to maintaining works. They can only contribute their labour. (Tran Quy Suu)

4.2.7 Conflicts and Grievances

The CBRIP hopes to minimise the occurrence of conflicts, irregularities or grievances, by emphasising local participation and disbursing funds at the lowest administrative levels. Nonetheless, people cannot be expected always to have the same interests, and conflicts or disagreements will no doubt arise in the project process. In anticipation of and preparation for these occurrences, workable mechanisms for conflict resolution are required.

Local people hesitate to air their grievances publicly. Many people prefer to avoid conflict and confrontation and, even if they have a legitimate complaint, may not air it publicly for fear of losing face. Even when a village complaint does get a public airing, the decision agreed upon may not be carried through (see box below).
Legal procedures through which villagers can voice complaints or make denunciations to the commune level and higher have some limitations. Procedures for citizens to express their grievances in Vietnam are defined by the Law on Complaints and Denunciations (No. 09/1998/QH10 of December 2, 1998). Citizens’ concerns are supposed to be received by the Commune People’s Committee and, according to the law, Commune People’s Committees should set out one day a week as ‘citizen receiving days’ for this purpose. Chairmen of Commune People’s Committees are given the authority to settle complaints—about themselves as well as about responsible persons under their management (Chapter 11, Section 2, Article 19). Thus, a grievance against a People’s Committee Chairman would have to be directed to the chairman himself; taken the strong cultural preference for avoiding direct confrontations, launching a complaint in this way would be extremely difficult.

The law does not include clear legal procedures for making complaints to the village level administration. Villages do not legally constitute a level of administration, and therefore procedures described under the Law on Complaints and Grievances do not apply to this level. However, the law does state that: “The State encourages the conciliation of disputes among populations before they are settled by competent agencies, organisations and/or individuals in order to restrain complaints from arising from the grassroots” (Chapter I, Article 3). In addition, the Decree on Grassroots Democracy (Decree No.29/1998/ND-CP) states that village or hamlet meetings shall be organised “with the participation of all voters or household heads” to “elect or dismiss the village of hamlet chief(s); [and] elaborate village or hamlet conventions and rules” (Chapter 13, Article 14, Paragraph 4). Thus, villages are left to their own devices to handle disagreements within their own communities.

Finally, as with other government policies, villagers in remote areas are unlikely to be aware fully of the Law on Complaints and Denunciations.

4.2.8 Financial Oversight

The CBRIP project would provide funds directly to a large number of communes. This calls for a carefully designed system to minimise leakage and misuse of funds.
Views are divided as to whether communes can handle a project budget. For the most part, districts are not always convinced they can, though most stated that they think they should. Communes were more confident that they would be able to do so, if they receive support in financial management. Many of them already handle amounts over and above the budgets they would be receiving for subprojects under the CBRIP. There was widespread agreement among local people in the communes that disbursing the budget to the commune is completely appropriate.

There is no public display, and very limited local knowledge, of actual finances and budgets at commune level. Commune budgets should be publicly posted (according to Decree 29 on Grassroots Democracy), but this had not happened to date in any of the communes visited. Commune authorities are frequently aware of partial budget details only for the projects they are involved in (see box below).

**Box 41: Different Perspectives**

*District cadre:* "No, communes do not have experience to handle the large sums of money involved in infrastructure projects—say up to 200 million VND. You can't hope to give the subproject budgets to the communes."

*Commune cadre:* "In my commune [a remote minority commune in a mountainous district of Thua Thien Hue] we annually handle over 300 million VND."

(stakeholder workshop, Nha Trang)

**Box 42: Sheet Iron and Nails—but No Accounts**

The biggest construction project to take place in the Rac Glai and Xie Trieng ethnic villages that make up Son Thai Commune (Khanh Vinh District, Khanh Hoa Province) in the last five years has been an initiative to build or upgrade every house (all 125 households) in the commune. This has been carried out through the government fixed settlement programme. Village people co-operated with each other to build or repair their houses with the material provided by to them by the authorities. Approximately 90% of households have now repaired their existing houses with sheet iron and nails. The remaining 10% of households have new houses built by the government valued at 7 million VND each.

Although a large part of the work was locally managed, no knowledge exists within the commune of the financial aspects of the project. Even the Commune People's Committee did not know how much money was funded for each household, or for the entire commune. They didn't know the prices of construction materials; the only thing they were asked to do was to sign receipts, to show how many tons of sheet iron and nails they had received.

(Dau Quoc Anh)
PART FIVE: PROPOSED STRATEGY

The final part of this report lays out a strategy for incorporating the goals of the Social Assessment into the CBRIP. This strategy is designed to:

- Ensure that vulnerable groups will benefit from the project;
- Incorporate the specific needs and incorporate the local knowledge of ethnic minorities;
- Build upon the recognised strengths of the full range of stakeholders currently involved in implementing infrastructure works.

The strategy has been developed so that it is consistent with existing policies and laws of Government. Where existing laws are not consistent, suggestions have also been made as to how policy changes could form a firm foundation for implementation of the CBRIP, and for other projects based on similar principles.
5 PART FIVE: PROPOSED STRATEGY

5.1 Commune Classification

The CBRIP preparation documents suggest classifying the project communes by degree of existing capacity to implement government works, with an appropriate level of external support then given to each category.

This study has shown that commune capacities differ by type rather than degree. Very remote communes have high levels of self-reliance, but very little experience and low levels of understanding of government polices and development programmes; all upland minority communes have 'lower capacity' in working within government programmes, but relatively high capacity in management and implementation of their own works using their own forms of social organisation; challenges to the implementation of the CBRIP in in-migrant communities has more to do with low community cohesion than low capacity.

