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# **BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM**

**The Poverty Reduction through  
Integrated Small Enterprise  
Development Project - PRISED**



NATIONAL POLITICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

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## Preface

Poverty reduction is a significantly consistent policy of the Party and the Vietnamese Government. Not only it does address the desire of the Vietnamese people, it is also thoroughly in line with the general trend of the era, corresponding to the Millennium Development Goals set by the United Nations.

In the past few years, Vietnam has been highly appreciated by the United Nations and international institutions in the attack against poverty. It is ranked among one of the countries which are most successful in poverty reduction. To achieve the poverty reduction objectives, the Party and the Government has launched a wide array of measures and polices. One of such polices is the "Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy" which is approved by the Prime Minister in May 2002. Small enterprises play a critically important role in sustainable poverty reduction, especially through job creation and income generation.

To provide readers with a new reference document on poverty reduction through integrated small, enterprise development, the National Political Publishing House and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry would like to introduce the book ***Best Practices and Lessons Learnt from the Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise Development Project - PRISED.***

The report is developed on the results of the "Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise Development Project - PRISED" which is funded by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) and the International Labor Organization (ILO).

The book focuses on best practices and lessons learnt out of the Project, addressing such topics as the approach, execution modality, use of instruments and tools in enabling business environment, media work, social marketing, small business association development, business development service to support the development of small enterprises, thus contributing to poverty reduction.

Despite strong efforts by the authors and editors, the publication may not be free of errors or shortcomings. We appreciate very much your comments on the book.

The book is respectfully presented herewith to our honourable readers.

*September 2009*

NATIONAL POLITICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

## FOREWORDS

Poverty reduction is a one of the prime concerns in Vietnam and is being approached in different ways. Vietnam has chosen a comprehensive approach to poverty reduction. The approach has been articulated in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS) of the Government. One of the essential pillars of the CPRGS is to: *"create an equal business environment for all types of enterprises from all economic sectors, including enterprises with foreign direct investment (FDI), improving their access to public services and business and investment opportunities, and encourage the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises"*.

The project "Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise Development" (PRISED) funded by Sida and executed by ILO and VCCI aims to make a contribution to the implementation of this important task of the CPRGS and also of other economic development, poverty reduction and enterprise development policies in Vietnam. Phase 1 of the Project was executed by ILO in the cooperation of VCCI. Phase 2 of the project was executed by VCCI in the modality of national execution principle (NEX) with technical supports from ILO.

One common interest of SIDA and project executing agencies, including ILO and VCCI, is knowledge management, experience sharing which aim to disseminate the project best practices and to replicate the products and activities supported/ or implemented by the project. For this purpose, this report aims at documenting best practices and lessons learned from the four years of project implementation. On that basis, lessons learnt and best practices can be further shared with project's partners, provincial institutions, ministries and international organizations in order to disseminate the best practices. It may also help to improve the effectiveness, sustainability of the interventions by other programs and projects which are operating in similar fields or with similar objectives.

This report is prepared by a team of experts led by Le Duy Binh (Economist, Economica Vietnam). Team members include Phan Duc Hieu, Nguyen Minh Thao (Central Institute of Economic Management - CIEM); Ngo Vinh Bach Duong (Institute for State and Law, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences). Other experts contributing to the reports are Pham Ngoc Thach, Do Kim Yen, Dao Thuy Trang and Luong Thu Ngan (Economica Vietnam). The report was coordinated by Mr. Pham Hoang Tien – PRISED Project Director and Ms Tran Thi Thanh Tam – Project coordinator.

We would like to express our special thanks for the comments by Dr. Pham Thi Thu Hang (Director of Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion Center, VCCI), Ms. Hoang Thi Dieu Hang (Sida); Ms. Rie Vejs Kjeldgaard (Director, ILO Hanoi), Mr. Kees Van Der Ree (ILO Geneva), Ms. Jenny Ikelberg on the contents of the report. In the implementation process, the team benefited a great deal from the support by all members of the project management unit, project coordinators, and staff at VCCI in Hanoi, Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho, and from staff of provincial partners in Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Binh Phuoc and Tra Vinh. We are very grateful for this support and inputs.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

CPRGS	Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DIT	Department of Industry and Trade
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
EU	European Union
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Technical Cooperation)
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
KAB	Know About Business
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment
NEX	National Execution
PRISED	Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMEPC	Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion Center
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber for Commerce and Industry

## **PART I - INTRODUCTION**

### **I. PROJECT BACKGROUND**

After the introduction of the Enterprise Law in 1999 and 2005, small and micro enterprises have grown exponentially the last decade. This has played an important role in job creation and poverty reduction in Vietnam. The role of small and medium enterprises in economic growth and poverty reduction has been articulated in the CPRGS issued by the Vietnam Government. Besides, the Government had enacted a series of regulations in order to set up a favorable environment for the development of this area such as the Decree No. 56/2009/ND-CP dated June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009 on Support to Development of Small and Medium Enterprises<sup>1</sup>, Decree No. 88/2003/ND-CP on the structure and operation of associations, Decision No. 236/2006/QD-TTg dated October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 which releases the SME Development Plan in the period of 2006 – 2010.

Nevertheless, the development of small and micro enterprises still faces obstacles related to ineffective implementation of law and policy related to local economic development, small enterprise promotion and poverty reduction. Dialogue between the government and the enterprises still suffer from numerous shortcomings. Business development services are in severe shortage and once available, the quality is often not up to standard. Small enterprises face numerous difficulties when accessing to service markets like training, consulting, capital, information, techniques, skills training and product designing. Additionally, the demand for social dialogue between employers and employees is increasing in order to resolve their disputes. The working conditions in enterprises, especially in the small enterprises, are often below generally accepted standards.

The “Poverty Reduction through Integrated Small Enterprise Project – PRISED” was designed and implemented with the purpose of contributing to addressing the above mentioned obstacles. The project implementation is founded on the achievements of Start and Improve Your Business Programme (SIYB) and the Small Enterprise Development in the Greater Mekong Sub-region Project. It is also linked with other ILO projects and programmes in Vietnam and VCCI’s initiatives on business environment reforms and small enterprise development. Observing the underlying principles of local economic development, the project develops a strategy which aims to address prioritized demands of the provinces while building up a strong ownership of partner organizations and guaranteeing the sustainability of the local economic development process.

Operating in the area of supporting small enterprise development are also many projects implemented or funded by other international agencies. These projects are mostly under the overall coordination of the Enterprise Development Agency<sup>2</sup> of MPI, e.g. the Business Sector Programme Support of DANIDA, Vietnam Private Sector Support Programme of EU, SME Development Programme of GTZ, Vietnam Competitiveness Initiative of USAID, “Assistance to Establish the National and Provincial SME Support Infrastructure” of UNIDO etc. Each project has its own approaches towards small enterprise development and therefore there is a strong demand for coordination and also for knowledge and experience exchange among the projects.

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<sup>1</sup> This Decree replaces the Decree No. 90/2001/ND-CP on policy to support SME development.

<sup>2</sup> New name of the Agency for SME Development (ASMED).

## **II. PROJECT'S OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

The overall aim of the project is to contribute to the development of private sector and small and micro enterprises in Viet Nam, including households and self-employed in the informal economy, with the ultimate aim to stimulate local economic growth, generate decent employment, and strengthen cooperation between small-micro enterprises and local authority.

The project pursues a demand-led strategy and bottom-up planning methodology with active participation of local partners. Specific outputs take different shape and lead to different activities in the targeted provinces depending on the actual demand, needs and identified priorities in a specific province. The project has produced the following outputs to achieve the objectives summarized above

Firstly, improved local economy and business environment at provincial level for poverty reduction and enterprise and employment creation is attained by establishing a continuous dialogue between provincial people's committees, government departments, mass organisations, local institutions, business associations, finance providers, service providers and the small enterprises themselves. Provincial priorities have been identified and local economic development strategies and action plans have been developed and implemented with local governments and interest groups in the selected provinces. The implementation of the LED strategy is evaluated and impact assessed, resulting in lessons learned shared at the national level and in other provinces.

Secondly, business development service markets have been further improved in the provinces through the introduction of new and innovative training materials and services for providers and enterprises.

Thirdly, the project stimulates the use of mass media by MSEs for improved access to knowledge, information and services. At national/provincial level, media campaigns and/or support programmes have been designed and established. The Improve Your Business on the Air radio programmes earlier broadcasted in five provinces has been introduced further in selected provinces. Social marketing campaigns that promote the concept of good working conditions lead to higher productivity and the value of entrepreneurship have been developed and implemented with media agencies using different forms of mass media.

Finally, national capacity to provide training and support in the areas of local economic development, policy reform, public private partnerships (PPP) and management of small business associations (SBA) has been further developed. Trainers and business association counselors have been trained on how to provide training and counseling to small business associations.

The project has developed a broad range of partnerships for the different aspects of its programme, including with the Agency for SME Development (ASMED) at the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). It also actively joined the activities under the SME Partnership Group which is coordinated by the Enterprise Development Agency of MPI and in donor coordination and experience exchange activities with other donor agencies operating in the same field like EU, DANIDA, UNIDO, GTZ, USAID etc.

## **PART II – GOOD PRACTICES FROM PRISED PROJECT**

### **I. GOOD PRACTICES RELATED TO GENERAL ISSUES OF THE PROJECT**

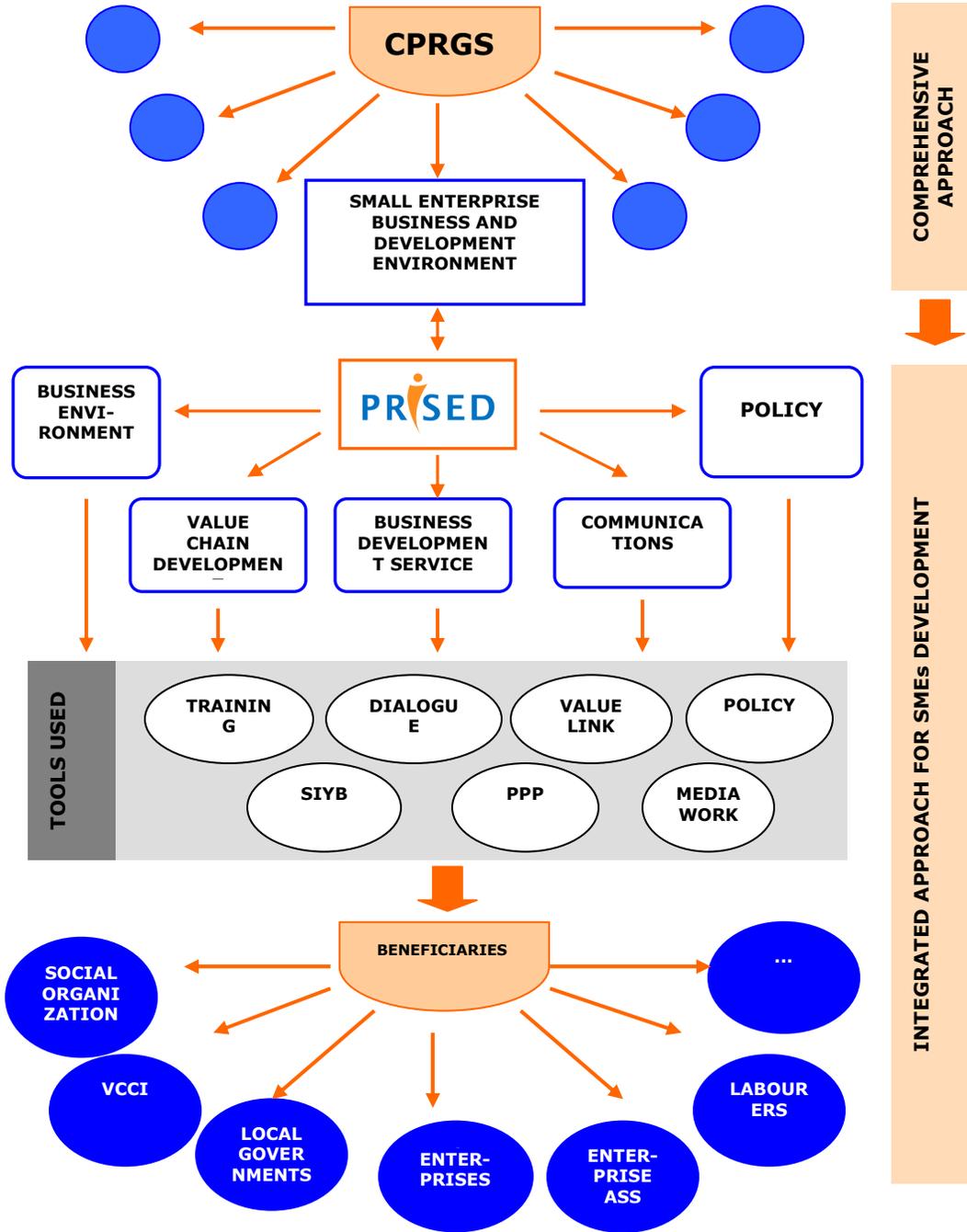
#### **1. Approach and national framework**

