Regional Workshop Report on the Poverty-Environment Nexus

Building Institutional Capacity, Partnership Development and Participatory Governance

Hue City, Viet Nam
23-25 May 2006

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA)
Regional Workshop Report
on the
Poverty-Environment Nexus

Building Institutional Capacity, Partnership Development and
Participatory Governance

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DESA

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Executive Summary

Poverty eradication and environmental protection are major concerns of many countries and international communities. In order to address this global concern, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched a technical cooperation project to focus on the widely spread problems of poverty and environmental threats to communities. The project, “Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation”, dealt in a hands-on way with the Poverty-Environment nexus (P&E). The project focused on institutional capacity building and networking to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions in two of the Asian regions covering five countries each, Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

The projects have now been completed and an inter-regional workshop was conducted in Hue City Viet Nam from the 23rd to 25th May 2006. The Government of Viet Nam through its United Nations Development Program (UNDP) funded poverty/environment nexus project invited UNDESA to organize this joint regional workshop to share their experiences on project activities in Viet Nam and other countries in Central and Southern Asia. The project was designed to evaluate the outcomes of the projects, share the lessons learned and to plan a pathway forward.

The workshop focused on the major issues of institutional engagement, and building capacity and partnerships in participatory governance at the community, local and national levels to address the complex and intertwining challenges of poverty and environment at the community level.

This paper provides a consolidated report on the workshop. The report includes the purpose and objectives of the workshop, summaries of presentations delivered at the workshop, the major points discussed and provides a list of participants from the various countries. The report closes with recommendations from the workshop on possible follow-up activity, policy proposals and ideas for cooperation programs and further project activity.

The report is supplemented by the more detailed project report that provided input into framing the workshop. This report has been included in this document as an appendix. This detailed project report covers four dimensions of the poverty environmental nexus project and includes:

- The initial global literature review and context set by the programs strategic objectives,
- The component project proposals and objectives (10 In-country Project Proposals (IPPs)),
- The collation and review of the ten final reports, and
- Closes with a range of recommendations and lessons learned from a synthesis of the ten in-country projects.

The workshop covered a wide range of issues and included the group sharing the perspective of the United Nation (UN) from Mr Adil Kahn, listening to the initiatives of the Hue City including a site inspection/field visit. The group also gained insight
into the broader Viet Nam initiatives which included the Eco-Eco project and the renewable energy initiative. The group was exposed to the UNDP-PEP program in addition to having the opportunity to share the lessons from the Poverty Environmental Nexus portfolio sponsored within the Ten Countries and the Non Government Organizations (NGOs) along with other funding agencies through UNDESA. The workshop was able to reflect on these successes and lessons learned to consider some of the more systemic policy, practical and strategic requirements on which to go forward with.

The workshop was regarded as highly successful in achieving the objectives. The workshop attendees (predominantly Central and Southern Asia) reported on the substantive value of sharing the project activity outcomes and the lessons learned. Considerable interest is now held in linking projects, expanding project activity, engaging the private sector in institutionalizing project outcomes and to gain further benefit from the development and integration of the P&E network.

*Workshop conclusions*

The workshop analysis of the UNDESA project portfolio concluded that the activity was of considerable value. The projects had developed attitudinal and behavioral change and co-operation at the Government (local and central), NGO and Community level. These changes and activities have the potential to be self sustaining and directly contribute to the economic wellbeing of the targeted communities. These outcomes also have had a major bearing on the community health and wellbeing as well as addressing some of the systemic issues that have resulted in land degradation.

The demonstrated success of these projects in contributing to breaking the poverty environmental spiral leads to the conclusion that there is an identified need to build on, learn from, further develop and expand the existing project portfolio to create new initiatives that will lead to sustainable regional development, improve knowledge, and allow for more effective information sharing and networking on the poverty-environmental nexus.

The workshop also concluded that the portfolio of projects presented provided considerable insight into how to deal with the poverty environmental nexus and provided a range of ideas and lessons for each participant. The presentations made a considerable attempt to deal with a range of issues underpinning and driving the poverty-environment nexus. The IPPs and other project activity covered in the workshop addressed many of the necessary processes to achieve success. The generic strengths of the workshop were in bringing together a distributed network of engaged participants that shared their knowledge and experiences in both failure and success.

While all the IPPs attempt to address the policy and governance needs, the engagement of the community and stakeholders, the development of improved income generation and the knowledge of the land management needed to address the land degradation, they did so with great variability in approach. This diversity of approach afforded the significant opportunity for discussion at the workshop and to evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches through the workshop processes. Furthermore, it was recognized and acknowledged that most of the projects discussed built on and linked to a wide range of existing and proposed activity. The workshop attendees acknowledged the importance of the support and the leverage provided by the UN funding, and regarded this as a significant contribution. The workshop also recognized and
highlighted the role of the UN as a key broker and facilitator and that this role now needs to be strengthened and new partnerships and projects formulated.

Within the current UNDESA project portfolio there was a strong recognition at the workshop that this has generally made a solid attempt to address the policy and institutional governance issues required to make any significant or measurable change in the target countries. The success has been most evident where strong partnerships with the country’s government were actively engaged and an advocate for the activity. On the occasions where policy and legislative change was introduced or just supported then the changes were considerable and more enduring.

The project portfolio achieved considerable behavioral and attitudinal change. The change has been achieved by the direct operational and strategic engagement of the Government (local and central) as well as the NGOs and the community. The key success factor in achieving this change is attributed to the direct involvement of these three sectors in the formation of the projects, their implementation and their iterative review and improvement. In all instances and without exception all participants of the workshop recognized and supported the need for strong partnerships with all levels of Government, the NGOs and the direct engagement of the community in the development operation and management of the project.

This success factor appears to be directly attributable to the focus on the priorities set and derived by the local communities in partnership with the Government and NGOs. Not only were the project outcomes focused on what were the issues of importance to the communities but they were the ones deemed to be likely to make the most difference and fitted within the cultural and attitudinal environment of the communities.

As indicated, the impediments and blockages to success had to be negotiated with the Government agencies, who then facilitated the appropriate changes to the legal, policy and institutional framework. The processes of joint education, awareness raising and technical support about the key priority concerns were also seen as a key strategy in achieving success. A key element for future activity was seen as the direct engagement of key personnel with the institutions to act as advocates for the project.

In many of the projects the engagement of women directly improved their capacity and their status in the community and this was a commonly reported outcome at the workshop. The engagement of the women also secured their direct involvement and ownership of the process and outcomes. As keepers of the hearth their engagement was seen as critical to securing the sustainability of many of the initiatives and provided a direct link to achieving the added targets of improved nutrition, health and sense of community wellbeing. The engagement of youth also was a key outcome and also has proved successful. This process has not only provided them with an improved understanding and knowledge of how to address the future challenges they face, but has also provided them with alternative employment options, a pathway forward and hope for the future.

The use of project funds to establish initiatives such as community gardens and recycling has shown to be effective in providing practical examples of what can be done. The sharing of these successes has also contributed significantly to the diffusion of the outcomes to other communities and word of mouth networks needed to secure
wider uptake. This approach has addressed the concept of adult education through the processes used by practical people of learning by doing. The diffusion of the results of the projects was considered a major next step. While all at the workshop felt the projects had been successful, all regarded the need to scale up the initiatives and to learn and build on what had been done and achieved. The sharing of information across countries and project was recognized as a major strategic need and next step.

The Environmentally Sound Technologies Information System (ESTIS)/ICT platform was a consistent focus of the workshop. All felt it had a major role to play but had significant limitations in its current form and needed to have more proactive development and use. While websites had been established they had not been fully populated with the data from the projects and accordingly had not yet been fully exploited. Some of the expected outcomes of the ICT lesson learning platforms has been dependent on the projects being completed - so that the distilled results and lessons learned could be shared. There is now a need to strategically consider the role and value of the ESTIS web system to provide the platform for knowledge sharing and lesson learning. The future elements of the ESTIS type of systems needs to take into account the new complex systems thinking so that the system is self sustaining and dynamic (how a web works), provide a global repository of information and portal on the poverty environmental nexus, access to library services, email, networks, discussion groups, contact point for other providers (funding agencies, NGOs and project leaders) and so forth.

It was recognized and commended that UNDESA has adopted a strategic decision in the management of the project portfolio and played a very useful and strategic role. The approach taken provided transparency in the development of the partnerships and facilitated a genuine contribution toward the achievement of the project objectives and their contribution toward the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals.

It is recognized and acknowledged that the projects were in many instances pilot projects and very small in the target and impact area. Despite this, they have been successful and made a difference that appears, at this early stage, to be sustainable. However, it is also clearly recognized and acknowledged that the issues that the project was attempting to address are complex and require a long term concerted effort. Given the need for target communities to move toward self reliance and self governance, this will require further consideration and the subsequent development of further specifically targeted projects.

Within the limitations of the existing suite of projects (resources and funding), there was a recognized need to follow up on the projects to assess the full benefit as well as any unintended consequences or negative impacts that were not foreseen at the outset. This may include downstream impacts on other business activity or unexpected economic leakage from the area due to other non target factors.

There is an ongoing need to more fully develop the comprehensive engagement process, including gaining shared goals and ideals, language, knowledge and decision making processes including capacity building. This is regarded as a key success factor in the current portfolio of projects. The degree in which it succeeded and how future projects can capitalize on the lessons learned and improve on this process needs now to be evaluated and iteratively improved for the next suite of projects. Part of this need is to consider how adults engage and learn, including experiential learning processes,
appreciative enquiry and continuous improvement/learning. The diversity of the project portfolio and the approaches taken provides a useful opportunity to significantly contribute to such an analysis.

**Recommendations**

1. There is a need to develop a more effective mechanism for communication sharing information access to knowledge, discussion platforms for lesson learning across and between countries and projects. This should include a formal understanding of what agencies are involved in what projects and with what degree of success in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels to ensure projects are well targeted and effective. This needs to include enhanced mechanisms for formal and informal communication and knowledge sharing as well as the exchange of information across the organizations and instrumentalities associated with addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

2. There is an ongoing need to foster genuine cooperation, collaboration, partnerships and advocacy between the community, NGO and central and local Government as a way of achieving the goals of poverty alleviation in environmentally degraded areas;

3. In areas of political sensitivity or community unrest the use of local NGOs in partnership with the community seems best suited to negotiate pathways forward with the Government or statutory authorities. It is also considered that the UN can play a major pivotal role in facilitating the political brokerage and engagement;

4. There is a need to develop better and more inclusive decision making processes that improve community self determination and governance that involves all levels of Government, NGOs and the Community;

5. There is a need to develop improved information gathering and data management processes for informed decision making on the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

6. There is a need to explore and evaluate the potential of online multilingual language services to support the sharing of information and use of the knowledge generated by the projects across communities;

7. There is a need to look toward engaging other funding groups in the Poverty Environmental Nexus and this needs to include regional Government, Private Enterprise and the Community;

8. That all projects directed toward the poverty-environmental nexus have well developed project evaluation processes to measure and assess project processes and outcomes and that the evaluation of projects continue and be undertaken well after the project has been completed (i.e. >12 months) in order to determine the degree of sustainability of the outcome;

9. There is a need to ensure adequate communication strategies are developed and that the whole community (community, NGO, industry and government) are kept well informed and engaged in project development and implementation through sharing information about project activities, achievements and progress;
10. There is an ongoing need for training and development on the poverty-environment nexus issues and in particular in community developed initiatives and developing business skills in markets, marketing, branding and eco-labeling financial analysis and supply chain management;

11. Consideration needs to be given to enhancing the scale of the projects to a regional perspective. If this is to be undertaken then consideration will also need to be given to research into:

   a. The baseline socio-economic conditions of the region,
   b. The socio-economic effects of the policy and programs being implemented, and
   c. The effectiveness of the particular institutional environment, the policies and programs in facilitating the desired changes/improvement.

A regional scale approach will require joint planning and the development of a shared vision.
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Preface

In December 2005 the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) completed a collaborative project addressing the Poverty-Environment Nexus. The project involved the participation of ten countries in Central and Southeast Asia and focused on overcoming the prevailing poverty and underlying environmental challenges. UNDESA discussed the experiences from the Poverty-Environment Nexus project with the UNDP Country Office in Viet Nam and the UNDP Poverty Environment Project in Hanoi. These United Nations organizations believed that it would be beneficial if a forum was organized to synthesize and share invaluable experiences on methods and lessons learnt from the UNDP and the UNDESA Poverty-Environment Nexus Projects. The idea was to share the lessons learned with the many partner organizations. The forum was held in Hue City, Vietnam during the period 23rd – 25th May 2006, and titled the **Regional Workshop on “Poverty-Environment Nexus: Building Institutional Capacity”**.

The workshop was jointly organized by UNDESA, UNDP Poverty Environment Project, Hue City, Hue Farmers Association, and ENDA Viet Nam. Approximately 50 officials and experts from Viet Nam and six other countries in Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and Oceania attended the workshop. The workshop focused on building institutional capacity and partnerships in participatory governance at the community, local, regional, national and international levels to address the complex and intertwining challenges of poverty and environment at the community level. Besides a series of short presentations delivered on thematic issues and country experiences, the participants engaged in free discussions to explore the project outcomes and distil the valuable lessons learnt and finally to develop forward-looking plans for their own areas of interest.

This report documents the objectives and framework of the workshop, and presents, summarily, records of the presentations delivered and major outcomes of the deliberations at the workshop.

UNDESA is thankful to all of the organizations and individuals who were committed to successfully organizing the Hue workshop.

**Adil Khan**  
Chief  
**Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch**  
**Division for Public Administration and Development Management**  
**United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs**
## Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of South East Asian Nations</td>
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<td>BMA</td>
<td>Bangkok Metropolitan Administration</td>
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<td>CBNRM</td>
<td>Community Based Natural Resource Management</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<td>CCD</td>
<td>Community Capacity Division</td>
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<td>CF</td>
<td>Community Forestry</td>
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<td>CFRP</td>
<td>Community Forestry Research Project</td>
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<td>CIDSE</td>
<td>International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity</td>
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<td>DAFO</td>
<td>District Agriculture and Forestry Office</td>
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<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
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<td>DPA</td>
<td>Development and Partnership in Action</td>
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<td>EC&amp;E</td>
<td>Energy conservation and efficiency programs</td>
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<td>ENDA</td>
<td>Environment Development Action</td>
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<td>EM</td>
<td>Environmental Management</td>
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<td>ESTIS</td>
<td>Environmentally Sound Technologies Information System</td>
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<td>Forestry Association</td>
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<td>Food and Agricultural Organization</td>
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<td>Family Health Promotion</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
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<td>Greenhouse Gases</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication and Technology</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internal Displaced People</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IPPs</td>
<td>In-country Project Proposals</td>
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<td>ISRD</td>
<td>Institute for Sustainable Development</td>
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<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>LUPLA</td>
<td>Land Use Planning and Land Allocation</td>
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<td>MAFF</td>
<td>Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<td>MoNRE</td>
<td>Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment</td>
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<td>NEDO</td>
<td>New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>NKBR</td>
<td>Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve as a Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan</td>
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<td>National Institute for Development Administration</td>
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<td>NTFPs</td>
<td>Non Timber Forest Products</td>
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<td>NR &amp; E</td>
<td>Natural Resource and Environment</td>
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<td>Natural Resource Management</td>
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<td>PAFO</td>
<td>Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office</td>
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<td>PDR</td>
<td>People's Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>P &amp; E</td>
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<td>PEN</td>
<td>Poverty-Environment Nexus</td>
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<td>PEP</td>
<td>Poverty Environment Projects</td>
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<td>PEO</td>
<td>Provincial Education Office</td>
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<td>Provincial Forestry Administration</td>
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<td>PRC</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>PROGRESS</td>
<td>Promoting Rural Opportunity, Generating Resources and Ensuring Social Solidarity</td>
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<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers</td>
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<td>SEIER</td>
<td>System Efficiency Improvement, Equitization and Renewable Project</td>
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<td>SED</td>
<td>Sustainable Economic Development</td>
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<td>SEMP</td>
<td>Sustainable Environment Management Program</td>
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<td>SDC</td>
<td>Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>Thailand Environment Institute</td>
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Background

The inter-linked issues of poverty eradication and environmental protection are the major concerns of many countries and the international community. The problem is so extensive that addressing the issue is now seen as fundamental to future global health and wellbeing. Many of those suffering from poverty live in environmentally degraded areas. Driven by the conditions of assetlessness and powerlessness, the poor often rely for their survival on unprotected forests, fisheries, and other natural resources. Being devoid of ownership rights they exploit these resources and often degrade the very resources that they depend on. The poor living in urban areas, in many cases, lack access to fresh clean water, are exposed to polluted air sheds, lack suitable sanitation systems, and are often exposed to a range of solid and hazardous wastes. These conditions predispose them to disease and ill-health in general.

In order to develop a more strategic understanding of how best to address these problems the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched a technical cooperation project to focus on the widely spread problems of poverty and environmental threats to communities. The project, Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the areas Affected by Environmental Degradation, dealt in a hands-on way with the Poverty-Environment nexus. The project (herein referred to as the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project) focused on building institutional capacity and networking to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded areas in two of the Asian regions covering five countries each: Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

Specifically, the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project was designed to:

- improve institutional capacity and the articulation of policies and practices for local governance for poverty eradication, as well as environmental sustainability and regeneration, through community initiatives;
- enhance community-based productive activities for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability; and
- establish sub-regional and inter-regional Information and Communication Technology (ICT) networks for the sharing of information and the provision of access to new networks and knowledge.

In order to achieve these objectives, the poverty-environment nexus project took an integrated approach to the problem from the community perspective. This approach targeted the engagement of community-based organizations in poor districts, NGOs, the private sector, and local and central government agencies. The strategy was designed to empower stakeholders and offer solutions to strengthen community systems in a manner that improved environmental sustainability. At the same time, the projects were focused on achieving poverty eradication in the participating communities.

UNDESA commissioned the development of the portfolio of ten projects (in-country project proposals: IPPs) to build on and complement existing initiatives or in some countries to develop new pilot initiatives. All of the ten IPPs were scheduled for completion by the end of 2005.
In undertaking a holistic and integrated approach UNDESA was also interested in building the knowledge base and skill sets of the participants to the broader issues of capacity building, community development and community-based resource management.

Preliminary findings of the project portfolio reveal that grass-root level institutional capacity building and partnership building between the central government, the local government, the community organizations and the NGOs is a key to poverty reduction and sustainable resource management. The projects also highlight the need for continuous networking, lesson learning and cooperation for the further consolidation, expansion and replication of best practices in the poverty-environmental nexus.

Viet Nam, along with many other countries, has been active in attempting to address their Poverty and Environmental concerns and have demonstrated a significant positive impact. In Hue City, the project addresses the poverty/environment challenges of the peri-urban area; the area is located at the fringe of the rural area and is deprived of both urban and rural facilities. Being a part of the rural/urban continuum, the project presented several opportunities to achieve success. The UNDESA project has helped stimulate these opportunities by strengthening the socio-economic governance of the area. The lessons from this project and the other related initiatives are highly relevant for improving cooperation between all stakeholders and by developing best practice methodology for information exchange and poverty/environment institutional capacity building, within the region, as well as at the inter-regional level.

The Government of Viet Nam through its UNDP funded poverty/environment nexus project invited UNDESA to organize a joint regional workshop to share their own experiences, as well as those of the UNDESA project activities in Viet Nam and other countries in Asia. The workshop targeted the following outcomes:

- To improve institutional capacity and the articulation of policies and practices for local governance for poverty eradication, as well as environmental sustainability and regeneration, through community initiatives;
- To enhance community-based productive activity for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability; and
- To strengthen sub-regional and inter-regional networks for information sharing and lesson learning both within and across the nations.

It is the purpose of this paper to provide a consolidated report on the workshop. The report outlines the purpose and objectives of the workshop, provides summaries of presentations delivered at the workshop, the major points discussed and a full list of participants from the various countries. The report closes with recommendations from the workshop on possible follow-up activity, policy proposals and ideas for cooperation programs and further project activity. The program for the workshop is included in Appendix I. The workshop was conducted in English with Viet Namese translation provided by the Hue City People’s Committee Bureau of Foreign Affairs.
The Workshop

Aim
The major aim of the workshop was to build institutional capacity and partnerships in participatory governance at the community, local and national levels to address the complex and intertwining challenges of poverty and the environment at the community level.

Objectives
The objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Achieve a clearer understanding by the participants of the inter-related issues of poverty and environment, and the concept of “building institutional capacity to address the issues of poverty/environment nexus”;
2. Raise awareness of the outcomes and the lessons learned from the in-country field experiences, the need for and methodology of institutional and community engagement as well as the imperatives relevant to effective planning, implementation, and monitoring of projects and the achievement of sustainability of project activity in addressing the poverty-environment nexus;
3. Improve the understanding and the articulating of policy issues including partnership building in poverty/environment nexus initiatives;
4. Enhance networking for sharing knowledge and experiences, learning lessons and exploring possibilities of future inter-country and intra-country collaboration on the poverty-environment nexus initiatives; and
5. Identify needs for technical cooperation for institutional capacity building on the poverty-environment nexus.

Outputs
The workshop targeted producing the following outputs:

(a) A training manual on poverty-environment nexus issues;
(b) A report on the workshop, outlining the findings of the workshop and collected lessons learned;
(c) A collection of case reports from developing countries on the application of the concept and approach of the “poverty-environment nexus”;
(d) Records on deliberations, leading to the preparation of draft proposals for expanded technical cooperation programs/projects on “poverty-environment nexus”; and
(e) Self-developing networks of participating organizations/countries to exchange views and information on policies, programs and projects, concepts and methodologies, and other relevant issues of the “poverty-environment nexus”.
Preparatory Activity

Workshop participants were provided with a workshop briefing report providing background information on the conceptual framework of the poverty-environment nexus as well as the theory and practice of participatory governance and partnership development. The paper also provided insight into the experience and challenges of other regions and countries in addressing the poverty-environment nexus through community development such as Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania as well as an overview of the initiatives on the poverty-environment nexus of selected organizations from the international community, such as UNDP and the World Bank. The paper also provided a summary of the findings of the ten IPP projects, the experiences gained and the lessons learned from the UNDESA initiative on the poverty-environmental nexus in Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The report then covered strategies for information sharing and the importance of establishing and maintaining ICT networks for information exchange and lesson-learning. The report closed with a summary of the key strategic findings of the ten IPPs and issues for discussion at the workshop. The report is available through the UNDESA office on request and is electronically available from the ESTIS website.

Participants

The workshop was attended by 51 officials from central and local governments, NGOs and community organizations, the private sector and research and training institutions in Asia. The workshop was supported by the Viet Namese Government through the Hue City People’s Committee Bureau of Foreign Affairs. A list of the participants and their details are included in Appendix II.

Workshop Presentations

Opening Remarks

Opening remarks were provided by representatives of Hue City, UNDESA, the UNDP/PEP and enda Viet Nam. All representatives spoke of the need to work collaboratively and the importance of taking a collegiate and integrated approach across boundaries to address the insidious and extensive problem of the Poverty Environmental Nexus. While acknowledging the complexity of the issue and the difficulty in addressing the problem, these opening remarks indicated the degree of interest in cooperative effort and set the scene for an open and engaged workshop process. A focus of these early remarks was directed at the need to build capacity, collaboration, sharing learnings and experiences as well as the need for effective networks and the desire to deal with the systemic institutional problems. Some of the key messages and background to the workshop were outlined by Mr Adil Khan, Chief, Socio-economic Governance and Management Branch, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Mr Khan indicated that that the key issues of the workshop, which were focused on the poverty and environment nexus, have direct relevance to the continued efforts of the international community for realizing decent living conditions of the people around the world.
The world leaders assembled in September 2000 at the United Nations World Millennium Summit in New York, and set up the eight major Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In short, these goals are: (1) eradicate poverty and hunger, (2) achieve universal primary education, (3) promote gender equality, (4) reduce child mortality, (5) improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) ensure environmental sustainability, and (8) develop a global partnership for development. The achievement of these goals were reviewed at the World Summit of the United Nations held in September 2005, and the whole United Nations system is at present geared to assisting the member states in achieving by 2015 these eight Millennium Development Goals. This workshop is, in this sense, an attempt of the United Nations to advance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr Khan further outlined that UNDESA as a Department of the United Nations Secretariat, has three distinctive responsibilities. The first one is to provide inter-governmental bodies of the United Nations with substantive support in their negotiation process. Secondly, to undertake research and publish on current issues of social and economic development policy. Thirdly, to formulate and execute technical cooperation initiatives for development, in collaboration with inter-governmental, national, and local governments, civil society organizations, NGOs and research institutes, as well as the private sector. Mr Khan emphasized that the main purpose of the United Nations technical cooperation activities was to “build the institutional capacity” of organizations in developing countries, which is also a key objective of the workshop. In carrying out these three functions of the Department, UNDESA wants to continue working closely with each organization participating in the workshop.

The workshop was then structured around three core themes: (a) The concept of P&E and the issues this presented, (b) the institutional in-country and project experiences, and (c) the institutional issues and participatory governance. The workshop concluded with an extensive group discussion session focusing on where to from here.

**The P&E concept, country experiences, and major issues.**

Professor Bob Miles of the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development (ISRD) at Central Queensland University, Australia delivered a keynote address on the P&E concept using a range of country experiences to demonstrate points and to raise major issues. The presentation clearly articulated that poverty is multidimensional, and inter-linked with environmental problems. The environmental problems usually associated with the commercially useful regenerative resources, which when under constant pressure from excessive use, degrade. In these situations the depletion of the natural resource is often linked to the poverty of the people that are dependent on them for their income.