This commune classification recommends distinct types of support for two types of communes: communes with no vehicle access, and communes inhabited by both recent in-migrants and indigenous groups. The basic participatory approach, with special attention to ethnic minority needs outlined in the training requirements, should apply in all other communes, including the more accessible minority communes, lowland communes and coastal communes.
### Table 18: Commune Classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commune Classification</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Specific risks for CBRIP</th>
<th>Special Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type A:</strong> Communes with in-migrants and indigenous groups</td>
<td>10 communes</td>
<td>- communes in the process of rapid social change; - difficulties in coming up with plans that express the needs and priorities of the community as a whole; - language barriers most likely in reaching indigenous groups</td>
<td>- risks of benefits being captured by migrants at expense of indigenous groups; - risks of improved infrastructure attracting further migrants and increasing pressures on indigenous groups and the environment.</td>
<td>- subproject proposal to be reviewed by anthropologist/ethnic minority specialist before approval can proceed (see 'subproject selection'); - Community Facilitator (CF) must facilitate all commune meetings for subproject selection to ensure both migrants and indigenous groups are represented; - close monitoring (studies rather than spot-checks) required throughout project cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type B:</strong> Communes with no vehicle access</td>
<td>9 communes</td>
<td>- situated from several hours' to 2 days' walk from district centres; - least experience of implementing government projects: few fixed settlement or 135 projects reach here; - high levels of self reliance; - language barriers in reaching many people</td>
<td>- simply too far away for district cadres to justify, on their salaries, walking the hours or days it takes to reach these communes; - similar disincentives for contractors; - higher costs of implementation due to transportation difficulties</td>
<td>- CFs for these communes hired on basis of commitment to reach communes; financial incentives for CFs in these communes; - close monitoring (studies rather than spot-checks) required throughout project cycle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type C:</strong> all other project communes</td>
<td>all other communes</td>
<td>Standard procedures recommended in this proposal apply to all these communes except for those laid out for working with ethnic minorities in ethnic minority communes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These numbers require further clarification by MPI.

NB: See Appendix 11.

Type A communes are communes in which more than 20% of the community is made up of in-migrants arriving in the last five years. Communes made up of 100% migrants are considered to be Type C communes. Special supports for both Types A and B apply for in-migrant communes without vehicle access (if any).

### 5.2 Proposed Ground Rules for CBRIP Subprojects

#### 5.2.1 Ground Rules to Ensure Community Involvement

The basic ground rules for subprojects need to be kept as simple as possible. Complicated rules and regulations decrease local capacity to carry out subprojects effectively, thereby limiting local participation.
Table 19: Ground Rules for CBRIP Subproject Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Project Cycle</th>
<th>Ground Rules</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Dissemination</td>
<td>1. CBRIP information that is in the public interest must be publicly posted in villages and communes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Subproject Choice | 2. Village-level consultations on subproject choice must be held within each project commune.  
3. At least two consultations must be held: one with women in the village, and one with all adults in the village.  
4. In the first year of project implementation, communes must make a provisional choice on how all three tranches will be spent. |
| Meetings | 5. All voters must be invited to all project-related meetings in the villages.  
6. Representatives from every village must be present at commune-level CBRIP meetings.  
7. Decisions can only be passed if 2/3 of those invited to village and commune meetings are in attendance, and if over 50% vote in favour. |
| Management | 8. Communes must form a Commune Management Committee (CMC) for the duration of the project, comprising cadres with signing power and financial experience, as well as an elected representative from each village. The CMC would form the core of the Maintenance Committees as needed (where there are commune-level works).  
9. Villages must form Village Management Committees (VMC) for the duration of village-level subprojects, which would form the core of Maintenance Committees upon completion of construction. Each Village Management Committee must have at least one non-official as a member. |
| Design | 10. Contractors must consult communes on subproject design and location; Commune Management Committee must approve subproject design and location.  
11. Targeted consultations must be held on design with those interest groups most directly affected by a particular subproject. This may include, for example, women (for water supply), parents of school children (for schools), or the elderly (clinics). |
| Labour | 12. Local people must be paid for their labour on the CBRIP subprojects; payment must be at the market rate.  
13. The Commune Management Committee must approve the hire of any manual labour from outside the commune to work on subprojects. |
| Maintenance | 14. Maintenance Committees (and water users’ groups where relevant) must be established for each subproject. |
| Conflict Resolution | 15. Complainant(s) must present a petition (oral or written) to the Commune Management Committee, Village Management Committee or Maintenance Committee. Petitions may be made at any time.  
16. The Commune or Village Management Committee must respond within one week of receiving the petition. |

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30 This is in line with the Grassroots Democracy Decree, which stipulates that meetings for works to be directly discussed and decided by the people must have the participation of at least two-thirds of the people supposed to attend (Chapter III, Article 8, Paragraph 2).
5.3 Recommended Changes to CBRIP Design

5.3.1 Changes to the List of Eligible Works

5.3.1.1 Revised List of Eligible Works
The table overleaf shows recommended changes to the list of eligible subprojects under the CBRIP. The original draft list, “Eligible Works for Commune Infrastructure,”\textsuperscript{31} appears in italics.