The selection of intervention level is an essential element to ensure effective implementation, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of a technical assistance project. PRISED has chosen to focus its interventions on provincial level, particularly on implementation of laws and policy at provincial level, policy and regulation formulation at selected provinces and on capacity building of local partners. The selection of intervention achieved consensus among donors Sida, ILO and VCCI. This approach is demand based and pragmatic and reflects good coordination between donor agencies. The results and outcomes from the two phases of the project showed that focused interventions at provincial level is a good choice and it can apparently bring about quick, immediate and positive impacts. The approach adopted project stressed on both the need for policy dynamics at the central level and support to provincial level.

Poverty reduction is a one of the prime concerns and is being approached in different ways. Vietnam has chosen an overall and comprehensive approach to address the problem – an approach which is clearly articulated in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS). The strategy was approved in May, 2002 by the Prime Minister as a strategy paper which aims at poverty reduction, rapid and sustainable economic growth while maintaining social advance and equality. The entire document demonstrated an comprehensive approach which aims at achieving different objectives with an emphasis laid on different program and development tools. The CPRGS articulates the the following objectives (i) promoting rapid and sustainable economic growth while maintaining social advance and equality; (ii) creating fair business environment including foreign-invested enterprises and small enterprise development; (iii) continuing the structural reform process; (iv) improving public administration reform; (v) developing the human resources and reducing inequality; (vi) reducing vulnerability and improving the capacity of vulnerable groups and (vii) building an indicator system to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the CPRGS.

PRISED was formulated with the objective of contributing to the second objective of CPRGS, i.e. creating an enabling business environment and development of small enterprises. Therefore, the comprehensive approach of CPRGS was translated into the integrated approach for small enterprise development. This is a new approach for enterprise development and is absolutely in line with the overall approach in CPRGS. Using CPRGS as the foundation, PRISED pursues the integrated and comprehensive approach towards creating enabling business environment and development of small enterprises - one of the seven pillars of CPRGS.

**From comprehensive approach in CPRGS to integrated support approach in SMEs development under PRISED**



Integrated enterprise development was a unique approach which have been adopted by PRISED. With this new approach, an array of instruments and products have been introduced, used and redevelopped to meet the requirements in enterprise development at provinces and at local communities. The interventions and instruments are selected in a flexible manner on the basis of the actual context, capacity and priorities of each province. The integrated approach resulted in different implementation strategies among 4 provinces, reflecting actual needs and priorities of each province. For instance, while Quang Ngai focused on business association development and value chain, Binh Phuoc concentrated more on media work, value chain and policy dialogues between the local authority and the business community. Or while social marketing and media work are of higher interest in Tra Vinh (IYB on air), social marketing and business association development sound more appealing to Thanh Hoa. The integrated approach therefore has ensured the diversity and flexibility throughout the implementation process.

The project activities were set up based on the experiences and capacity that ILO and VCCI have had through SIYB project and Mekong subregion enterprise development project. Such foundation has helped PRISED extend to new areas and new concepts representing more integrated and better approach to enterprise development, local economic development and creation of better jobs, income and poverty reduction. The development of PRISED ensured continuity, built on and maintained previously achieved results of previous projects. A long process of design and deployment illustrated a process of continuous learning, self improvement and reform of approach from stakeholders especially from the donors (Sida) and executing partners (ILO and VCCI).

One of the constraints often seen in any development projects implemented by Vietnamese government and donors in different fields is the lack of models, instruments or products. Such a lack often hinder severely the achievement of the development objectives. To overcome such drawback, PRISED has adopted an underlying approach of developing products and instruments, having them tested, replicating them on a larger extent, and making effort to institutionalize the products and instruments. This is one of the most prominent best practice in PRISED. Both ILO and VCCI attached special importance to this approach and have consistently developped tools and transfered them to partner provinces. The development of new tools includes localization of documents and instruments which were developed by international organizations or experts, e.g. the manual on setting up and strengthening of business associations and the guideline on improving business environment at provincial level.

The models of providing business development services, public private partnership and communications which were successfully developed and tested was welcomed and used by partners. In the role of a facilitator and coordinator and in conjunction with partner organizations at provincial and central level, PRISED piloted new ways of providing business development services, e.g. the agriculture commodities news, development of agricultural product brands, and policy dialogues on air and on television, etc.

Development of tools and products and transfer them to national partners is a wise approach to ensure the sustainability and the long-term use of the products even beyond the completion of the project. Under PRISED, products and instruments were developped together with national partner organizations with support from national, international experts and consulting companies. This has strengthened the national ownership of the whole development process, the relevance and workability of the products and instruments developped. At the same time, it improved the capacity of national individuals and organizations which were involved in the development, use and institutionalization of those tools and products.

## **2. Mode of Implementation, Management and Institutional Structure**

In each province, the Department of Planning and Investment is selected as an implementation focal point. Often the right selection of partners, a well designed implementation structure and an appropriate approach are key to the success of the project. DPIs are provincial agencies which directly involves in the formation and development of enterprises, domestic and foreign investment promotion, and in the elaboration and co-ordinating the implementation of socio-economic development plans, hunger elimination and poverty reduction programmes. It also play a crucial role in local economic development.

The fact that DPI is the focal point is absolutely suitable to the content and the approach of the project – integrated enterprise development to alleviate poverty. Direct and close cooperation with Department of Planning and Investment ensures the effective and sustainable integration of project activities and objectives and local activities of enterprise development, value chain development and improvement of business and investment environment. It also ensures the connection between project activities and departments, sectoral activities which leads to combined impacts of the project.

Acting on a recommendation in the project mid-term evaluation report, project management and execution was further decentralized in the second phase. Management and co-ordination activities have been decentralized by VCCI Hanoi to regional branches. Specifically, VCCI Ho Chi Minh City is in charge of project activities in Binh Phuoc, while VCCI Can Tho takes care of activities in Tra Vinh and VCCI Da Nang of activities in Quang Ngai. Project activities in Thanh Hoa are still under the management of VCCI Hanoi as the VCCI branch in Thanh Hoa has just been established.

However, there are an increasing number of activities which are undertaken by VCCI Thanh Hoa towards the end of the project, thus helping to improve the implementation capacity of VCCI Thanh Hoa. The strong decentralization in project management is in line with the prevailing decentralization trend in Vietnam in different areas, ranging from economic governance in the public sector to business administration in enterprises and projects. In the framework of PRISED, the decentralization process has been particularly robust and persistent in phase 2. The decentralization aims at two main objectives: (i) improving the efficiency in project implementation, and (ii) strengthening the capacity in project implementation management as well as technical expertise of staff in provincial and regional institutions, especially of VCCI regional branches. Decentralization enable the project to make the best use of technical strength of VCCI branches. A typical example is the use of experience of VCCI Ho Chi Minh City in implementing SIYB on air program. Decentralization is also applied both to activity implementation and to financial management. VCCI branches are given higher autonomy in project management and implementation. However, the Project Management Unit in Hanoi still assumes the overall responsibility in terms of technical supervision, disbursement and financial management. It also provides technical support to branches on complicated activities to ensure a smooth cooperation between the project management unit and the provinces. The two objectives set for the decentralization process have been achieved, proving that that this is a successful lesson in terms of project management under PRISED.

## **3. Provincial Project Partners**

With the Department of Planning and Investment as a focal point, the partner structure of PRISED is designed in an open and flexible manner to meet the demand for support in the provinces. Project's partners are very diverse, including public authorities such as in addition to DPI, other line

departments in the provinces, social organization like provincial women's union, private enterprise association, service providers, etc. The project has been able to attract the participation of a large number of partners and therefore encourage the coordination between them. Such a diverse and strong alliance help to improve a great deal the outreach of the project in the province. Therefore, in the framework of PRISED, the partner structures across beneficiary provinces are not at all identical. Rather it is structured in a way that reflects the main focus of activities and the priorities of each provinces. Such an open and flexible partner structure is one of the prominent features of the project, enabling it to respond the best to the need for support in the field of local economic development, enterprise development and and poverty reduction in each province. This is also a critical factor to ensure that the tools and products introduced by the project are effective and will be continued to be used in the province. Thanks to the principle, the project has been able to select appropriate partner for its activities, ensuring that the immediate objectives and development objective of the project are to be achieved.

The partners are selected on the basic of their core function and the possibility of their contribution to the success of the project. This is a key element to strengthen the ownership of local partner on the activities implemented.

PRISED provides technical assistance and co-ordinates the implementation of project activities rather than gets involved directly in activity implementation. PRISED place a special focus on building and consolidating a network of enterprise development supporting agencies to support the implementation of the project. Its role as a coordinator and backstopper is clearly seen in every single activity. As a coordinator, PRISED developed demonstration instruments and models, having them tested and transferred to partner agencies. It also support with capacity building activities so the knowledge will be built and the instruments and be used effectively. On that basis, partners and provinces continue to use the instruments and replicate them on a larger scale and in a longer time period. Typical examples include the development of model to provide agriculture commodity price information on the radio and on television, public private partnership model in providing basic social services, social marketing campaign in marble and stone industry, online policy dialouge on the radio and television. Coordinating the process, PRISED has succeeded in attracting different resources to implement project activities in order to achieve expected outcomes. In the framework of the project, a large number of activities were implemented by project budget with significant counterpart funds by partner provinces, e.g. the IYB Programme on Tra Vinh Radio and Television, value chain development in Binh Phuoc. Limiting itself to the role of a backstopper and coordinator, PRISED has been particulalry sucessful at enhancing the ownership of partner organizations.

#### **4. Bottom-up and Participatory Planning of Project Interventions and Activities**

An appropriate approach and institutional structure constituted a strong foundation for PRISED to apply the principle of bottom-up and participatory planning.

Through conferences and workshops, objectives and contents of the project were shared with national partners, provincial agencies, mass organizations, local press, business associations, business development service providers and others. On the basis of input information provided by the project, the DPI, in their role as the focal points at provincial level, are responsible to coordinate the project planning process. Plans in provinces are formulated based on requirements of support and actual demand from local partners and also on the support principles as well as short term and long term objectives of the project. Bottom up and participatory planning has been pursued persistently

and consistently in all of the four provinces. Therefore, the principle has helped to ensure a high ownership of partner organizations and the effectiveness and sustainability of activities implemented.

Activity planning under PRISED also followed closely the national and provincial programs and plans for enterprise development, socio-economic development and poverty reduction at national and provincial level, such as 5 year socio economic development plan 2006-2010 of provinces, the small enterprises and private sector development plan, poverty reduction plan, etc. By attaching itself to national and provincial plans and programmes, activities under PRISED are highly feasible and have higher chance of mobilizing additional resources from provincial partners for project implementation, thus contributing more to the achievement of the overall objective and the project impact and sustainability in the long run.