A degraded environment implies that there are fewer resources available both for present and future generations with a greater risk to economic well-being and resource. Poor people, particularly women and children are often the first victims of environmental degradation although they are not necessarily the perpetuators. The
poor’s exposure to environmental degradation is distinctive in that the surroundings of the locations commonly inhabited by the poor are often environmentally impoverished, fragile or degraded. The lack of a strong resource base makes it difficult for the poor to get out of the degraded environment and try to make a living with alternative sources of livelihoods which are less degrading. In that sense these people are more like victims rather than degraders of the environment. Thus, there exists a two-way relationship between poverty and environment in the developing countries. Poverty can cause environmental degradation, and in turn, the degradation of the environment exacerbates the poverty.

From an economic perspective, poverty is often defined in terms of monetary wealth and income. This definition, however, has been shown globally to be fairly limiting. Instead of cash savings and earnings, wealth is often reflected in cattle holdings, the quality of agricultural implements, housing materials, labor resources, access to land, and the ability of the household to produce food. Hence, an assets-orientation is particularly important while examining the poverty-environment interactions.

It was pointed out that environmental factors are major components of the burden of disease in developing countries. In this context the environment includes household water supply, toilets, wastewater collection and treatment, indoor air pollution, agrochemical pollution, and urban air pollution. By far the greatest cause of disease in this area is the lack of access to adequate water and sanitation.

The issue and importance of climate change was raised as an emerging strategic driver requiring increased consideration. The significant body of evidence indicates that climate change will compound the poverty environmental issues particularly affecting the people in the Asian, African and Latin American regions. The changes are predicted to bring higher temperatures and more extreme weather events in the future. Of considerable concern is that food security and water availability will be affected by this increased variability. Of note is that climate change has significant implications for the economic growth of agriculture-based economies and also the food security of the poor.

Participatory governance and partnership development.

The role of international institutions and non-state stakeholders is important in addressing the poverty environmental issues of the globe. United Nations has and continues to play an important role in changing the mindset of policy makers. Effort by the UN has also been directed toward non-state stakeholders from the civil society in bringing their attention to the issue of the poverty-environment nexus. This invariably promotes environmental protection. UNDP provides an integrative and interactive mechanism through which a large number of separate efforts by inter-governmental, non-governmental, regional, national and local bodies are coordinated.

In addition, the UNDP helps countries achieve sustainable human development by assisting them to build up their capacity to design and carry out development programs in the fields of poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women, and the protection and regeneration of the environment. In all these efforts poverty eradication is the highest priority.
The UN MDGs now guide most of the least developed and developing countries in designing and implementing pro-poor development strategies focusing heavily on poverty reduction and environmental protection.

The public-private partnership is a key element in securing success, ownership and change. These partnerships can include all joint activities of the public sector with the private - for profit (e.g. business firms) and not for profit (e.g. NGOs). Each of the stakeholders contributes some kind of resources and participates in the planning and decision-making process in this new kind of collaborative arrangement. It underlines the new quality of relations between government and non-government sectors which is more balanced by sharing both risks and rewards of a project than has been the case with pure contractual relationships. This does not necessarily imply that all stakeholders participate equally; rather each partner contributes according to the relative strengths and respective roles within the partnership. Another important aspect of public-private partnership is its principally open-ended conception in recognizing the long-term nature of true cooperation, mutual trust, a shared vision, engagement and respect.

A key challenge raised is the need to convert project activity to institutional changes in policy, strategy participatory governance as well as changes in beliefs, values and behaviors of all parties.

Understanding relationships between poverty and environmental outcomes requires investigating issues such as resource access (e.g. assets, land, labor, credit, and markets), institutions (e.g. land tenure systems, governance) and vulnerability (e.g. seasonal vs. long-term, networks, entitlements).

Incorporating people’s knowledge, perception, values, beliefs and attitudes into planning and decision making has been found to be of vital importance in achieving environmental friendly development. It is equally important that people need to be constantly reminded about the intricate linkage between environment and their sustenance. The poor need to be seen as part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Efforts should be made to improve environmental management in ways that contribute to sustainable growth and poverty reduction, and more particularly they need to reflect the priorities of the poor. Supportive policies and institutions are needed, including access to information and decision making. This should be done in order to expand the poor’s opportunities to invest in environmental improvements and or enhance their livelihoods.

Environmental management needs to be integrated into poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts in order to achieve significant and sustainable results. Improving environmental management in ways that benefit the poor requires policy and institutional changes that cut across sectors and that lie mostly outside the control of environmental institutions. Such strategic and institutional considerations must include changes in governance, and domestic economic and social policy, as well as international and industrial-country policies. Moreover, poverty-environment issues should be integrated into national development frameworks by addressing the environmental concerns of the poor in nationally owned poverty reduction strategies. In addition, they should be related to macroeconomic and sectoral policy reforms, so that they can become integral parts of national sustainable development strategies.
Gender dimensions of the poverty-environment nexus should also be addressed by ensuring that they are fully integrated into the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies and related policy reforms.

Access to environmentally sound and locally appropriate technology, such as crop production technologies that conserve soil, water, and agro-biodiversity in addition to minimizing the use of pesticides, or appropriate renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies, and air pollution, should be expanded by improving protection of and access to indigenous knowledge and technologies.

Appropriate private-sector involvement should be encouraged by strengthening government and community capacities to partner with the private sector and to expand environmental services for the poor. This should be done by providing incentives for local enterprise development based on the sustainable use of biodiversity (such as community-based ecotourism or sustainable harvest of natural products), and by putting in place appropriate regulations and voluntary codes to safeguard the interests of the poor and the environment.

Effective environmental coalitions have to be developed at the local level with local governments as lead agencies drawing partners from local NGOs, CBOs, and representatives of the landless and other segments of the population.

Sustainable IT networks also need to be further developed to bring all the stakeholders involved in environmental protection together for raising environmental consciousness among different groups of citizens.

Governments must be aware that community approaches are inherently diverse and that standardized methods for grappling with either local issues or the groups that tackle them are likely to fail. As a consequence, considerable “space” and freedom must be granted to community initiatives to innovate and create the relationships that will bring them success.

There are a wide range of international aid agencies and funding bodies. Most of these bodies are working with partners and NGOs to secure outcomes that address the poverty-environmental nexus and the UN MDGs. While there is great variation in the approach across the agencies and project providers, they have one common principle of success. This is the engagement of the end users and the development of integrated partnerships across all levels of Government, NGOs and community groups.

There is no feasible policy connection between poverty and environment without good governance. Changes in the nature of the environment-poverty nexus have as much to do with power as they do with policy failures. They depend on how different interests are negotiated and expressed. Efforts to address poverty, while enhancing the environment, requires strong political will.

To achieve a new method of working, government agencies and occasionally NGOs must undertake to make a number of conceptual shifts. Building partnerships with local communities is a new endeavor for many agencies, and one that requires not only good will, but also a commitment to experimentation and fine-tuning solutions.
In parallel with support to broader partnership approaches, considerable attention must also be given to developing more flexible pluralistic approaches to decision making. The concept of pluralism recognizes the existence of differing and often conflicting positions. These approaches can accommodate different interests and the increased likelihood of conflict that this is likely to bring, and do not require consensus before being able to move matters forward. Pluralism has encouraged the development of innovative tools such as resource management contracts and codes of conduct. Such concepts raise issues such as how to achieve needed checks and balances, and accountability, in the absence of absolute standards or single clear-cut solutions.


Dr Nguyen Trung Thang (UNDP/PEP Project Manager) spoke of the UNDP poverty environmental project titled *Harmonizing Poverty Reduction and Environmental Goals in Policy and Planning for Sustainable Development 2005 – 2009*. As part of the introductory remarks reference was made to the excellent work of Viet Nam in reducing poverty in the country (Figure 1) but recognized that poverty was still a substantive issue for the country.

![Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam](image)

**Figure 1. Poverty reduction in Viet Nam**

The UNDP program was seen as necessary because evidence presented showed that overuse of the natural resource resulted in degradation and subsequent poverty where sound land use was able to reverse this trend. However, in order to achieve this there was a need to strengthen policies and practices that directly involve poor people in resource/environmental management.

The time frame for the UNDP initiative was to operate from 2005 until 2009. The implementing partner was the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment with a total budget allocation for the project of $3,700,000 USD comprising of:
• UNDP: 1,400,000 USD  
• DFID: 2,000,000 USD  
• Government: 300,000 USD

The inception phase has now been completed and two provinces have been selected for piloting. The goal of the program is to strengthen government capacity to integrate environment and poverty reduction goals into policy and planning for sustainable development. The project is focused on effective policy and planning and the major objective is targeted toward capacity building.

The project has three primary components (a) Study P-E linkages in Viet Nam and raise awareness on P-E linkages as well as strengthening monitoring procedures; (b) Mainstream environmental and poverty concerns into policy frameworks of sectors, localities and strengthen MoNRE’s capacity to develop policy and legal instruments; and (c) Improving coordination within and between government and donors.

The first study will consider the P&E linkages in Viet Nam and raise awareness on P-E linkages (eight activities in total). The project will analyze existing P&E information, consider ten case studies and review NR&E and P&E projects to develop suitable policy and investment models.

The second study will focus on strengthening monitoring procedures (nine activities in total). This will include reviewing existing monitoring and review processes for P&E activity, developing suitable indicators and targets and establishing effective P&E policy.

Some of the recent and future policies, strategies and plans that affect PEP activities include:

• Revised Law on Environmental Protection passed by National Assembly (with PEP support);
• Five year Plan 2006-2010 for Natural Resources and Environment completed (PEP advice; support for scoping M&E system);
• Natural Resource and Environment Agenda 21 under formulation (PEP support with scoping mission);
• Sector Agenda 21s to be prepared by concerned Ministries (PEP focus: forestry, fisheries, sustainable energy);
• Local Agenda 21s to be prepared by Peoples’ Committees (PEP focus: 2 pilot and 2 replication provinces); and
• SED Plan (including CPRGS) completed and guiding national/ provincial development (PEP focus: P-E links in next Plan.

The mainstreaming of environmental and poverty concerns into policy frameworks (eight activities in total) will focus on:

• Mainstream poverty reduction in NRE five-year Plan;
• Integrate poverty reduction in NRE Agenda 21;
• Integrate P-E concerns into sector Agenda 21s;
• Support P-E in local Agenda 21s; assess P-E in provincial SED Plans; and
• Assess national SED Plan; recommend EP and PR mainstreaming.
The strengthening of MoNRE’s capacity to develop policy and legal instrument (seven activities in total) is targeted towards the development of a road map on policy reform and environmental protection. This will in part be achieved by pilot activities to develop mechanism for the involvement of poor people in the development and implementation of policies.

Activity will also focus on improving the coordination within and between government and donors (five activities). This will include drawing on the lessons learned from Viet Nam sector-wide approaches, study tours, training workshops, and the piloting of collaborative activities with ISGE on environmental policies and P-E.

**Poverty-Environment Nexus for Indigenous People**

A concept note on the Regional Indigenous Peoples Program was provided by Ms Chandra K. Roy, Regional Coordinator, Regional Indigenous Peoples Program, UNDP Regional Center in Bangkok.

**The Challenge**

As a result of a concerted effort at reducing poverty globally, the leaders of 189 countries met in 2000 to develop the Millennium Declaration. The declaration outlined the commitment of the world’s governments to the Charter and principles of the United Nations, and the universal realization of international human rights principles. The Declaration states: “We will spare no effort to promote democracy and strengthen the rule of law, as well as respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.” The fundamental link between human rights and development articulated in the Declaration underpins and frames the MDGs, and requires that all work towards the goals considers and respects fundamental human rights.

The MDGs outline eight goals and the associated targets and indicators for the world community to work towards a common vision of sustainable human, social and economic development. From the paper, the meeting of the MDGs’ challenge requires attention not only to the eight goals, but also to their inter-relationship with each other and with social and political contexts. The Goals also recognize the indivisible nature of environmental and poverty concerns for developing countries: in MDG 7 *(Ensure environmental sustainability)* and MDG 1 *(Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger)*.

This policy framework ensures that the nexus of poverty and environment is central to MDG strategies, and is underpinned by human rights principles. Strategies must therefore integrate the environmental concerns of poor and vulnerable groups into mainstream development processes at local, national, and regional as well as global levels.

**Indigenous Peoples, Poverty and Marginalisation**

Indigenous peoples are extremely diverse across the Asia-Pacific region having their particular and distinct histories, cultures and development challenges. Nevertheless, they share common disparities vis-à-vis the general population and the states in which they live. The indigenous peoples of the Asia-Pacific continue to be among
the most vulnerable of all marginalized groups. The people often live in conditions of severe poverty and face the effects of many forms of discrimination. Commitments made at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) to empower indigenous peoples, as a major group in the implementation of Agenda 21 have as yet not been fully met. Therefore, indigenous peoples from Asia have at present limited participation in regional and global policy negotiations about sustainable development, forests, traditional knowledge and biodiversity, trade and the environment. Given the centrality of land and resources to self-identification, cultural survival and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, the marginalization from environmental decision making processes is regarded as a violation of these indigenous peoples’ rights and their development choices.

The marginalization of indigenous peoples is an issue and a challenge in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. In 2005 the Inter Agency Support Group on Indigenous Issues stated “that the effort to meet the targets laid down for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals could in fact have harmful effects on indigenous and tribal peoples, such as the acceleration of the loss of the lands and natural resources on which indigenous peoples’ livelihoods have traditionally depended or the displacement of indigenous peoples from those lands.”

In response to continued marginalization and to address the potential dangers of the Millennium Development goals, the Inter Agency Support Group argued that the main challenge is to interpret and qualify the Millennium Development Goals as related to the rights and priorities of indigenous peoples. This needs to be done in a way that is relevant and attributes to indigenous peoples a sense of ownership in the process, and to articulate the Millennium Development Goals within the framework of international human rights standards.

As mentioned by the Inter Agency Support Group, the sidelining of indigenous peoples in development policy and programming can have a particularly harmful impact on their rights to lands and resources, and subsequent alienation from the development process. Involvement of indigenous peoples and their representatives in all stages of policy formation, especially policies directed towards the achievement of the MDGs, is seen as essential to ensure that the MDGs are relevant and do benefit indigenous peoples together with their national societies. Dominant policy documents and frameworks used in the planning of development, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) often marginalize or ignore indigenous peoples’ concerns and needs, and consultations to enable indigenous concerns to be raised.

For the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (and any other government policy), to be meaningful and effective to improve the situation of Indigenous people, it is imperative that they are properly represented at all decision-making levels, from policy formulation to implementation. Recognizing the importance of this, a consultative meeting on the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers was held with the participation of the leaders of the indigenous peoples of Bangladesh in April 2005 in Dhaka. While successful in being a first step in highlighting poverty and environment related issues of indigenous people in the PRSP process, there is a need to conduct further studies to determine the extent to which recommendations given in this process have been incorporated into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and other policy instruments.
Community-Based Composting and Clean Vegetable Production in Huong Long Commune Hue City Viet Nam

An in-country presentation of the Viet Nam initiative was provided by Mr Bang Anh Tuan from edna Viet Nam. The presentation was followed by a site visit where the participants of the workshop were exposed first hand to the wide range of activity and success of the project.

Introduction

Due to the rapid urbanization and economic development, Thua Thien Hue Province and Hue City are faced with serious environmental problems, notably solid waste. On average, the City disposes of 200m³ solid waste daily. However, the current waste collecting system can only manage 70% of this amount. The remaining 30% of solid waste, mainly in the surrounding areas such as Huong Long Commune, are not processed through the City’s waste collecting system. This results in environmental pollution (Plate 1).

On the other hand, there is an increasing demand of clean vegetables to serve tourism and local consumption in Hue City. Every day Hue City imports 20 to 30 tonnes of various kinds of vegetables from other provinces to meet its needs. To ensure the Hue’s consumers and tourists’ health, the Thua Thien Hue Province has set up a long-term plan to use 10 ha of fertile agricultural land in Huong Long Commune, Hue City to grow clean vegetables. As the solid waste causes environmental and water source pollution, it will seriously affect the growth and quality of the clean vegetables, thus it will violate the technical requirements for clean vegetables. Meanwhile, rural based domestic waste contains a high proportion of organic matter. Therefore, the organization for collecting, sorting and converting solid waste into compost for fertilizing the clean vegetable and plants requires consistent attention and investment (Plate 2).
Plate 2. Sorting through solid waste requires constant vigilance

The project is an initiative of Hue farmers’ association, Huong Long commune and ENDA Viet Nam in the frame of the Environment and poverty Nexus project promoted and funded by UNDESA. The project is to pilot the organization of a community-based solid waste collection and composting in order to reduce its pollution risk and to generate income via promoting the use of compost to produce clean vegetables. With financial support ($19,200 USD) from UNDESA and contributions of local partners in Hue (e.g. land, human resources), the project started its activities in An Ninh Thuong and An Ninh Ha hamlets – Huong Long commune by the establishment of community-based solid waste collection and the construction of a 3-ton composting plant (Plate 3).

Plate 3. Composting plant for organic waste

Objectives of the Project

The project objectives were to model government/people collaboration and enhanced capacity for local governance through the improvement of community-based waste separation/composting and environmentally sustainable clean vegetable production.
Specifically the project was designed to:

- Promote local government/people collaboration for policy implementation on environment/poverty nexus;
- Enhance institutional capacity for local governance on environment/poverty nexus;
- Improve community-based waste separation and composting;
- Promote environmentally sustainable production and distribution of clean vegetables; and
- Promote active participation of Viet Nam in the sub-regional networking on poverty and environment nexus.

The major lessons learned from the project were:

1. That the organization of regional workshops and field activity allowed for the effective explanation of the project’s objectives and methodology to the stakeholders as well as facilitating the formulation of a national action plan. The project plan provided the potential partners with clear insights into the project components and concrete conditions and steps for the project organizational structure and implementation process. This has motivated the interest and commitment into the project initiatives and facilitated the creation of constructive partnerships among involved stakeholders for the project implementation process;

2. The clear definition of roles and benefits of involved partners at the beginning of the project action plan formulation, implementation and monitoring process was an imperative in fostering transparency and accountability as well as ensuring the expected outcomes and outputs of the project were realized. Advocacy to attract the interest of Municipal Authorities in the initiative was necessary in order to facilitate its up-scaling and replication;

3. Local policy and regulation of household solid waste collection services is needed to be put in place to motivate people’s participation;

4. Simple community-based composting techniques with training proved to be relevant for the community’s application and participation. Community-based experimentation of the applied technique fostered community’s acceptance and participation;

5. Demonstration farms with clear productive outputs help promote farmers’ interest in the use of produced compost and create a market for both compost and vegetables (as long as sound marketing strategy is formulated – bring the market to the producers) (Plate 4); and

6. Continuous community awareness raising activity operated by a community-based promotional group is helpful in achieving attitudinal and behaviour change.
1. Given the complicated and the multi-objective nature of the project, six months was not a sufficient period of time to adequately test the project’s effectiveness and sustainability. It is recommended therefore that a follow-up period of at least six months after the end date of the project, where technical support is to be provided especially in the field of clean vegetable production, quality of compost and marketing of vegetable products, is needed.

2. Dissemination of the project outcomes and lessons learned is to be developed. The sharing of experiences with Qui Nhon City where a similar project (under the financial support of UNESCAP) and with other projects of the same nature, funded by UNDP in Viet Nam are being undertaken. This will be a good opportunity for dissemination of the project lessons learned and replication.

3. As the project is a pilot phase experimenting with the institutional arrangement and operation of community-based composting system in connection with the improvement of farming system (clean vegetable production and soil quality improvement), further financial and technical support from UNDESA/UNDP is an imperative for the local partners (not only in Hue but also in other provincial cities) to verify and fortify the project outputs and outcomes (Hue City) in order to replicate and expand this initiative.

4. Networking to share experiences and lessons learned among participating countries is an important goal of the project. Nevertheless, it has not been adequately developed in this initial phase. It is necessary to find a practical solution that encourages the active participation and the commitment of participating countries into this network through the established websites. Moreover, financial and technical support is an imperative to help local partners set up and maintain their newly built web sites (if any) and enable them to partake in the international network for information and lesson learned sharing.

Plate 4. Demonstration farms using organic waste as fertiliser

**Recommendations**

1. Given the complicated and the multi-objective nature of the project, six months was not a sufficient period of time to adequately test the project’s effectiveness and sustainability. It is recommended therefore that a follow-up period of at least six months after the end date of the project, where technical support is to be provided especially in the field of clean vegetable production, quality of compost and marketing of vegetable products, is needed.

2. Dissemination of the project outcomes and lessons learned is to be developed. The sharing of experiences with Qui Nhon City where a similar project (under the financial support of UNESCAP) and with other projects of the same nature, funded by UNDP in Viet Nam are being undertaken. This will be a good opportunity for dissemination of the project lessons learned and replication.

3. As the project is a pilot phase experimenting with the institutional arrangement and operation of community-based composting system in connection with the improvement of farming system (clean vegetable production and soil quality improvement), further financial and technical support from UNDESA/UNDP is an imperative for the local partners (not only in Hue but also in other provincial cities) to verify and fortify the project outputs and outcomes (Hue City) in order to replicate and expand this initiative.

4. Networking to share experiences and lessons learned among participating countries is an important goal of the project. Nevertheless, it has not been adequately developed in this initial phase. It is necessary to find a practical solution that encourages the active participation and the commitment of participating countries into this network through the established websites. Moreover, financial and technical support is an imperative to help local partners set up and maintain their newly built web sites (if any) and enable them to partake in the international network for information and lesson learned sharing.
Development of Renewable Energy for the Poor

The development of renewable energy for the poor was scoped by Mr Hoang, Viet Cuong, National Consultant of UNDP-PEP. In his presentation, discussion was tabled as to why there is a need to focus on renewable energy, the types of renewable energy available in Viet Nam, the renewable energy sources and their utilization as well as exploring the link between renewable energy with poverty reduction.

The need for renewable energy was demonstrated by the low access to the national electricity grid (especially in rural areas). In general, only 87% of households are connected nationally to the grid. The quality of the connection in many instances is poor and the supply of fuel oil will be limited after 2012. The poor and rural areas heavily depend on non-commercial energy in the form of biomass resources.

Renewable energy is a sustainable approach to poverty reduction as well as achieving rural development.

Clean renewable energy has an important role in the strategy for energy sustainable development. In Viet Nam, combustibles, renewable and waste represent about 54% of total energy production. Interest is now focused on energy efficiency and renewable energy development. At the global level the world summit in Johannesburg called for renewable energy development as GHG clean energy sources. The renewable energy potential of Viet Nam is large (e.g. wind, solar, hydro, geothermal). However, their use in a commercial scale is not yet fully developed, with wind power and biomass showing significant promise.

In Viet Nam, small hydro-power stations have been established with a capacity from 100 to 10,000 kW/station. There are 500 potential sites with total capacity of about 1,400,000 - 1,800,000 KW (accounting for 80-97% of total small hydro-power stations). There are 2,500 small Hydro-power Station sites with a capacity from 5 to 100 kW/station (total capacity of 100,000 kW to 150,000 kW). These sites could generate 5-7.5% of total small hydro-power. There are also about a one million sites with a capacity form 0.1 to 5 kW/station (also called Micro-Hydro-Power Stations) with total capacity of 50,000 - 100,000 kW (accounting for 2.5 - 5% of total Small Hydro-Power capacity).

Viet Nam has a relatively good solar resource. Solar radiation in Viet Nam is 3–4.5 kWh/m²/day in winter and 4.5–6.5 kWh/m²/day in summer. Solar energy is an ideal source to meet the off-grid needs, especially in the more sparsely populated areas where mini-grids are not feasible.

Three types of solar energy application are relevant to Viet Nam, especially in rural and poor areas and include individual home systems (common lighting, audio, television), village facilities (common lighting, audio, television) and energy centers for recharging batteries.

Photovoltaics is a specific field of interest that is applied strongly in Viet Nam. In the past 12 years the solar photovoltaic systems have undergone significant development. By the end of 2003, the total PV systems installed for mountainous areas and islands Viet Nam was:
• Solar PV stations for battery charging:
  46 Systems – Capacity: 300Wp-1000Wp
• Solar PV systems for Communities:
  470 Systems – Capacity: 150Wp-800Wp
• Solar PV systems for household:
  2800 Systems – Capacity: 45Wp-70Wp
• Solar PV systems for sea and river lamps:
  250 Systems – Capacity: 50Wp-100Wp

Typical biomass resources in Viet Nam include sugar cane dredges (bagasse), rice husks, rice straw, coffee husks, coconut shells, cashew nut shells and wood residues. The main biomass utilization in Viet Nam is for power generation (electricity production), gasification, alternative fuel in rural areas and co-generation.

Biomass provides an ideal fuel as a cheap, abundantly available fuel that is clean, has no sulfur content and is renewable. Table 1 outlines some of the energy produced by biomass type and tonnage.

**Table 1. Potential of biomass for electricity generation in Viet Nam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of biomass</th>
<th>Total main biomass amount produced (000 tonnes)</th>
<th>Total available biomass amount (000 tonnes)</th>
<th>Potential of estimated electricity capacity (MW)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice husk</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>70-150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagasse</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>150-200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood residues</td>
<td>440</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastes and other biomass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30-50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biogas also offers a theoretical potential for energy production. Based on the 1999 statistics, the theoretical biogas production was estimated at 8,360 million cubic meters, 38.2 % of which is estimated to be generated from animal manure. The total estimated biogas production is equivalent to 0.4 million TOE. However, the realistic biogas potential is far from the theoretical potential. It is estimated that about 5% of families can afford a biogas plant. The annual gas production is estimated at 130.6 million cubic meters, equivalent to 62,700 TOE.

Wind offers another option using kinetic power to generate electricity. Wind generated energy is competitively priced with an $1,000USD/kW investment and generation cost of 3.91 cents/kWh

Renewable energy presents a considerable opportunity to contribute to poverty reduction. Energy provides an alternative means of harnessing energy for all kinds of domestic and production activity. However, in Viet Nam:
• 18% of communities are not connected to the national grid;
• 75% of the population lives in rural areas. Millions of people live without electricity;
• Agriculture based rural economies lend itself to biomass energy production; and
• Mountainous and coastal areas are suitably endowed with the potential for mini-hydro and wind power development with low operational and maintenance cost.