\textsuperscript{31} Summary of Project Design Features, Annex 1, Attachment 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposed Commune-Level Subprojects</th>
<th>Revisions/Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Improvements/upgrading of existing roads not involving changes of alignment or road extensions (improvement in critical sections with gravel, drains culverts, etc.; and Irish crossings <50 m, single span bridges and truss bridges of <15 m) | \( \Rightarrow \) Clarify whether communes with no vehicle access would be allowed to improve tracks so that they would be passable by four-wheeled vehicles.  
\( \Rightarrow \) Add improvements to existing (transportation) waterways.  
\( \Rightarrow \) Cover costs of spans up to 200 m. |
| 2. Footpath and track improvement (including provision of footbridges <30 m; cutting of steps in steep sections; and widening). | \( \Rightarrow \) Check assigned costs: US$3000 may be too low for reservoirs. |
| 3. Improvement/upgrading of temporary run-of-river diversion schemes (serving 5-20 ha) with gabions and stone masonry, main canal and essential control structures up to a maximum investment of US$2000 per ha. | \( \Rightarrow \) Allocate higher sums for water supply. Costs can go considerably higher for particularly difficult problems of water supply.  
\( \Rightarrow \) Check number of households per well. It is highly dependent upon local geography: in some places it may be logical for only two households—if they form one cluster in a widely scattered village—to share a well. Ten households per well is rather high. |
| 4. Construction/improvement of small reservoirs serving <30 ha up to a maximum total investment cost per hectare of US$3,000. |  |
| 5. Flood control works serving at least 50 ha of agricultural land or 100 families. |  |
| 6. Gravity drinking water schemes (with appropriate sanitation) serving a minimum of 30 families at a cost of <US$100 per family. |  |
| 7. Construction of communal dug wells (with appropriate sanitation) serving a minimum of 10 families at a cost of <US$50 per household. |  |
| 8. Connection of the communes to the national electricity grid provided this requires <5 km of high voltage lines (400V) and one transformer. | \( \Rightarrow \) Add connection to national electricity grid from commune centre to villages.  
\( \Rightarrow \) Clarify numbers of households per hydropower generator: 20 seems very high.  
9. Construction of small hydropower schemes of 5-50 kW serving between 20 families. |
and 200 families at a maximum cost per family of US$50-200.

| 10. Replacement of existing 'leaf schools' with permanent structures. |
| 11. Repairs and upgrading of existing school buildings and health centres. |
| 12. Construction of new kindergartens and primary and lower secondary schools including commune semi-boarding schools, provided district undertakes to provide teachers. |

⇒ Permit village-level classrooms (*lop hoc*)—serving the lower primary grades—to be built or upgraded using the grant. As in 12., the district must undertake to provide teachers.

⇒ Ensure both day care centres (*nha tre*) and kindergartens (*mau giao*) may be built or upgraded using the grant.

⇒ Allow communes with poor internal access to build a second commune clinic if this significantly improves access for remote villages. The district must undertake to provide/train health staff.

⇒ Include toilets in the design of all schools and health clinics.

| 13. Provision of public toilets and water supply to existing markets in commune centres at a cost of <US$2,500. |

⇒ No change.


⇒ Check cost: too high.  
⇒ Define purpose: to be used for a wide range of community activities from public meetings to cultural events to agricultural extension activities.  
⇒ Add village-level meeting houses.  
⇒ Include public toilets in the design, to be incorporated if there is no public facility in adjacent buildings.  
⇒ Incorporate playing grounds into layout of standard designs.

| Proposed District-Level Works |
| 1. improvements/upgrading of existing roads (including Irish crossings, bridges and culverts). |
| 2. Extension of the national electricity grid to one commune or a group of communes where such extension exceeds 5 km or requires < 1 transformer. |
| 3. Improvements/upgrading of existing irrigation systems. |

⇒ Add to commune list as “inter-commune works” (see below).

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32 It is not clear in the three options above whether this would be possible. Some people took 11/ to mean that these classrooms (which are frequently made of leaves) could be replaced by permanent structures—but then pointed out that this was illogical as it means they would have to build a leaf house in order to be eligible to upgrade it to a permanent structure!

33 This statement is based on informants in several (mountainous) communes putting the construction cost of a ‘Kinh’ house of bricks with a tile roof at 20-50 million VND.

34 The existence of playing grounds or soccer fields was seasonal in many villages visited: temporary playing fields come into use once crops have been taken off the land, and revert back to agricultural use in the planting season. This may depend then on the availability of suitable land.
5.3.1.2 Inter-commune Works

Under current proposals, district-level works would allow districts with three or more project communes to be provided with funds equivalent to 20% of funds allocated to the communes in the district, to the three types of inter-commune works serving the population of two or more communes.  

The Social Assessment team has two reservations about the district-level works:

1. **The district-level works mar what is otherwise a relatively simple project design.** The simpler the project and the rules of the game, the more likely they are to be understood and taken up in the way in which they were intended.

2. **The district-level works go against the principle of encouraging greater control at commune level.** The proposal puts both decision-making and management back at district level. This may result in the failure of efforts at decentralisation, as it reintroduces an opportunity for districts to 'take over' from communes as soon as they judge communes are not up to the job; it detracts from participatory features of the project design elsewhere.

**Recommendations for district level works:**
- Re-name them 'inter-commune works' and add them to the commune list of eligible works;
- Allow communes (rather than districts) to decide whether they want these works undertaken;
- Place project management and financial management in the hands of the districts;
- Require the same procedures for public posting of information in the communes (as used for commune-level projects).

5.3.1.3 Further Remarks

**The inclusion of only shared public infrastructure works is sound.** The inclusion of infrastructure works directed at individual households (electricity connections or wells to individual households, for example) is to be avoided, as this lessens the risk of benefits being concentrated in the hands of dominant persons or groups.

**Costs of infrastructure works vary significantly between different geographic zones.** The Ministry of Construction acknowledges this by issuing guidelines on different investment levels for infrastructure in mountainous, midland and lowland areas.  

Financial entitlements issued to communes only on the basis of population cannot be considered to be equitable as mountainous areas will not be able to build as much with their money as lowland areas.