## **5. Smooth Transition from ILO Execution to National Execution**

PRISED was implemented in two phases. Phase 1 was executed by ILO in coordination with VCCI and Phase 2 was executed by VCCI with technical assistance from ILO following the NEX model. This is a unique feature, distinguishing PRISED from other technical assistance projects operating in the same field.

The transfer of project execution from ILO to VCCI started on October 1, 2007. At the transitional period, there were concerns about the continuity of project activities after it is transferred to VCCI. However, activities implemented in the second phase have proven that there is an obvious continuity and consistency in activities, interventions and concepts of the Project in phase 2, making sure that the project continues its trend of reaching the overall objective of the entire project. Tools and products developed in phase 1 was further developed, improved and used in phase 2. New products such as public private partnership (PPP) were introduced and developed in phase 2. The consistency in project management and implementation was guaranteed. Thanks to the continuity between the two phases, partners felt no disruption or difficulty in the implementation process. VCCI has proven their capacity in providing technical support to implementing partners at both central and provincial level, and at the same time their capacity to meet all stringent requirements of the donor agency.

Key factors which ensured the smooth transfer of the execution from ILO to VCCI are the followings:

- The transfer was planned right at the time when the project document was being formulated.
- Both ILO and VCCI were active in preparing for the transfer right at the first phase of the project.
- In preparation for the transfer, the capacity of VCCI in general and of project officials were continuously strengthened, especially through directly involvement in coordination, technical inputs and activity implementation in phase 1.
- ILO continued to provide technical advisors to support the implementation of the project in phase 2.

Successful transfer of project execution from an international organization to a national organization is an important indicator for sustainability of technical assistance project. The improved capacity of a national organization such as VCCI in project execution is an important indicator demonstrating that they are completely capable of implementing similar projects, sustaining the instruments and

products, maintaining and developing technical competence and knowledge for the sake of similar projects in enterprise development, local economic development and poverty reduction in the future.

The successful transfer of project management from an international organization (ILO) to a national organization (VCCI) is a valuable experience a good practice in implementing technical assistance projects in the field of enterprise development and poverty reduction – an area in which Vietnamese institutions are showing continuously improved capacity in project formulation, implementation, management, execution, monitoring and evaluation. Under PRISED, this is an appropriate approach which have been adopted by the donor, ILO and VCCI. The good practice should be further replicated in the context of other technical assistance projects.

## **6. Monitoring and Evaluation System**

On the basis of the recommendation in the mid-term evaluation report, a monitoring and evaluation system of PRISED was developed and put into operation to provide timely information. PRISED has developed a user handbook on the system of project reporting, monitoring and evaluation. The handbook aims at supporting provincial partners, regional VCCI branches and National Project Office in using the system to monitor and evaluate activities and results of project in their area of management. Besides, through the reporting system, PRISED Project Management Unit can track the progress of the project all over the country and is continuously updated with accurate information and data for reports to the donor and government authorities which are tasked with ODA management, including the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

Monitoring and evaluation system was designed on the basis of the popular software application EXCEL. The monitoring system keeps track of different areas of the project, including information on the achievement of objectives, expected results, outcomes and activities. At the same time, monitoring system also captures information and data to measure impact indicators, means of verification, source of information, reporting responsibility, report receiver and report frequency.

However, the M&E system was introduced only at the end of the Project. Given the importance of the M&E system, it is important that the system be set up and put into operation right at the outset of the project. This is an important lesson learnt from PRISED.

## **7. Project Communication**

PRISED have made continuous effort to build its own image. Starting with the development of its own logo, using consistent color sets in its logo, correspondences, publications, presentations, PRISED has been successful in building a unique, impressive, catchy identity and a positive image in partners, beneficiaries and related agencies.

To ensure the sustainability and enhanced knowledge management, PRISED especially focused on publications and documentation work for long term use. Building the its own identity and reflect such an identity in all publications is a creative feature of the project. PRISED is among a few projects which implement a strategy to build its own image. And the results from these efforts have been very encouraging.

The project has developed a website [www.priSED.com.vn](http://www.priSED.com.vn). Information about the project, presentations and updated news can be found in the website. The website and news about every

activity of the project are updated once every six months and is an important source of information for research, reference for partners and other projects operating in the same field.

Sharing information among project implementation partners and project stakeholders is an obstacle for most projects. With a broad participation of a wide array of stakeholders from central to provincial levels, PRISED has addressed the problem in a systematic manner. In the framework of the project, an internal regulation on information exchange has been elaborated. The regulation cover the issues of the form of report, mode of information exchange, periodical report, responsibility of respective individuals and units in exchanging information. With such structure, the reporting system under the project has been running effectively.

The internal information exchange, reporting system and monitoring and evaluation under the project has been taken seriously and executed in a serious and systematic manner. This has enabled PRISED to make a difference in terms of project management and execution, especially from the perspective of ensuring the quality of management, and close adherence to the objectives and expected results of the project.

However, the effort to build up a unique image of the project, the introduction of the project logo was only implemented at Phase 2. Most of the publications, training manuals, etc. were uploaded in the project website – a practice which most international projects often takes. This has encouraged the sharing of knowleged built under PRISE. These are also important lessons learnt under the project.

## **8. Independent Mid-term Evaluation of Project Implementation**

A mid-term evaluation on different aspects of PRISED was carried our in March, 2007 in order to provide a diagnostic of project management, discussions on strenghs and weaknesses as well as suggestions for improvement. Mid term evaluation is considered a good practice in the framework of PRISED. the recommedations of mid term evaluation have helped to improve the implementation of the project, especially recommendations about strengthening the capacity of staff, institutionalization and mainstreaming of LED activities and instruments into VCCI activities, and specific recommendations on project management such as stronger decentralization to regional VCCI branches.

### **A Summary of Most Important Best Practices Related to the Overall Issues under PRISED**

- √ It is a wise decision to focus the interventions on activities at provincial level and on policy implementation rather than at the level of policy formulation at national level. The approach is destined to bring about positive and practical impacts on different fields in the context that there is a dynamic in policy formulation at central level. The approach is also a good selection given that there is already a lot of support at policy making level by other donors.
- √ Integrated enterprise development approach is a unique approach towards poverty reduction and has proven to be very effective by the instruments and models introduced and developed by the project.
- √ Bottom up, participatory and demand-driven planning with strong reference with social and economic development plans has been the overriding principle. Rather than just talking about it, PRISED has persistently stick to the principle in its actions.
- √ The transfer of project execution from an international organization to a national organization was implemented effectively. Preparations for the transfer process were carried out particularly through the strengthening the capacity and ownership of partner institutions. Despite the transfer, the concepts, activities, approach, type of interventions, etc. are continued in a consistent manner.
- √ The continued technical assistance from an international organization and strengthened capacity of national partner organizations are critical factors to ensure the smooth transfer of project execution and the overall success of the project;
- √ Mid term project evaluation of the project to improve the implementation and project management and serious implementation of recommendations are important. This is also one of the most remarkable good practice under PRISED.
- √ Appropriate and sound project management structures in which tasks and functions of different partners, staffs are clearly defined are key to the effective implementation of a technical assistance project.
- √ Decentralization is the right approach to ensure the ownership of the project, and autonomy of partners and the relevance of project's activities and interventions to provincial contexts.
- √ Communication activities and image building is also a key factor resulting in effective project implementation, higher possibility for instruments and products being known about and being replicated.
- √ The system for result, impact monitoring and evaluation has been developed in systematic manner and was put into implementation. The system has provided sufficient information to monitor the results and impacts of the project.
- √ Internal information system was developed in a professional manner, ensuring the smooth flow of information – a decisive factor for effective project implementation.
- √ Stronger efforts should be made to feed best practices from the project, e.g. the approach to poverty reduction through integrated enterprise development should be communicated to organizations, institutions, ministries at the national level.
- √ Communication activities should not be limited to delivering the news about project activities. Communication activities in the framework of the project should be focused on the dissemination of models, products and tools, thus giving them a higher chance of being replicated under other projects, national programs and by other organizations.
- √ The M&E system should have been developed and put into operation right at the outset (Phase 1) of the Project;

## **II. GOOD PRACTICES RELATED TO INSTRUMENTS AND PRODUCTS FOR MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT**

### **1. Improvement of the Business Environment**

A key feature of improving business environment activities is to meet the demand for technical assistance of local authorities on local economic development and capacity strengthening in formulating and implementing policies, public consultation, particularly in the field of administrative procedures, law enforcement, business registration reform, etc.

In the framework of improving business environment, PRISED focused on the following areas: (i) Development training manual and strengthen the capacity of human resources at provincial level about management and development of local economy, (ii) enhanced dialogues between public and private sectors, (iii) public private partnership, (iv) development of small enterprise associations.

Those different fields of interventions under the project are interrelated and consistent with each other in terms of content. For example, there was a strong interrelation between improvement of public private dialouge with the development of small enterprise associations. Additionally, they represent a linkage between interventions between the national and provincial level (e.g. the training by the Administrative and Political Institute 1 on creating enabling business environment for local government officials from selected provinces).

### **1.1. Development of Training Materials and Training on Provincial Business Environment**

Right from the onset, the project placed importance on activities to improve policy making skills, strengthening awareness about the role of SMEs, role of the State as well as other level of local authorities and related organizations so as to develop a favourable business environment for SMEs. In the framework of PRISED, this activity aims at both achieving objective of the project and ensuring sustainable development, job creation and hunger elimination and poverty reduction in the province.

Enhancing capacity of local authorities, especially those at provincial and district level is an important intervention area of the project. A high-quality training manual was developed in the framework of the project. The manual was also and at the same time set up tools probably used and researched by VCCI, central organizations, institutes and other provincial organizations in the future. Unclear meaning.

The project developed a three volume publication called "Creating Enabling Business Environment – Formulation and Implementation of Policy for SMEs Development" including (i) Volume 1: Overview of Local Economy Development Policy; (ii) Volume 2: Enabling Business Environment for Small Enterprises; (iii) Volume 3: Policy Evaluation, Development and Implementation.

One distinguishing characteristic of this serie is the good combination of international knowledge and practical knowledge of Vietnam context. Based on the ILO book "Creating an Enabling Environment for Small Enterprise" co-authored by Simon White, Patricia Richardson, Claude Lamshead and Nabeel Goheer, the training manuals were adapted to the context of Vietnam. Supplemented with case studies, exercises, examples from Viet Nam, the 3 volumes were further developed by an experts group from VCCI, Administrative Political Institute of Region 1, Central Institute of Economy Management, National Economics University.

During phase one of the project the training manual was adapted, edited and tested in training of trainers. During the second phase the manuals were used to train provincial authorities.

In total PRISED trained 200 officers in its 4 provinces on "Creating an enabling bussiness environment – Formulating and Implementing Policy on SME development". In the provinces, the training content and program were designed in a flexible fashion in order to meet specific demands of each province. For example, some couses are 4 or 5 days long while some are shorter, lasting for only 1 or 2 days. In Tra Vinh, the course was designed to meet the demand of the province for

improving the business environment in the time of global economic recession. While in Binh Phuoc, the focus is on local marketing

In addition to the provincial training, the Administrative Political Institute of Region 1 trained 14 classes with more than 400 participants from 15 provinces in the North. The mission of the institute is to provide official training to government officials from commune, district and province level. Officials at commune and district levels are those daily in interaction with the business community and have to deal with practical issues related to business environment. The institute is an official training body with experienced lecturers for civil servants. Learners at the institute are therefore absolutely the right target group for the project. They are the one which are well selected for training by the Institute and thus have a high motivation for learning. They are considered to be the ones who play an important role in economic governance in their provinces or districts.