A range of National Programs exist under a Master Plan of energy conservation and efficiency programs (EC&E) - (MOST, MOI, MONRE, MPI).

International support for the energy development program comes in a wide range of providers including the New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) demonstration project, the IFC and the Danish Consultant Trust Fund provided resources for a series of projects that resulted in the Master Plan for Rural Electrification for Viet Nam. Wind Resource Mapping programs have been supported by the Netherlands and small hydro investment schemes have been sponsored by New Zealand.

The World Bank programs have objectives for the improvement of energy access in the rural areas, helping the country mobilize finances to meet the rapidly growing demand for energy and improving the technical, commercial and financial efficiency of the energy system as well as initiating a reform of the sector, including market restructuring, sector and corporate governance.

Some of the World Bank Programs include:

• **Rural Energy I** ($150 million, May 2000) to connect 900 communes to the national power network;

• **Rural Energy II**: includes major upgrading and/or expansion of rural power networks in about 1,200 communes;

• **System Efficiency Improvement, Equitization and Renewable Project** (SEIER – $225 million, June 2002) to improve technical, commercial and financial efficiency of EVN and the power companies; and

• **Transmission, Distribution and Disaster Reconstruction Project** ($199 million, February 1998) to reinforce the existing north–south transmission system and rehabilitate distribution systems in three cities.

Some of the barriers to the development of the renewable industry sector in Viet Nam currently include an inadequate regulatory framework and action plan to provide the necessary drivers to accelerate the development of the renewable energy; insufficient awareness of the available technologies, their costs and their performance; a lack of reliable data and research on biomass energy sources; and a shortage of access to high quality technology at affordable prices.

Renewable energy requires high initial investment cost and there is a lack of commercial businesses and infrastructure to provide renewable electricity equipment and services. The continuing high costs of biomass conversion technologies and
therefore of energy generated from biomass is still a major limitation as is the limited access to finance for consumers, businesses and project developers.

There is a need to encourage the implementation of the Renewable Energy Action Plan including the provision of financial support for rural areas. Research and Development of appropriated technology is required to make the technology affordable in rural areas. There is also a need for information sharing and awareness raising on the benefits of the technology and the continued international cooperation in renewable energy development for rural areas for Viet Nam.

**Eco-villages for income generation and environment protection**

Prof Ha Chu Chu, National Consultant of UNDP-PEP gave a presentation on Eco-villages for income generation and environment protection.

The Eco-Eco project focuses on two primary ecosystems in Viet Nam. One of these ecosystems is the sandy land along the sea coast with an area of approximately 500,000 hectares. This area is seasonally fresh water submerged and comprises one of the biggest river deltas occupying an area of about 250,000 hectares of this land system. The second area is the desertified hilly land caused by erosion and inappropriate cultivation practices.

The people that are the inhabitants of these fragile ecosystems are very poor and the livelihood is bad. The micro climate is unfavorable for life and agricultural production. The area is exposed to high temperatures, recurring drought, strong dry winds, and erosion from inappropriate land use.

**Application of eco-eco models and their contribution to poverty reduction and environmental protection in Viet Nam**

**Fresh water submerged land:**

Rice cultivation is undertaken in the dry season, yielding one crop per year. The income of the farmers is very low with widespread poverty and malnutrition. The Eco-Eco model work is directed at transferring the rice monoculture into a multi-cropping system including: rice, aquaculture, fruits and green vegetable horticulture. The socio-economic and environmental effects of achieving this diversity of cropping and income have now achieved universal recognition.

- **Environmental benefits:** The landscape of the submerged land in rainy seasons has greater diversity of life under the range of new crops and land uses - alive with flowers, birds and bees.
- **Socio-economic benefit:** With only a monoculture of rice, the women are jobless in the rainy season having to leave the children in search of work in the neighboring markets. Under the diversified cropping model the family income increases notably with the sale of multiple food products. The daily meal is rich in protein and results in improved nutrition for the family.

The environment of coastal land is not ideally suited to human habitation and food production. Physical and biological properties of the sand limit water and fertilizer retention. The sun and wind are harsh resulting in the death of plants and seedlings.
The coastal marine resources are exhausted, and the inhabitants now have to depend on agriculture products. There is an urgent need to rehabilitate the sand ecosystems ensuring sustainable development. Activities to remediate the problem include establishing hedges for shading and improving soil health. The hedges provide an effective barrier for wind and reduce evaporation. Ponds and wells have been established to improve domestic water supply and irrigation of the crops in the dry season. Plant selection is targeted towards improved production and drought tolerance.

**Desert Hills ecosystem**

The desertified hilly and mountain country is also unfavorable for agriculture production. The sloping land is subjected to severe erosion and loss of water. The most agriculture practice applied by the minority ethnic groups is “shifting cultivation” and nomadic cattle breeding.

The agriculture production per unit of land is low. There are significant risks from floods in the rainy season through to protracted droughts in the dry season. Out of the need for survival the community is moving from the desert landscape to the forest land which has fertile soil for food production. The sloping land is deteriorating rapidly.

The Eco-Eco model is an example of an assistance measure that is ensuring the sustainable development for the minority ethnic group living in the upland. The model is transferring to the people the appropriate techniques for stopping erosion and providing practical guidance in the development of channels and green hedges for the arable soil and water retention. The community is being trained in crop rotation, conserving soil fertility for sustainable land use and the provision of a more nutritious diet for the community.

Another landscape requiring attention is the tidal area. This area along the sea coast is tidally inundated and covered by the mangrove vegetation. Some typical areas of mangrove vegetation are ecologically significant and the area is a national wild flora and fauna reserve. In the process of food production, the local population destroys the scarce mangrove vegetation to make dykes and sea walls to increase the land area for farming.

The socio-economic and environmental objectives of the Eco-Eco model for this landscape include the re-establishment of the mangrove system and ecological balance. The community and the local government recognize the problems created by the construction of the dykes and recognize the need for the restoration of mangrove ecosystem. The question remains on how best to improve the productivity of the landscape to serve the needs of the inhabitants in an ecologically sensitive way. Some options under consideration include the digging of ponds for brackish aquaculture. The increase in productivity of aquatic resources will make a substantial contribution to the health and wellbeing of the community and economic viability. As the income per hectare of land is very low at present this tends to lead to the destruction of the vegetation for fuel wood. With the re-establishment of ecology of the mangrove vegetation the biota including crabs and shrimp will re-establish. If managed and used sustainably this ecosystem has the potential to improve the income of the inhabitants.
The sustainability and the agriculture production of the ecosystems discussed depend on the type and impact of the land use. The livelihood of the human communities settled in the fragile ecosystems is poor and often threatened by sudden climatic change. The poor family income is based purely on agriculture production, the productivity of which depends on the quality of the ecosystem. In order to eradicate famine and alleviate poverty in these areas it is necessary to improve the sustainability and land use of these fragile ecosystems.

The success of these initiatives depends on the transfer of adequate techniques by the experts and technicians as well as the engagement and dedication of the local inhabitants and the local cadres. The eco-villages models are easy to replicate and extend.

The Eco-Eco models have targeted three of the main fragile ecosystems in North Viet Nam. However, at this stage the financial aid is limiting the ability to progress at the required rate and not sufficient for covering the vast distances from South Viet Nam to the high plateau Tay Nguyen. The sandy lands along the sea coast stretch from Thua Thien Hue to Phan Thiet. The hilly land in South Viet Nam is a vast area and calls for re-greening with eco-villages. The Me Kong river delta also has a vast area of submerged land inhabited by very poor communities.

With the valuable experiences and lessons learned from the field work in the eco-villages and communities settled in the fragile ecosystems in the North of Viet Nam, the Eco-Eco Institute is now able to extend its socio-economic and environmental activities to South Viet Nam. It is hoped that the socio-economic and environmental outcomes of the work of the Eco-Eco model continue to receive public recognition. It is also hoped that this important work will receive the support of the national and international aid organizations to provide the moral and financial aid to continue this vital work.

**Results and impacts of the Laos initiative - Land and Livelihoods: Land use, legal extensions and livelihoods**

Mr Rick Reece, Regional Director for Asia, Village Focus International (VFI) presented on the topic of land and livelihoods: Land use legal extensions and livelihoods.

The great majority of Laos people live in rural poverty and are dependent upon natural resources for food and income. Contemporary thought is that the most realistic pathway to an improved quality of life for these poor rural people is to enhance their skills and ability to use natural resources in a sustainable way while profiting from their use.

The policy framework that gives these village people rights to use, manage and profit from traditional lands is already in place in the form of the Land and Forest Law, yet most people (including officials) are unaware of this and do not know their natural resource rights or responsibilities.
With this in mind, Village Focus International’s (VFI) objective in this project is to support natural resource management (NRM) policy implementation and to build the local government and village institutional capacity. This is to include the sensitizing of the community to the issues and opportunities of sustainable land use as well as establishing networks for information sharing on the promotion and implementation of Laos Natural Resource Law as a strategy to protect forest and natural land resources. The end goal is to increase the income of the upland poor, through sustainable community forestry.

Due to the low levels of education and institutional support, the poor of the southern uplands districts have an almost complete lack of understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities under the Land and Forest Law. Since most poor people depend on the forest resources for their livelihoods (Plate 5), this is an issue that must be addressed.

**Plate 5. Extraction of forestry products in Laos**

For these upland people, the only marketable products they have access to, are the Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), however there is no comprehensive understanding of how these resources can be used or marketed for income generation and as a strategy for natural resource management.

In order to help local people break out of their cycle of poverty, this project has sought to address the poverty-environment nexus by:

- supporting policy implementation for local governance;
- enhancing institutional capacity for the management;
- helping people (local officials and village people) understand their rights and responsibilities under the law in regard to forest and land use (the ability to use, manage and profit from the forest in a sustainable way) (Plate 6); and
- creating opportunities to market valuable forest resources as a strategy for proper resource management and livelihood improvement.
Plate 6. Training of local villages in their rights and local law

This project has proven to be highly successful and regarded as cutting edge in Laos. For a relatively closed political system, the fact that VFI has been able to create a complete annex of land and forest law, as well as extension materials to explain the law to local officials and village people was a major breakthrough in achieving the intended outcomes of the project. The making of this policy relevant to the lives of local people by helping them to improve their standard of living is a step not often taken by development projects, and VFI has achieved this outcome through the project.

Given the progress of the project to date the following recommendations are proposed in order to complete the project and to continue to address the potential outcomes of poverty reduction and sustainable land use in Laos.

1. There is an ongoing need to continue to work with the Government officials to complete the final draft of the Legal Guidebook for Land and Forest Rights and Responsibilities. This will need to be followed up by printing and widely disseminating the Guidebook to officials, NGOs and other development organizations with follow up discussions to facilitate and secure understanding and ownership.

2. There is also a need to create non Lao language extension materials to explain the NRM law to village people in Taoi and Samoui districts in Salavan Province. This extension material template needs to be made available to other organizations, to enable them to translate messages into other ethnic/cultural contexts. There is also a need to create a systematic process for the extension of these materials, possibly through the already established Traditions and Environment Volunteer Youth (TEVY) group.

3. There is also a need to continue the LUPLA process in Taoi and Samoui districts, in order to do complete village planning and to receive a Temporary Village Land Use Certificate. This should also involve the scaling up of the
project by creating a ‘mobile unit’, with focus on LUPLA, Legal Rights and Responsibilities directly connected to community development. The focus of the mobile unit activities should be on approximately three provinces (perhaps north, central and south), with training offered to interested NGOs and the provincial and district government officials.

Lessons Learned from the Kazakhstan - Felt production as a way to alleviate poverty in mountain regions

Ms Aigul Zhanserikova, Executive Director, Camp Consulting Public Foundation presented the Kazakhstan initiative titled *Felt production as a way to alleviate poverty in mountain regions*. The project was undertaken in the Almaty region of Kazakhstan.

The aim of the project is the training of rural women from poor families in the use and processing of wool using environmentally sound technology to design modern felt products (Plate 7). The primary focus of this work is poverty alleviation. This is achieved by increasing income of the community women and reducing the pressure on natural resources of the local environment. The target group of the project are young women and schoolgirls from villages in the Almaty mountain oblast. Selection of participants for training was undertaken with special attention to representatives from poor families, who rely on poaching as one of their main sources of income.

Plate 7. Women being trained in the production of modern wool felt products

Main beneficiaries of the project are the participants of three training activity groups (10 people per each group) and their families. However, it is expected that these participants will train an extended network of women (relatives, friends, neighbors and other fellow-villagers). Hence, the benefits of the project are now enjoyed by more than 30 people and their families (Plate 8).
Traditionally, women in the Kazakh villages were engaged in cooking and education of children. Of note is that the male of the household is considered to be the main breadwinner in the family. The women having learned the technology of felt production can now make a contribution to the family’s budget by earning additional income.

Thus, the skills developed by the women from the training will allow the women to not only to receive additional income, but also promote their role in the village. Having united in groups of producers, women can also play a more active role in the decision-making process, strengthening institutional potential of the community (Plate 9).

Plate 8. Some of the women and families – the beneficiaries of the training in felt production.

Plate 9. Some of the Quality wool products now produced by the Women
The major lessons learned from the project are:

- Securing the cooperation of the government from the beginning of the project has helped in the project’s implementation and follow up;
- Involvement of the media has shown to be a useful tool in attracting local authorities and other organizations for their engagement and cooperation in the project;
- The strong recognition of the necessity to explain to the local people about inter-relationship of ecology, economy and social dimension in achieving sustainable development;
- That the team-work of women promotes their unification, experience and information exchange, solving common problems and strengthening their role in decision-making process and strengthening the institutional potential of the community;
- The necessity of undertaking a needs assessment of activities prior to starting the project (e.g. presence of the interest and support from either local authorities and local people, access to local resources);
- The necessity of solving common problems of local women in wool processing, marketing, price-calculation, access to information and further improvement of their capacity and to secure their engagement; and
- The need to make the provision for the inclusion of repatriate women - Kazakhs returning to their homeland from different countries (as they have more knowledge about historical handicrafts).

Further capacity building could be achieved by the development of ongoing support for the producer’s network for the exchange of experiences and the sharing of information between local producers. In addition, capacity could be further enhanced by the organization and delivery of additional training workshops to improve product quality, such as improvements in technologies, design, and price calculation. There is a need to provide ongoing support on marketing (contacts with trade people, organization of sale constant points) as well as running promotional events (e.g. exhibitions, presentations of results, printing of flyers, catalogues, posters). Additional market research is needed (e.g. age targeted, demands). There is also a need for the distribution of information to local governments, donor organizations, local NGOs, and other interested people. Information about results of the project now need to be placed on the ESTIS website and promoted through the local mass-media. This will assist in increasing the number of local women and young girls involved in the felt making process.

Fundraising for a project proposal on brand naming and the labeling of the local, handmade, ecologically-friendly products will be a key to maximizing the return to the producers of these quality products (Plate 10).
Plate 10. A trade fair exhibit and the need for the development of a brand and eco-labeling

Results and Impacts of the Thailand Initiative: Local Government Capacity Building for Environmental Sustainability and Community Development

Khunying Nathanon Thavisin, Permanent Secretary, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and a Community Representative presented a session outlining the initiative in Bangkok titled *Local Government Capacity Building for Environmental Sustainability and Community Development*.

Bangkok, the capital of the Kingdom of Thailand, is the centre of development of various fields such as economic, commerce, transportation, education, and modern technologies as well as being the most important labor market of the nation. Thus, it attracts many people from various regions to the city to search for better jobs and living conditions. Bangkok has an area of 1,568.7 km². Although the registered population is about 6 million, it is estimated the population is 10 million as almost 4 million are unregistered (population density of 4,000 people/km²). The rapid population expansion creates various problems affecting the living condition, for instance urban concentration, environmental degradation, waste water, and solid waste and air pollution. Presently, the City of Bangkok has more than 1,800 communities. Approximately 900 communities are considered congested. As the result of urban concentration, it leads to the problems of public utility, health, sanitation and access to basic government services. At the same time, the living conditions of the people who reside in these congested communities are impoverished.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has been attempting to solve these problems by encouraging the public participation in community environmental improvement as well as promoting self-reliance in order to create stronger communities, to be self-supportive and have a better quality of life. UNDESA provided financial support to carry out the program on capacity building for BMA’s
staff and community leaders to alleviate poverty and environmental conservation. The program has been in operation since 2004.

The project objectives were to support physical development of the communities in order to improve the environment of the rivers and canals and other natural water resources. This was done in such a way as to revive the traditional ways of life as well as maintain cleanliness, orderliness of the community, the efficient utilization of the natural resources, and reduction of waste. The project sought to create income for the community as well as reducing the households’ expenditure by creating jobs and developing a pattern of work in order to generate income from the resources in the communities. A focus was on building capacity and creating networks on environmental management and poverty alleviation in the communities.

The program started with 12 pilot communities and expanded to provide coverage to nearby communities. These pilot communities were chosen to become a model for implementation and could be adapted to suit others communities.

An additional objective was to develop and build the capacity of the Bangkok Metropolitan administration on environmental management and poverty alleviation through integrated approaches.

Lessons Learned

Every nation and region has various types of social and community structures as well as occupations. These variations originated from differences in race, religion and geographic area. Thus, the problems of communities would have both similar and dissimilar aspects. Formulating a community development model would allow us to learn from the best practices through sharing of knowledge and experiences in order that participants could apply this knowledge and experiences toward their own community development program.

The lessons learned from the project are as follows:

• The public and private sectors must jointly identify problems and select suitable alternatives for development;
• To encourage community participation in solving problems by strengthening the roles of the various community groups as well as the methods of actions in order to solve environment and poverty problems;
• There is a need for guidelines for occupational development and community income generation as a means of solving problems of various groups and building the capacity of people in communities in order to create self-reliance without any need of assistance; and
• To pass on the knowledge and experiences to develop the communities by the utilization of local wisdom in order for further development such as organize workshops and create websites for information dissemination.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration was able to improve the capacity of the communities on environmental management and poverty alleviation in 12 pilot communities. Later, the network expanded to cover 24 more communities, with a total of 36 communities. The BMA anticipates that this project will help Bangkok’s communities to have economic prosperity, good environment and living conditions
as well as live in self-sufficient lifestyle in accordance with the royal initiative of His Majesty the King.

Moreover, the guidelines and best practices could be publicized to other communities and nearby provinces such as Nakhon Nayok Province, Nakhon Ratchasrima Province, and especially the environmental management of Khao Yai National Park, which is proclaimed by UNESCO as one of the world heritage areas.

**Network Building Activities**

Network Building Activities were conducted for 24 Communities at Klongsongkratheam School, Lat Prao District. Participants comprised of representatives from 12 pilot communities with a total of 120 participants. Workshops were also conducted in the Princeton Park Suite Hotel, Din Daeng District. Participants comprised of representatives from 12 pilot communities and community network from 24 communities with a total of 120 participants.

**Environmentally Friendly Product Center- Loy Sai Group, Lat Prao District**

The center began the operation on 26 December 2005. It was brought about by the mobilization of people of Loy Sai Anusorn community, Lat Prao District. The people were taught and lead by participants who received training on network building activities of the communities. Participants received support from the Loy Sai Anusorn administrators (Ms Linda Wohandee) and the educational committee for the meeting venue as well as financial assistance. The training was carried out until all the participants could make environmentally friendly products for household usage. Consequently, it reduces the household’s expenditure and solves problems of wastewater disposal and generates a supplementary income from making and selling the product.

In addition, the project was integrated into the local school curriculum to provide supplementary knowledge to the students and school staff as well as publicizing the activity to the nearby school and areas outside of Bangkok such as Klong Pak Nam Tambon administration, Nakhon Nayok Province and Wat Jampa, Bang Khun Thien Sub-district, Nonthaburi Province.

The Khao Yai National Park staff became aware of the network building activities from the community’s environmental management and poverty alleviation project. The National Park is experiencing problems of water pollution due to an increased number of visitors as well as the continual use of chemical products. The staff of the national park thought that it would be beneficial to participate in the project and requested the assistance of the Permanent Secretary for the BMA (Khunying Nathanon Thavisin) to secure lecturers to provide the necessary training to the national park staff.

Khao Yai National Park is a source of pride to the people of Thailand and was proclaimed a world heritage area by UNESCO on 28 July 2005. Thus, it was considered to be a great opportunity to participate in the preservation of valuable heritage. Therefore, the BMA assisted in the establishment of an environmentally friendly product center at Khao Yai National Park as well as training in order to build capacity, sustainability and self reliance of the operation.
Results and Impacts of the Initiative: Cambodia - Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction through Integrated Community-based Development in Mountainous Areas

Mr Nop Sarom, Executive Director, Family Health Promotion, Cambodia presented a talk on the Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction through Integrated Community-based Development in Mountainous Areas.

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world. One of the main issues confronting Cambodia is entrenched poverty and environmental degradation. In order to address these issues the Family Health Promotion (FHP), a local NGO, with its target communities, set up a pilot project titled “Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction through Integrated Community-based Development in Mountainous Areas”.

The key objective of the initiative was to reduce poverty and improve land management through institutional capacity building. The project focused on the Provincial Forestry Administration, the Commune Councils, and CBOs for the policy implementation. This group was also engaged to assist in improving the networking on poverty/environment nexus as a strategy to improve living conditions of the poorest people in Kampot Province, south-western Cambodia.

Specifically the objectives were to:

- Enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (through the Provincial Forestry Administration), Commune Councils, and the community organizations, to improve local governance through training on the poverty/environment nexus;
- Improve governance systems for natural environment protection and poverty alleviation through the formulation of community forestry by expanding the enforcement of the forestry law/land law, as well as the access to forestry resources;
- Develop food safety and security for the poorest of the poor in the community; and
- Promote networking and lesson learning at the international, national and local levels.

Some of the lessons learned from the initiative include: (a) that if the Community Forestry (CF) approach is to work it requires time and the use of step by step processes to build the strong skills and attitudinal base required for sustainable natural resource management; (b) the partnership between UNDESA, Development and Partnership in Action (DPA), and the local CIDSE was a key factor to make Community Forestry sustainable; and (c) without the collaboration of the Forest Administration, the Community Forestry initiative by the community facilitated by FHP would not have been successful. Community Forestry needs technical support and recognition from the Forest Administration (FA). Thus, their full participation of the FA is the main player in getting official recognition.
The organization of members and the raising of awareness on the importance of natural resource management and simultaneously forming the sub-committees at the village level provides a strong base for Community Forestry. Capacity building of Community Forestry is the key factor to change the attitudes and behavior of the people relying on the forest. Now people recognize the need to protect the trees, conserve the existing species for their future generation and prepare forest management plans (Plate 11).

Plate 11. Capacity building in Community Forestry

FHP, which is a local NGO, is working closely with the communities and is able to access knowledge and information from the Poverty-Environment Nexus projects and the learnings from the other nine countries through the inter-regional, regional, and in-country workshops (Plate 12).

Plate 12. Networking and capacity building in community Forestry
The formation of Community Forestry for Natural Resource Management without Community Forestry law agreed to by the government results in the trees being increasingly cut down and landscapes degraded. This has led to many difficulties with the local authorities and the more influential people in these communities. Unclear land concessions plans around the community forestry also lead to the difficulties in organizing Community Forestry.

**The need for further capacity building initiatives**

In order to contribute to Community Forestry sustainability there is a need to ensure:

- The right approach and community development concept;
- Effective project planning and management;
- Clear demarcation of boundaries using GPS, mapping, tree inventory and wildlife, etc;
- Local good governance and decentralization;
- Peoples’ participation, contribution, fundraising and financial management; and
- Networking and use of ICT systems at community, provincial, regional, national and international level.

**Results and Impacts of the Myanmar Initiative: Kayah Poverty Environmental Nexus Initiative**

Mr U Shwe Thein, Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE Myanmar spoke to the Myanmar initiative titled *Kayah Poverty Environmental Nexus Initiative*.

Prolonged conflicts and severe land degradation have contributed to a difficult livelihood situation in Kayah. Combined with environmental degradation, a climate of fear for livelihood improvement initiatives and a lack of confidence, which is exacerbated by a fragmented social landscape with a variety of ethnic groups, make this environment a major challenge. The three major religious groups are Roman Catholic, Baptist, and Buddhist/Animist.

There is economic competition, e.g. border trade for timber and other forest products, among various armed groups in the area and this has increased social insecurity in Kayah State. It was reported that at least 70% of households are faced with food shortages ranging from two to eight months. These shortages are most pronounced during the four months of the rainy season from June to September. Borrowing, skipping meals and reducing food quantity and quality are some of the coping strategies and the population is continually living in debt.

With funding assistance from the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) and UNDESA, the project was designed to promote the engagement of women. The three dominant religious groups and the authorities were engaged with a view to increase women’s capacity to generate food, as well as to improve their capacity to contribute to policy dialogue and improve institutional capacity for local governance. In addition, the groups were tasked with promoting networking and information sharing on the poverty-environment nexus through the application of home gardening by women in rural areas where poverty prevails.
By the end of the project, the three religious groups were willing to engage in community development in the targeted areas in Kayah State. The Kayah State authorities supported the project implementation. A total of 3,434 women, including mothers and women headed households, established home gardening on their own initiative (Plate 13). After receiving the benefits from home gardening, they are willing to continue growing home garden produce. An email network could not be established in the Kayah State due to the poor transmission of the landline. The outputs, outcomes and lessons learned of the project have been shared at the sub-regional workshop held in Brisbane.