The final Vietnamese version of the list of eligible works must be checked carefully. Translation of the draft list from the English (which appears to be the...
original) to the Vietnamese contains a few key errors (for example, costs for small reservoirs are given as cost per ha in English, but as flat rates in Vietnamese; ‘kindergartens’ in English is translated into Vietnamese as ‘day care’, etc.). The wording of the final documents needs to be checked carefully to avoid problems arising merely from mistranslation.

5.3.2 Phasing

Project piloting and phasing is essential. It is the key instrument through which the CBRIP:
- can respond to community needs and preferences on an ongoing basis; and
- can thereby make necessary adjustments to project design and processes.

Errors in carrying out pilots include:
- ‘piloting’ too large an area; problems occur across large areas that could have been prevented;
- ‘piloting’ only part of the process, so that problems cannot be corrected in later stages of the project.

Recommendations for phasing:
⇒ Determine the number of phase one communes by the number of Community Facilitators who can be effectively trained in the first year (under 20);
⇒ Feed lessons learned through phase one and each subsequent phase into a mandatory review of project experience at the end of each year, and make necessary adaptations;
⇒ Use communes introduced in earlier phases as training sites for subsequent phases (and use skilled Community Facilitators from previous phases to assist in training).

Below is a suggested timetable for phasing that would allow project completion within five years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year One Communes 2001</th>
<th>Year Two Communes 2002</th>
<th>Year Three Communes 2003</th>
<th>Year Four Communes 2004</th>
<th>Year Five Communes 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase one</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase two</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase three</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>244</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total communes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>532</td>
<td>484</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Facilitators</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>108</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendations for choosing phase one communes:
⇒ Include the communes which participated in the field study, stakeholder workshops and selective survey;
⇒ Include at least three Type A and three Type B communes;
⇒ Choose—as far as this is possible—communes close together;
⇒ And/or begin work in 2 or 3 provinces only in Year One.
5.4 Project Preparation

5.4.1 Selection of Community Facilitators

It is estimated that grants would be available to train and employ some 120 "Community Facilitators" (CFs) to serve as key resource persons in providing support to project communes. Good facilitators skilled in community development are vital to the success of the CBRIP, and a number of difficulties are to be expected in seeking out suitable candidates.

Table 22: Recommendations for Hiring Community Facilitators:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advertise and interview for positions;</td>
<td>• Tendency in Government to target training support to people on the basis of their not having attended training courses before, providing little opportunity to build on existing learning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire on the basis of previous experience or training in community-based development, and commitment to travel and to spend long periods in assigned communes and remote villages.</td>
<td>• Existence of many people with some experience and/or training in community development, but little chance to build on it.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(These may be young graduates or older people with lengthy work experience; they may be people in government, NGO or private sectors.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay competitive salaries with financial incentives for those CFs working in the most remote areas.</td>
<td>• District cadres lack motivation to reach very distant communes and remote villages due to low salaries and lack of travel allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide access to motorbikes for transportation to project sites when this is necessary and feasible.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide budgets for travel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage qualified ethnic minorities to apply;</td>
<td>• Low awareness of issues related to local knowledge of ethnic minorities;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assign CFs who understand minority languages to relevant communes.</td>
<td>• Language barriers in communes with ethnic minorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively recruit women;</td>
<td>• Travel requirements may prevent women from applying for CF positions;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require all CFs to train commune and village Women’s Union leaders (or other appropriate women in the communes) to facilitate women’s meetings (see guidelines for CFs).</td>
<td>• Must have backup mechanism for ensuring male CFs can include women in project consultations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested guidelines for CFs:
- Read this Social Assessment;
- Hold targeted consultations with most marginalised groups on project choice and project design, or instruct local mass organisations or other appropriate individuals within the villages and communes to do so;
- Travel to and work in all villages in their assigned communes;
- Review and revise list of infrastructure that is of particular benefit to marginalised groups as part of their normal work;

37 For example, the National Committee for the Advancement of Women trained approximately 10 women in each province in Vietnam (from various offices at provincial, district and commune levels) to stand as candidates in elections for the People’s Councils in November 1999. Topics that were included in this training are directly relevant to the CBRIP: stakeholder analysis, consultation, and bringing gender perspectives to local councils and administrations; the NGO Training Project regularly holds similar courses down to commune level, and cadres from some of the 532 project communes can be expected to have received training from this source.
- Do seasonal/work calendars with communities in their assigned communes to determine appropriate times for meetings;
- Identify and train women (either Women's Union staff or other appropriate women) to run women-only meetings;
- Attend biannual meetings with all other CFs to exchange experiences as team members.

**Recommendations for assigning communes to each CF:**
- Assign a cluster of communes, adjacent or accessible to one another, to each CF (one CF may work in more than one district in some areas);³⁸
- Assign communes according to workload and remoteness of commune and villages (in accessible lowland and coastal communities it may be reasonable to have facilitators oversee more than 5 communes; in extremely remote communes, CFs may not be able to reasonably work in more than two communes);
- Hire CFs full-time.

**Recommendations for ensuring the timely inclusion of community development principles into the project:**
- Hire CFs as soon as possible;
- Have CFs in place and trained before information dissemination begins (they will be key players in it).

### 5.4.2 Training

#### 5.4.2.1 Support Required

**Recommendations for training in community-based development approaches:**
- Training for CFs in community development tailored to the CBRIP;
- Training for Commune Management Committees in project management;
- Basic training for district technicians in community development.

Training for Community Facilitators should be project-specific and practical, with emphasis laid on convincing CFs of the value of arguments for participation within the context of the project.