Especially, the cooperation between VCCI and the institute has created a favorable condition for PRISED to effectively further develop and share the training manual. Such a strong cooperation is a good foundation for the smooth implementation of training activities on policy and provincial business environment. It ensures that the training implemented under PRISED reached the right target group and the right learners. Such a cooperation with a well-established institute also helps to improve the image of a product by PRISED and its sustainability in the long run. It also ensures larger outreach beyond the four project provinces

A good selection of partner for training on creating enabling environment for small and micro enterprises at local level, combined with an appropriate approach of localizing the training materials, pilot training, and then replication on a larger scale have ensured the success of this instrument in terms of impact and sustainability. Especially, the introduction of the training manual to 14 classes organized by Administrative Political Institute of Region 1 help to share the knowledge to more than 400 learners who are the officers at the local areas. The training manual have been shared with central agencies and the different ministries.

## **1.2. Public and Private Dialogue**

Enhancing dialogue between the State and private sector is an important content of any program or initiatives in improving the business environment. However, the different approach towards this topic often result in different outcomes.

Within the framework of PRISED, dialogue activities between the public and private sectors have been done effectively. The project pays attention to the promoting social dialogue between the local authoritative agencies and the small businesses so that the local authority and the business can together identify priorities and then to formulate plans and strategies. In many provinces, the project help local agencies and private business through creating an effective platform for dialogue. Activities of the forum bring effectiveness for both sides, the local agencies and small businesses, for example the dialogue activity on PCI in Binh Phuoc province (see box 1). The combination of dialogue activities with building commitment to actions, with forming action plan as well as support to implementation of such action plan have been successfully carried out in Binh Phuoc. This is one of the good experience within the project framework and should be further replicated.

Content of the annual dialogue directly relates to the pressing issues in province such as the business registration procedures, investment, real estate, tax, customs. Besides, other contents about labour, labour safety, workplace, female workers, developing agriculture product markets... are

also topics of discussion. These topics also caught high attention from audiences, listeners in the province.

### **Improving Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) through Public and Private Dialogue in Binh Phuoc**

The PCI ranking of Binh Phuoc has significantly improved during the last 3 years, from 52 in 2006 to 37 in 2009. PCI that was initiated and developed by VNCI and VCCI in 2005 aims at assessing and ranking provinces by their regulatory environment for private sector development. Unfortunately, PCI ranking of Binh Phuoc is very far behind its neighboring provinces, such as Binh Thuan, Ba Ria Vung Tau, Dong Nai, Long An, Binh Duong-.

Binh Phuoc has shown positive reaction to its ranking in the PCI. The province people's committee, in corporation with PRISED and VCCI, has hold immediately a dialogue between the provincial competent agencies and the business community here in order to discuss about the PCI of the province. More than 100 participants who were invited to the dialogue came from all relevant agencies and stakeholders, including mass media organizations, business associations, business clubs and businesses in the province. Chairman of the People's committee of Binh Phuoc chaired the dialogue. The dialogue not only aims at making PCI more clear to understand and sharing information in relation to relevant experiences of some provinces in improving PCI ranking but also saves more time for participants to discuss on how to improve Binh Phuoc's PCI ranking, especially improvement of very-low-ranking sub-indexes of the PCI such as entry cost, private sector development policies, informal charges and labour training. The dialogue has resulted in a Decision 2454/QD-UBND of the Chairman of the People's committee dated November, 12, 2008 which has specified in details activities to improve PCI ranking as well as demanded relevant agencies to set forth its action plan.

As a result, a taskforce for PCI improvement has been established under the direct leadership of the province people's committee. The taskforce has issued an action plan based on the results from the dialogue and best practices gained from a number study tours in other provinces. This action plan has been consulted with PRISED and VCCI. Then, the action plan and its implementation budget have been approved by the people's committee very soon. A number of activities in the action plan have been incorporated in the PRICED such as training on enabling business environment, enhancing public-private dialogue, etc... A vice chairman of the people's committee is assigned to be director of the taskforce who will oversee and monitor implementation of the action plan of the taskforce. Other members of the taskforce are responsible to report progress in implementing the action plan regularly to the director via an email [pci.binhphuoc@gmail.com](mailto:pci.binhphuoc@gmail.com). This email address is also used to receive any comments and feedbacks from business community in relation to PCI of Binh Phuoc. Support of the PRISED in enhancing public-private dialogue is highly appreciated by relevant partners and is considered as a key factors contributed to success of the public-private dialogue.

All above-mentioned reactions of Binh Phuoc people's committee have showed a decisive commitment and effort of the leaders and people in Binh Phuoc in improving PCI ranking and the business environment. Finally, support from PRISED and efforts made by Binh Phuoc People's committee have resulted in a good achievement that PCI of Binh Phuoc has jumped by 17 rankings to 32 ranking in 2008.

Traditional methods of dialogues between the public and private sectors have been carried out. In all the provinces covered by the project, annual meetings between the local authorities with business community have been implemented on a regular basis. PRISED placed high attention to both content the modality of such dialogue to make it really interactive and to the result and the actions committed which come out of the dialogue. In most of the meetings, there is always the presence of the province leaders such as the vice chairman of the provincial people committee. Thanks to this, many important decisions were even made right at the policy dialogues.

PRISED is one of the few projects in Viet Nam that has actively used the mass media in sharing knowledge on business policy, business environment . This is based on the previous instruments which ILO and Sweden had introduced, Using available tools for the policy dialogue and using the radio channel with the reasonable cost with wide coverage in a creative manner have been a distinguishing features under PRISED. Programs on policy dialogue on business environment has attracted a large audience who are not only from provinces of the project but also from other neighboring areas. For instance, the policy dialogue program of Tra Vinh Radio and Television has been warmly received by audiences in Vinh Long, Ben Tre and Hau Giang. Some of the policy dialogue programs on television were broadcast live or take the form of talk show. This really show the creativity of PRISED and its partners in the implementation process.

Moreover, PRISED has developed the tools to support the dialogue process such as bulletin or strengthening the role of business associations in policy advocacy. Establishment and development association of small enterprises to increase their role as an important partner in policy dialogue is an crucial content of PRISED in provinces.

However, the PPD process under PRISED has not been carried out in a well-structured manner. This is an important area for further improvement to improve the public and private dialogue activities in provinces where PRISED provide support.

### **1.3. Small Business Association Development**

Business association plays an important role in the development of business. Business association can contribute to development of the economy and private sector by providing certain services to its members. For this reason, PRISED has supported the development of business association to better serve Viet Nam medium and small enterprises. This has become an important area of intervention under the project

Focusing on the important role of business association and the private sector in improving the business environment of province via the policy dialogue, encouraging all these factors in building, making development program is a distinguishing feature of PRISED. Activities on public - private dialogue combined with developing small association, enhancing the capacity of these associations in representing their members' interests are combined effort to improve the quality of these dialogues

Therefore, main activities are to aim at promoting and increasing the number of small business associations. Activities implemented include supporting the establishment of new ones, strengthening the capacity of existing in terms of leadership skills, management, and service provision to members of the association.

The trainers' manual "Managing Small Business Associations" was developed right at the outset of the project in 2006. The manual covers establishment, and management of SBAs, service provision and advocacy. This is an effective tool in building capacity for small bussiness association. To complement this manual with illustrative stories of business associations in Vietnam, PRISED produced a booklet with eleven case studies. These 2 effective documents was published in July 2008

### **Strengthening the capacity of Quang Ngai Fishery Processing Association**

Quang Ngai is a coastal province in the Central Viet Nam with 130 km coastline, 30% of Quang Ngai population are fishermen. As a result, there are many factories that make fish sauce, dried fish in 21 communes. Annual output of fishery ranges from 85 to 90 thousand tons. In an effort to develop local economy via supporting small and micro enterprises, PRISED has focused its support on production of fish sauce and dried fish in Quang Ngai that is considered as typical advantage of the province and is expected to create more jobs for the poor people.

The PRISED has provided technical supports to fish sauce and dried fish processing units in Quang Ngai. The technical support has taken in various forms such as training courses on enhancing managing capacity and teaching skills for processing, material storing, marketing and negotiation,...; organizing study tours in the provinces in the South; supporting households to participate in trade fairs and exhibitions; supporting product marketing by using mass media, like radio, television. Support of the PRISED has helped most of the fish sauce and dried fish processing units to create their owned brand-name so that they can steadily expand their market to other provinces throughout the country.

Due to expansion of production, fish sauce and dried fish processing units has employed more laborers, especially female laborers in the province. In addition, those units now acknowledge importance of coordination for purpose of better development. The PRISED has advised establishment of the fishery processing association and provided training on raising awareness of important role of association as well as association management skill.

Under support from PRISED and authority agencies in Quang Ngai, Quang Ngai Fishery Promotion Center has sent its competent staffs to visit 150 fishery processing units in 10 communes in order to encourage them set up a fishery processing sub-association in Quang Ngai. Finally, Quang Ngai Fishery Promotion Center has selected 45 fishery process units to be members of the fishery processing sub-association basing on their production capacity and level of food safety and hygiene.

The fishery processing sub-association was established by decision No 125/QD-HN of Quang Ngai Fishery Association under support from Quang Ngai Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Quang Ngai Fishery Promotion Sea Product Center. Establishment of the fishery processing sub-association is expected to benefit its members by not only expanding market but also ensuring compliance with food safety and hygiene requirement.

The project cooperates with many institutions such as Quang Ngai Women Association, Binh Phuoc Youth Business Association, Thanh Hoa Small and Medium Business Association, Thanh Hoa Farmer Association to do the training and disseminate the manual in support of strengthening their capacity.

If the association wished to develop other activities after the training course, technical support would be given in many fields. Many direct support activities such as consulting for the enterprises in supplying services for its members, training course for members, joining the policy dialogue activities were implemented with support from the project

#### **1.4. Public Private Partnerships (PPP)**

In the recent years, public private partnerships (PPP) have become popular topic both domestically and internationally. PPP will help to decrease the burden on state budget in building infrastructure and supplying services for community. Cooperation related to the Government agencies (public sector) and private enterprises, individual business to ensure infrastructure for economic development, public services such as public notary, waste collection and waste treatment disposal, sewage services.... The key principle for PPP is the shared benefit, risk and resources between the public and private sector.

For Viet Nam, PPP is a new definition. However, Viet Nam is now implementing many policies which are PPP in nature, e.g. “Government and the people joining hands”, “socialization of public services”... These policies share many things in common with PPP in improving rural transport, holding cultural festivals – not really PPP, supplying some services for public with the motto “known, discussed, implemented and monitored by the people”

Because this is the new approach, raising public awareness about PPP is considered to be the most important priority for the project. In 2003, VCCI cooperated with ILO in developing the training manual and in pilot PPP training in Viet Nam

In fact, the demand of cooperating using PPP has increased and with the desire of making this module applicable to create more jobs for the poor as well as their chances of accessing public services or basis social services. In the second period, PRISED decided to revisit and revise the training manual of 2003 to serve the learners better. Typical examples of provinces which are implementing PPP modules about sanitary supply in Bai Chanh, Nghi Xuan, Thanh Hoa were introduced. This is one of the first documents in Viet Nam with full information about PPP which include the modules, legal background, instruction on legal negotiation about PPP which can be easily studied and applied in many places

In order to disseminate this new manual, the project had a training course in Hanoi for the PPP coordinators in April 2009 for more than 20 delegates from 4 projected provinces, Thanh Hoa, Quang Ngai, Tra Vinh, Binh Phuoc and the officers from the projects. The manual was distributed at different workshops, including the LED exchange workshop in Can Tho in July 2009.

Developing training document, module and tool on the basis of combining international experience and knowledge with adjustments to Viet Nam context, using the manual for pilot training and capacity building and sharing knowledge in a large scale have been proved to be one of the advantages of PRISED.