Plate 13. Women working in their home gardens with Care project officer

The key lessons learned from the project include:

• Building trust with the respective village community has been necessary to secure the safety and the security of information used in scheduling the staff’s field visits to the most remote and insecure villages as well as to increase the engagement of the key stakeholders of the project;
• Supplementary feeding and nutritional education have improved the nutrition status of the children and increased availability of food (Plate 14);
• It was important to engage both men and women from the various ethnic and religious groups in the networking and community development activities;
• Deliberate engagement opportunities created for mothers and caregivers through cooking and home gardening activities has increased their confidence in making decisions for their households. This is leading to the increase of women’s social position within the family and in the community (Plate 15);
• Home garden activity has been the most appropriate activities in Kayah State to increase women’s productive roles (Plate 16);
• The strategy starting with supplementary feeding and nutrition education and then following with food production through home garden establishment has
been successful in mobilizing key players such as authorities, local groups, village leaders, and men and women for long term community development in the Kayah State; and

- Longer term intervention is recommended to achieve the sustainability of the networking and institutional capacity building of the local partners.

Plate 14. Improving the nutrition of the young

Plate 15. Women now take a more proactive and confident role in the community
The project evolved and spread out from the targeted villages to other villages in the Kayah State. As a follow up to this initiative, a medium termed community engagement project called **Promoting Rural Opportunity, Generating Resources and Ensuring Social Solidarity in Kayah State (PROGRESS Kayah)**, has been designed and is currently being implemented. This project has as its primary objective improving the livelihood and security of 5,000 poor and marginalized Internal Displaced People (IDP) households from different ethnic and religious groups in Kayah State. The project will empower 51 Village Development Organizations (VDOs), two partner organizations and one social network to collaboratively develop, implement and replicate models for community development (agriculture, water and health) that will also encourage a secure enabling environment. In the current operating environment no policy specific interventions are appropriate, taking into consideration the conflict, inaccessibility and insecurity. Therefore, it is recommended that these types of programs are developed for the remaining population in Kayah State.

**Proposal for an On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service: A Framework for Sustainable Development through Globally-Shared Learning**

Ms. Susan Forbes, Manager – Agreement Management, Commercial Advisory Services, Queensland Government, Australia presented a paper on On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service.

The Workshop on the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project held in Brisbane, Australia in August 2005 identified the need to develop enhanced mechanisms for knowledge sharing and information exchange at the local, national and international levels.

Under the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project, the sharing of experiences and access to new knowledge sets are considered critical to enhance the capability of communities to eradicate poverty and address sustainability and environmental regeneration. An important design element of the Project, therefore, is to facilitate
the development and use of sub-regional and inter-regional information and communication technology (ICT) networks.

At the Brisbane Workshop, the development of appropriate ICT platforms for information-sharing and knowledge generation, as well as links to other networks and information sources, was seen as pivotal to addressing this need. It was agreed at the Workshop that the ESTIS platform - developed by the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), supported by informal ICT mediums (such as the internet), would be used to establish regional, sub-regional and inter-regional networks.

Nine months after the Workshop in Brisbane, while the Project is achieving real results, it is yet to realize its full potential through use of the ESTIS Platform and ICT mediums. The difficulty arises from the diversity in Community Languages across the 10 countries involved in the Project. This restricts opportunities for the full interchange of project learnings and for access to the technical expertise which is available globally. Reliance on the English language for reporting progress being made with projects is also resulting in the loss of complete, accurate information flows, together with a disincentive to make full use of the ESTIS opportunity which the United Nations has offered. Accordingly, the need appears to exist for easily-accessible real-time translation services. In fact, at the August 2005 Workshop, Mr Bang Anh Tuan from enda Viet Nam raised the difficulty of taking full advantage of the ESTIS and ICT systems arising from the lack of translation and web-design skills in his communities in Viet Nam. This difficulty appeared to be shared across a number of the community-based projects.

As the information sharing plan under the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project is globally web-based, it seems appropriate to consider adopting a globally web-based, borderless approach to accessing such translation services. This provides an opportunity for considering the development of an “On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service”. Such a Service would involve making more effective use of the ESTIS web-based environment, and the opportunities made available by ICT mediums generally, by:

- Allowing Communities to prepare and present text in their own local Community Language;
- Arranging for these texts to be:
  - Translated into their National Language; then
  - Translating these into English;
  - Translating the English texts into their Peers’ National Languages; and finally
  - Translating these into their Peers’ local Community Languages.

In this model outgoing learnings will be available to their peers, while incoming learnings from their peer communities would similarly be translated (in the reverse order) and be available in their own local community language (Figure 2). Similarly, technical expertise for their projects, which is available globally through academic and research institutions as well as other organizations, would be accessible in each Community’s local language.
As Figure 2 illustrates, the “On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service” in fact has the potential to provide real-time information to a Community in that Community’s own local language:

- Once the information is translated into the National Language, it becomes immediately available for accessing by its sister communities;
- Once the information is translated into the English Language, it becomes immediately available to English-speaking participants as well as English-speaking technical experts and to allied organizations such as the United Nations; and
- The information can then be disseminated to multiple communities by their National Languages and, ultimately, in their local Community Languages (Figure 3).
Accordingly, the “On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service” provides a framework for sustainable development through globally-shared learnings. At the community-based project level, the proposed approach offers the following potential benefits:

Firstly, the ease of using the On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service is directly enjoyed by community-level participants. Accordingly, there will be an increased incentive for participants to want to share their own learnings; to access learnings from other communities through the ICT network; and to seek technical expertise and advice that is available globally, again through the ICT medium.

Secondly, the learnings are captured fully and accurately in the local Community languages. Accordingly, there is maximized potential for the community-based learnings to be disseminated fully and accurately.

Thirdly, advice offered by peers and experts are likely to be actively sought as they can be accessed by participants in their own Community languages, thereby encouraging the transfer of learnings and maximizing the creation of new knowledge sets and thereby learning outcomes.

The On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service, therefore, maximizes the scope for projects to enhance their performance under the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project.

The proposed approach offers broader benefits for the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project as a whole, to be enjoyed by the United Nations and other agencies. Firstly, the approach offers the scope to seek standardized reporting of data from each community-based project and thereby allows for enhanced performance management across those projects.

Should the communities be required to provide certain sets of quantitative data under a standardized format, performance data could then be collated and analyzed across the projects. This would allow the measurement and comparison of performance across projects. This would, in turn, enable evaluations to be made about the more effective practices and provide value-added analyzed information to be offered to project participants, thereby better guiding them to enhance their future performance prospects. Standardized reporting would also enable the United Nations and other agencies to assess and monitor the effectiveness of the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project over time, thereby assisting in their own resource management and decision-making.

The approach also allows for the establishment of a self-management framework. Should the communities be trained in “continuous improvement”, this approach offers a built-in capacity for communities to become self-managing and self-sustaining learning communities. This, in turn, allows the United Nations and other agencies to move on to seed new projects in other communities under the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project. Accordingly, it is proposed that the On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service enhances the potential for the project to be self-sustainable.
Should the proposal for an On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service be considered to have merit for further consideration, the following five-step action plan may provide some form of a path forward.

Firstly, guidelines will need to be developed to ensure ethical, effective and efficient delivery. Existing guidelines, such as those available from the Australian Government, may provide a useful starting point.

Secondly, in planning the implementation of those Guidelines, there will be a need to:
- clarify community needs for these multi-lingual services;
- determine the framework model for services provision. Again, existing models such as those in Australia could be examined. These include The Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) as well as Centrelink’s Multi-Lingual Call Centers and the Special Broadcasting Services (SBS); and
- establish the resources base for services. While volunteer resources may be available during the pilot program, there may be a need to consider the use of accredited resources to ensure the quality of the service is upheld.

Thirdly, the concept will need to be trialed in one community. One prospect is for the Service to be trialed in Hue City in Viet Nam, where the project is progressing well, with learnings to share. The need for multi-lingual services has already been identified for the Viet Nam project, as has the availability of a skilled resources base in Australia and elsewhere.

Fourthly, the effectiveness of the Service under this trial will need to be evaluated, before,

Fifthly, enhancing the model and rolling the service out to other communities.

In conclusion, the proposal for an On-Line Multi-Lingual Interchange Service provides a framework for sustainable development through globally-shared learnings. This concept would enhance the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project.

**Group Discussions on Capacity Building for Better Management and Policy Articulation for Poverty-Environment Nexus (PEN) Initiatives.**

Participants at the workshop were divided into three discussion groups to hold free discussions on selected major issues of the workshop theme. The groups were based around (1) a multi-national strategic level focused group (2) an in-country group (Viet Nam) and (3) a multi-national project level focused group. The groups were asked to consider but not feel restricted to the following framework of reference:

(1) Where to from here?
   a. What policy initiatives are needed?
   b. Ideas for necessary, new or novel projects.
c. How do we better form and manage the partnerships and alliances?

(2) What are the key planning and implementation issues in PEN initiatives?

(3) What are the capacity building/training issues in PEN initiatives, including partnerships?

(4) How to monitor, evaluate and measure the impact of PENs and what factors are crucial for their sustainability?

(5) The opportunities and challenges of linking PEP initiatives to the overall national and local government development strategies and policies?

(6) How do we establish an effective lesson-learning ICT framework (local, national, and international)?

Notes from discussions

Strategic level focus group

This group focused on two areas - policy initiatives and networking.

Policy

Trust and true partnerships between government authorities and international organizations especially with NGOs is pivotal and needed for true engagement to occur in project activity. The trust and partnerships are needed to realize real time and long term sustainable outcomes. It was noted and reported that currently there is a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding which has required significant time and money to be spent overcoming the constraints.

Possible solutions:

a. UNDESA has a leading role to play in nurturing the relations between governments and NGOs;

b. There is a need for deliberate engagement opportunities to be created between government and NGOs;

c. There is a need to identify key people and senior personnel at the different level of authorities and use them to be advocates for the project activity with the national government;

d. There is a need for country partnerships to be formulated with and by the UN in assisting with new project design and initiatives; and

e. Laws for NGOs and Associations exist positively in Viet Nam, however, the situation in other participating countries are not always favorable – the UN has a role in assisting to negotiate solutions to these issues.

Influencing policy

• UN has a pivotal role to bring the ministers in the various countries together to engage in and support the project activity;

• UN needs to be more proactive in pushing the envelope across the globe in addressing the Poverty Environmental nexus;

• There is an active need to get involvement of government in project level activities;
• Individual organizations (NGOs) need to plan for and implement an advocacy program for all projects and strategic activity; and
• There is a proactive need to share information to the government departments at all levels and on a very regular basis.

Future Networking
The question was asked as to whether ESTIS as an information sharing tool is useful particularly at the community level? Some of the limitations identified included:

• Language difficulties
• No reading habits in some communities
• Difficult to allocate time for internet
• Preparing the information to share
• Limited capacity of many to use computer and/or internet
• No follow up after the Brisbane Workshop
• Limited access to internet in some community
• Unclear who should be the audience (users) of the ESTIS

While ESTIS was seen as a useful platform there were significant limitations to its current usefulness and some of the suggested improvement and uses were tabled.

• There is a need to establish an email group as a tool to networking at the regional level;
• ESTIS could be used as online library and as a resource center where each member saves the information and where other members access to and translated the information to their respective languages; and
• There are some websites that can be used for networking and/or as a resource center.

In-Country Focus Group
The in-country focus group considered some of the impediments and blockages that exist in working within a country and the following notes reflect the more salient points of their discussion.

Policy environment

• Policies are needed to provide effective credit to poor households (targeting mechanism and business planning);
• There is a need for the creation of interest groups, networks and/or professional clubs (extension/farmer/ornament flowers) to share information and apply best practices effectively and efficiently;
• Policy and mechanisms are needed to support and promote projects with significant outcomes and output (after project completion); and
• Appropriate policy and mechanisms are needed with the country to encourage environmental protection and poverty reduction.

The group also considered the question of how can things be done better and offered the following points for discussion:
• Sharing information adequately and timely among stakeholders;
• Organizing workshops regularly (intra-city, intra-province, inter-province, national and regional);
• Organizing field trips for experience sharing (in-country and abroad);
• Marketing environmentally friendly products;
• Capacity building for community in project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; and
• Mobilizing funds from different sources (even from the community).

Subsequent discussion realized unanimous support for these points. The group then considered some project options for Vietnam and offered the following suggestions for further development:

• To expand the scope of solid waste collection, composting and introduce clean vegetable production to farmers (for other hamlets in Huong Long Commune);
• To apply ecological economics to reduce the greenhouse effect at the artisan village (bronze molding) in Duc Ward (Hue);
• Capacity building and community awareness raising to change attitude and behavior regarding environmental sanitation, and pesticide and insecticide practices;
• Renewable energy projects (biogas); and
• Damage mitigation of riverbank erosion caused by flooding.

**International Project level focus group**

The group looked at the current portfolio of projects and asked the question about what is needed at the international level. The group felt that there was a strong need to continue the existing portfolio but at a higher level and wider scale. The existing projects have realized substantial outcomes and highlighted the need to now progress these initiatives into the next logical stage of their development. There was a strong recognized need to upscale the networking mechanisms to ensure the information generated by the projects was shared and access to the learning of other initiatives was able to be drawn on and used. The networking needs to occur:

- between communities at national level
- between communities at regional level
- between NGOs at international level

The group reinforced the need identified by the other groups in that partnerships and the involvement of the Government was needed. Partnerships were seen as fundamental prerequisites and were needed in at least three identified levels:

- Partnerships with government
- Partnerships with private sector
- Partnerships with international NGOs

There also was a strong recognized need for co-financing with other donor NGOs/government to address the poverty environmental nexus. At the international level there was a need to develop mechanisms and approaches that would provide the link between countries and projects:
• Exchange experience and lessons learned from project activity;
• Exchange of information;
• Training on project design and implementation at the community level;
• Cross visits are needed between projects and countries to share and learn;
• Community learning centers are needed to distribute information and secure wider engagement in project activities;
• Demonstration/modeling projects have shown to be highly valuable and more are needed;
• Translating the project outcomes between local languages and English is necessary to gain a wider exposure and use of the project outcomes and to share learnings and experiences;
• Monitoring and evaluation of projects over the short and long term time scales is needed and must be resourced; and
• Publicize project results and the distribution of information.

**Workshop conclusions and recommendations**

The workshop covered a wide range of issues and included the group sharing the perspective of the UN from Mr Adil Kahn, and listening to the initiatives of the Hue City including a site inspection/field visit. The group also gained insight into the broader Viet Nam initiatives which included the Eco-Eco project and the renewable energy initiative. The group was exposed to the UNDP-PEP program as well as the opportunity to share the lessons from the Poverty Environmental Nexus portfolio sponsored within the Ten Countries and the NGOs plus other funding agencies through UNDESA. The workshop was able to reflect on these successes and lessons learned to consider some of the more systemic policy, practical and strategic requirements on which to go forward with.

The workshop concluded that the portfolio of projects presented provided considerable insight into how to deal with the poverty environmental nexus and provided a range of ideas and lessons for each participant. The presentations made a considerable attempt to deal with a range of issues underpinning and driving the poverty-environment nexus. The IPPs and other project activity covered in the workshop addressed many of the necessary processes to achieve success. The generic strengths of the workshop were in bringing together a distributed network of engaged participants that shared their knowledge and experiences in both failure and success.

While all the IPPs attempt to address the policy and governance needs, the engagement of the community and stakeholders, the development of improved income generation and the knowledge of the land management needed to address the land degradation, they did so with great variability in approach. This diversity of approach afforded the significant opportunity for discussion at the workshop and to evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches through the workshop processes. Furthermore, it was recognized and acknowledged that most of the projects discussed built on and linked to a wide range of existing and proposed activity. The workshop attendees acknowledge the importance of the support and the leverage provided by the UN funding, and regarded this as a significant contribution. The workshop also recognized and highlighted the role of the UN as a
key broker and facilitator and that this role now needs to be strengthened and new partnerships and projects formulated.

Within the current UNDESA project portfolio there was a strong recognition at the workshop that this has generally made a solid attempt to address the policy and institutional governance issues required to make any significant or measurable change in the target countries. The success has been most evident where strong partnerships with the country’s government were activity engaged and an advocate for the activity. On the occasions where policy and legislative change was introduced or just supported then the changes were considerable and more enduring.

The project portfolio has achieved considerable behavioral and attitudinal change. The change has been achieved by the direct operational and strategic engagement of the Government (local and central) as well as the NGOs and the community. The key success factor in achieving this change is attributed to the direct involvement of these three sectors in the formation of the projects, their implementation and their iterative review and improvement. In all instances and without exception all participants of the workshop recognized and supported the need for strong partnerships with all levels of Government, the NGOs and the direct engagement of the community in the development, operation and management of the project.

This success factor appears to be directly attributable to the focus on the priorities set and derived by the local communities in partnership with the Government and NGOs. Not only were the project outcomes focused on what were the issues of importance to the communities but they were the ones deemed to be likely to make the most difference and fitted within the cultural and attitudinal environment of the communities.

As indicated, the impediments and blockages to success had to be negotiated with the Government agencies, who then facilitated the appropriate changes to the legal, policy and institutional framework. The processes of joint education, awareness raising and technical support about the key priority concerns was also seen itself a key strategy in achieving success. A key element for future activity was seen as the direct engagement of key personnel with the institutions to act as advocates for the project.

In many of the projects the engagement of women directly improved their capacity and their status in the community and this was a commonly reported outcome at the workshop. The engagement of the women also secured their direct involvement and ownership of the process and outcomes. As keepers of the hearth their engagement was seen as critical to securing the sustainability of many of the initiatives and provided a direct link to achieving the added targets of improved nutrition, health and sense of community wellbeing. The engagement of youth also was a key outcome and also has proved successful. This process has provided them with an improved understanding and knowledge of how to address the future challenges they face. It also has provided them with alternative employment options and a pathway forward and hope for the future.

The use of project funds to establish initiatives, such as community gardens and recycling, has shown to be effective in providing practical examples of what can be
done. The sharing of these successes has also contributed significantly to the diffusion of the outcomes to other communities and word of mouth networks needed to secure wider uptake. This approach has addressed the concept of adult education through the processes used by practical people of learning by doing. The diffusion of the results of the projects was considered a major next step. While all at the workshop felt the projects had been successful, all regarded the need to scale up the initiatives and to learn and build on what had been done and achieved. The sharing of information across countries and project was recognized as a major strategic need and next step.

The ESTIS/ICT platform was a consistent focus of the workshop. All felt it had a major role to play but had significant limitations in its current form and needed to have a more proactive development and use. While websites had been established, they had not been fully populated with the data from the projects and accordingly had not yet been fully exploited. Some of the expected outcomes of the ICT lesson learning platforms has been dependent on the projects being completed - so that the distilled results and lessons learned could be shared. There is now a need to strategically consider the role and value of the ESTIS web system to provide the platform for knowledge sharing and lesson learning. The future elements of the ESTIS type of systems needs to take into account the new complex systems thinking so that the system is self sustaining and dynamic (how a web works), provide a global repository of information and portal on the poverty environmental nexus, access to library services, email, networks, discussion groups, and contact point for other providers (funding agencies, NGOs and project leaders). Some ideas on how this will be achieved will now be developed by the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development and presented back to the UNDESA for consideration in the two months following the workshop.

It was recognized and commended that UNDESA has adopted a strategic decision in the management of the project portfolio and played a very useful and strategic role. The approach taken provided transparency in the development of the partnerships and facilitated a genuine contribution toward the achievement of the project objectives and their contribution toward the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals.

It is recognized and acknowledged that the projects were in many instances pilot projects and very small in the target and impact area. Despite this, they have been successful and made a difference that appears, at this early stage, to be sustainable. However, it is also clearly recognized and acknowledged that the issues that the project was attempting to address are complex and require a long term concerted effort. Given the need for target communities to move toward self reliance and self governance, this will require further consideration and the subsequent development of further specifically targeted projects.

Within the limitations of the existing suite of projects (resources and funding), there was a recognized need to follow up on the projects to assess the full benefit as well as any unintended consequences or negative impacts that were not foreseen at the outset. This may include downstream impacts on other business activity or unexpected economic leakage from the area due to other non target factors.
There is an ongoing need to more fully develop the comprehensive engagement process, including gaining shared goals and ideals, language, knowledge and decision making processes including capacity building. This is regarded as a key success factor in the current portfolio of projects. The degree in which it succeeded and how future projects can capitalize on the lessons learned and improve on this process needs now to be evaluated and iteratively improved for the next suite of projects. Part of this need is to consider how adults engage and learn, including experiential learning processes, appreciative enquiry and continuous improvement/learning. The diversity of the project portfolio and the approaches taken provides a useful opportunity to significantly contribute to such an analysis.

**Recommendations**

1. There is a need to develop a more effective mechanism for communication sharing information access to knowledge, discussion platforms for lessons learning across and between countries and projects. This should include a formal understanding of what agencies are involved in what projects and with what degree of success in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels to ensure projects are well targeted and effective. This needs to include enhanced mechanisms for formal and informal communication and knowledge sharing as well as the exchange of information across the organizations and instrumentalities associated with addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

2. There is an ongoing need to foster genuine cooperation, collaboration, partnerships and advocacy between the community, NGO and central and local Government as a way of achieving the goals of poverty alleviation in environmentally degraded areas;

3. In areas of political sensitivity or community unrest the use of local NGOs in partnership with the community seems best suited to negotiate pathways forward with the Government or statutory authorities. It is also considered that the UN can play a major pivotal role in facilitating the political brokerage and engagement;

4. There is a need to develop better and more inclusive decision making processes that improve community self determination and governance that involves all levels of Government, NGOs and the Community;

5. There is a need to develop improved information gathering and data management processes for informed decision making on the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

6. There is a need to explore and evaluate the potential of on-line multilingual language services to support the sharing of information and use of the knowledge generated by the projects across communities;

7. There is a need to look toward engaging other funding groups in the Poverty Environmental Nexus and this needs to include regional Government, Private Enterprise and the Community;

8. That all projects directed toward the poverty-environmental nexus have well developed project evaluation processes to measure and assess project
processes and outcomes and that the evaluation of projects continue and be undertaken well after the project has been completed (i.e. >12 months) in order to determine the degree of sustainability of the outcome;

9. There is a need to ensure adequate communication strategies are developed and that the whole community (community, NGO, industry and government) are kept well informed and engaged in project development and implementation through sharing information about project activities, achievements and progress;

10. There is an ongoing need for training and development on the poverty-environment nexus issues and in particular in community developed initiatives and developing business skills in markets, marketing, branding and eco-labeling financial analysis and supply chain management; and

11. Consideration needs to be given to enhancing the scale of the projects to a regional perspective. A regional scale approach will require joint planning and the development of a shared vision. If this is to be undertaken then consideration will also need to be given to research into:

   a. The baseline socio-economic conditions of the region;
   b. The socio-economic effects of the policy and programs being implemented; and
   c. The effectiveness of the particular institutional environment and the policies and programs in facilitating the desired changes/improvement.
Appendix I
Workshop program

(As of 17 May 2006)

UNDESA/PEP-UNDP, Vietnam
Interregional Workshop on
Poverty-Environment Nexus – Building Institutional Capacity
23-25 May 2006, Hue City, Vietnam

Workshop Programme

21 May (Sunday)

Arrival of the UN Staff

22 May (Monday)

Arrival of the participants

16:00 onwards: Workshop registration at the hotel (International participants mainly. Local participants have the option of registering the next day at the workshop venue.)

Day 1
23 May (Tue.)

8:00-9:00 Registration (Contd.): International and local participants.

Opening Session

9:00 - 9:10 Opening Remarks by a Mr. Nguyen Danh Thanh, Vice Chairman of Hue People’s Committee (10 Minutes)

9:10 - 9:20 Opening remarks by Mr. Adil Khan, Chief, Socio-economic Governance and Management Branch, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (10 Minutes)

9:20 – 9:30 Opening remarks by Mr. Truong Manh Tien, National Project Director of UNDP/PEP (10 Minutes)

9:30 – 9:40 Opening Remarks by Mr. Bang Anh Tuan, ENDA Vietnam (10 Minutes)

Chair: Mr. Phan Canh Viet Cuong, Vice Director of Department of Foreign Affairs, Hue City

Orientation/Administrative Session

9:40 – 9:55 Briefing on the Programme/Administrative Matters by the UNDESA (Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa), UNDP/PEP
Logistic Matter by Ms. Tran Vu Quynh Trang (DoFA – Hue City (15 Minutes)

9:55 -10:10 Coffee Break (15 Minutes)

MODULE 1: CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Session 1: Plenary
10:10 - 10:40 Keynote Presentation on Concepts, Country Experiences, and Major Issues (by Prof. Bob Miles, Central Queensland University, Australia; UNDESA Consultant) (30 Minutes)

10:40 – 11:00 Feedback from the Participants (20 Minutes)

11:00 - 11:20 PEP Introduction (by Dr. Nguyen Trung Thang, UNDP/PEP Project Manager) (20 Minutes)

11:20 – 11:35 Feedback from the participants (15 Minutes)

11:35 – 11:50 Country Presentation on Results/Impacts of the Initiative: Thailand (by Ms. Nathanon Thavisin, Permanent Secretary, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration; and a Community Representative) (15 Minutes)

11:50 – 12:00 Feedback from the Participants (10 Minutes)

**Moderator/Chair: Mr. Adil Khan, Chief, SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA**

12:00-13:30 Lunch Break

**MODULE 2: COUNTRY/INSTITUTIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Session 2: Plenary**

13:30 – 13:45 Selected Public and Non-Public Initiatives to meet Challenges of Poverty-Environment Nexus Issues from the Vietnamese Perspectives (by Mr. Bang Anh Tuan ENDA Vietnam) (15 Minutes)

13:45 – 14:00 Development of Renewable Energy for the Poor (by Mr. Hoang Viet Cuong, National Consultant of UNDP-PEP) (15 Minutes)

14:00 – 14:15 Eco-eco Village in Vietnam (by Prof. Ha Chu Chu, National Consultant of UNDP-PEP) (15 Minutes)

14:15 – 14:45 Q&A Session for Clarification (30 Minutes)

14:45 – 15:00 Coffee Break

15:00 - 15:15 Country Presentation on Results/Impacts of the Initiative: Laos (by Mr. Rick Reece, Regional Director for Asia, Village Focus International; and Mr. Thongdy Chantavong, Deputy Head of the Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office, Salavan Province) (20 Minutes)

15:15 – 15:30 Experiences of Poverty-Environment Nexus in Central Asia: Lessons Learnt from the Kazakhstan/UNDESA Project (by Ms. Aigul Zhanserikova, Executive Director, Camp Consulting Public Foundation) (15 Minutes)

15:30 – 15:45 Country Presentation on Results/Impacts of the Initiative: Vietnam (by Mr. Bang Anh Tuan ENDA Vietnam) (15 Minutes)

15:45 – 16:15 Q&A Session for Clarification (30 Minutes)

16:15 – 16:30 Country Presentation on Results/Impacts of the Initiative: Cambodia (by Mr. Nop Sarom, Executive Director, Family Health Promotion, Mr. Kuy Sophal, Partnership Programme Officer, Development and Partnership in Action; and Mr. Pho Sovutha, Principal of Sectored Forestry Administration of Chhouk District) (15 Minutes)
16:30 – 16:45 Country Presentation on Results/Impacts of the Initiative: Myanmar (by Mr. U Shwe Thein, Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE Myanmar; and Ms. Daw Aye Aye Khaing, Project Manager, CARE Myanmar) (15 Minutes)

16:45 - 17:00 Q&A Session for Clarification (15 Minutes)

17:00 COMPLETION

**Moderator/Chair:** Mr. Stephen Carson, UNDP-PEP

**18:30 PM (Tentative) Reception Dinner Hosted by Hue City**

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**Day 2**

**24 May (Wed.)**

**MODULE 3: ISSUES ON INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING, INCLUDING NETWORKING, FOR POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT NEXUS (PEN)**

**Session 3: Plenary**


9:20 – 9:40 Feedback from the Participants (20 Minutes)

**Moderator/Chair:** Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa, Programme Coordinator, SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA

**Session 4: Group Discussions (3 Groups to Be Established)**

9:40 – 11:00 Group Discussions on Capacity Building for Better Management and Policy Articulation for Poverty-Environment Nexus (PEN) Initiatives (80 Minutes)

The participants will be divided into three (3) discussion groups to hold free discussions on selected major issues of the workshop theme, and the outcome of the group discussions will be presented at a plenary meeting on Thursday, 25 May 2006.