**Recommended topics for training of CFs:**
- Principles, objectives and ground rules of the CBRIP;
- Content of this Social Assessment;
- Awareness of relevant ethnic minority issues: notions of 'backwardness', the importance of local knowledge, awareness of the value of local designs, construction skills, and forms of social organisation for management and maintenance;
- Awareness of relevant gender issues;
- Awareness of issues related to in-migration and indigenous groups;
- Awareness of poverty and marginalisation;
- Skills to elicit opinions of marginalised groups;
- Strategies for conducting participatory consultations;

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³⁸ The CF can also facilitate negotiations between adjacent communes if an inter-commune project is chosen.
⇒ Strategies for speaking through translation;
⇒ Techniques for organising targeted consultations of interest groups (especially women), and for training others (mass organisations, key village people) in these techniques;
⇒ Understanding of bidding processes;
⇒ Understanding of financial management systems;
⇒ Development of project maintenance systems;
⇒ Understanding of all GOV policies relevant to the CBRIP.

**Recommended topics for training Commune Management Committees:**
⇒ bidding procedures;
⇒ quality control;
⇒ financial management.

**Recommended topics for training district technicians:**
⇒ basic awareness of concepts and benefits of participation;
⇒ how to incorporate participation into their work.

### 5.4.2.2 Study Visits

**Recommended study visits:**
⇒ For district technicians and administrators, provincial PMU, and CFs: to visit sites in project communes where local people have built infrastructure works without government assistance, to learn from design, construction, and organisation for management and maintenance of such works;
⇒ For CFs and communes in second and subsequent project phases: to visit and learn from communes in previous phases.

### 5.4.2.3 Training Providers

**Constraints to finding suitable training providers for CFs are:**
⇒ A lack of experience among trainers themselves in providing this type of training;
⇒ A small number of appropriate institutions; and
⇒ Training providers’ own need to rely on outside expertise to assist in developing adequate training courses.

Training providers capable of taking on this training, provided outside support is available, include Ho Chi Minh City Women’s Union Training School, Hue University and Hue Agricultural College. Please note these suggestions are not based on in-depth assessments of these institutions, but on the basis of these institutions being referred to the Social Assessment team.

**Recommendations for training provision in community-based approaches:**
⇒ Hire two training providers from two urban sites in the project area. This could comprise one site in HCMC and one in Hue, with the advantages of reducing geographical constraints in the southern part of the project area, and addressing north-south cultural differences.
⇒ Provide training providers with outside expertise to assist in putting together a CBRIP-specific training package: the NGO Training Project is a suggested resource with the expertise to do this.
Training providers should be encouraged to take the training to provincial or even district DPIs, and conduct it there, rather than bringing CFs down to the cities. This could help to:

- incorporate participation into the mainstream of the project;
- allow trainers to see the context in which they are training people;
- allow visits by CFs to some of the project communes.

### 5.4.3 Policy/Advocacy

##### 5.4.3.1 Policy Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 23: Suggested Policy Changes in Support of the CBRIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Policy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decree No. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision No. 135/1998/QD-TTg of July 31, 1998 to Approve the Programme on Socio-Economic Development in Mountainous, Deep Lying and Remote Communes with Special Difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law on Complaints and Denunciations (No. 09/1998/QH10 of December 2, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations on use of local materials in infrastructure construction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Certificates and Household Registration Cards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4.3.2 Advocacy Issues

In order to ensure that marginalised groups benefit from the planned infrastructure, two key points must be addressed:

1. Poor and marginalised groups cannot benefit equally if they cannot pay for the services facilitated by the CBRIP;
2. Benefits will be non-existent or greatly reduced if soft services (of teachers, extensionists, health workers) are either not provided or are of poor quality.

The CBRIP should integrate its work with:

Measures to improve the quality of education for children in the project communes, and access to education for poor children, including:
- Improving the provision and quality of teachers in remote areas;
- Promoting the provision of kindergarten teachers and teachers for village classrooms (lop hoc);
- Promoting teacher training for ethnic minority teachers, particularly in the early grades;
- Lifting regulations on minimum numbers of children required to hold secondary school classes;
- Promoting multigrade classes, and teaching of Vietnamese as a second language;
- Promoting girls' education;
- Promoting measures to reduce the real costs of education to poor households.

Measures to reduce the real costs of health and to improve the quality of healthcare, particularly preventative health, in the project area.

Initiatives to improve the socio-economic situation of the poor in the project communes, including extending credit and agricultural extension services. This will allow the poorest households to make good use of roads, irrigation, etc., constructed under the CBRIP to improve their household economies.
5.5 Roles and Responsibilities

Community Facilitators:
- To ensure that a participatory process is actually used in all phases of the project cycle.

Village Management/Maintenance Committees:
- to ensure villagers in their village are fully represented in all project processes;
- to ensure appropriateness and sustainability of the infrastructure.

Commune Management/Maintenance Committees:
- to ensure that all villages are fully represented in all project processes;
- to ensure appropriate financial management;
- to support village management and maintenance committees;
- to ensure the appropriateness and sustainability of the infrastructure.

Commune People’s Committee:
To respond to any grievances that cannot be resolved within the commune or village management committees

District DPI:
- to conduct technical appraisal and approval of commune subprojects;
- to supply technical support, as requested by the project communes, during construction;
- to manage inter-commune subprojects if these are selected by the project communes.

District People’s Committee:
- to respond to any grievances that cannot be resolved within the project communes.

Province DPI:
- to ensure effective linkages between the CBRIP and other donor and government programmes; especially in the provision of basic social services (health and education), agricultural extension services and credit.