## **2. Social marketing and media work**

### **2.1. Social marketing**

Within the framework of PRISED, social marketing was used as a tool to promote improved working conditions in one case, and encourage entrepreneurship in another.

Social marketing is the application of commercial marketing approaches and techniques to influence the behaviour of a specific target audience in order to improve their personal welfare or that of the wider society.

The implementation of social marketing activities was very well-planned with two focused programs in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh. These activities were carried out in an exact procedure to make sure that they are logical and practical when being brought into daily life. Such activities like analyzing social marketing environment, defining target group, aims and purposes of the program, drafting social marketing plan and strategy, managing social marketing program, supervising the implementation and evaluating the result as well as the effect of the program were realized in a rational and consistent sequence. This reflects the high capability of VCCI staffs and ILO technical experts in initiating a fresh project in Vietnam.

### **Social Marketing – An Effective Tool for Quick and Direct Impact on Enterprises, Workers and the Community**

Stone and marble is an important industry of Thanh Hoa since it creates many jobs and income for tens of thousand people and households in this province. It is also an in-the-spotlight industry because of its dangers which may threaten not only workers' and their families' life but also the development of enterprises and the safety of surrounding community. After doing research on the working environment of Thanh Hoa enterprises, PRISED project has cooperated with local authorities such as Planning and Investment Department, Labour, Invalids and Social Welfare Department, Labour Federation and People Committees to implement a social marketing campaign to improve people's awareness of labour safety and change risky behaviour at enterprises and rock processing sites in Thanh Hoa.

After a series of unfortunate accidents in many rock mines nation-wide in a short period, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2008, the Prime Minister issued Directive No.18/2008/CT-TTg on enhancing Labour Safety in rock exploitation which has consolidated the determination of the project staffs as well as local partners. The subject of the program is defined as employers and employees. A number of activities were implemented, for example the seminars on Labour Safety Propaganda and the training course on Labour Safety in two districts of Ha Trung and Dong Son, attracting hundreds of participants namely enterprises owners, union staffs, Labour Safety propagandists, provincial labour union staffs and labourers.

To support the social marketing activities, the Project designed a logo, printed flyers, Labour Safety handbook, posters, banners and slogans for the program. The logo is well-designed, fun-packed, original, informative and especially easy to recognize, understand and remember. The information documents were carefully prepared and effective in supporting the program implementation. An innovation on social marketing program in Thanh Hoa is to establish a mobile information group which propagating Labour Safety directly to rock exploiting and processing enterprises in Thanh Hoa. This group and the media documents are the most effective measures to transfer the program's message to the target group.



*Social Marketing Program Logo in Thanh Hoa*

The opening ceremony of the media campaign, including theater and songs, in Nhoi town (Dong Son District) and Ha Trung town (Ha Trung district) are the highlights of the campaign with the participation of many local residents and authorities. It also reflects the effectiveness of a new way to bring the legal documents to the local people who often find these texts boring and dull. Beside the ceremony, the social marketing program was successfully implemented thanks to the efficient support of the media and the coordination with the project's media activities. Three short documentaries on Labour Safety of rock industry were made and broadcasted on Thanh Hoa Radio and Television Station. The campaign activities have reached a large number of readers through Thanh Hoa News, Labour News and Thanh Hoa Union Papers. To conclude the program, a discussion was held and broadcasted on Thanh Hoa Radio and Television Station. Participants of the discussion were representative from DOLISA, Thanh Hoa Labour Union, People Committees from Nhoi and Ha Trung towns, as well as representatives of employers and employees from enterprises which has joined the program.

The effect of the Program on targeted group is very clear. According to an independent evaluation of VietInsight consulting company, although the implementation period is short but with a well-planned execution, the program has reached 44% coverage, enhanced people's awareness on Labour Safety from 73% in 2008 to 84% in March 2009. After the campaign, 74% people interviewed by VietInsight said that the working environment and Labour Safety in their working places had been improved, whereas only 53% people shared the same opinion before the program. Many enterprises and individual workers had positive changes in Labour Safety behavior.

A positive point in PRISED program implementation is the consistent application of bottom-up approach. This helped to meet local demands and put the emphasis on participants of local partner right at the beginning as well as during the program. Two social marketing programs implemented in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh is in accordance with the common policy of the Government and the Social Economic Development Plan of the province. Specifically, the social marketing programs have effectively support the implementation of Directive No.18/2008/CT-TTg on enhancing Labour Safety in rock exploitation. Social marketing program in Tra Vinh was also based on the practical needs of local enterprises. And this year is also Tra Vinh enterprises year which was named "Doing business to establish one's own enterprise – bring prosperity to family and the whole country". This has contributed to enhance the commitment and participation of local authorities as well as to support the aims, purpose and the target group defining process of the social marketing program. With the participation of local partners, the social marketing program in Thanh Hoa mainly utilizes the media to provide rock exploiting and processing enterprises with basic knowledge on labour safety as well as to introduce the measure to and the result of improving working conditions and labour safety in order to increase productivity, employees' and employers' income. Meanwhile, in Tra Vinh, the program's focus is to provide residents and enterprises with information and skills in doing business in order to encourage new enterprises establishment and development, so that the sources for national budget and local economic development would be increased.

Basing on local demand and aiming at different targeted groups, PRISED designed specific social marketing strategy for each province and created explicit plan and tool for these activities in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh provinces. In each province, the message for social marketing program has been specified. PRISED was also flexible in using the tool for social marketing process. The main activities implemented in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh include: launching ceremony, seminars and training course, mobile information groups, marketing materials (i.e. handbooks, fliers, posters, banners and flipchart) delivery, closing ceremony and talk show on television. Meanwhile, the key tools and activities in Tra Vinh are the talk show on business establishment, a live discussion with local authorities on doing and developing business, training on radio, information dissemination through radio, television and documents like handbooks, fliers and posters.

## **2.2. Media Work**

Media Work – a tool which has been developed and implemented successfully by ILO in many countries with different forms – was adjusted and adapted to the conditions of Vietnam. The communication through mass media aims at developing programs for small and micro enterprises on radio and television, as well as implementing conventional tools such as to introduce enterprises' establishment on radio (SIYB on air).

Understanding the power of mass media, PRISED has actively selected the partners, methods and content of the program. Based on the consistent rule, the communication through mass media was linked with other activities within the project where media has become an important tool and medium to implement other activities such as social marketing, improving sources for business development, enhancing information exchange between small and micro enterprises and the authorities, researching business environment, and training and capacity building. Media has a strong effect in many activities of PRISED project, ranging from building a favorable business environment, and social marketing and entrepreneurship. Using media and media work tools to achieve the planned outcome is an outstanding practice from PRISED.

The implementation of media activities was also very professional, starting from the research and evaluating conditions and demand in each province. This step was carried out in various forms like plays, interactive television program, training on doing business on television, etc.

### Interactive Television Program in Quang Ngai

One of PRISED's aims is to develop local radio and television programs for small enterprises to provide consultation on running a business, information and training on business environment, business opportunities, prices, market events, and service suppliers, etc. In order to heightening the effectiveness of activities within PRISED project, the communication activities in Quang Ngai coordinate and support others which were implemented in the same area. The media work program on Quang Ngai Radio and Television Station was much diversified in terms of genre including live television and radio interactive programs; communication through short plays on television and radio; news in brief on mechanism and policy on radio and television.

The interactive TV programs in Quang Ngai were broadcasted live on radio and television to disseminate information and to address questions from enterprises through direct call to the hotline of the program. The target group of these programs is mainly small and micro enterprises, thus, the design and making of the program which is easy to understand and practical are the strong points of the programs. To produce an interactive program, Quang Ngai Radio and Television Station has used up to 2 technicians to build a marketing series for these program to make sure that before main program is broadcasted, the trailers must be screened at least 3 days earlier and 3 times each day on television and radio. Besides, teams of reporters are sent out to survey at locals, make documentaries and clip relating to the topic, collect queries from business households and pass them to the production team. Each interactive program on radio and television uses 3 to 4 clips, documentaries, and queries and answers. During the filming or recording process, the program always displays the hot line number 055-3 817 862 so that audience could exchange their ideas or ask questions.



*Interactive television program "Improving business environment" in Quang Ngai*

In addition, as these interactive programs are live, the reporter team has to rehearse several times with the speakers before the real broadcast. During the production of the program, VCCI Da Nang/ PRISED project have directly supervised and drawn up some lessons. With this way of implementing, Quang Ngai Radio and Television Station has produced 6 interactive programs with different topics: (i) Improving business environment; (ii) Accessing capital sources to develop business and production; (iii) Techniques in preserving and processing seafood; (iv) Marketing to attract clients and customers; (v) From labels to trade mark; (vi) Food safety in processing seafood.

These interactive programs are resounding and brings about positive effects to the locals; more importantly, it encourages doing business spirit for small and very small enterprises, especially those who produce and shell fish sauce and dried fished.

Fully aware of its importance, participating provinces have a strong commitment to media work activities under the Project. Tra Vinh's People Committee has allowed Tra Vinh Radio and Television Station to upgrade its facility and equipment in order to improve its broadcasting capacity, ensuring that it would effectively make use of the PRISED support. This strong commitment also guarantees the quality and sustainability of these programs. Some television programs have implemented project activities in an innovative manner, including agricultural products news, talk show on business environment, and IYB on air. The project provided technical support through domestic consulting companies or consultants both to improve quality and capacity for local television stations and to ensure the sustainability of the programs on television.

All provinces have confirmed that these programs would continue by using local budget and mobilized fund from other sources after PRISED ends its support.

In Quang Ngai, the media work has brought about positive results by making the program diversified. Both radio and television programs feature a wide and deep content, helping local residents to get access to business legal regulations and law like law on labour, investment, and government support policy, etc. as well as PRISED activities in an attempt to develop medium and small enterprises. Thanks to the media, local people now gain more knowledge and experience from successful businessmen and households doing business. These programs have provoked the desire of doing business from the community. With the support from PRISED, Quang Ngai Radio and Television station produced and broadcasted 6 television interactive programs, 6 radio interactive programs (30-35 minutes for each program), 2 television short plays, 2 radio short plays, 8 television news on policy and market, 8 radio news on policy and market, 1 documentary about the evaluation of PRISED's impact in Quang Ngai.

Those media programs have reflected the creativity and diversity in designing and making the shows. Such programs include talk shows, dialogue on business environment on radio using hot line, introducing programs like "Enterprise Story" in Binh Phuoc, providing business development service in the form of News on Agricultural Commodity Products, connecting media work activities with social marketing programs on labour safety, start your business, IYB on Air. These programs are good practices which can be replicated in other projects.

#### **Documentary Series on Television "Start Your Business"**

With the aim of stimulating the community's desire to do business and of honoring brilliant business idea, within the project framework of PRISED, Quang Ngai Television and Radio station has cooperated with VCCI Da Nang to produce the report series "Start Your Business". Through the main characters of the reports who were learners of KAB ("Knowing About Business" program), the program "Start Your Business" has created a deep impression in the target group of teenagers, conveying the message of "be active to come up with business idea and be confident to enter the market once you have found one". Following this spirit, Quang Ngai Television and Radio station produced 5 portrait reports on learners of KAB at semi-public secondary school Huynh Thuc Khang and Dung Quat Information and Technology training and Developing Center.

These programs are made to continue a series on training of the Project namely "Knowing About Business - KAB". With the support from the Project and the encouragement of KAB learners, the selected learners in the report have actively and confidently presented their business ideas. Since being broadcasted, the programs have attracted attention of many KAB learners.

In addition, thanks to the advantages of broadcasting time (20:30), short duration (5 minutes), and carefully selected characters, the numbers of viewers is quite high. Many people have known PRISED through these programs of Quang Ngai Radio and Television station. Especially, these programs had a significant effect on a group of the youths who have become active and dynamic in generating business innovation.