**Tentative Discussion Topics (Suggestive)**

1. Where to from here?
   - What policy initiatives are needed?
   - Let’s identify any new and novel project idea.
   - How do we better form and manage the partnerships and alliances?
2. What are the key planning and implementation issues in PEN initiatives?;
3. What are the capacity building/training issues in PEN initiatives, including partnerships?;
4. How to monitor, evaluate and measure the impact of PENs and what factors are crucial for their sustainability?;
5. The opportunities and challenges of linking PEP initiatives to the overall national and local government development strategies and policies?; and
6. How do we establish an effective lesson-learning ICT framework (local, national, and international)?
Moderators/Chairs: Prof. Bob Miles, Central Queensland University; Mr. Stephen Carson, UNDP/PEP; and Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa, UNDESA

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee Break

Session 4: Group Discussions (3 Groups to Be Continued)

11:15 – 12:30 Group Discussions Continued. (75 Minutes)

Moderators/Chairs: Prof. Bob Miles, Central Queensland University; Mr. Stephen Carson, UNDP/PEP; and Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa, UNDESA

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch Break

Study Tour

To visit project sites of the Hue Farmers Association

17:30 COMPLETION

18:30 PM Reception Hosted by UNDESA

Day 3
25 May (Thu.)

MODULE 4: ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS AND PLAN OF ACTIONS

Session 5: Plenary

9:00 – 9:30 Presentations of the Outcome of Group Discussions (30 Minutes)

9:30 – 10:00 Feedback from the Participants (30 Minutes)

10:00 – 10:15 Coffee Break

10:15 – 11:00 Summarization (by Professor Bob Miles, Professor, Central Queensland University; and UNDESA Consultant) and Feedback from the Participants (45 Minutes)

11:00 – 11:20 Workshop Evaluation (20 Minutes)

Moderator/Chair: Mr. U Shwe Thein, Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE Myanmar

Session 6: Closing

11:20 – 11:30 Closing Remarks by an International Participant (10 Minutes)

11:30 – 11:40 Closing Remarks by UNDESA (10 Minutes)

11:40 – 11:50 Closing Remarks by UNDP/PEP (10 Minutes)

11:50 – 12:00 Closing Remarks by a Vietnam Representative (10 Minutes)

12:00 ADJOURNMENT
Appendix II
List of participants at the Hue City Workshop

UNDESA/PEP-UNDP, Vietnam
Interregional Workshop on
Poverty-Environment Nexus – Building Institutional Capacity
23-25 May 2006, Hue City, Vietnam

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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<th>Tittle</th>
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<td>Mr. U Shwe Thein</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE MYANMAR</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ms. Daw Aye Aye Khaing</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Project Manager, CARE MYANMAR</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Mr. Richard L. Reece</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Director, VILLAGE FOCUS INTERNATIONAL</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Mr. Thongdy Chantavong</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Deputy Head, Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr. Bang Anh Tuan</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Program Manager, ENDA VIETNAM</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Mr. Pham Van Hien</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Project Advisor, ENDA VIETNAM</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Son</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Vice Chairman of Qui Nhon People's Committee</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Mr. Huynh Van Phuong</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Chairman of People's Committee of Nhon Phu Ward</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Mr. Nop Sarom</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Executive Director, FAMILY HEALTH PROMOTION</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Mr. Kuy Sophal</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>DPA Project Officer (former CIDSE)</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Mr. Pho Sovutha</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Forest Administration Officer</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Ms. Nathanon Thavisin</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA)</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Mr. Ratanaprapichote</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Teacher of Mapraoteer School (Community Representative)</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Mr. Banlue Sooksai</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>BMA Official</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Ms. Siriporn Rattanakumnerd</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Ms. Aigul Zhanserikova</td>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Executive Director, CAMP CONSULTING Public Foundation</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Ms. Susan Marie Forbes</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Mr. Robert Lennox Miles</td>
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<td>19.</td>
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<td>20.</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Trung Thang</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Mr. Truong Manh Tien</td>
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<td>General Director, Department of Environment, Ministry of Resources and Environment</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Hoang Minh</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Mr. Hoang Viet Cuong</td>
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<td>National Consultant, UNDP-PEP</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Mr. Ha Chu Chu</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Mr. Mohammed Adil Khan</td>
<td>UNHQ/New York Chief, SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Dinh Dau</td>
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<td>29.</td>
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<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Mr. Phan Tien Dung</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Mr. Le Khanh</td>
<td>Hue, Vietnam Director, Hue City Farmers’ Association</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Tung</td>
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<td>33.</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Mr. Phan Huynh Khoi</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Thang Doan</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Mr. Le Xuan Hue</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Mr. Vo Van Quang</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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<td>40.</td>
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<td>Mr. Phan Canh Viet Cuong</td>
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<td>48.</td>
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<td>49.</td>
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<td>50.</td>
<td>Ms. Ton Nu Ngoc Chau</td>
<td>Hue, Vietnam Secretariat</td>
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Appendix III
Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation in the Central Asian and Southeast Asian Regions”: Processes and Lessons of Ten In-country Projects

December 2005
Poverty eradication and environmental protection are inter-linked and have received global attention, as one of many key challenges of the Millennium Development Goals. To address this global concern, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) carried out an interregional technical cooperation project “Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation” (Ref: A/56/6 Sect. 33). The project, hereinafter referred to as the “Poverty-Environment Nexus Project”, was implemented in selected Asian countries – five (5) in Central Asia and five (5) in Southeast Asia.¹ The project was implemented during 2004-2005.

The project’s main focus has been the institutional capacity building of communities and institutions to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions. Through country consultations, achieved through pre-project sub-regional workshops that included government, civil society organizations and community organizations, projects were selected in each of the ten countries. These projects were referred to as in-country project proposals (IPP). In addition, the project, through the provision of information communication technology (ICT), was also aimed at establishing interregional and intra-regional networking arrangements for mutual lessons learning and self-sustained institutional capacity building.

For substantive guidance the project also sought inter-agency partnerships. These partnerships involved the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the International Environmental Technology Center of the United Nations Environment Programme (IETC/UNEP) and several UNDP country offices. UNESCAP and IETC/UNEP played active and important roles in project implementation as cooperating agencies. UNESCAP, through its Poverty Eradication Section, collaborated with UNDESA. It assisted UNDESA in identifying participating organizations in Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam, jointly organized a sub-regional workshop in Bangkok in November 2004. Assistance was also provided in participating in the mid-term review workshop in Brisbane.

IETC/UNEP provided critically important technical input to establish an ICT network among the project participating organizations, using the UNEP-developed information transfer and knowledge management system called the “Environmentally Sound Technology Information System (ESTIS)”. IETC/UNEP participated in the Bangkok workshop in November 2004 and the Brisbane workshop in August 2005. It provided the workshop participants with extensive briefing and demonstrations on how to use the ESTIS. In addition, UNCRD (United Nations Center for Regional Development) participated in the sub-regional workshop in Bangkok, Thailand (November 2004).

In May 2006 UNDESA partnered with UNDP Country Office, Viet Nam and organized a workshop to discuss the lessons learnt and the way forward. This report

¹ The ten project countries are: Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, South East Asia- Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao, PDR, Thailand, and Vietnam.
records in detail these lessons. The generic lesson that emerged from each of the in-country project activity is that environmental sustainability in degraded areas has to be tackled, along with poverty reduction initiatives. It is particularly important that these initiatives augment income generation for the community. The active participation of all key stakeholders, especially the partnerships between community, the grass-root organizations and government agencies including the NGOs are keys to the success of such projects.

The success of the Poverty Environment Project is attributed to all the people who actively participated in the project activities from villages and communities, local authorities and national governments, national and international NGOs, to various international organizations and agencies. UNDESA is also grateful to Prof. Robert Miles of the Central Queensland University, Australia, the Principal Consultant to the Project for his invaluable guidance and support to the project. From UNDESA itself, Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa and Mr. Alexei Tikhomirov, along with Mrs. Elvira Cachola, provided the management support to the overall implementation of the project.

Adil Khan
Chief
Socio-Economic Governance and Management Branch
Division for Public Administration and Development Management
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Abstract

The mutually inter-linked issues of poverty eradication and environmental protection are the major concerns of many countries and international communities. Many of those living in poverty are inevitably exposed to environmentally degraded areas. In order to address this global concern, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched a technical cooperation project to focus on the widely spread problems of poverty and environmental threats to communities. The project, “Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation”, deals in a hands-on way with the Poverty-Environment nexus. The project focuses on institutional capacity building and networking to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions in two of the Asian regions covering five countries each, in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

Specifically, the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project is designed to improve institutional capacity and the articulation of policies and practices for local governance for poverty eradication, as well as addressing environmental sustainability and regeneration, through community-based initiatives. The project is also designed to facilitate the development and use of sub-regional and inter-regional ICT networks to provide access to new knowledge sets and the sharing of experiences that will enhance the capability of community-based activities on the poverty-environment nexus. The project portfolio contributes to a number of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG), though it primarily focuses on Goal 1: the Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, and Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability.

UNDESA commissioned the development of the portfolio consisting of ten projects (In-country Project Proposals: IPPs) to build on and complement existing initiatives, or in some countries develop new pilot initiatives. All of the ten IPPs were to be completed by the 31st December 2005.

This report covers four dimensions of the project.

- The initial global literature review and context set by the programs strategic objectives,
- The component project proposals and objectives (10 IPPs),
- The collation and review of the ten final reports, and
- The report closes with a range of recommendations and lessons learned from a synthesis of the ten in-country projects.

A mid-term project review workshop was seen as a major operational and key success factor in the achievement of the project goals. The process and outcomes of the mid term review are therefore included for the reader in the appendices.

The findings of the ten IPPs have been analyzed and each project report has listed specific recommendations relating to the project areas activity. In addition, a suite of systemic and strategic recommendations on the project portfolio are also distilled and
presented. The following systemic or portfolio wide conclusions and recommendations are made:

1. Information on what succeeds in building the economy and sustainability of local communities is at best incomplete and fragmented. Accordingly, it is important to maintain and exchange views and information on the vital issues of poverty alleviation in the context of environmental sustainability;

2. There is a need to develop a formal understanding of what agencies are involved in what projects and with what degree of success in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels to ensure projects are well targeted and effective;

3. There is a need to develop enhanced mechanisms for formal and informal communication and knowledge sharing as well as the exchange of information across the organizations and instrumentalities associated with addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

4. There is an ongoing need to foster genuine cooperation and collaboration between the community, NGO and central and local Government as a way of achieving the goals of poverty alleviation in environmentally degraded areas;

5. In areas of political sensitivity or community unrest the use of local NGOs in partnership with the community seems best suited to negotiate pathways forward with the Government or statutory authorities;

6. There is a need to develop better and more inclusive decision making processes that improve community self determination and governance that involves all levels of Government, NGOs and the Community;

7. There is a need to develop improved information gathering and data management processes for informed decision making on the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels;

8. That all projects directed toward the poverty-environmental nexus have well developed project evaluation processes to measure and assess project processes and outcomes and that the evaluation of projects continue and be undertaken well after the project has been completed (ie >12 months) in order to determine the degree of sustainability of the outcome;

9. There is a need to ensure that the whole community (community, NGO, industry and government) are kept well informed and engaged in project development and implementation through sharing information about project activities, achievements and progress;

10. There is an ongoing need for training and development on the poverty-environmental nexus issues and in particular on developing skills in markets, marketing, financial analysis and supply chain management; and
11. That the generic dot points included in Appendix IV are debated and
developed for public use as a framework for developing projects and assessing
project suitability in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus.

Within the recognized constraint of the short time frame and the need for follow-up
evaluation, the ten IPPs in the project portfolio have been found to be of considerable
value and have developed attitudinal and behavioral change and co-operation at the
Government (local and central), NGO and Community level. These changes and
activities have the potential to be self sustaining and directly contribute to the
economic wellbeing of the targeted communities. These outcomes also have had a
major bearing on the community health and wellbeing as well as addressing some of
the systemic issues that has resulted in land degradation.

The demonstrated success of these projects in contributing to breaking the poverty
environmental spiral leads to the conclusion that there is an identified need to build
on, learn from, further develop and expand the existing project portfolio to create new
initiatives that will lead to sustainable regional development, improve knowledge, and
allow for more effective information sharing and networking on the poverty-
environmental nexus.
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Introduction

Poverty eradication and environmental protection are inter-linked and have received global recognition as emerging key challenges for world leaders and as prerequisites for global sustainability and stability. The problem is significant and is of major concern for many countries and the international community. Many of those living in poverty are inevitably exposed to environmentally degraded areas. In order to address this global concern the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched a technical cooperation project to focus on the widely spread problems of poverty and environmental threats to communities. The project, “Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation”, deals in a hands-on way with the Poverty-Environment nexus. The project title herein after is referred to as the “Poverty-Environment Nexus Project”. The project focuses on institutional capacity building and networking to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions in two of the Asian regions covering five countries each; in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam).

Specifically, the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project is designed to:

- improve institutional capacity and the articulation of policies and practices for local governance for poverty eradication, as well as environmental sustainability and regeneration, through community initiatives;
- enhance community-based productive activities for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability; and
- establish sub-regional and inter-regional ICT networks for the sharing of information and the provision of access to new networks and knowledge.

In order to achieve these objectives, the poverty-environment nexus project attempts to assess the depth of the problem from the demand side perspective. This approach targets the engagement of community-based organizations in poor districts, NGOs, the private sector, and local and central government agencies. The strategy is designed to empower stakeholders and offer solutions to strengthen community systems in a manner that improves environmental sustainability. At the same time, the project is targeted at achieving poverty eradication in the participating communities.

UNDESA commissioned the development of the portfolio of ten projects (in-country project proposals: IPPs) to build on and complement existing initiatives or in some countries to develop new pilot initiatives. All of the ten IPPs were scheduled for completion by the 31st December 2005.

In undertaking a holistic and integrated approach UNDESA was interested in building the knowledge base and skill sets of the participants of the ten IPPs to the broader issues of capacity building, community development and community-based resource management.

In order to achieve this, UNDESA firstly commissioned a review of global literature on the poverty environment nexus (Atiur Rahman 2004) and used this as tool to
inform a international strategic planning workshop conducted in 2004. The focal point of the workshop was to gain a greater insight and understanding into the problem as well as seeking input and commitment to the drafting of a strategic framework and direction to address the problem. The workshop outcomes were then translated into a portfolio of projects targeting the poverty environmental nexus in ten countries in southern and central Asia. The projects (10 IPPs) were then commissioned with the view to ensuring a wide range of opportunities and key challenges were addressed. The projects were specifically designed to build on and add value to existing in-country activity and to leverage additional resources and effort onto that provided by the United Nations.

During the course of the projects a mid term project review and lesson learning workshop was used to review project progress and evaluate processes and strategies as well as sharing experiences and learnings of the project team. This was undertaken to ensure a high probability of success was realized. The mid term project review workshop was designed and commissioned in collaboration with UNESCAP, UNEP, and Central Queensland University, organized within the framework of and to leverage off the International Conference on Engaging Communities (Brisbane, Australia, 14-17 August 2005). The workshop titled the “United Nations Workshop on Inter-regional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiative in the Central Asian and Southeast Asian Regions” was conducted over the three day period and afforded the participants the opportunity to engage in a number of key note addresses on community engagement delivered at the International Conference.

The objectives of UNDESA for the workshop were:

1. Ensure that the project stakeholders fully shared the re-orientation of the in-country project initiatives as approved by UNDESA;
2. Review the most up-to-date status of the in-country project activities;
3. Strategize in-country activities to better produce expected project outcomes and introduce necessary modifications, if any, in work plans of the IPPs;
4. Strategize joint actions of the participating organizations for the establishment and use of national, sub-regional, and inter-regional networks for lessons learning on the poverty-environmental nexus, including the use of the ESTIS developed by UNEP;
5. Ensure that modalities are set up for monitoring and evaluation of in-country activities with, or without, the participation of UNDESA, UNESCAP, and UNEP; and
6. Promote networking and capacity building of the workshop participating organizations through their participation in relevant programs of the International Conference on Engaging Communities.

As the portfolio of projects commissioned by UNDESA were scheduled for completion by the 31st December 2005, it is the purpose of this paper to provide the final report on the Networking and Capacity Building for Poverty Alleviation through Community-based Development in the Areas Affected by Environmental Degradation Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions. The report was prepared with the assistance of Prof. Robert Miles, UNDESA Consultant (Executive Director, Institute for Sustainable Regional Development, Central Queensland University, Australia).
The paper reflects the chronology of the project and firstly presents a summary of the global context of the poverty-environmental problem as documented by Rahman (2004) and the strategic imperatives set by the UN. The paper then provides, for each project, a brief overview of the ten countries targeted by the portfolio, the key objective of each project, along with the methods and outcomes sought by the ten IPPs. This is followed by an overview of the project results and outcomes and key deliberations. The report closes with an overall summary of the findings along with the suite of recommendations for further consideration. The deliberations and key learnings from the mid-term review workshop and the approach to establishing the ICT network for lesson learning using the ETSIS support framework are dealt with briefly in the body of the report. A more detailed information on the workshop process is appended. A list of the major participants in the project is listed in the appendices. A more complete list of the people engaged in each project has been provided by the project leaders in their final reports.

The Global Context: Introduction

Poverty is considered to be multidimensional, and strongly inter-linked with environmental problems. The environmental problems are usually associated with the commercially useful regenerative resources, which when under constant pressure from excessive use, degrade. The work of Rahman (2004) found that this was particularly evident in developing countries. In these situations the depletion of the natural resource is often linked to the poverty of the people that are dependent on them for their income - even when the wider economy is growing.

A degraded environment implies that there are fewer resources available both for present and future generations with a greater risk to economic well-being and resource sustainability (Rahman, 2001). Therefore, common and mutually interlinked issues of poverty eradication and environmental protection are the major concerns to many developing and developed countries. From the wide range of literature reported in Rahman (2004), poor women and children are often the first victims of environmental degradation although they are not necessarily the perpetuators. They are often forced to face an adverse environment with significant implications for their deprivation. They also suffer from malnutrition and ill health which further erode their potential to derive an income.

This background information coupled with the limited knowledge of the institutional capacity to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions, particularly in Southeast and Central Asian countries, led to the formation of the need for a project. It is commonly considered that community initiatives are the best options for regenerating community resources to eradicate poverty and help sustain the environment. However, such initiatives have difficulties if not well planned and executed in those countries where the vested interest groups are able to vitiate good governance.

Given this context, this section assesses the broad interface between poverty and environmental degradation globally. Different dimensions and some examples of the global environment-poverty nexus are discussed, and linkages of environment-poverty nexus to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG) are explored. Finally, the role of international institutions and non-state stakeholders in dealing with the nexus is presented and discussed.
The Nexus
Rahman’s (2004) global literature review on the Poverty-Environmental Nexus for the United Nations identified that the poor’s exposure to environmental degradation is distinctive for two reasons. Firstly, the surroundings of the locations commonly inhabited by the poor are often environmentally impoverished, fragile or degraded. In addition, these areas often have variable climates and are the riskiest for health and income generation. Secondly, the lack of a strong resource base makes it difficult for the poor to opt out of the degraded environment and try to make a living with alternative sources of livelihoods which are less degrading. In that sense these people are more like victims rather than degraders of the environment. Thus, there exists a two-way relationship between poverty and environment in the developing countries. Poverty can cause environmental degradation, and in turn, the degradation of the environment exacerbates the poverty.

Poverty is itself a product of unequal resource distribution between groups and classes. Environmental degradation depresses the ability of the poor to generate income through two channels. Firstly, it requires the poor to divert an increasing share of their labor to routine household activities and second, it decreases productivity of those natural resources from which the poor derive their livelihood (Mink, 1993). For example:

**Diverting labor.** Environmental degradation can lower labor productivity, even when the individuals concerned are healthy. For example as fuel wood becomes scarce, poor households spend an increasing amount of their time collecting it. Time taken away from other productive activities like agriculture has an opportunity cost and can result in lower incomes. Further, families are not able to compensate for this diversion of labor resulting in a reduction in household income from agriculture and deterioration in food consumption levels and nutritional status. The inter-dependency of these variables has significant implications for the overall livelihood of the poor.

**Reduced the productivity of the poor’s natural resource base.** Where the poor depend on biomass fuel and confront increasing fuel-wood scarcity, they often shift to using animal dung, fodder and crop residues for fuel. Since a reduced quantity of these materials is returned to the soil, fertility of the soil may decline. Growth in rural populations also places extra pressure on land resources resulting in shortening of fallow land in the community in the process. This too can have a negative impact on the health of the soil and hence its productivity. Poverty may also constrain the farmers’ ability to maintain soil productivity through more intensive application of variable inputs.

**Impact of poverty on resource management.** The extreme poor often struggle at the edge of subsistence. They are usually pre-occupied with survival strategies that focus on their day-to-day existence. Their ability to plan ahead is limited and often restricted to critically short time horizons, measured in a few days or weeks. The immediacy of their need means that they have very limited capacity to save or plan for the future. As a result, the extreme poor cannot afford the time or energy to invest in the sustainability of the natural resource base which they are dependent on. The high subjective discount rate implies rapid resource extraction to meet present income or consumption needs, and low investment in natural resources to improve future returns. This has significant and dynamic implications for growth and subsequently on poverty reduction.
**Higher risks faced by the poor.** Generally, higher risks are faced by the poor than their rich counterparts. In many parts of Asia poor farmers perceive their access to land as tenuous because of conflicts with other claimants or the overlap of different land rights. In these cases the poor are most likely to be the ones marginalised. The better-off rural families are more likely to be able to establish farm claims to land where a transition is occurring from common property to private property system, or where there are lengthy and costly administrative procedures for establishing legal title to land. Under such circumstances, the poor interest in longer-term investments in the productive capacity of land is likely to be severely diminished. Common property resource (CPRs) often serve as a form of insurance that the poor rural residents can turn to if they face setbacks in their primary income generating activities. A degrading environment significantly affects the access to this natural insurance of the poor.

**The poor’s constraints to manage risks.** Poor households have been found to be most at risk of falling below subsistence levels of consumption. These people tend to treat the available natural resources as an asset to be drawn down in times of emergency. The options for managing the natural resource base for the long term are often limited by the need to meet short term needs. Accordingly, the poor’s assets and agricultural stores are usually minimal and are quickly depleted. Credit and insurance markets for the extreme and intractable poor are frequently fragmented or non-existent. In addition, the women who play a significant role in managing natural resources are frequently under-served by agricultural and forestry extension services and this further compounds the problem. All these imply higher level of uncertainties and insecurities with implications on the management of environmental resources.

Jehan and Umana (2003) conclude that the environment affects poverty situations in three distinct dimensions

a. by providing sources of livelihoods to poor people;

b. by affecting their health; and

c. by influencing their vulnerability.

On the other hand, as Grimble et al (2002) found, poverty can also affect the environment in various other ways: by forcing poor people to degrade the environment, by encouraging the countries to promote economic growth at the expense of environment, and by inducing societies to downgrade environmental concerns, including failing to channel resources to address such concerns (Figure 1).
Figure 1: Dimensions of poverty and its linkages to environment

![Diagram showing the linkages between poverty and environmental factors]


The problem is a global issue and substantive. Table 1 shows the geographic distribution of the poor and the number deriving their livings from marginal lands. Table 2, however, considers this data from the perspective of the percentage of the population of countries on fragile land in terms of slope, shallow soil and aridity. These two simple tables clearly demonstrate the gravity and extent/severity of the issue for the globe.