MPI:
- to ensure the highest quality of project preparation, particularly recruiting and arranging for the training of the first group of CFs in phase one;
- to ensure the community-based approach is carried through project implementation monitoring and evaluation.
5.6 The Project Cycle

5.6.1 Information Dissemination

5.6.1.1 Dissemination of Project Information

Recommended strategy for dissemination of CBRIP information:
- Use multiple channels to disseminate information;
- Emphasise understanding by the target audience;
- Target for an audience that thinks in very practical rather than highly conceptual terms.

Recommended topics for information dissemination:
- Description of CBRIP;
- Summary of key government policies;
- List of project communes and criteria for choice;
- Project objectives;
- Financial arrangements;
- Ground rules.

Recommended channels for dissemination of project information:
- Verbal: through CFs, commune authorities, village leaders and mass organisations;
- Printed factsheets: published in clear simple Vietnamese, distributed in communes;
- Information videos: live-dubbed in local languages;
- Provincial newspapers and Phu Nu.

5.6.1.2 Dissemination of Subproject Information within the Project Communes

Rule 1. CBRIP information that is in the public interest must be publicly posted in villages and communes.

Recommended procedures for public postings:
- Should be posted in public places (in the commune centre at the UBND or a central school) and within each village in the project communes;
- Should be posted as soon as the project begins—following dissemination of project information;
- Should be updated at regular intervals with relevant information;
- Should contain minimal but sufficient information and be simple and clear;
- Must be recorded in a standard format (to be designed and supplied to each project commune).

Recommended information to be included in the public postings at various stages of the project cycle:
- each village's subproject proposals;
- final projects chosen by commune;

39 The Cham are one minority group within the project area who have a script that is actively used and quite widely understood; however, high levels of literacy in Vietnamese among the Cham mean it is not necessary to print the information in Cham. Cham who are illiterate are likely to be illiterate in both languages.
40 "Woman"—a popular women's magazine.
contractors chosen, and their addresses;
→ design proposals (map showing position of project, diagram of construction);
→ statement of CMC approval of design;
→ statement of CMC approval of hire of any outside labourers;
→ wages local people are paid and days worked;
→ names, gender and ethnicity of members on the CMC and VMC;
→ names, gender and ethnicity of members on the Maintenance Committee;
→ amount of budget assigned for the subproject, and amount spent to date;
→ levels of maintenance fees or contributions.

5.6.2 Subproject Selection

Rule 2. Village-level consultations on subproject choice must be held within each project commune.
Rule 3. At least two consultations must be held: one with women in the village, and one with all adults in the village.
Rule 4. In the first year of project implementation, communes must make a provisional choice on how all three tranches will be spent.

Recommendations for the process of subproject selection:
→ Every village produces a proposal;
→ All village proposals are presented at commune-level meetings;
→ CMCs (with one representative from each village—see section on management below) vote on final choice;
→ Village proposals are reviewed to draw up provisional choice for subprojects in years two and three.

Recommendations for local consultation process:
CFs, in conjunction with commune and village mass organisations, should:
→ Ensure the ground rules are adhered to;
→ Identify, with local people, the most convenient times for holding consultations to ensure maximum attendance;
→ Arrange targeted consultations for women, and encourage women to attend open meetings;
→ Encourage communities to consider projects that are particularly beneficial to certain groups (old people, women, children) within the community;
→ Encourage communities to discuss potential benefits of all types of eligible works.

Recommendations for subproject selection in Type A communes:
→ CFs must facilitate all commune meetings for subproject selection to ensure both migrants and indigenous groups are represented;
→ Proposals must be reviewed by ethnic minority specialist/anthropologist. Approval cannot be given until specialist has judged that subproject selection reflects interests of both indigenous and migrant communities. Recommended that this specialist be from Hanoi-based research institute, and hired for duration of CBRIP to conduct this work.

5.6.3 Subproject Appraisal/Approval

Recommendations for subproject appraisal:
⇒ District technical staff to carry out technical appraisal of the subprojects;
⇒ Appraisal procedures should be simplified to ensure timely implementation;
⇒ Costs of technical appraisal should be a clearly defined percentage of project costs, but should not be paid for directly by the project communes out of their CBRIP tranches.

5.6.4 Selection of Management Committees

**Rule 8:** Communes must form a Commune Management Committee (CMC) for the duration of the project, comprising cadres with signing power and financial experience, as well as an elected representative from each village. The CMC would form the core of the Maintenance Committees as needed (where there are commune-level works).

**Rule 9:** Villages must form Village Management Committees (VMC) for the duration of village-level subprojects, which would form the core of Maintenance Committees upon completion of construction. Each Village Management Committee must have at least one non-official as a member.

Commune Management Committees should:
- Be responsible for all duties at commune level, including administration, financial management, overall project management and organising all commune-level consultations.

Village Management Committees should:
- Be responsible for all duties at village level, including organising village-level consultations, local labour arrangements, and maintenance contributions.

Recommendations for promoting representative Management Committees:
CFs, in conjunction with commune and village mass organisations, must:
⇒ Encourage communities which have constructed infrastructure works in the past with no outside assistance to model their management committees on pre-existing committees for the previous works;
⇒ Encourage the community to put those people they trust and respect on the committees: village elders; women; those people respected in the community; teachers (for schools) and health workers (including nurses and indigenous midwives) for clinics;
⇒ Encourage people to consider the capabilities of, and give active roles to, the elderly or disabled on these committees;
⇒ Oversee the process of elections for these committees;
⇒ Ensure that the final choice reflects the ground rules for management committees.