Tra Vinh has implemented the "IYB on Air" program and then the "business consultancy on radio" program. These programs are aimed at supporting enterprise's establishment, changing and enhancing business competence for micro and small enterprises.

### **The program of learning business on radio in Tra Vinh – Practical impacts**

Since 2007, Tra Vinh province has produced 2 programs "Learning business on radio" and "Business consultancy on radio" with the cooperation of VCCI in Can Tho, Tra Vinh Department of Investment and Planning, Tra Vinh Radio and Television station, and with the sponsorship from PRISED project. The program of learning business on radio was broadcasted from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to November 7<sup>th</sup> 2008. The preparation of the program started in May 2007 through a series of activities like study tour and experience exchange at Binh Phuoc Radio and Television station, the warm up seminar with the participation of representatives from many stakeholders and local enterprises.

After 2 months of enrolling, the project received 467 learners who were enterprises' owners, business householders from Tra Vinh, Vinh Long, and Ben Tre. They were divided into 45 groups (353 learners from Tra Vinh into 34 groups, 56 learners from Vinh Long into 5 groups, and 58 learners from Ben Tre into 6 groups).

The program had 2 periods. In period 1 (September 2007), the project concluded the training courses for group leaders, editors and technicians as well as finished the documents delivery, radio broadcasting and telephone payment process for hotline supporting groups during the broadcasting. This period was officially broadcasted from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to December 7<sup>th</sup> 2008.

Each live program has a 60 minute duration (from 14.00 to 15.00 every Tuesday and Friday), of which the first 25 minutes are for the lecture which is recorded in advance, and the rest 35 minutes are for chatting and exchanging experience through telephone call. Learners use the hotline to raise questions which will be answered by the host, lecturer, and guests at Tra Vinh Radio and Television station. If all questions could not be dealt with due to time limit of the live program, the answer letters would be sent later by the organizer.

Based on the review and evaluation of results from the learning business on radio program, the project and its partners have decided to continue the show "Business consultancy on radio". The show started on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2009 until July 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. The training courses for group leaders were held on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2009. The program of Business Consultancy on radio has 6 special subjects which are live broadcasted in 70 minutes from 14.00 to 15.00 every Tuesday and Friday, rebroadcast on every Wednesday and Saturday at the same time on FM 96.6 MHz of Tra Vinh Radio station.

The differences between two programs "Learning business on radio" and "Business consultancy on radio" are: (i) the duration of business consultancy program is 10 minutes longer, thus, the overall length is 70 minutes; (ii) the latter aims at providing more specialized information than the "Learning business on radio" program.

The survey among learners of business learning program on radio about the preparation stage and the practicability of the program reflects very positive results. Only 11% of learners thought that the content of the training course is not really useful when applied into reality; 88% of learners said that it was easy and applicable into doing business. More than 72% of learners believed that the course helped them to come up with many more business ideas; half of all the learners spoke highly of the program for assisting them to managing their business more easily, calculating prices and costs more precisely; and making a better plan for doing business. Learners' business efficiency were heighten, making the business more and more better off after the course finished; this accounted for 57.8%.

The program was carried out in Tra Vinh but has also reached audiences in other surrounding provinces. This clearly shows the special effects of using media.

In addition to diversity in terms of content, the programs produced by provincial Radio and Television stations have various forms. They therefore could improve the effectiveness of information and knowledge transferring. For example, in Quang Ngai, Binh Phuoc, the programs take the form of performance like television and radio short plays or short news on mechanism and policy on both television and radio. In fact, the target group of these programs is mainly micro and small enterprises, thus transferring information in an easy to comprehend way. This is one of the positive features of the program. On the other hand, the program relates to many fields and different legal regulations, therefore the hosts of the program and the scriptwriter have to spend much time on studying documents, legal regulations relating to the program topic while writing the script and the voice over. Besides, the program host, scriptwriters have to study documents concerning PRISED to make the content more specialized and relevant with the objectives and direction of the project.

#### **"Binh Phuoc Business Stories"**

"Binh Phuoc Business Stories" is a series of 12 television programs which were carefully produced by Binh Phuoc Television station (BPTV) with the technical support from PRISED project through WTC Company. These programs were broadcasted on BPTV and ended on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2009.

Starting on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2008, after several times of experimenting, collecting evaluation opinions and adjusting, the program was first broadcasted on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009. Focusing on difficulties and enquiries of small enterprises about policy, business strategy, labour resources, environment pollution, working environment, gender issue, and local potential products, etc. "Binh Phuoc Business Story" have sufficiently reproduced basic issues on doing business skills and experience, and economic development policy. Thanks to the program, enterprises could change their awareness and habits in doing business, apply advanced knowledge to further develop their enterprises.

Each program consists of 2 parts. Apart from reporting the situation in local small enterprises through holding discussion, interview, documentary, the program spends 2/3 of its length for short plays in forms of musical play or comedies to reflect the reality in most of today small enterprises. With this structure, "Binh Phuoc Business Story" has simplified complicated issues, making them much easier to understand and absorb. Additionally, "Binh Phuoc enterprises' story" program attracted a large number of viewers, increasing the effectiveness of the communication and propaganda in PRISED project.

Through these programs, the purpose of information dissemination g has been reached. Besides, Binh Phuoc Radio and Television station has initiated a new approach when making supporting program, providing information, knowledge, and business skills for small and very small enterprises in the area.

The use of television interactive program in some media activities of PRISED has reflected the initiative and dynamic features in applying new tools to address complicated issues about business law and business establishment. This interactive program broadcasted live on television and radio disseminated knowledge and information as well as addressed queries from enterprises through the programs' hotline. The preparation of the program content therefore must be done very carefully and specifically by both scriptwriter and speaker. This program mobilized a big team of reporters, editors, and technicians to prepare thoroughly the content and technical problem. During the broadcasting time, the hotline number is always screened so that viewers can directly contact, ask questions, and exchange information. Some programs with special topic even require experienced and knowledgeable host who may specialize in marketing or brand issues.

### **3. Value Chain Development**

The project aims at developing two main value chain including the cashew nut chain in Binh Phuoc and fish sauce and dried fish chain Quang Ngai. The process started by activities which quickly

analyzed some potential value chain at the time of the project. Based on the analysis, the design of supporting program was carried out.

### **Developing Value Chain for Direct Benefits of Increasing Income and Creating Jobs**

Before getting to know PRISED project, Mr. Tram in Pho Thanh commune, Duc Pho District, Quang Ngai was an indebted fisherman who had to sell his boat and got on shore to sell and process seafood. At that time, the scale of his seafood processing site was very small with dried fish as the main product. He produced and processed the product using his own experience when he was a fisher; thus, there was no use of preservative. His products were not packed and labeled properly.



*Mr. Tram introduces his products*

Moreover, he had no understanding of marketing, resulting in the fact that customer received no consultancy but more often made their choice by themselves. He said: "I don't care if the customers buy the product or not, it's their right." Customers coming to buy his product must have heard and known about it so there was no need to introduce and marketing. This explained the limited number of his customers. The products were sold mainly at local and to passengers on 1A highway.

By getting access to PRISED project through participating in courses on marketing, preserving raw materials and fine products, techniques in selling, procedure to process dried fish and seasoned fish, Mr. Tram has changed his awareness on these issues and had applied new technology in preserving and processing his products, making the productivity of his processing site increase by 30-40% in comparison with the production using past experience. In addition, he invested in a new cold storage to preserve material and products. His processing unit also adapted the fish drying procedure using scaffolds to ensure hygiene. Applying the knowledge he obtained in PRISED courses on marketing and selling skills, he packed and labeled the products more carefully. He has built up the trademark "Huong Tram" for his dried fish products. Besides, with the help of local authorities through improving business environment and the development of his processing unit, Mr. Tram has recently registered to establish Huong Tram Private Company specialized in producing dried fish and seasoned fish. He also registered his trademark Huong Tram with the National Office of Intellectual Property for his products.

His enterprise has participated in the exhibition in Hanoi, selling a large amount of products and becoming a favorite product of many consumers. Unlike before, Mr. Tram has paid more attention to the consulting service in order to increase the sales. At present, his enterprise has opened a representative shop where?. With the knowledge and skills from the courses, Mr. Tram has updated and improved the producing and selling methods, making the sales increase rapidly and his products can reach to a larger market. In 2008, Mr. Tram estimated that his processing unit sold out about 500 tones of dried fish and seasoned fish. The products of Huong Tram enterprise are no longer limited at the local but reaches out to many cities nationwide.

Thanks to the development of Huong Tram, many people found their jobs. In the peak period, this company attracts about 50-60 workers, comparing to only 5-10 in the past.

The supporting plans for two value chain at Binh Phuoc and Quang Ngai are different in terms of content due to the differences in the demands of local partners and the characteristics of these two products. However, the common point which also presents the overall accessing methods of the project lies in the consistent integration of varied activities within the project and the development of the value chains.

The outstanding feature was the integration of supporting activities for business services and for the two value chain development. Other activities e.g. providing different players in the value chain with market information, branding services, consulting on technical issues to improve the products' quality, etc. were among the most popular development services in these two local value chains.

The media were used efficiently to support the value chain development. In Quang Ngai, with the support from the project, the provincial Radio and Television station has made the program "From Label to Trademark" in order to help fish sauce and dried fish processing sites build up their own trademark. Especially, the news on agricultural products was very successful in Binh Phuoc and Quang Ngai with high sustainability. In addition, the development of value chain was closely linked with other activities to develop associations, particularly the ones within the value chain. Typical example was supporting association in providing information for its members to create a common trademark for their products like in Quang Ngai, to meet EuroGap standards like in cashew at value chain in Binh Phuoc, or to share experience and market information.

The biggest lesson drawn from PRISED activities to develop value chain is that we can easily reach our target on improving the competitiveness and efficiency of a value chain. Based on the common rules on value chain development, each project designs an accessing method which flexibly matches its method and resources.

Like in other technical assistance projects, the cooperation to develop value chain encounters many difficulties. Each department and section at provincial level is only in charge of one stage in the whole chain. For example, the planning for cashew nut growing and ensuring quality of the products are responsibilities of Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, whereas, it is Department of Trade and Industry that coordinates activities relating to the processing, trading and market. Therefore, in value chain development project, it is very important to carry out careful analysis to accurately define the critical point that need support in the whole chain, to pick up the suitable partners capable of coordinating the whole chain development and to gradually pass over the role of value chain development supporting to that partners in order to ensure the sustainability.

#### **4. Business Development Service (BDS).**

The operation of PRISED Business Development Service program was diversified and flexible. Therefore, many BDS development interventions just followed the traditional approach in market development while some other BDS market development activities are simply integrated in other field of interventions of the project.

PRISED keeps on promoting its available tools and the traditional strength of ILO and VCCI to develop the market for training and consulting for potential businessmen and businessmen from Start and Improve Your Business SIYB, Gender equality and Women business capacity strengthen - Get Ahead Program, Know About Business (KAB) targeted at high school students, or business development service (BDS) for households. These activities are designed to meet the growing demand in the province. Training on business start-up which is targeted to establishment of small or medium enterprises provides information relevant to business registration, tax and finance report. Moreover, this training is also targeted to women in order to help them to do business more efficiently and successfully.

### **Agriculture Commodity Price Bulletin on Radio and Television – a Creative Method in Providing BDS**

Binh Phuoc is a mountainous province with many ethnic minorities which account for 19 % of the total population. In addition, Binh Phuoc is a province where areas of rubber tree, cashew nuts and pepper is the largest. People live on agriculture. Rubbers, cashews, peppers and manioc are main products. Most of the people, especially ethnic minorities are not able updated with market price of their products because of the market fluctuation and lacking of an information channel where they can easily access to in order to update market price of their product when necessary.