Table 1: Geographic distribution of the poor (in millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Total rural population</th>
<th>Rural population on favorable lands</th>
<th>Rural population on marginal lands</th>
<th>Rural poor on marginal lands</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>101 (3.7)</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>176 (6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>2840</td>
<td>2044</td>
<td>755 (28.0)</td>
<td>1289</td>
<td>375 (13.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South America</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>40 (1.5)</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>48 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Asia and North Africa</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>37 (1.4)</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>35 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: Figures in the parentheses are percentages of the total rural population.
Table 2: Environmental fragility in developing countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Population (million)</th>
<th>Share of population on fragile lands (%)</th>
<th>Share of earth’s land surface affected (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aridity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arid, slope</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arid, poor soil</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arid, slope, poor soil, forest</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arid, slope, poor soil, forest</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slope</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slope, poor soil</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slope, forest</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor soil</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor soil, forest</td>
<td>386</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Forests (only)</strong></td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Impact of climate change on poverty in the Asian countries**

There is now a significant body of evidence and research indicating that the health of Asian people, agriculture, forestry, water availability, coastal infrastructure and land cover will be affected by changing climate patterns. The changes are predicted to bring more extreme weather events in the future. Of considerable concern is that food security is likely to be affected by this increased variability. Climate change has significant implications for the economic growth of agriculture-based economies and also the food security of the poor.

As an example, the rain-fed agricultural systems will be affected by increased variability in the timing and intensity of the rains. In particular, high yielding varieties – the basis for the ‘green revolution’ in Asia – may prove more susceptible to early flooding, salinization and drought than hardier traditional varieties. Food production will be affected by changing seasonal patterns and temperatures. In India, a temperature rise of 2°C could lower yields of staple crops, wheat and rice by 10 percent and reduce farm revenues by up to 25 percent. Increasing frequency of El Niño events will cause declines in marine fish productivity along the coasts of south and south-east Asia, affecting food security and fish exports in developing countries like Viet Nam and Cambodia.

Health will be affected both directly through increased mortality from extreme temperature and weather events, and also indirectly through increased incidence of vector-borne diseases and poorer nutrition. Malaria is currently mostly endemic in the South Asian and Southeast Asian region, but there are risks that it may spread as a result of changing climate, urbanization, irrigation, agricultural practices and deforestation. There is a risk of increased levels of respiratory problems as a result of increased frequency and extent of forest fires. Already there is a concern across
Southeast Asia that the forest fires associated with intense droughts could increase with climate change. The loss of forestry resources also has serious consequences for forest-related economic activities, livelihoods and ecosystem services.

Water security is also likely to worsen across large parts of Asia, with implications for irrigated agriculture, human water consumption and hydroelectricity generation. It is estimated that even without climate change, India’s per capita renewable freshwater supply will fall by 40 percent based on projections of population growth, water demand and run-off within the major river basins. Climate change could significantly worsen this picture, decreasing rainfall supplies to major river basins. Glaciers in the Himalayan mountain ranges will retreat further, as temperatures increase, they have already retreated by 67 percent in the last decade. Glacial melt would lead to increased summer river flow and floods over the next few decades, followed by a serious reduction in flows thereafter (DFID 2004b).

Poor laborers and rickshaw drivers formed the highest proportion of the 1,000 people who died in India during an intense heat wave in May 2002, and the 1,400 deaths in the heat wave in 2003. Following disaster floods in Central Viet Nam in November 1999, poor households were the slowest to recover, and unable to afford labor to clear their fields and return to agricultural production (DFID 2004a). The recent (2004) flood in Bangladesh affected more severely the ultra poor living in fragile areas like river banks and chars (land raised by siltation).

Environment and the health of the poor

There is little doubt that environmental factors are major components of the burden of disease in developing countries. Twenty percent of the total burden of ill-health in one state in India is due to environmental factors. In this case, environment includes household water supply, toilets, wastewater collection and treatment, indoor air pollution, agrochemical pollution and urban air pollution. By far the greatest cause of disease in this area is the lack of access to adequate water and sanitation.

Furthermore, diseases related to environmental factors affect the poor disproportionately. Respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases are the two biggest causes of death among the poorest 20 percent of the world’s population as ranked by national gross figures. These diseases are responsible for 13 and 11 percent, respectively, of deaths of the poor. Malaria is the tenth biggest killer of the world’s poor, responsible for four percent of deaths.

Within individual countries the differences are even more striking. Under-five mortality is, almost without exception, higher for children in the poorest quintile (by consumption) than for the less poor quintile. A poor child in Brazil is six times more likely to die than one born in a wealthy household in the same country.

Certain environmental problems contribute towards a substantial part of the burden of disease in poor countries, and that the effects are often disproportionately concentrated on the poor. These relate to communicable and vector-borne diseases, largely the result of dirty water and parasites breeding in stagnant water, and to respiratory infections, mainly from indoor air pollution and urban air pollution in some parts of the developing world. Other problems, such as those relating to toxic materials (pesticides, industrial pollution), tend to cause illnesses such as cancer, which are not major factors causing burden of disease of the poor, except in certain isolated cases or atypical countries.
Chronic poverty in South Asia is to a large extent the result of adverse ecological processes. Bangladesh provides a striking illustration. Here the most persistent poverty has historically been found in the river erosion areas which in years of severe flooding have been susceptible to widespread starvation and even famine (Sen 1981).

The 1974 famine, for example, was particularly severe in the river erosion belts along both sides of the river Brahmaputra. These form the most economically depressed sub-districts and unions of what are now Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha and Jamalpur districts. These were also the areas hardest hit during the massive floods of 1988 and 1998. In the later years, however the damage was not so great.

Apart from the impact of an immediate crisis those living in ecologically vulnerable areas also find it more difficult to recover. This is because apart from having few savings or other assets they tend to have less access than richer areas to non-farm employment and to micro-credit. They also find it difficult to borrow the money to migrate. Since everyone is affected simultaneously the markets for both assets and credit also collapse - a consequence of ‘covariate risk’. While all householders in these areas are exposed to ecological risk, those most vulnerable are small landowners and agricultural laborers.

The poor and the poorest living in these areas require priority attention during times of distress. There is a need for higher allocations of food to meet their short-term consumption needs as well as other assistance for rebuilding homes, roads, culverts, schools and clinics damaged by floods. Given the widespread credit and insurance market failures during times of disaster the micro-credit agencies could play a role in financing seasonal migration of the poor (Rahman 2001).

**Linkages of environment-poverty nexus to the UN MDGs and international environmental agendas**

Sustainability of the environment is one of the key dimensions of sustainable development and poverty reduction and these are the core of the Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs). The integrity of the environment is crucial to the future of people who are currently inflicted with poverty. Their future well-being is strongly related to the environment in terms of health, earning capacity, security, physical surroundings, energy services, and decent housing. In rural areas, poor people may be particularly concerned with their access to and control over natural resources, especially in relation to food security. For poor people in urban areas, access to a clean environment may be a priority. Prioritization of environmental issues may vary across different social groups. For example, poor women, reflecting their primary role in managing the household may regard safe water, sanitation facilities, and abundant energy services as crucial aspects of well-being.

Some environmental issues are emerging now as global concerns. Contemporary examples include global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer. Some are international, like acid rain, the state of the oceans, or the condition of rivers that run through several countries. Some are, however, more localized, though they may often occur worldwide, for example urban air pollution, water pollution or soil degradation. Even though the poor also feel the impacts of global environmental degradation, it is local environmental damage that affects the lives of the poor more severely.

As mentioned, the impact of environmental degradation is unequal between the poor and the rich. Environmental damage almost always has the greatest impact on the poor. The overwhelming majority of those who die each year from air and water
pollution are the poor. They are most affected by desertification and the floods, storms and harvest failures brought about by global warming. All over the world, it is the poor who generally live nearer to dirty factories, busy roads and dangerous waste dumps. The loss of biodiversity also impacts severely on poor rural communities. To demonstrate this, the following points taken from the work of Jehan and Umana (2003) offer some insight into the extent of the problem:

- Water-borne diseases such as diarrhea and cholera kill an estimated 3 million people in developing countries, the majority of whom are under-five;
- Vector-borne diseases such as malaria account for 2.5 million deaths a year, and are linked to a wide range of environmental conditions or factors related to water contamination and inadequate sanitation;
- One billion people are adversely affected by indoor pollution;
- Nearly 3 million people die every year from air pollution, more than 2 million of them from indoor pollution. More than 80 percent of these deaths are those of women and girls;
- Nearly 15 million children in Latin America are affected by lead poisoning;
- As many as 25 million agricultural workers, 11 million of them in Africa, may be poisoned each year from fertilizers;
- More than one billion people are affected by soil erosion and land degradation; Some 250 million people are at risk from reduced crop yields;
- Deforestation already costs the world $42 billion a year in lost income; and
- About 650 million poor people in the developing world live on marginal and ecologically fragile lands.


The unequal access of the poor to natural resources and the larger adverse impact of environmental damage on the poor’s lives have some direct consequences on the capability of affected communities to achieve some of the UN MDGs. Benefits associated with efficiency in resource use and the advantages of de-linking economic growth and resource use have significance for the achievement of the UN MDGs as well.

The direct consequences of unequal access of the poor as well as adverse impact of environmental damages on them will be felt across the spectrum with regards to achievement of the UN MDGs. Not only have the poor unequal access to natural resources, they suffer more because of environmental degradation. Soil degradation and erosion and desertification are affecting poor people more in terms of access to natural resources and livelihoods, leading to their further impoverishment and vulnerability. This will have an adverse impact particularly on the achievement of the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 and generally on several other UN MDGs.

The loss of biodiversity and continuous bio-piracy are robbing indigenous people of their assured sources of resources, livelihoods and medicine that need to be available in the nature around their surroundings. It then becomes more difficult for them to get out of the poverty trap. In societies with a significant proportion of indigenous people, this will slow down the process of achieving the UN MDGs.

The poor bear the major impact of inaccessibility to safe water, water contamination, water-borne and water-related diseases. This has an adverse impact on achieving a number of UN MDGs. For example, the greater inaccessibility of the poor to safe
water will make the goal of halving, by 2015, the proportion of poor people without access to safe water difficult. The greater inaccessibility of poor people to safe water, their larger exposure to water contamination, higher malnutrition and morbidity will have an adverse impact on school enrolment. Inadequate sanitation at school is a powerful disincentive for attending school, especially for girls. Even if they attend the schools they are unlikely to go to poor quality toilets and hence become victims of urinary complications.

In addition, since child mortality is higher among poorer households, a greater incidence of water-borne and water-related diseases will make the situation even worse. Increasing lead poisoning among poorer children, particularly in urban areas, may also have an adverse impact on child mortality in many parts of the world. All these will make it difficult to achieve the goal of “reducing child mortality by two-thirds by 2015”.

Indoor pollution is a major problem for poorer households, which are at the bottom of the energy ladder. Every year, four-fifths of the 1.8 million deaths from indoor pollution in rural areas are among women, many of whom are pregnant or mothers of small children. As child mortality is significantly higher among poorer families, exposure to indoor pollution increases the likelihood of not achieving the goal of reducing by 2015 child mortality rate by two-thirds, as acute respiratory diseases will claim many children’s lives.

The interaction between poverty and environmental degradation can lead to a self-perpetuating process in which, as a result of ignorance or economic necessity, communities may inadvertently destroy or exhaust the resources on which they depend on for their survival. Rising pressures on environmental resources in developing countries can have severe consequences for self-reliance, income distribution, and future growth potential in the developing world.

Environmental degradation can also detract developing countries from the pace of economic development by imposing high costs on these countries through health-related expenses and the reduced productivity of resources. The poorest 20 percent of the world’s population will experience the consequences of environmental ills most acutely. Severe environmental degradation, due to population pressures on marginal land, has led to falling farm productivity and per capita food production. Since the cultivation of marginal land is largely the domain of lower-income groups, the losses are suffered by those who can least afford them. Similarly, the inaccessibility of sanitation and clean water mainly affects the poor and is believed to be responsible for 80 percent of disease worldwide. Because the solutions to these and many other environmental problems involve enhancing the productivity of resources and improving living conditions among the poor, achieving environmentally sustainable growth is synonymous with the definition of economic development.

The growing consumption needs of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) populations may have global implications as well. There is also an increasing concern in the Medium Developed Countries (MDCs) that the destruction of the world’s remaining forests, which are concentrated in a number of highly indebted developing countries including Brazil, Mexico, Peru and the Philippines, will greatly contribute to global warming and the greenhouse effect.

For environmental policies to succeed in developing countries, they must first address the issues of landlessness, poverty, and lack of access to institutional resources.
Insecure land tenure rights, lack of credit and inputs, and absence of information often prevent the poor from making resource-augmenting investments that would preserve the environmental assets from which they derive their livelihoods. Hence preventing environmental degradation is more often a matter of providing institutional support to the poor than fighting an inevitable process of decay.

**Role of International Institutions and Non-State Stakeholders**

The role of international institutions and non-state stakeholders is important in addressing the poverty environmental issues of the globe. United Nations has and continues to play an important role in changing the mindset of policy makers. Attention by the UN also has been directed toward non-state stakeholders from the civil society in bringing their attention to the issue of the poverty-environment nexus. This invariably promotes environmental protection. UNEP provides an integrative and interactive mechanism through which a large number of separate efforts by inter-governmental, non-governmental, regional, national and local bodies are coordinated.

In addition the UNDP helps countries achieve sustainable human development by assisting them to build up their capacity to design and carry out development programs in the fields of poverty eradication, employment creation and sustainable livelihoods, the empowerment of women, and the protection and regeneration of the environment. In all these efforts poverty eradication is the highest priority.

The UN MDGs now guide most of the LDCs and developing countries in designing and implementing pro-poor development strategies focusing heavily on poverty reduction and environmental protection. A number of NGOs also have been taken onboard by the UN to push the poverty reduction and environmental protection agendas across the globe. Some corporations have been drawn into the Global Compact by the UN to sensitize those international companies to play pro-poor and pro-environment role while doing their businesses.

Other multilateral agencies like Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Bank, and bilateral and regional agencies like UK Department for International Development (DFID) and European Community (EC) are also playing pro-active roles towards pro-poor, pro-environment development interventions through both government and non-government organizations. However, the challenge remains on how to continue to provide adequate resources for poor countries that affect real time change and outcomes.

**Public-Private Partnership as a tool for Environmental Sustainability and Poverty Reduction**

The public-private partnership

The public-private partnership is a key element in securing success, ownership and change. These partnerships can include all joint activities of the public sector with the private — for profit (e.g., business firms) and not for profit (e.g., NGOs). Each of the stakeholders contribute some kind of resources and participates in the planning and decision-making process in this new kind of collaborative arrangement. It underlines the new quality of relations between government and non-government sectors which is more balanced by sharing both risks and rewards of a project than has been the case with pure contractual relationships. This does not necessarily imply that all stakeholders participate equally, rather each partner contributes according to the relative strengths and respective roles within the partnership. Another important aspect of public-private partnership is its principally open-ended conception in recognizing...
the long-term nature of cooperation, mutual trust, a shared vision, engagement and respect.

The notion of public-private partnership applies to two dimensions:

a. *strategic or policy dimension*, which relates to the coordination of political objectives, suitable measures and roles of both partners in development; and

b. *operative or project dimension* that deals with the realization and implementation of these projects.

The conceptual framework of public-private partnership has been graphically presented in Figure 2 and some examples of which follow. The examples demonstrate how the partnerships work but also provide a demonstration of the complexity of the issues and the interdependence.

In Figure 2:

- Area A represents partnership between government and for-profit private organizations
- Area B refers to government-civil society partnership
- Area C represents tripartite public-private partnership among government, for-profit private organizations, and not-for-profit civil society organizations.
- Finally, area D refers to partnership between civil society and for-profit private organizations due to public-private partnership, which is actually social gain from the later partnership.

**Figure 2: Public-Private Partnership**

**Partnership for environmental protection and poverty reduction**

*Forests managed by their users as common property*

One type of relationship that can be identified is where populations living in a forested habitat are dependent on forest outputs, and have established indigenous systems of users managing the forests as common property. For forests, some key characteristics
seem to include: that they are indivisible; the area is large and the number of users low; users form a cohesive group or a particular incentive (e.g., watershed protection) creates cohesion across diverse groups; benefits outweigh the transaction costs; and they are relatively isolated from disruptive external pressures (such as upland regions).

Historically, governments have tended to increase their control in such areas, in pursuit of revenue and environmental objectives, and consequently have usually progressively limited local rights rather than supporting them. However, in the last two or three decades this has begun to change. The principal factor has been the recognition that centralized management of forests in situations where local people also draw upon the natural resources has failed to conserve essential productive and protective aspects of the forest estate.

A larger role for local management of forests has also been consistent with recent strategies to devolve and decentralize, and to bring about greater participation by rural populations in decisions and actions affecting them – empowering them to effect change. It appears likely that these shifts have been facilitated in some countries by declining economic importance of the forest sector at the national level, and a related increase in interest in its environmental and socio-economic contributions.

The active role of one region in which there has been good progress towards strengthening and empowering local users to manage forests has been in the hill areas in Nepal. However, elsewhere the conditions under which user groups can effectively control and manage forests unaided have proved to be limited. Even within Nepal it has not proved possible to develop comparable working systems in the lowland areas of the Terai, characterized by more demographically diverse populations and market oriented livelihood systems. The more usual situation reflects multiple stakeholders, with different interests in local forest resources, and the conflicts that this tends to engender.

**Environment and empowerment**

Environmental education must be part of any long-term, poverty-focused environmental strategy. Awareness about the negative environmental externalities or adverse impact of certain development projects on the livelihoods of poor people often does not go beyond the communities that are most severely affected by it. For instance, urban consumers of fuel-wood may be scarcely aware of the consequences of increased logging on the livelihood of the rural poor. In such a case, environmental education can play a particularly important role by informing different segments of the local population about issues relevant to the community and negotiating local conflict. This becomes even more salient in the context of weak local environment institutions.

A key aspect of many environmental projects is institutional capacity building, which focuses largely on training personnel within environmental ministries or programs. Such an approach to capacity building often has limited success, either due to corruption at the ministerial level or because it is de-linked from the concerns of the community. Bureaucratic rigidity is yet another constraint. Here too, environmental education can play an extremely powerful role in the long run by creating demand for effective local institutions and laying the cultural groundwork for effective political action.

Awareness about environmental issues can be raised by public and private agencies, grassroots institutions, through changes in school curricula, and by creative use of the local media. The Sustainable Environment Management Program (SEMP) in
Bangladesh supported by UNDP and implemented by the Government with active support of both government and non-government institutions has demonstrated clearly how environmental consciousness among citizens can be raised in innovative ways. Besides, increased media coverage, a separate environment-related periodicals supported by the Program reaches all areas of the country and helps raise environmental awareness amongst all the stakeholders including judges, parliamentarians, administrators, local government officials, NGO leaders, school teachers and students.

However, even in the absence of direct links with political parties, various environmental conflicts in India have gained national attention as a result of work by the media and professional groups. Many development projects attempt to involve local communities in various stages of planning as a way of making projects more participatory. This suggests that environmental education is a dynamic, two-way process that can enable both local communities and development institutions to be more responsive and accountable.

People in general and the poor in particular have to keep an eye on what is handed to them as development projects. Indeed many large-scale development interventions have proved to be environmental disasters. The dam raised around Kaptai Lake for producing electricity in Bangladesh in the sixties of the last century displaced thousands of households of indigenous people and sowed the seeds of ethnic discontent which is still creating social and political tensions in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The environmental consciousness was not high enough at that time to avoid such a development disaster. The global civil society also was not well-developed to take up the issue of environmental degradation out of Kaptai Hydroelectric Project. However this was not the case with Silent Valley Dam in India. The anti-dam movement in the early eighties actually forced the policy-makers to shelve the project.

Conclusions

The global review of the literature undertaken by Rahman (2004) highlighted the need to ensure that nexus between poverty and environment is always considered with development and population policies and must be dealt with holistically. Isolated poverty alleviation strategies were found not to be effective if they are not environmentally sound, participatory in nature and focused on building local and national capacities for self-reliance.

Incorporating people’s knowledge, perception and attitudes in planning was found to be vital for environmental friendly development. It is shown to be equally important that people need to be constantly reminded about the intricate linkage between environment and their sustenance. A broad based eco-perception is seen as important and needs to be incorporated in the design of development projects so as to avert the environment-poverty nexus. The establishment, driven by donor interests, often ignores the indigenous knowledge base and imposes on the local people development projects which are not always sensitive to their local needs or the environment. The environmental consequences of some very large scale projects were shown through the review undertaken by Rahman (2004) to be in some instances devastating.

In order to handle effectively the overwhelming global environment-poverty nexus and its threats towards achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals, the poor need to be seen as part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Efforts should
be made to improve environmental management in ways that contribute to sustainable growth and poverty reduction, and more particularly they need to reflect the priorities of the poor. Supportive policies and institutions are needed, including access to information and decision making. This should be done in order to expand the poor’s opportunities to invest in environmental improvements and or enhance their livelihoods.

There are many examples of how poor environmental management is bad for growth, and how the poor often suffer the most from the subsequent environmental degradation. Clearly pursuing growth at the expense of the environment can in the long term undermine the growth and the program’s effectiveness in reducing poverty.

Environmental management needs to be integrated into poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts in order to achieve significant and sustainable results. Improving environmental management in ways that benefit the poor requires policy and institutional changes that cut across sectors and that lie mostly outside the control of environmental institutions. Such strategic and institutional considerations must include changes in governance, domestic economic and social policy, as well as international and industrial-country policies. Moreover, poverty-environmental issues should be integrated into national development frameworks by addressing the environmental concerns of the poor in nationally owned poverty reduction strategies. In addition, they should be related to macroeconomic and sectoral policy reforms, so that they can become integral parts of national sustainable development strategies.

Decentralization of environmental management should be strengthened by integrating poverty-environment issues into sub-national policy and planning processes and sectoral investment programs. Civil society and the poor and marginalized groups should be empowered to influence environmental management policy and planning processes at all levels. This can be achieved by expanding public access to environmental information, decision making and justice.

Poverty-environment monitoring and assessment should be improved by strengthening government and civil society capacity to monitor environmental change. Such monitoring needs to consider how issues affect the poor and by integrating poverty-environment indicators into national poverty monitoring systems. This needs to be linked to building capacity to apply monitoring and assessment results to poverty-environment policy formulation and implementation. Gender dimensions of poverty-environment nexus should also be addressed by ensuring that they are fully integrated into the formulation, implementation and monitoring of poverty reduction strategies and related policy reforms.

Anti-corruption efforts also need to be strengthened to protect the environment and the poor by improving the legislative and regulatory frameworks. These efforts need to ensure effective mechanisms are in place for feedback from communities to enforcement agencies. Rights of the poor on the natural resources, particularly CPRs, should be strengthened by reforming policies and formal and informal institutions that influence land and natural resource access, ownership, control and benefit sharing, with particular attention on resource rights for women.

The poor’s ability to manage the environment, including conservation and sustainable use of land, water and biological resources, and access to clean water, sanitation services and energy, should be enhanced by strengthening local management. Such arrangements need to target building capacity and supporting women’s key roles in
managing natural resources. Environmental vulnerability of the poor should be reduced by strengthening participatory disaster preparedness, risk management strategies and mitigation capacity of vulnerable groups, and by expanding access to insurance and other risk management mechanisms.

Access to environmentally sound and locally appropriate technology, such as crop production technologies that conserve soil, water, and agro-biodiversity and that minimize the use of pesticides, or appropriate renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies that also minimize air pollution, should be expanded by improving protection of and access to indigenous knowledge and technologies. This should include improving incentives for pro-poor technology development, and by involving the poor in technology research, demonstration and dissemination.

Appropriate private-sector involvement should be encouraged by strengthening government and community capacities to partner with the private sector and to expand environmental services for the poor. This should be done by providing incentives for local enterprise development based on the sustainable use of biodiversity (such as community-based ecotourism or sustainable harvest of natural products), and by putting in place appropriate regulations and voluntary codes to safeguard the interests of the poor and the environment.

Pro-poor environmental fiscal reform should be implemented through pricing natural resources appropriately. In particular this should include energy and water. This can be achieved by:

- expanding the use of fiscal incentives to promote environmentally sound practices;
- through improving the use of rent/taxes to better capture and more effectively allocate natural resource revenues; and
- through improving the use of pollution charges to better reflect environmental costs in market prices.

International and industrial-country trade policies need to be improved by addressing trade-environment-poverty links in the negotiation and implementation of multilateral trade agreements. This needs to consider reforming trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and trade barriers to give developing countries equitable access to international markets. In addition, there is a need to encourage environment-friendly products and trade practices, and the elimination of subsidies that lead to unsustainable exploitation.

Sustainable consumption and production should be encouraged. Industrialized country’s consumers and producers affect the environmental conditions of developing countries through their trade, investment, pollution and other activities. Making rich-country’s consumption and production more sustainable will require a complex mix of institutional changes. These changes will need to address market and government failures as well as broad public attitudes. Interventions may have to be made at the global governance level to bring this change.

Effectiveness of development cooperation and debt relief should be enhanced to address poverty-environmental issues, particularly for the poorest countries, where aid and debt relief continue to have a valuable role to play in helping governments make many of the changes needed. This includes mainstreaming environment in donor agency policies and operations through staff training, development and application of
new skills, tools and approaches, and revisions to the way resources and budgets are allocated.

There are substantial limitations in the data that capture environment-poverty inter-linkages. In many cases this environmental data focus on environmental changes without measuring their impact on the poor. The poverty data generally do not capture environmental concerns. Institutional mechanisms are needed through which the information on those data could be gathered, analyzed, and used for designing policies to improve the environment and reduce poverty. For this to happen the capacity of the central statistical agencies and research institutions has to be strengthened to generate environment-sensitive data which cut across all areas of development.

Effective environmental coalitions have to be developed at the local level with local governments as lead agencies drawing partners from local NGOs, CBOs and representatives of the landless and other segments of the population.

Sustainable IT networks also need to be further developed to bring all the stakeholders involved in environmental protection together for raising environmental consciousness among different groups of citizens. This needs to include the journalists, researchers, NGO activists, teachers/students, local government leaders and government officials involved in development activities. Efforts need to be made to improve the quality of interaction between national and global civil society activists involved in environmental and poverty reduction activisms.