5.6.5 Financing of Subprojects

Recommendations regarding financial transfers in support of the community-based approach:
⇒ Transfer all subproject budgets to commune level. All communes in the project are able to handle budgets for the subprojects, if provided with adequate supports; transfers to this lowest administrative level, with reporting of the financial ‘bottom line’ directly to the community, will help to reduce leakage and misuse of funds;
⇒ **Ensure timely disbursement of grants.** Essential for ensuring construction takes place in the appropriate season, when materials can be brought in and local people are free from agricultural tasks to participate. Late disbursement results in rushed implementation and poor quality construction, and reduce opportunities for local participation;

⇒ **Flexibility of funding to account for higher infrastructure costs in remote areas.**

### 5.6.6 Project Design

**Rule 10:** Contractors must consult communes on subproject design and location; Commune Management Committee must approve subproject design and location.

**Rule 11:** Targeted consultations must be held on design with those interest groups most directly affected by a particular subproject. This may include, for example, women (for water supply), parents of school children (for schools), or the elderly (clinics).

In order to promote subproject design that responds to local needs and priorities, CFs, in conjunction with commune and village mass organisations, must:

⇒ Encourage open discussions about how marginalised groups within the commune might benefit and how remote villages might benefit;

⇒ Encourage communes to explore options for building shared commune infrastructure (schools, health clinics, markets) in locations where they will benefit the greatest number of people in the commune, and not necessarily in the administrative centre of the commune;

⇒ Encourage designs that benefit as many households as possible within the commune or village;

⇒ Encourage minority communities to point out ways in which infrastructure construction may violate local beliefs, and to suggest appropriate changes;

⇒ Encourage people to state their design preferences, especially in terms of traditional designs;

⇒ Emphasise the benefits of using local materials for better maintenance.

### 5.6.7 Use/Maintenance

**Rule 14:** Maintenance Committees (and water users' groups where relevant) must be established for each subproject.

**Requirements for Maintenance Committees:**

⇒ Members must be elected;

⇒ There must be a realistic financial plan for sustainable contributions;

⇒ There must be an effective collection plan that takes into account different degrees of usage of infrastructure and poverty of villagers;

⇒ There must be a commitment from higher levels for assistance with maintenance in times of great need.

**Recommendations for incorporating these requirements:**

⇒ Allow communities to decide for themselves on levels and kind of contribution for maintenance;
Develop a simple list of estimated costs for maintenance and repairs to assist communities in calculating levels of contributions that are both locally affordable and sustainable; this can be done by the economic team; Provide a package of advice on troubleshooting and simple repairs for local people. This can be disseminated through CFs and printed on simple leaflets.

5.6.8 Conflict Resolution Mechanism

| Rule 15: Complainant(s) must present a petition (oral or written) to the Commune Management Committee, Village Management Committee or Maintenance Committee. Petitions may be made at any time. |
| Rule 16: The Commune or Village Management Committee must respond within one week of receiving the petition. |

Existing legal instruments regulating complaints and denunciations at district and commune level

⇒ District- and commune-level People's Committees should have one day free per week when they can receive complaints from the community;  
⇒ District/commune People's Committee chairpersons are responsible for settling complaints or denunciations of their own activities or illegal actions, as well as those of people and agencies under their jurisdiction;  
⇒ The Fatherland Front and citizens are responsible for supervising this process.

Recommendations for complaints mechanisms to work effectively:
⇒ Local people must be made aware of the mechanisms;  
⇒ Local people must be encouraged to use the mechanisms.

If faced with inaction or an impasse, complainants should then be encouraged to go to higher levels using GOV laws (below).

5.6.9 Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism

The mechanism proposed here is a system to monitor and evaluate the community-based approach. It is designed to:

- Monitor whether genuine community participation is taking place and whether benefits of the infrastructure works are reaching not only the better-off members and more easily accessible areas, but also the most marginalised people within the communities and the more remote areas of the project communes;  
- Anticipate and identify problems: areas where these processes are not happening (or not happening well); and  
- Feed this information back into a system for improving CBRIP design in subsequent phases.

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5.6.9.1 Reporting

Reporting on a community-based approach must originate from commune and village levels.

It is recommended that reporting be made:
⇒ To the local community (and by the local community) through public postings (see section on information dissemination);
⇒ To higher levels: photocopies of the original public postings and somewhat more detailed commune reports to be sent up through all administrative levels.

Village and Commune Management Committee reports to higher levels:
⇒ Must be created at clearly defined intervals;
⇒ Include photocopies of the public postings; and
⇒ Include a brief report on problems encountered in involving the community in the subproject. District and provincial levels should answer the same questions in their reporting. This feedback should be the trigger, along with other aspects of monitoring, for identifying problems, and for providing appropriate additional supports as necessary.
⇒ Should be signed by all Management (and subsequently Maintenance) Committee members;
⇒ Must be sent up (as a photocopy of the original) through all administrative levels; district and provincial reports can then be attached to these as they move up through the administrative levels;
⇒ Receipt of satisfactory reports could act as a trigger for disbursement of subsequent tranches.

Four suggested stages after which reporting should be required are:
1. subproject selection;
2. design;
3. construction finished and maintenance plan developed;
4. six months after works are put into use.

5.6.9.2 Monitoring

Two types of communes require very close monitoring:

Type A (in-migrant communities): to ensure that decisions made reflect the needs and priorities of the community as a whole, that both indigenous and in-migrant groups benefit from the subprojects, and that infrastructure construction does not place undue pressure on the indigenous groups.

Type B (extremely remote communes): in order to ensure that the community-based approach—and all other project activities—are reaching these communes.