Acknowledging difficulty for people in Binh Phuoc in updating daily market price of some agriculture, PRISED in coordination with Industry and Commerce Department, farming association and Binh Phuoc Cashew nut processing and import-export Association has developed and broadcasted the Agriculture Price Bulletin on Binh Phuoc Radio. This Agriculture Price Bulletin aims at providing people with the most updated daily price of agriculture products so that they are better to decide when to sell their product, supervise buyers as well as predict the market price.

The bulletin comprises of information as follows: (I) prices of coffee, pepper, resin rubber, cashew in key districts and towns in the province; (ii) The imported and exported price of raw cashew nut. The Bulletin has broadcasted for 45 days from November 15 to December 31, 2008. Everyday, the bulletin is started broadcasting at 5:25 AM and broadcasted at 10am and 5:50pm. Broadcasting of the bulletin was highly appreciated as the most precise and update information resource where people can assess to know about market price of some products at certain time. As a result, the bulletin has helped people to avoid losses caused by selling their products under market price due to lacking of information.

Market information is very important, especially for small business, households and farmers. Using the radio and television channel to provide market information is considered as a creative approach which benefited from experience of ILO and VCCI related to media work. For this activity, PRISED has given an effective tool of high sustainability. Usefulness of the bulletin has been proved as it will be kept broadcasting after termination of the PRISED.

The project keeps on consulting, supporting local partners with the duty of aiding and developing business and businessmen. Via the media, the project encourages entrepreneurship through business idea contest on TV.

Especially, PRISED consistently pursued the integrated approach to the BDS development. Activities supporting BDS were combined with other activities of the project, particularly in capacity building, media work, etc. For example, advanced BDS like trademark, "International Fair Trade", Eurogap certificate are integrated in value chain development in Binh Phuoc and Quang Ngai. Role of the organizations like Binh Phuoc Cashew Nuts Association has been improved in providing BDS. Capacity of some selected BDS providers has been improved by introducing innovative way of providing BDS. For example, capacity of the television and radio station in Binh Phuoc, Tra Vinh and Quang Ngai in providing market information via agriculture product news, service of training skills of starting business on the radio channel have been improved and ensured the sustainability in the long run

Enhancing capacity of the BDS provider through "learning by doing" is a distinguishing feature under PRISED. Strong use of domestic consulting service and supporting service help to strengthen the capacity of service providers. Institutions like Farmers Association, Radio and Television Station, Business Association have improved remarkably their capacity in supplying BDS like business information, marketing information, training, trademark and product quality management thanks to their active cooperation with PRISED in project implementation.

Nevertheless, BDS development activities under the project are still far from the widely known market principle in market development. Subsidy to service provision remains. This is also an important lesson learnt under PRISED.

#### **Summary of good practices and lessons learnt related to tools and products of the project**

- √ The right selection of partners (on the basis of their core functions, capacity, commitment) is a critical factor to ensure the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of products, tools which are introduced and built under the.
- √ Development of products and instrument, having them tested and disseminated, and encouraging their replication prove to be a solid and effective approach of PRISED;
- √ Available products and instruments which are of ILO's and VCCI's advantage have been used in a flexible and appropriate manner, helping to produce quick results while guaranteeing the sustainability of the products
- √ The integrated approach enables the project to choose the right set of instruments and tools meet the diverse demands for support and different priorities of different provinces.
- √ The approach adopted by PRISED in localizing international tools, adjusting international best practices to fit with the Vietnamese context and combining with Vietnamese knowledge is an important lesson learnt from the project
- √ PRISED placed a strong emphasis on combining international and domestic knowledge. This combination ensures the workability, relevance and effectiveness of the tools and products introduced and applied in the project.
- √ The products, tools are used in the integrated principle. They therefore support each other to achieve the targeted results and the overall objective of the project.
- √ Strengthening the capacity of the business associations and the private sectors in policy advocacy play a critically important role to improve the business environment at the provinces.
- √ Media programmes are implemented in a professional manner. They take different forms, ranging from talk show, documentary, live discussion, to short play. The diversity have helped to attract a wide audience and listeners. Innovative tools like interactive TV, enterprise stories, etc. are also used, improving the quality and the attractiveness of the media work programmes.
- √ In order to meet the long list of demands from the province, a big number of activities have been implemented at each of the province. This might be necessary at the initial phase of the project. However, the Project could have been able to shorten this phase by shortening the list of activities, becoming more focused and in crafting the intervention strategy for each of the province.
- √ Public and private dialogue should be organized in a structured manner with well organized follow up activities.
- √ BDS development should follow market based principles.

### **III. BEST PRACTICES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT**

#### **1. Ensure the national ownership of the project**

The good lesson from PRISED is the national ownership of the partners have been going side by side with the improved capacity of project partners and beneficiaries. The transfer of project execution from an international organization to a national one is an important indicator for the strengthened national ownership of the project.

The transfer was carried out in a well-planned roadmap. This assures the sustainable capacity of the partners' organization in designing, implementing and monitoring other projects of the same feature

in the future. The transfer holds a significant meaning in terms of national ownership both in the field of technical advices, finance and project management.

The transfer was envisioned right at the time the project was being formulated. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase, ILO and VCCI worked proactively in preparing for the transfer. VCCI actively prepared its human force for this transferring. The transfer has been implemented in parallel with improving the institutional capacity of the national partners both at national and provincial level in terms of technical capacity and project management capacity

SIDA is particularly interested in the execution of the project in Phase 2 when it is implemented using NEX modality. SIDA worked closely with VCCI for months before the transfer. SIDA provided intensive support to creating a financial management rules and management methodology so that the project could work well. Moreover, there is a continue support of international experts after the transfer which is and other factor which ensures the effective implementation of the project.

National ownership of the project has been very obvious in the implementation process, especially at the provincial level. Provincial partners actively make their own plan based on the guiding principles of the project with broad participation of different agencies. Through information workshops, information about project, with the coordination of the project management, partners have combined project's activities with their own activities. In reality, only activities that are suitable to the demand, capacity and interest of the domestic partners can be implemented in a sustainable way. If project activities are closer to their priority, partners will have more commitment to the project. These can be done at the step of planning. PRISED has insisted on this principle. Therefore, there is a commitment of responsibility of its partners in implementing and monitoring the results. Many partners actively give their contribution to the project implementation and take strong ownership of the instruments and tools introduced.

## **2. Ensuring Sustainability**

This is one of the important criteria of the technical support project. Sustainable feature has become one of the principles of all activities of PRISED

Ensuring national ownership is key to the project's sustainability. High national ownership has translated into the determination and specific commitment of organizations in implementing this project,

Moreover, the project particularly focused on product development, documentation, knowledge management sharing experience for many partners. This is another crucial factor in ensuring the sustainability of the project. Training documents on business environment, PPP, training for small business, module of information service supplier like agriculture product news, procedures to deal with a social marketing campaign... are the product of sustainable feature in long term. Because these products will be used more by other organizations, projects even when this project finished.

PRISED pays special attention to enhancing the capacity for its partners, enhancing the professional technique of the consulting units, service suppliers, bidders with the purpose of maintaining the project capacity in many field in the long term. The cooperation of domestic and international expert is one of the step in realize this purpose. With the support of PRISED, a system of service suppliers has been formed. They can complete complicated tasks such as making a social marketing campaign, developing series of value chains, joining media activities, etc

It is important that there is a consensus about the importance of sustainability among donor ILO, VCCI, partner organizations, and beneficiaries. PRISED has done well in this regard through information activities within the project, staff training staff for project as well as through expressing its expectation from specific activities of the project. Capacity building plays an important role to ensure sustainability too. In particular, at the 1<sup>st</sup> period, the project sent staffs for further training in other countries like sending staff to Turin – Italy, using consultancy to comment capacity of each staff members. The 2<sup>nd</sup> period, VCCI together with ILO identified the training demand for the project. Besides, active participation in implementing project helps to improve capacity of each staff member. At the same time, technique, knowledge transferring is shown via cooperation between the project management board with its branches, workshop, and meeting of project officers for experience sharing.

### **3. Gender**

In most of the province, partners are Women Association; this shows the special attention of project to gender issue. Gender issues are integrated in all of the activities. The issues have been serious taken into consideration in all steps of project, from project formulation, planning and work plan elaboration, implementation, result monitoring and experience exchange. Gender issues are integrated in different part of the project, e.g. improving business environment, improving BDS and developing series of values

Raising awareness of implemented partners about gender issues has been proactively carried out. It has become a topic of project workshops, project meetings, experience sharing among provinces, meeting project management unit. Therefore, many activities directly related to the gender issues were carried out. One of the most outstanding one is the direct support for Business Women Association in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh to hold training courses and experience sharing workshops to increase their understanding in leadership and gender issues for areas within project In Quang Ngai. Quang Ngai Women Association implemented a program on gender and doing business on Quang Ngai Television, targeting 10 communes of the city in order to improve the understanding of the public, community, local government about a gender equality in developing an enabling business environment. While in Thanh Hoa and Tra Vinh, business development services targeting women have become an area of support. Get Ahead workshops are held to share experience in assisting women to do business. In Binh Phuoc and Quang Ngai, gender issue, job creation for women has been taken seriously in project planning.

These activities reveal that gender issues play an important role in PRISED. This topic has become an overarching interest of the entire project. Integrating gender issues to the other activities of the project is a good approach adopted by the project. This lesson of PRISED can be further replicated in the context of other projects

### **4. Experience sharing and knowledge management**

Experience sharing and knowledge management are carried out systematically within framework of PRISED. Principles of making products, report, printing and sharing have been done scientifically and effectively. Experience sharing and knowledge management has become a key point rule of the project. This has been done in many ways.

Reports, documents, brochures of the project about business environment, training manual on enhancing small and medium business management, 11 stories about small business, training document on PPP, press release about PRISED operations are valuable materials for implementing partners at the provincial and national levels, as well as for other projects and donor projects. Moreover, internal materials of the project like handbook of project supervising system and estimating influence of social marketing program in Thanh Hoa are also important assets of the project.

Besides, knowledge sharing and managing activities were carried in many ways such as field trip among provinces, experience exchanging in project management, or actively joining and sharing via national forum such as SME Week, SME and private sector Development Partnership Group. The content of sharing experiences and discussion was carefully prepared stressing on the practice of experiences and examples. Publications and documents were handed out in the event.

Every six months, there is a project staff meeting with the participation of all staffs in the project. These meetings are also for provinces to share knowledge, experience and information with each other, as well as the activities which have been done and should be done in the next 6 months. It helps improving the management and operation activities.

The Project's communication activities contributed significantly to knowledge and experience sharing of the Project. Thanks to the large influence of media, many activities, information and experience of the Project could reach viewers and listeners outside of the 4 project's target provinces.

An activity which can be improved by sharing more knowledge inside the Project is the complete update of reports and publications as well as lesson learnt on Project website. Moreover, the website should be updated with documents, presentations at sharing experience meetings and from provinces and partners. The website should be maintained for at least another two years after the project finishes so that project partners and those who are interested in the project may access to the project's knowledge and documents (PDF files) even after it has ended.

## **5. Creativity**

Many of PRISED activities which have shown their creativity and uniqueness while ensuring the impact and sustainability should be further replicated. The creativity was shown clearly through the localization of international practices and tools so that they would be adaptable to Vietnam and ensures the feasibility and effectiveness of the activities. Training documents about business environment, association or government-private dialogue were composed in a new way, which is suitable for Vietnamese readers. Media activities on mass media were used to provide business improvement service through TV and radio, organize dialogues, find out about business environment on radio, or using hotline for live policy dialogue on radio, hosting talk show about business improvement represent its creativity.

The creativity and learning process are encouraged in PRISED. PRISED created an environment where people dare to act, find out and experiment new ways and have responsibility as well as encouraged partners organization, project coordinators, project staffs to do this. The decentralization of project management and implementation, the principles of bottom up planning have encouraged independent thinking of project staff, independency of each side are very important elements in creating a creative environment in PRISED project.