**Summary of In-country Project Activity**

**Central Asia**

1. Kazakhstan

**Background to Country**

Kazakhstan is located in Central Asia, northwest of China with a total area of 2,717,300 km², 7.98% of which is arable land and 0.05% under permanent crops. Native Kazakhs are a mix of Turkic and Mongol nomadic tribes who migrated into the region in the 13th century and were rarely united as a single nation. The area was conquered by Russia in the 18th century and Kazakhstan became a Soviet Republic in 1936. During the 1950s and 1960s agricultural "Virgin Lands" program, Soviet citizens were encouraged to help cultivate Kazakhstan's northern pastures. This influx of immigrants (mostly Russians, but also some other deported nationalities) skewed the ethnic mixture and enabled non-Kazakhs to outnumber natives. Independence in 1991 caused many of these newcomers to emigrate.

Kazakhstan is the largest of the former Soviet republics, excluding Russia and possesses enormous fossil fuel reserves as well as plentiful supplies of other minerals and metals. It also is a large agricultural - livestock and grain - producer. The break-up of the USSR in December 1991 and the collapse in demand for Kazakhstan's traditional heavy industry products resulted in a short-term contraction of the economy, with the steepest annual decline occurring in 1994. In 1995-97, the pace of the government program of economic reform and privatization quickened, resulting in a substantial shifting of assets into the private sector. Current issues include: developing a cohesive national identity; expanding the development of the country's
vast energy resources and exporting them to world markets; achieving a sustainable economic growth outside the oil, gas, and mining sectors; and strengthening relations with neighboring states and other foreign powers.

The area’s climate is typically arid and semiarid with cold winters and hot summers. Kazakhstan has a population of 15,143,704 people (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of:

- 0-14 years: 24.4% (male 1,884,369; female 1,807,585)
- 15-64 years: 68% (male 5,028,455; female 5,268,726)
- 65 years and over: 7.6% (male 404,940; female 749,629)

Infant mortality is 30.54 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has a negative migration status of - 3.35/1000 head of population. Twenty-six percent of the population is below the poverty line. The GDP composition per sector is agriculture: 7.7% industry: 37.7% and services: 54.6% (2003 est.)

**IPP Title:** Felt Production as a way of Poverty Alleviation in Mountain Regions

**Partner Organizations:** CAMP Consulting (NGO)/Academy of Sciences (Central Government)

**Key Objective:**

To build the capacity of rural women to reduce poverty through income generation that is undertaken in an ecologically stable manner.

**Introduction and Background**

More than 43% of Kazakhstan’s population live in rural areas and the transition to a market based economy has had a significant impact on the viability of this section of the population. The transition contributed to the disintegration of the social and economic infrastructure in the rural villages and this has resulted in serious environmental problems. The problems have expressed themselves in the form of limited access to potable water and increasing disparities in living standards between rural and urban areas. This has resulted in a considerable increase in the migration of people from the villages to the cities.

The environmental problems are considered to be a function of poor land management practices and the inadequacy of the economic activities to provide a decent standard of living for the rural population. These problems have had an adverse effect on health, birth rate and life quality of the rural population, reduced agricultural productivity and increased poverty and unemployment.

Almaty region, the target of this project, is one of the poorest regions of Kazakhstan. In Almaty over 35% of the population live in poverty. As a result of economic growth and the creation of new employment opportunities in different spheres of the economy in Kazakhstan over the past few years, there has been a reduction in the unemployment of the male sector. However, the level of female unemployment in Kazakhstan hasn’t changed and last year the number of females unemployed exceeded 390,700. The Almaty region is one of the worst areas of unemployment with approximately 70,000 unemployed females.
Driven by poverty, the population continues to over utilize the natural resources of the area. As an example, the people who do not have sufficient income to purchase coal, gas or electrical power undertake uncontrolled cutting down of trees for heating purposes. Further examples include the intensive overuse of pastures and overgrazing of the landscape near settlements leading to a sharp reduction in biodiversity and degradation of landscape.

In these conditions, the search for alternative kinds of economic activity is an imperative. It is only by generating alternative kinds of economic activity that the pressure on the environment can be reduced. Historically, the traditional activity of nomads was sheep and cattle breeding. Wool was easily accessible, environmentally friendly and versatile raw material that was used very widely in housekeeping. Felt products, made out of wool, were used for the construction of nomad’s houses (Yurtas), carpets and clothes, underpinning the conditions of the nomad’s life.

Unfortunately, during the Soviet period many traditional crafts that helped nomads to survive in the severe climatic and economic conditions in the past, have been forgotten. Today the wool is being sold to intermediaries for very low prices and there is a loss of the skills and expertise, and practice of manufacturing traditional wool and wool felt derived products. At the same time, there has been a growing resurgence in the demand and markets for these products, particularly from the urban consumers.

This increase in demand presents a significant opportunity to retrain rural women in the traditional arts and craft of felt production. The re-emergence of such an enterprise would provide an excellent income generating source that is environmentally friendly. This style of enterprise fits well with the local culture and is especially important for young women and schoolgirls who are family hearth keepers in the future.

The skills gained from this style of training will allow these women to make felt products in existing domestic conditions and provide a much needed additional source of income as well as providing much needed household goods and warm clothes for family members. The processing of the wool using this local craft is an ecologically clean technology, as only natural dyes are used for felt coloring, and production of goods requires nothing but water and natural soaps. Moreover, versatility of wool as a raw material ensures that women can be engaged with felting all year around.

This project titled “Felt Production as a way of Poverty Alleviation in Mountain Regions” is being implemented by CAMP Consulting Public Foundation of Kazakhstan (an NGO) in partnership with the Academy of Science of Kazakhstan, local governments and communities.

The project is designed to hold national and local seminars with the purpose of strengthening the capacity and the institutional potential of the local communities. The seminars are targeted at improving communication between the different community groups and to enhance employment opportunities for women and young girls from the poor and marginalized communities that promote the sustainable development of the villages.
The project is expected to create employment opportunities for women from distant villages through establishment of a felt production facility and strengthen their role in the decision making process on the issues of poverty reduction, gender inequality and environmental threats to the community.

It is expected that the project outcomes will result in additional income for village women, promote the role of women in villages, unite groups of producers with a common interest, and assist women to participate in decision-making processes. In addition, the project outcomes should strengthen the institutional potential of the community to involve women, as well as creating opportunities for women to contribute to the family budget.

**Project objectives and performance targets**

The aim of the project is to train rural women from these poor families to process wool and design modern felt products using environmentally sound technology. The purpose of the project is to reduce poverty by increasing the income for these people and decrease pressure on the environment. The target group are young women and schoolgirls from villages in the Almaty region. The selection of the participants for training was done with special attention to ensuring an adequate representation of the poor who rely on poaching as one of their main sources of income.

While the main beneficiaries of the project are the participants of three training groups (10 people per each training group) and their families, it is expected that these participants will train other village women (relatives, friends, neighbors and other fellow-villagers). In this way the benefits of the project will be widely distributed and significantly more than the 30 people attending the initial training and their families.

Traditionally women in the Kazakh villages were engaged in cooking and education of children. The male of the household was considered to be the main breadwinner in the family. However, after being trained in the art and craft of felt production women can also make a contribution to the family’s budget. Thus, the skills received by women during training will allow women not only to receive additional income, but will also promote their role in the village. Having united in groups of producers, women can be more pro-active in the decision-making process of the community and strengthen institutional potential of the community.

**Methods**

The project started with a National Workshop to explore and develop the approach and where the outcomes of the sub-regional meetings (19-21 October, 2004, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan) were translated into a local context and to plan the in-country activities.

Felt didactic training sessions were implemented in three villages of Almaty oblast for rural women. During these workshops the women were taught the methods of wool processing by hand and exposed and trained in new technologies used in the felt making process. Producer networks were established to support the women and to provide access to markets and marketing experience. These networks also served as forums in which the lessons and experiences could be shared and extended beyond the initial trainees.
The results of the project were also promoted and disseminated widely through the use of the mass media and information and the lessons learned published for wider uptake and adoption.

**Project Budget**

The project budget funded by UNDESA is $18,000 US dollars. The total amount contributed by “CAMP-Consulting” PF was $1,500 US dollars.

**Outputs and outcomes**

The outcomes of the project met or exceeded all the planned objectives and performance targets. In summary:

- The engagement and agreement of local authorities to support the project was achieved at the National workshop in July in Almaty;
- At least 30 rural women from poor families were trained:
  - Poor families were selected and trained in felt production
  - 3 training groups (10 people per group training) were conducted and evaluated;
- The women when trained participated in craft fairs;
- The participants of the workshop training have established and participated in a craftsman network for the exchange of experience and marketing;
- The trained women now have incomes derived from the sale of felt products;
- Remote villages were involved in the process of the training (Kegen and Saty villages);
- “CAMP-Consulting” PF provide access to information and communication with other felt makers; and
- One person attended the international workshop in Brisbane (14-17 August 2005) to share the outputs, outcomes and lessons learned of the project.

The project has had a significant influence on the economic, social and environmental aspects of villager’s life. The additional income derived from felt making has improved the social status of women and has enabled them to buy coal for cooking and heating as opposed to the unsustainable cutting of trees for firewood. The project has the potential to be implemented in other villages and regions. Customers benefit from the handmade natural products and the villages benefit from access to a broader market.

The project was of particular interest to the local authorities (Akimat) of Almaty Oblast. Within the framework of the government program to decrease unemployment, Akimat of Almaty Oblast established a high level of cooperation with the project organization and directly participated in the project’s implementation. The representatives of Akimat also took part in the National Workshop and helped to choose the target villages and participants for the felt training workshops.

As a result of the project there is now a functional workshop in Almaty. In this workshop about 5-8 women work and train other women from the local villagers to improve their skills. Also these women are used as trainers for other commercial felt training workshops. So far, this workshop is the center for all felt producers in Kazakhstan. The center operates as a place for sharing experience and the exchange of
information. Information concerning design, coloring, and patterns is provided through this center. Orders for goods are processed and distributed among the producers in accordance with their personal abilities and skills. “CAMP-Consulting” PF continues to support this network with marketing and public relations support and provides the necessary information for producers as well as widening the network of training and involvement by sharing experience.

An initiative of the women’s group on felt making was to establish a center in Saty village of Raiymbek rayon with the support of local NGO and trainers from the Almaty workshop. Three women from this village came to the Almaty workshop to learn felt processing technologies and distributed this experience to their local village.

This type of business generated through the project does not require much in the form of start up capital as the women are able to work in their homes. A woman who constantly produces felt products can earn between $30 and $100 US per month depending on the amount, size, quality and promotion of the products. This is a good income for the village women where there is a high unemployment and it is difficult for women to start their own business.

A contract has been established between “CAMP-Consulting” PF and the ASA Program (the European network for development education) in Germany (http://www.asa-programm.de/en) for future cooperation. In the frame of this contract two students from the Germany University of Handicrafts will come to Kazakhstan this year for three months to train local producers.

Several local NGOs were involved in the establishment and operation of the project, including “Balatay” in Raiymbek village and “Sholpan” in Kegen village. These NGOs already have good reputations in their administrative regions and are experienced in the engagement of their respective communities. This experience includes the engagement to solve socio-economic problems, sharing knowledge and expertise and promoting human rights issues, village development and institutional capacity building. Also through these NGOs villagers get access to advice and information.

Through the use of the mass media and local area networks, information about the project was disseminated effectively throughout Kazakhstan. For example, the Akimat of Aksu Rayon of Pavlodar Oblast (north Kazakhstan) expressed interest in the results of this project. In addition, the representatives of the NGO “Zhaukazin” of this region came to Almaty to learn more about “CAMP-Consulting” PF’s activities. Consequently, this NGO received a grant from the government to organize a felt production workshop. Our trainers were involved in conducting a 10-day felt training workshop for women in the Saryshiganak village. Information about this workshop was widely distributed through Oblast and state TV channels. This is a significant example of the level of cooperation secured between NGOs and government. Good relations also have developed between “CAMP-Consulting” and “Zhaukazin” NGO. Women trained in the first workshop are willing to continue training others. There is now an agreement with the Akimat of Aksu Rayon to further support the rural women to develop and improve their abilities to produce felt products. The Akimat of Aksu Rayon will cover the travel fees, accommodation and further training expenses for the women of Saryshiganak village in Almaty.
One of the participants of the felt training workshop Kulyan Zhangutty is a school teacher and director of the NGO “Balatay” in Raiymbek village (Karasay Rayon). This lady is continuing to use her skills and experience gained from the seminar to teach art lessons for pupils in the 6th to 11th grades. Village girls learn to make wool dolls, seat cushions, baby boots, cell phone cases and wall hangings during the lessons. It is very important to note that this school teacher has received a grant from Akimat of Almaty Oblast to publish aids about felt making for schoolgirls. Additionally, the teacher now trains unemployed women at home.

While completing the project, the NGO “Sholpan” became aware of the activities of UNDESA, “CAMP-Consulting” PF and other partner organizations. Subsequently, they joined the Central Asian Alliance of Mountain Villages (AGOCA) in December 2005 as the “Territorial Self-Government of Kegen Village” public organization. AGOCA is a regional organization founded in 2002 that includes mountain communities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The main goal of the Alliance is to promote sustainable development in mountain regions of Central Asia, thereby improving the living standards of their inhabitants.

The training workshops and their results were covered in regional and state newspapers and television crews broadcasted from the sites where the seminars were held. Thus, the state newspaper “Express-K” covered the training seminars held in Raiymbek village. Coverage included “With Felt to Europe”/Ruslan Bakhtigareyev/ № 148 from 9 August 2005. The newspaper “Arguments and Facts” wrote: “People of Felt”/Otto Waiskopf/ № 43 from October 2005. Kulyan Zhangutty, who received a grant from the government, published 500 aids about felt making for schoolgirls and distributed among school teachers. This information was covered in the newspaper “Century Herald”/ № 51 from 10 December 2005.

The best felt products made by the village producers were displayed at the international exhibition “Kanatty Aiel”, organized by the conference of businesswomen in Kazakhstan and sponsored by UNESCO in October 2005. Sales over a two-day period exceeded $1000 US. This success has further inspired the village producers who participated in the felt workshops. Information about the exhibition was broadcasted in all Mass media and the participation of the women was covered in the magazine “Mirror”. A small-illustrated aid is planned for publication and will focus on the results achieved and lessons learned from the project. The publication will be helpful to felt producers, government agencies and other NGOs.

During the project’s implementation, community self-evaluation exercises were conducted and were aimed at measuring quantitative and qualitative impacts of the project. The project has resulted in the:

- Mobilization of local women and strengthening of their role in the community;
- Decreased unemployment among the rural women;
- The production of high quality handmade felt products;
- The use of local raw materials in felt production with now environmental impact; and
- Waste products from felt production are disposed in specially determined areas.
A number of organizations have developed an interest in this project and this has assisted in spreading the results. Rural women (approximately 30 people) constantly keep contact with the sponsoring NGO via telephone or visit the NGO office or training workshop. Trained participants from three villages visit and communicate with each other. For example, felt producers from Raiymbek village communicate and share experience with producers from Kegen village not only via telephone, but also visit each other. Thus, the project has resulted in a well developed and self sustaining informal network with well defined and complementary roles.

For example:

- “CAMP-Consulting” PF – operates as a resource center for the felt producer’s network. It helps consult on marketing, the distribution of information regarding producers, training workshop, felt products; holds discussions on pricing the policy, attends to consumers demands. The “CAMP-Consulting” office also provides producers with information about other projects and events and links with producers via telephone, fax, Xerox and Internet services;
- The Felt Workshop in Almaty – operates as a training center for producers. 5-8 women rent space for this workshop (in the same building where “CAMP-Consulting” rent an office), where they work to improve both the technology and the design of their felt products. Additionally, they earn money by participating as trainers in commercially run felt workshops;
- Rural producers – process local wool and make felt products; and
- Sale point in Almaty – sells products made by producers and estimates consumers demands and processes orders.

As there is no access to the Internet in local villages “CAMP-Consulting” PF is required to continue to provide this service and it is only through this ongoing commitment that the information is distributed to the community.

Conclusions

The project “Felt production as a way to alleviate poverty in mountain regions” has been highly successful and is likely to achieve sustained outcomes. The main beneficiaries of the project are young women and schoolgirls from local villages. The participation in the project has allowed women and schoolgirls to develop skills in the production of handmade felt products that will help them to support themselves and their families. The project outcomes has built their capacity and allows them to increase their standing, self determination and contribution to the community. As a result of the project the women are now playing a more proactive role in the decision making processes in their communities.

By increasing the income of these women, there has been a subsequent reduction in the pressure on the environment as these households have not had to rely on the unsustainable practice of indiscriminate harvesting of trees for heat and energy. Having learned skills on felt making the women now have an alternative source of income. The income can now be used to purchase coal for house heating during the winter period. Accordingly, the project outcomes contribute to an improvement in their economic situation, alleviate poverty and decrease the pressure on the environment.
By the use of the mass media and other networks the project results and information has been distributed widely throughout Kazakhstan. This has resulted in a significant uptake of the project ideas by other NGOs and secured a high level of government support. There are now many other similar projects being implemented by a wide range of NGOs in other parts of Kazakhstan. In particular in Pavlodar Oblast, local NGO “Zhaukazin” secured financial support from the local authorities to carry out a felt training workshop for local women. The NGO Balatay and the participants of the training workshop in Raiymbek village received financial support from local authorities for the publication of aids about felt making for schoolgirls. The number of organizations now interested in the project process and the establishment of village industries continues to expand.

**Recommendations**

The project has resulted in considerable success and has effectively engaged a wide range of parties in the use of products to generate income in an environmentally sensitive manner. Accordingly, it is recommended that these types of projects continue to be supported and promoted and that the results of this project be promoted and distributed more widely. In addition, it is recommended that the project outcomes continue to be evaluated through time to gauge the degree of the level of sustainability and impact.

It is also recommended that product development, marketing and branding need to be further developed and promoted using the identity of natural environmentally friendly products made by local villages and artisans. The promotion of special exhibitions would be of great advantage where felt products of rural women are presented and promoted.

2. Kyrgyzstan

**Background to Country**

A Central Asian country of incredible natural beauty and proud nomadic traditions, Kyrgyzstan was annexed by Russia in 1864; it achieved independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and is located west of China. Kyrgyzstan has a total area of 198,500 km² of which 7.3% is arable land and only 0.35% is under permanent crops of which 10,740 km² of land is irrigated. Natural resources of the area include abundant hydropower; significant deposits of gold and rare earth metals; locally exploitable coal, oil, and natural gas; and other deposits of nepheline, mercury, bismuth, lead, and zinc. The area is experiencing significant problems with water pollution. Many people get their water directly from contaminated streams and wells and as a result, water-borne diseases are prevalent and increasing soil salinity from faulty irrigation practices is emerging as a major concern.

Kyrgyzstan, a poor, mountainous country has a predominantly agricultural economy. Cotton, tobacco, wool and meat are the main agricultural products, although only tobacco and cotton are exported in any quantity. Industrial exports include gold, mercury, uranium, natural gas and electricity. Drops in production were severe after the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991, but by mid-1995 production began to recover and exports began to increase. The government and the international
financial institutions have been engaged in a comprehensive medium-term poverty reduction and economic growth strategy. Further restructuring of the domestic industry and success in attracting foreign investment are keys to future growth.

Climate in the area is generally dry continental to polar in the high Tien Shan, subtropical in southwest (Fergana Valley) and temperate in northern foothills. The population of 5,081,429 (July 2004 est.) has an age demographic of:

- 0-14 years: 32.3% (male 835,599; female 804,384)
- 15-64 years: 61.6% (male 1,535,447; female 1,594,972)
- 65 years and over: 6.1% (male 120,555; female 190,472)

Infant mortality is 36.81 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has a net migration -2.45 migrant(s)/1,000 head of population. Fifty percent of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line with a GDP by sector: agriculture: 38.7% industry: 22.9% and services: 38.4%

**IPP Title:** Programs on Herbs Collection and Treatment

**Partner Organizations:** Mountain Village (NGO)/National Centre for Mountain Development (Central Government)/International University (Central Government)

**Key Objective:**

Capacity building of local communities for herb collection and treatment for income generation and the sustainable conservation of herbs.

**Introduction and Background**

The “Mountain Village” Public Association (NGO) of Kyrgyzstan implemented a grass-roots level community initiative on capacity building in communities affected by environmental degradation. The objective was to develop community based programs for the establishment of sustainable systems of herb collection and processing. The project has been conducted as a partnership with the National Centre for Mountain Regions Development of Kyrgyz Republic and the local governments and communities.

This project addresses the complex issues that threaten the livelihood and environment of the rural households in Kyrgyzstan. It focuses on social mobilization of local communities for the development of income generating activity that will assist in alleviating poverty and improve the ecological sustainability of the region.

One of the main tasks of the project was to train local community representatives from degraded areas in alternative ways of generating income using the collection and treatment of mountainous medicinal herbs, and their subsequent sale to local pharmaceutical enterprises. National and local seminars are being held for the purpose of capacity building and developing the institutional potential of the local communities.

With the successful completion of the project, herb collection and processing are being used to create an additional source of family income, as well as facilitating the
improvement and strengthening of the population’s health. Training has also been used to provide the opportunity to increase the awareness of the participating families in understanding the ecology of the area and the sustainable development of the natural resources of the region.

Development of this kind of economic activity, in the distant and high mountain regions, is expected to ease the challenge of unemployment and address the pressures brought about by poverty and the degradation of the environment. The project outcomes are also expected to reduce the mass emigration, through time, from the regions affected by land degradation and desertification.

**Project objectives and performance targets**

As indicated, the aim and objectives of the project were to reduce poverty and environmental degradation in these mountainous areas by improving the management, collection and processing of native medicinal herbs. The primary goal was to build community capacity through the development of community based programs that would lead to sustainable systems of herb collection, processing and use.

Specifically the project was designed to

- Reduce poverty and increase income generation through improved methods of herb cultivation, collection and processing;
- Engage and train local communities in more sustainable methods of herb cultivation, collection and processing;
- Improve the economic viability of the communities through enhanced herb cultivation techniques, collection and processing;
- Improve the level of awareness, understanding and productive use of these traditional medicines and landscapes; and
- Increase the engagement and capacity of local authorities to work with the community in joint planning to develop activities and practices that would lead to more viable and sustainable production and use of these traditional herbal medicines.

**Methods**

Partners in the Public Union Mountain Village included the local administration (Ayil Okmoty), Chui oblast and Issyk-Kul oblast. These parties actively engaged in the project and provided assistance in the organization of meetings and training. The Community society *Zaria* assisted in the preparation and supply of herbal material as well as the access to technical equipment and resources on an as needed basis. *Zaria* also assisted with the conduct of meetings, assistance with organizational issues, through to training, product pricing, compound quality and environmental management.

The Pharakom-K Company Ltd provided assistance with training, raw material processing and marketing. Assistance was also provided by the Forestry in Issyk–Ata rayon, Chui oblast.

Following an intensive suite of meetings and consultation with stakeholders and community people, the project team provided training in herb production and
collection techniques. These training programs were targeted toward engaging the poorest members of the community.

The project was conceived in 2003. A database of project activity, production and processing was developed and continues to be regularly updated and used to assist decision-making. Marketing research was also conducted prior to the project commencement. This information has been used to inform the project team as to the most effective products and production strategies required to access global markets.

In March to April 2005, meetings were held with the local authorities and the political representatives to secure their awareness, understanding, engagement and support for the project. In May to June 2005, two groups of thirty vulnerable community members were selected to receive training in the sustainable production, collection and processing of medicinal herbs from the two oblasts of the Kyrgyz Republic.

A national workshop titled the Ecological and Social Aspects of Environmental Degradation was conducted in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan from 15th -17th June 2005.

The first Community training session was conducted in Issyk-Kul oblast jointly with the Pharakom-K company. Pharakom-K Company had been working in the region for the preceding 3 years and had well established agreements and partnerships with the Public Union Mountain Village. The workshop targeted income generation from herb collection and partial processing. The target area was the Ak-Suu village where agreements were already in place for the collection of wild herbs. The Ak-Suu is 5 kilometers from the city of Karakoi and is noted as a primary herb collection site.

A second training session was conducted from 23rd -24th June 2005 in the Issak-Ata forestry of Chui oblast at a height of 1,800 m above sea level. The workshop similarly targeted income generation from herb collection and partial processing including the storing of material. All training included an understanding of the quality required of the processing. The training in the quality required of the processing was provided by the Pharakom-K Company Ltd.

In August 2005, five hectares of seeds were planted in Borvinok. Action was also taken to plant the fur company surroundings of Tash Basat village in Assyk-Ata rayon at an altitude of 1,700 to 1,900 m above sea level. Local school students were also trained in the cultivation and management of rare and endangered medicinal herb species. These endangered species have now been established on 3.5 hectares of land. This area will now be used as a nursery for future seed stock.

**Project Budget**

At total budget of $18,100 US was provided for the project. The funds were used to meet the costs of the delivery of a national workshop ($5,000), the services of a national consultant to collect data, create a database and survey villages ($1,500), the services of a national consultant to provide administrative support, organize and facilitate deliberations at the in-country workshops and staff expenses ($4,000), the services to advocate and support community-level initiatives ($4,000), and office equipment and supplies including communications (Internet, e-mail, fax, long-distance calls, etc) ($3,600).
Outputs and outcomes

The market analysis showed that there was increasing global demand for, and interest in, herbal medicine. The analysis showed that herbal medicines are regarded as highly effective without the harsh side effects associated with other non-herbal medicines. They are therefore increasingly sort after. However, there are a limited number of products in the market and awareness and knowledge of the product is not extensive.

Fourteen medications have now been jointly developed with the specialists of the Mountain Village and the Pharakom-K Company Ltd. These medicines are for use in the cardiac, neurologic, antineoplastic and immune deficiency areas.