Adequate monitoring of these two types of project commune should consist of:
⇒ In-depth periodic studies of a sample of the project communes within that classification: TORs for each study should cover the issues outlined for each type on the box above.
The commune sample chosen for Type A should cover all relevant provinces in the project area and be representative of all relevant ethnic groups;

The commune sample chosen for Type B should cover all relevant provinces in the project area, and communes with ethnic minority as well as Kinh in-migrants should be chosen.

The risks involved in implementing the CBRIP in Type C project communes is somewhat lower. It is therefore recommended that monitoring in these communes consist of periodic spot-checks to ensure:

- that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are benefiting from the subprojects;
- participation of beneficiaries in all stages of the project cycle.

**Monitoring** should occur periodically throughout the project cycle.

**Monitoring exercises should be done by an external agency:** for example, the Department of Sociology at the Institute of Social Sciences (Hanoi), or the Department of Anthropology, Hanoi University. It is preferable to have an institution that is Hanoi-based and has a long term (5 year) contract with MPI to conduct this work.

5.6.9.3 Indicators

While monitoring exercises for Types A and B will include much more qualitative assessments, both types of monitoring should include the collection of a number of basic indicators.

**Suggested indicators to measure project benefits:**

1. Percentage of 'hungry' and 'poor' households in villages where subproject is implemented.\(^{42}\)
2. Percentage of 'hungry' and 'poor' households with water points.
3. Percentage of 'hungry' and 'poor' households with land irrigated through CBRIP subprojects.
4. Percentage of subprojects implemented that benefit particularly vulnerable groups (water supply, classrooms, kindergartens and day care).\(^{43}\)
5. (For areas of high in-migration) Reasons why indigenous groups (*ho goc*) are satisfied/not satisfied with the progress of the project.
6. Reasons why women-headed households in the commune or project villages are satisfied/not satisfied with the progress/result of the subproject.
7. Reasons why poorest households are satisfied/not satisfied with the progress/result of the subproject.

**Suggested indicators to measure participation:**

1. Percentage of women on Management (and then Maintenance) Committees.
2. Percentage of ethnic minorities on Management (and then Maintenance) Committees.
3. Percentage of non-officials on Management and Maintenance Committees.
4. Percentage of costs spent on local labour.

\(^{42}\) Baseline available in PMU database (types D and C households).

\(^{43}\) Baseline data for these indicators is available in the PMU database.
5.6.9.4 Evaluation

It is recommended that:
- An internal phase one evaluation (review and adaptation—see below) be conducted at the end of year one;
- Similar reviews occur at the end of each year;
- A final evaluation be conducted by an independent agency.

The aims of the final evaluation should be:
- To evaluate whether the aims of this Social Assessment have been met;
- To make recommendations for future projects similar to the CBRIP.

5.6.10 Audits

Districts must be responsible for auditing commune’s accounts for the subprojects.

5.6.11 Review and Adaptation

In order to ensure that the project design responds on an ongoing basis to local needs and priorities:

- A project review should occur at the end of year one;
- Similar reviews to address problems and make necessary adaptations should then occur at the end of each subsequent year.

Processes that should feed into project adaptation include:
- Commune reports;
- District and provincial reports;
- Results of monitoring exercises.

5.7 For the Economic Team...

The Social Assessment Team recommends:
- Checking and revising costs of eligible works;
- Factoring in higher costs involved in reaching extremely remote and upland communes with seasonal road access, when calculating real costs of subprojects. These should not be calculated merely on a per head basis;
- Developing a simple list of estimated costs for maintenance and repairs to assist communities in calculating levels of contributions that are not only locally affordable but also sustainable;
- Clarifying what levels of costs would need to be met by higher levels in emergencies.

5.8 Project Risks

The CBRIP rests on the premise that local communities must be included in the process of the CBRIP, and should reap the benefits. This section anticipates
situations in which the reverse situation may be created: that local communities, or important stakeholders, may actually lose out. Anticipated negative impacts, and measures to mitigate them, are presented in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk</th>
<th>Reason for Risk</th>
<th>Mitigation Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor co-operation and involvement of higher administrative levels (district and province)</td>
<td>Participatory approach may be perceived as a threat to the administrative system in place; With finances and management assigned to commune level, district feels it is being bypassed.</td>
<td>Clear support role defined for districts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strengthening and enrichment of dominant groups; further marginalisation of the most vulnerable</td>
<td>Weak implementation of community-based approach will result in the CBRIP being implemented in same manner as top-down projects.</td>
<td>Community-based approach central to the project at all times; Invest time (and money) in training and choosing good community facilitators and incorporating lessons from phase one.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of infrastructure in in-migrant communes may aggravate or create social problems</td>
<td>Improved infrastructure may attract further in-migrants, increasing pressure on indigenous people.</td>
<td>Special attention to monitoring and research of in-migrant communities beyond the end of the subprocess cycle (see section on monitoring).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of income and/or land from irrigation</td>
<td>Land lost and/or houses reallocated due to irrigation projects.</td>
<td>Require community approval of project design, and records of who will lose out and how they will be compensated; Land acquisition plan prepared within WB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure works unusable after several years</td>
<td>Poor quality construction or inadequate maintenance.</td>
<td>Economic team to do real figures on cost of good quality construction; Economic team to support maintenance through advice on calculating long-term costs of maintenance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local people overburdened by maintenance contributions</td>
<td>Poorer households cannot afford contributions at same level as better-off households; Commune capacity to pay for major long-term repairs may be limited.</td>
<td>Advise communes to grade contributions according to household poverty level/ability to pay; Assure commitment for periodic contributions for necessary long-term maintenance from state budget.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk of difficulties in CBRIP loan repayment, and of money dedicated to social services being used for repayment.</td>
<td>Project funds are a loan to the GOV.</td>
<td>GOV has agreed and should adhere to 20/20 Agreement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>