### **Summary of good Practice and Lesson relating to Typical Features of a Technical Supporting Project**

- √ Focus on knowledge management, sharing experience through the creation of tools, documents, news, publication that ensures the sustainability of the project's activities and products.
- √ The experience and knowledge sharing among provinces is of high priority in PRISED and have taken different forms. Exchanging experience and learning from each other play an important role in the replication of tools and products.
- √ Special attention is paid to capacity building, persistence in bottom up and participatory planning, decentralization in project management, and linking project activities with core functions and mission of partner organization. These are important issues to ensure the commitment and active involvement of national partners in project activities.
- √ The transfer of project execution from an international organization to a national one will ensure the sustainability of the project in many aspects. The process is planned and envisaged right at the project formulation stage, and have been proactively prepared for in Phase 1 by all stakeholders involved, including the donor, ILO and VCCI . The capacity building is a critical factor to ensure that the transfer process is a smooth and effective one.
- √ The continued technical support from ILO plays a critically important role when the project is transferred to national execution. It is also very important that international experience is continuously provided and combined with domestic knowledge in order to develop the best tools, products, approaches and instruments in the framework of the project.
- √ Creativity is a very important factor to develop tools, instruments and products which match local needs and which work in local context. It is essential to encourage innovativeness in project implementation.
- √ Gender issues are the overarching topic and should be integrated into and taken into account at every stage of the project. It can be integrated in every field of interventions of the project e.g. creating better business environment, value chain development, and improving business development services.

## **PART III – SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **I. SUGGESTIONS**

The project has achieved many good results and thereby contributed towards building propitious business environment and developing local economy. The tools and outputs developed or introduced by the project should be sustained and further replicated. This section will put forward some suggestion to sustain the use and further disseminate the best practices and lessons learned from the project. This section also proposes some specific recommendations to the partners, especially the provincial bodies, on further using and ensuring the sustainability of supported activities and instruments.

#### **1. General Suggestions**

Good models such as PPP need to be further tested in practice and improved. The requirements of its output, however, in scope of the project, bound only on capacity building and development of training materials. Therefore, it needs further to be studied and tested in the context of other projects implemented by VCCI or ILO, or funded by Sida.

The approach of poverty reduction through integrated enterprise development is a new, creative and sustainable method. It is also in line with Vietnam Government's policy on enterprise development. The method has represented its strengths from flexibility, possibility of combining different instruments to meet local requirements. The approach therefore could be replicated in similar projects.

The results of the project prove that is a right decision when focusing its interventions on provincial and implementation level. Practical lessons learnt the implementation the project are valuable experiences and needed to be shared with ministerial authorities. These experiences need to be used by VCCI and the project partners and need to be shared in different forums, seminars, national workshops or policy drafting processes related to SE, local economic development or poverty reduction.

#### **2. Specific Suggestions**

The best way to disseminate experiences, best practices, lessons learned, instrument, and product is to have them shared fully at the project's website. The website has fulfilled the communication function. Nevertheless, it should become a means of knowledge management and sharing. Its contents need to be updated with sharable training materials, handbooks and reports of the project, speeches and presentations in exchange workshops, other articles related to project. In addition, the website should be maintained at least 2 years after project is ended.

It is important to share, on a selective basis, the best practices and lessons learnt on Vietnamese or international websites specializing on LED, enabling business environment, poverty reduction. This is also an important way to ensure the sustainability and easy accessibility to this important knowledge resource.

Each partner province need to work out an action plan on how to use and replicate the products and instruments which have been successfully introduced and developed under the project. Specific suggestions are as follows:

- Binh Phuoc should work out a detailed plan on sustaining the program on Agricultural Commodity Price Bulletin, PCI action plan, and policy dialogue on the media
- Quang Ngai should elaborate a plan to sustain the development of the fish source and dried fish value-chains and to strengthen the small enterprises associations.
- Tra Vinh should formulate plan on to sustain the social marketing activities, entrepreneurship training and the activity on "Start and Improve Your Business on the Air".
- Thanh Hoa should work out a detailed sustainability plan on social marketing activities, business development services, and small and medium enterprises associations' activities. The plan should also demonstrate how successful interventions like social marketing could be replicated in other sectors, e.g. formalization of business or enterprise with environment responsibility.

Before the project's closing date, each partner province should hold a small workshop in order to discuss the plan. The output of these workshops will be the above mentioned succinct plans in which tentative tasks with implementing institutions being identified. Provincial authorities may consider these plans, especially in the making of the following year's annual socio-economic plan and or of medium-term sector-based plans. Once integrated in such plans, local budget or other sources can be mobilized to implement the planned activities.

There are different approaches to poverty reduction. The method of approaching poverty reduction through integrated enterprise development has achieved good results. This method can be spread out as an effective model of poverty reduction..

The branches of VCCI in Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Can Tho should continuously strengthen the capacity which they have obtained in the implementation of the project to find new way, additional sources and initiative new activities in order to pursue further the replicate the approach of poverty reduction through integrated enterprise development. They should play an active role in sharing experience, knowledge management on this approach and other instruments and tools which have been successfully developed and introduced by the project.

## **II. CONCLUSION**

Overall, PRISED has achieved many positive results with good lessons learned and good practices which can be shared on a wider scale. Some good practices and lessons in framework of the project are special and identical when compared with those in other technical assistance projects in similar areas. They should be further disseminated in different ways to various institutions in order to improve the impact and effectiveness of technical assistance activities in Vietnam, of those in the field of poverty reduction, business development and local economic development.

## Annex 1 - Project Staffs

### Phase 1:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title and Position</b>
Kees Van Dree	Chief Technical Advisor, ILO Geneva expert
Pham Hoang Tien	Project National Director, Vice Director of SMEPC, VCCI
Bas Rozemuller	Technical Advisor, ILO specialist
Jenny Ikelberg	Technical Advisor, ILO specialist
Hoang Van Duong	Project coordinator
Nguyen Cam Tu	Project coordinator
Doan Thuy Quynh	Project officer
Tran Thi Thanh Tam	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, Manager, SMEPC, VCCI
Le Thi Kim Thanh	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, SMEPC, VCCI
Tran Minh Duc	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, SMEPC, VCCI
Nguyen Thi My Chau	Project officer in Quang Ngai, Director of SMEPC, VCCI Da Nang
Ho Anh	Project officer in Quang Ngai, VCCI Da Nang
Nguyen Thi Kim Phuc	Project officer in Quang Ngai, VCCI Da Nang
Huynh Thien Trang	Project officer in Tra Vinh, Deputy Manager, VCCI Can Tho
Duong Thi Kim Duyen	Project officer in Tra Vinh, VCCI Can Tho
Nguyen Duc Binh	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, Director of SMEPC, VCCI HCMC
Le Van Tuan	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, VCCI HCMC
Phung Duc Hoang	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, VCCI HCMC

### Phase 2

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title and Position</b>
Pham Hoang Tien	Project National Director, Vice Director of SMEPC, VCCI
Vo Tan Thanh	Member of PMU, Director of VCCI HCMC
Nguyen Cuong	Member of PMU, Director of VCCI Da Nang
Nguyen Huu De	Member of PMU, Vice Director of VCCI Can Tho
Tim Dyce	Technical Advisor, ILO specialist
Jenny Ikerlberg	Technical Advisor, ILO specialist
Dinh Manh Hung	Project coordinator, Manager, SMEPC, VCCI

Tran Thi Thanh Tam	Project coordinator, Manager, SMEPC, VCCI
Le Thi Kim Thanh	Project admin – media staff, cadre SMEPC, VCCI
Ngo Thi Hoai	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, Cadre, SMEPC, VCCI
Le Chi Thai	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, Cadre, SMEPC, VCCI
Vu Thi Thu	Project accountant in Hanoi
Nguyen Thi Kim Phuc	Project officer in Quang Ngai, Cadre of VCCI Da Nang
Tran Ky Nam	Project officer in Quang Ngai, Cadre of VCCI Da Nang
Luong Xuan Nam	Project officer in Quang Ngai, Cadre of VCCI Da Nang
Huynh Thien Trang	Project officer in Tra Vinh, Deputy Manager of VCCI Can Tho
Duong Thi Kim Duyen	Project officer in Tra Vinh, Cadre of VCCI Can Tho
Nguyen Thi Hong Thuy	Project officer in Tra Vinh, Cadre of VCCI Can Tho
Tieu Thanh Hieu	Project officer in Tra Vinh, Accountant, VCCI Can Tho
Nguyen Duc Binh	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, Director of SMEPC, VCCI HCMC
Dao Thi Nga	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, Cadre of VCCI HCMC
Phung Duc Hoang	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, Cadre of VCCI HCMC
Nguyen Huu Vinh	Project officer in Binh Phuoc, Deputy Manager, VCCI HCMC

## Annex 2 – List of Persons Interviewed

Name	Title and Position
Dr. Pham Thi Thu Hang	Director of SMEPC, VCCI
Mr. Pham Hoang Tien	Project National Director, Vice Director of SMEPC, VCCI
Mr. Dinh Manh Hung	Project coordinator, Manager of SMEPC, VCCI
Ms. Tran Thi Thanh Tam	Project coordinator, Manager of SMEPC, VCCI
Ms. Le Thi Kim Thanh	Project admin – media staff, cadre of SMEPC, VCCI
Ms. Ngo Thi Hoai	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, cadre of SMEPC, VCCI
Mr. Le Chi Thai	Project officer in Thanh Hoa, cadre of SMEPC, VCCI
Ms. Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard	Director, ILO Hanoi
Mr. Kees Van Der Ree	LED expert, ILO Geneva
Ms. Jenny Ikelberg	Technical Advisor, ILO
Ms. Hoang Thi Dieu Hang	Programme officer, Sida
Mr. Vo Hung Dung	Director of VCCI Can Tho
Mr. Vu Duy Khien	Director of Centre for Industry Promotion, Binh Phuoc DIT
Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Phuc	Project staff in Quang Ngai, VCCI Da Nang
Mr. Tran Van An	Deputy Director, Quang Ngai DPI
Ms. Pham Thi Ngoc Kim	Director, Centre for Youth Job training, Quang Ngai
Ms. Vo Thi Thuyen	Trainer, Centre for Youth Job training, Quang Ngai
Ms. Ngo Thi Ngoc Duyen	Quang Ngai Business Registrar
Mr. Nguyen Tien Dung	Vice Director, Centre for Fishery Promotion, Quang Ngai
Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nam	Centre for Investment Promotion, Quang Ngai
Ms. Dinh Thi Thanh Thuy	Vice Chairwoman, Quang Ngai City women's union
Mr. Dang Van Nghiep	Manager, Quang Ngai Radio and Television
Mr. Nguyen Thanh Tuong	Manager, Centre for Industry Promotion, Binh Phuoc DIT
Mr. Nguyen Quang Canh	Vice Director, Binh Phuoc DIT
Mr. Thai Minh Hung	Director, Centre for Investment Promotion, Binh Phuoc BPI
Mr. Pham Huong Son	Manager, Centre for Investment Promotion, Binh Phuoc BPI
Ms. Nguyen Thanh Long	Vice Director, Binh Phuoc Radio and Television
Ms. Y Linh	Binh Phuoc Radio and Television
Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Nhan	Binh Phuoc Radio and Television

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title and Position</b>
Mr. Nguyen Duc Binh	Director of SMEPC, VCCI HCMC
Mr. Le Van Huong	Vice Director, Tra Vinh DPI
Ms. Quach Thi Vu Hue	Director, Centre for R&D, Tra Vinh University
Mr. Pham Trung Yen	Deputy head, Faculty of Economics and Foreign Languages, Tra Vinh University
Ms. Le Minh Thuy	Deputy manager, Tra Vinh Radio and Television
Ms. Le Thuy Kieu	Vice chairwoman, Tra Vinh women's Union
Ms. Le Thu Hong	Family and Social Issue Division, Tra Vinh Women's Union