Of note is that the areas of land used for herb cultivation and collection require a period of fallow and rehabilitation on a four year rotation to remain productive. While herb production activity is only in the first full year of production it has been agreed that the rehabilitation will be incorporated into all production cycles to achieve a sustainable production system.

The project has received significant media promotion and exposure. As an example the project has been presented on Swiss TV and on the 7th February 2006 on the UN radio in New York. The presentation was jointly undertaken with the United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs.

Conclusions

The project has been highly successful in both engaging the officials in the project and in training the local communities in the sustainable production and harvesting of herbal medicines. The partnership with Pharakom-K Company Ltd has produced new products for the market place.

An important side benefit of the project is that in areas such as the Akonit Beloustova that have quality pastures for grazing, the inclusion of the herbs has enhanced the production system and increases the value of the pastures and feedstock for grazing animals.

In the Ak-Suu village at 2,500 to 3,000 m above sea level the local community, Zaria, are primarily engaged as shepherds and milk maids. These are the poorest people of these communities. Following the project, the total number of herb collectors in this district now ranges between 200 and 300 people. The collection of herbs is now an important part of their activity and this represents a sustainable and profitable addition to their income stream. Traditionally, potato collection during autumn was the only alternative income source. Cattle breeders traditionally have an annual total income on average, for a family of seven, of 1,000som per month (US$20-25). Monthly work on collecting and storing herbs can realize an additional monthly income of 5,000 to 10,000som. This is particularly important income for families who at the beginning of the academic year are faced with the additional cost of purchasing school books.

Recommendations

The project has met with considerable success and efforts should be made to continue these types of initiatives in Kyrgyzstan as a mechanism to reduce poverty and land degradation. It is also recommended that the current project continues and is monitored and supported. Such initiatives demonstrate how simple measures undertaken in partnership with the community can enhance the sustainable land use and reduce the poverty-environmental nexus in the Kyrgyz Republic.
3. Tajikistan

**Background to Country**

Tajikistan is located in Central Asia, west of China and covers an area of 143,100 km² of which 6.61% is arable land and 0.92% is under permanent crops. Tajikistan has completed its transition from the civil war that plagued the country from 1992 to 1997. There have been no major security incidents in recent years, although the country remains the poorest in the region. Attention by the international community in the wake of the war in Afghanistan has brought increased economic development assistance, which could create jobs and increase stability in the long term. Tajikistan is in the early stages of seeking World Trade Organization membership and has joined NATO's Partnership for Peace.

Tajikistan has the lowest per capita GDP among the 15 former Soviet republics. Cotton is the most important crop. Mineral resources, varied but limited in amount, include silver, gold, uranium and tungsten. Industry consists only of a large aluminum plant, hydropower facilities, and small obsolete factories mostly in light industry and food processing. The civil war severely damaged the already weak economic infrastructure and caused a sharp decline in industrial and agricultural production. Even though 60% of its people continue to live in abject poverty, Tajikistan has experienced steady economic growth since 1997. Continued privatization of medium and large state-owned enterprises will further increase productivity. Tajikistan's economic situation, however, remains fragile due to uneven implementation of structural reforms, weak governance, widespread unemployment, and the external debt burden. A debt restructuring agreement was reached with Russia in December 2002, including an interest rate of 4%, a 3-year grace period, and a US $49.8 million credit to the Central Bank of Tajikistan.

The Climate is mid-latitude continental, hot summers, mild winters; semiarid to polar in the Pamir Mountains. The population is 7,011,556 (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of

- 0-14 years: 39.2% (male 1,384,035; female 1,361,137)
- 15-64 years: 56.1% (male 1,957,712; female 1,976,488)
- 65 years and over: 4.7% (male 145,717; female 186,467)

Infant mortality is 112.1 deaths/1,000 live births with a net migration of -2.86 migrant(s)/1,000 head of population. Sixty percent (2003 est.) of the population are below the poverty line. The GDP per sector is agriculture: 30.8%, industry: 29.1% and services: 40.1% (2003 est.)

**IPP Title:** Training Centers for Poor Juveniles on Herb and Fruit Collection from Mountainous Plantation

**Partner Organizations:** Secure Motherhood (NGO)/Academy of Science (Central Government)
Key Objective:

To establish three training centers in the poor areas (Ayni District) to improve the collection, processing, and marketing of herbs and fruit by local youth for income enhancement.

Introduction and Background

The Republic of Tajikistan (RT) remains one of the poorest countries of the post-soviet (USSR) economy. The level of poverty is extensive and severe, and impacts on over 60% of the population. The situation in the mountainous districts of the Republic is a major problem with very high levels of unemployment and a significant lack of economic activity and enterprise. The level of business acumen in the community is low. Inadequate levels of education and a subsistence economy has resulted in extensive overexploitation of the natural resource base causing considerable land degradation from plant harvesting and over grazing.

At a meeting in Bishkek, the NGO “Secure Motherhood” proposed establishing training centers to educate juveniles from poor families to collect and process herbs and fruits of mountainous plantations. The project was approved by UNDESA and jointly implemented with “Secure Motherhood” in collaboration with Tajikistan Academy of Science, Ministry of Education and other government organizations.

The project commenced in July 2005 with a meeting of representatives of Ministries, Government and the Academy of Science discussing the project objectives, the training program to be offered, the employment of consultants, as well as the site selection for the centers.

The project was targeted at solving the local socio-economic and ecological problems by involving the juveniles from poor rural areas. The approach involved establishing training centers at three schools in the poor mountainous regions. The training encouraged the youth to understand and become involved in income generating activities such as the collection of fruits and herbs from mountainous plantations, processing and marketing. The primary goal was that the training sessions would engage the youth in useful activities, and facilitate their understanding of employment opportunities and future professional orientation as well as generating additional income to their families. The project is also directed at the sustainable use of this natural resource.

By taking a community driven initiative approach it was expected that employment opportunities for juveniles would increase and income for poor families would improve. The engagement of the schools would result in an ongoing legacy for the community and improve the professional orientation and interest of the communities’ youth as well as improving the understanding of the ecology of the area and its sustainable use and management.

Project objectives and performance targets

The project objectives were to:

- Evaluate the environmental, social and economic position of the population in mountainous regions;
• Discuss, at the national level and community level, the coordination of activities on poverty reduction and the improvement of environmental management in mountainous regions (representatives to include central and local authorities, NGO, International Organizations);

• Determine the appropriate mechanisms to generate the additional income by more effective commercial utilizing of the region’s drug plants and berries;

• Identify drug plants and berries which were over utilized;

• Identify the contribution the sale of drug plants and berries would make to the income of the local population;

• Create three training centers in the secondary schools in the targeted mountainous region;

• Increase the level of awareness of the population of land degradation and the sustainable land use and management of the landscape;

• Train the youth of the area in the methods of collection, drying and initial processing of drug plants and food plant material; and

• Organize activities that would assist in the restoration of the degraded environments of the mountainous regions of Ayni and Vahdat.

Methods

The initial assessment of the ecological and socio-economic conditions in the mountainous regions was carried out through a sociological survey. Poverty was at 75% with the income of the population based on the sale of agricultural products (70%) and the marketing of medical herbs and fruit (30%). Land degradation was evident in two thirds of the area.

Three schools were selected in the mountainous region, where up to the year 2000 bandit groups were active against the population. In these schools three training centers were established to train the school children in accordance with the objectives of the Project.

Problems of coordination of activities on poverty reduction and improvement of environmental safety in the mountainous regions were discussed at a national level with community representatives, central and local authorities, NGOs, and International Organizations. A National conference was conducted on communities in poverty and the reduction of land degradation. Surveyed inhabitants and forestry staff shared information on the medical herbs and fruit that were under the threat of extinction from over use.

Additional sources of income for the populations of the mountainous regions were identified. The income stream was based on medical herbs and berries sale. In order to achieve this, marketing research was carried out to identify which of the medical herbs were in demand and also to identify which public and private structures were involved in the marketing of the collected products.

Three Training Methodological Centers were established and equipped in the secondary schools of the mountainous regions. A school for “Young Forestry Officers”, a school for “Young Ecologists” and a “Green Patrol” were established. Contacts were negotiated and Cooperation Agreements were signed between these
schools. Agreements were also signed between the schools and the forestry staff, local healers and the National Park of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Awareness campaigns were conducted including mass media (local Radio, TV, newspapers) and booklets. The major focus was on the conservation of the medical herbs and berries that are under threat from over exploitation as well as methods of rehabilitation. As the result of these measures, local communities (Mahallas, Jamoats) became actively involved in the activities of the Project. Over 120 school children were trained in the collection, drying and initial processing of medical herbs and plant food products. Educational and information materials on medical herbs including two manuals and a booklet were developed and published. Measures to restore the degraded areas have started by organizing school plots on land that has been allocated by Forestry to use for planting of herbs and berries.

**Project Budget**

The project had a total budget of $15,740US. The funds were used to organize and run the workshops, including catering, transport and accommodation ($4,040); Assessment of the current status of the communities and the development of training information and data analysis ($1,500); Establishing and operations of the training centers – including books ($4,100); Computer hardware and IT support ($2,100); and Project management and evaluation ($4,000).

**Output and Outcomes**

1. **Evaluation of socio-economic and ecological position of the population in mountainous regions.**

   Activities of the Project covered three mountainous regions, including the villages of Raz, Pohut of the Ayni region, and in Ramit of the Vahdat region. The initial trips identified the schools with the pupils from the poorest families (state secondary schools). The family incomes were extremely low (18 Somoni or $6 US). The income of these families was largely derived from the money earned by men migrating from the Republic (25%); the planting and selling of tobacco; and the collecting and sale of drug plants and berries.

   In all regions there is a low level of education. Parents do not have the material wealth to provide children with higher education. Out of 600 survey respondents, 60% would like their children to have higher education, with 1% being able to realize this goal. Not a single girl is included in this number.

2. **Degradation of the ecology of the area.**

   All three regions displayed a high-level of ecological degradation. Of those surveyed none of the respondents answered which regulations he/she observes in order to prevent destruction of drug plants, yet a significant part of the incomes of families is derived from selling of drug plants: 21-24%. All respondents felt that the volume of herbage in the regions had decreased, yet the local communities did not place a high interest on the issues of ecological degradation.

3. **Demand for the drugs.**

   There is a high demand for plant based drugs in the region as well as the use of them as a food. The Republic of Tajikistan has a remarkable richness of native drug plants
with more than 5,000 species of which 70 are recommended as drug plants. According to official data more than half of all drug plants of the Republic grow in Ayni and Vahdat regions. In Ayni region – 46 species (sea-buckthorn, ephedra, dogrose, barberry, St.-John’s wort, origanum and others); and in Vahdat region – 56 species (ungernia Victory, ferule, nettle, origanum, elecampane, licorice, dogrose, barberry, sumach and others).

Within the regions selected the storage was not efficient and regulations of collecting are not observed and there is no evidence of cultivating native plants. As a result, the sources of many of the desirable plant species have significantly declined in the area (rhubarb, barberry, snowdon rose, golden root, and others). The process of degradation of the region is aggravated by an increasing dependence of the population on using and harvesting drug plants, which is connected to increase in allergic reactions to synthetic drugs. However, from the economic perspective the selling of plants helps the population to survive financially. Ninety percent of the surveyed respondents knew about therapeutic action of herbage. Only six species of plants are used for food (onion anzur, rhubarb, and barberry).

4. Impact of the Project
The marketing identified the commercial profitability list of the plants used for treatment and food. Mass collecting was recommended only for plants, which met the following requirements:

- Abundant supplies in nature;
- Safety when collecting;
- Exclusion of all the plant species listed in the Red Book; and
- Possibility of regeneration in nature.

As a result a list of drug plants was designed. The list can be used considering regulations of collecting:

- sea-buckthorn, ephedra, dogrose, barberry, St.-John's wort, origanum.
- Ungernia Victory, ferule, nettle, origanum, elecampane, licorice, dogrose, barberry, sumach.

Bonefide entrepreneurs and organizations were identified to purchase the drug plants, and agreements were negotiated. This was important to ensure compliance with the Laws of the Republic of Tajikistan. Material with information about drug plants and the reduction of ecological degradation in mountainous regions was prepared for publishing and six six-day training sessions were conducted in the secondary schools to develop the skills of the juveniles in market relations, marketing, financial analysis and follow-up management. In addition, the training included information on the sale of drug plants, plant food and the collecting, drying and initial processing. The Training Centers were equipped with audio and video equipment and the necessary literature. Pupils also were trained in the use of computers. Volunteers were prepared from the number of teachers of botany and biology. A total of 120 people were trained.

In order to raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve management of the ecology of the region, partnerships and alliances were formed in the adjacent communities (Rarz, Pohut, Ramit), and the Training Centers of each school with the
Forestry, associations called Changalboni Chavon. The main goal of the association is provide education and support in the:

- Protection of drug plants under threat;
- Collecting of planting stock;
- Growing of drug plants in plots, allocated by Forestry; and
- Reducing land degradation by planting of perennial drug plants.

Under the supervision of forestry officers, trainees have already started the preparation of the land. The program offered through the association has been successful in that the youth are occupied with useful activities. It has assisted them to develop healthy life-styles. Furthermore, the work prepares the youth for professional work in the Forestry Industries and the preparation of seeds and cuttings for the commercial planting of the native drug plants.

The activities of the associations are assisting to solve issues that will lead to the protection of the mountainous regions. The pupils designed the charter of the organization. This has assured ownership and commitment as well as securing compliance with the national regulations and the potential to secure assistance from the Government.

At present, the three Training Centers were created as associations and have started the exchange of information between each other. It is planned to involve pupils of the entire Republic into the activity of these associations. However, time and assistance of adults are necessary for this.

The project has met with considerable success. All project goals were realized and about 900 people have been involved in the projects including

- 600 participants in the survey;
- 120 participants in the seminars;
- 35 attendees in the National conference; and
- 150 participations from the NGOs, civil and local communities.

**Conclusions**

The project has met with considerable success. The incomes of families have been raised by the sale of the cultivated herbs and berries. The marketing study on the demand for medicinal plants and berries, as well as plants for food was extremely productive as it resulted in the engagement of entrepreneurs and organizations in the marketing and sale of these products in a sustainable way.

The social benefit of the project included youth education, constructive and useful employment of the community’s youth as well as the increased awareness of the need to protect the environment. The Jangalboni Javon (the young forester) has created a basis for the development of a forest economy, and improved local environmental management.

An agreement of mutual understanding and cooperation was signed with the local authorities (by Khukumates of Aini and Vahdat districts, Jamoates and forest communities) - eight agreements in total. Adjoining communities (“Rars”, “Pohut”,...
“Ramit”) and the community have created the Jangalboni javon in every school as the basis of each educational center.

Training is carried out with the school children and their parents in three pilot schools of the Aini and Vahdat districts (120 men). The training encouraged the exchange of knowledge in working with medicinal materials (drying and its storage). Two manuals in Tajik and Russian languages have been published and disseminated.

In all three districts family income from medicinal plants forms the considerable part of their income. On the results achieved through this project incomes have risen to $25-30 US, a five fold increase.

The National conference has contributed considerably to the mutual understanding of the key challenges and approaches and new partnerships and alliances have been formed. Participants of the conference included members of Academy of Science of RT, representatives of the President’s Office of RT, Ministry of Education, Forestry Committees, Department of Tajik National Park, representatives of Khukumats of pilot regions (Ayni, Vahdat), directors of pilot schools, NGOs, International organizations - UNDP, CAMP, UNFPA, Fund of Japan on reduction of poverty and others.

As a result of the project activity three Educational methodical centers are well established and equipped with computers and other training aids. The project activity has improved the knowledge level on sustainable land use practices and stimulated activity to reclaim degraded areas.

The NGO “Secure Motherhood” is now connected to the web-site ESTIS with the aim of exchanging information and improved connectivity for lesson learning at the national and international levels. It is also planned to connect the three educational centers to the Internet, under the regulations of Internet communication in mountainous districts.

**Recommendations**

The results of this project have clearly demonstrated the value of education and training in engaging the communities, NGOs and the government in partnership in addressing the poverty environmental nexus. The project has taken into consideration the social and economic welfare of the family, engaged the youth in useful social activity and utilized the natural capital of the region in a sustainable way. It is recommended that future work in this area is both desirable and necessary and should consider the following:

1. The value and use of training teachers (biologists) in the secondary schools of the mountainous districts to assist in the transfer and uptake of knowledge and practices in the sustainable use of the landscape and the harvesting and processing of native plants for food and drugs;

2. The engagement of the communities, NGOs and government in the value and technology of commercially planting, growing and harvesting the native medicinal plants and berries of the region;
3. The value in the creation of associations of young ecologists and young foresters to potentially engage and train youth in professional careers that build regional sustainability and the local economy;
4. The involvement of leaders associated with the forest economy to support the expansion of the program to other mountainous regions (to include the involvement of the Education Ministry, Department Of Forest Economy Of Jamoats);
5. The need to continue to encourage the future cooperation with Republic of Tajikistan national park; and
6. The further development of Internet communication in mountainous districts for learning, teaching, and the exchange of ideas and information.

4. Turkmenistan

Background to Country

Turkmenistan is located in Central Asia, bordering the Caspian Sea, between Iran and Kazakhstan and covers an area of 488,100 km² of which 3.72% is arable land and 0.14% is under permanent crops. Annexed by Russia between 1865 and 1885, Turkmenistan became a Soviet republic in 1924. It achieved its independence upon the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.

Extensive hydrocarbon/natural gas reserves could prove a boon to this underdeveloped country if extraction and delivery projects were to be expanded. The Turkmenistan Government is actively seeking to develop alternative petroleum transportation routes in order to break Russia's pipeline monopoly.

Turkmenistan is largely desert country with intensive agriculture in irrigated oases and large gas and oil resources. One-half of its irrigated land is planted in cotton, making it at one time the world's tenth-largest producer. Poor harvests in recent years have led to a nearly 46% decline in cotton exports. With an authoritarian ex-Communist regime in power and a tribally based social structure, Turkmenistan has taken a cautious approach to economic reform, hoping to use gas and cotton sales to sustain its inefficient economy. Privatization goals remain limited. In 1998-2003, Turkmenistan suffered from the continued lack of adequate export routes for natural gas and from obligations on extensive short-term external debt. At the same time, however, total exports rose by 38% in 2003, largely because of higher international oil and gas prices. Overall prospects in the near future are discouraging because of widespread internal poverty, the burden of foreign debt, and the unwillingness of the government to adopt market-oriented reforms. However, Turkmenistan's cooperation with the international community in transporting humanitarian aid to Afghanistan may foreshadow a change in the atmosphere for foreign investment, aid, and technological support. Turkmenistan's economic statistics are state secrets, and GDP and other figures are subject to wide margins of error. In particular, the 20% rate of GDP growth is a guess.

The climate is subtropical desert. The population is 4,863,169 (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of
- 0-14 years: 36.2% (male 904,627; female 857,601)
- 15-64 years: 59.7% (male 1,423,836; female 1,477,224)
65 years and over: 4.1% (male 76,670; female 123,211)

Infant mortality is 73.13 deaths/1,000 live births with a net migration of -0.86 migrant(s)/1,000 head of population (2004 est.). The percentage living below the poverty line is 34.4% (2001 est.). The GDP per sector agriculture: 24.8% industry: 46.2% services: 28.9% (2003 est.)

**IPP Title:** Training on Ecological Sustainability in Mountainous Regions of Kopetdagh of Turkmenistan

**Partner Organization:** Ministry of Nature Protection (Central Government)

**Key Objective:**

Capacity building of local communities on agro-technical methods of tillage and sustainable watering techniques and the organization of small businesses.

**Introduction and Background**

The Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan and the NGO “Turkmenistan Society of Fisherman and Hunters” are implementing a grass-roots level community initiative in Turkmenistan, called “Increase in Living Standards of the Population of Mountainous Regions of Kopetdagh of Turkmenistan through education on ecological sustainability”.

This grass-root level project attempts to address the complex and interwoven issues that threaten the livelihood and environment of the rural householders in Turkmenistan. This initiative focuses on the education of local communities in ecosystem management and sustainable land use. The targeted outcome of this training is to develop specific community-based practices that will improve the management and restoration of the degraded landscapes, as well as developing skills for the local individuals and communities to organize and operate small private businesses sustainably.

The knowledge and practical skills gained during this project are designed to allow the communities living in these mountainous regions to make more effective and sustainable use of existing land and water resources. This will be achieved by increasing the productivity of local agricultural activities and reducing the pressure on the environment caused by inappropriate methods of water and land use.

**Legislative framework, private land ownership and entrepreneurship.**

In 2004, the Land and Water Code, adopted at the 15th Khalk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan, made provisions for land in the rural areas to be granted to Turkmenistan citizens under private ownership for the purposes of personal subsistence farming and individual housing. Plots of land may also be granted to citizens under private ownership for commercial agricultural purposes. Citizens may also apply to lease land for grazing and other agricultural pursuits.

The resolution of the President of Turkmenistan also made provision for tenant farmers, who within 10 years demonstrated commercial use and productivity, to
secure a grant ownership of up to three hectares for agricultural production. Such plots may be those under previous long-term lease. This has provided a very constructive environment in which community capacity can be improved to achieve self-reliance in these historically subsistence areas.

Degradation and land use issues in the area
The landscape is under considerable pressure from over-utilization and inappropriate land use practices. Some of the more significant sustainability issues facing mountainous and piedmont areas of Turkmenistan include the degradation of the mountain forests and pastures; man-made desertification and salination and water logging. The main reasons for the emerging ecological crises is insufficient ecological literacy of the land users

A major challenge in addressing this problem is the lack of real understanding of the extent and severity of the degradation. A significant education process is required to raise awareness, develop an understanding of the practices required to redress the issue and the active engagement of the Government, the NGOs and the Community in solving the problem. Some of the symptoms of inappropriate land use in the region include the suppression of the more desirable plant type and their replacement by less desirable plants; declining pasture and crop productivity due to soil erosion and the loss of soil fertility, degradation of the region’s water quality; desertification and loss of biodiversity. These are all linked to and are impacting on the quality of life of the local inhabitants resulting in declining health and increased morbidity.

Recreational, tourism and cultural heritage
The mountainous and piedmont territory of the Central and Western Kopetdagh possesses many natural and cultural aspects that lend the region to recreational and tourism development. The clean air of the mountainous areas of the Central and Western Kopetdagh are seen locally as important for relaxation, health and recuperation.

The culture heritage of the area is also significant and endowed with architectural monuments and museums - ethnographic objects present the basis of recreational and cultural potential of Akhal Velayat. The region is one of Turkmenistan centers of folk applied art and includes carpet-weaving, silk-weaving and decorative needlework. At present Turkmen carpets are in demand in more than 50 countries of the world. The composition and structure of the carpets possess common features linking the region’s communities - a central field whereon basic patterns – “gyols” are placed is framed by a selvedge which small patterns differ from those on the central field. Patterns of the Turkmen carpets have a distinct, geometrized design and rich coloring wherein saturated red tints prevail. These patterns are centuries old and have a pronounced national character. From times immemorial the Turkmens have called a carpet “haly”, having defined by this term hand-made fleecy carpets, served as bedding for sitting. It is of note that samples of silk clothes from Merv (present Mary) were found in Egyptian tombs of the IX century. Turkmen women weave multi-colored silk clothes “ketechi”.

Project objectives and performance targets
The primary purpose of the project is to improve ecosystem management and the standard of living of the population of the mountainous and piedmont regions of
Turkmenistan. This was to be achieved by education and training on factors influencing ecological sustainability and to increase the level of understanding and awareness of local communities about the methods required be adopting and implementing to overcome the land degradation of the area. The final objective was to develop the community industry and entrepreneurship to achieve greater prosperity and self reliance.

**Methods**

Education and training were used as the primary tool to achieve the objectives of the project. Two workshops were run. The first educational workshop run in Badkhyz (Central Kopetdagh) focused on increasing the awareness of local communities to the risk and threats to the regional ecology. The workshop focused heavily on the training of landholders in the use of new agricultural practices and technologies that will lead to more sustainable land use. This training included reforestation, prevention of soil erosion and the adoption of practical measures to remEDIATE eroding landscapes.

A second workshop conducted in Nokhur (Eastern Kopetdagh) focused on improving the business acumen and entrepreneurship of local community groups with an emphasis on protection and development of natural crafts, in-country and foreign market demand and training on the receipt of installment credits and mechanisms for their redemption. It is also of note that the workshops focused on the practical application of the theory and the engagement of relevant experts that were familiar with the local conditions. Key community leaders were engaged in the development and delivery of the project.

The communities of the mountainous reserves were targeted for the education and training programs and included members of the communities from the Koitendag reserve (the easternmost of the country, the area is 2,714 ha) mountain systems of the Pamiro-Altai; the Kopetdagh reserve (the south of the country), high and middle mountains of the Central Kopetdagh; and the Syuntkhasardag reserve (embraces ecosystems of the Western Kopetdagh (dry subtropics) and adjacent flat grounds).

The Ministry of Nature Protection of Turkmenistan managed and coordinated the activity of the mixed community involvement and included representatives of local authorities; the respected elders from auls; and representatives of local intelligentsia: teachers, culture workers and other educational institutions.

Short term courses (seminars 3 to 5 days) were conducted and built around the three basic principles of the complexity of ecological training; the interdisciplinary link of the themes proposed for study and the professional orientation. The training included an understanding of today’s ecological situation as well as methods of social and economic impact on the ecology of the area.

**Project Budget**

At total budget of $6,000US was provided for the project. The funds were used to meet the costs of the delivery of the local workshops ($1,730), the services of national consultants to provide administrative support, organize and facilitate deliberations at the in-country workshops and staff expenses ($1,000), the purchase of necessary accessories to carpet weaving looms ($230), office equipment and supplies including...
communications (Internet, e-mail, fax, long-distance calls, etc) ($2,800) and the translation of two reports from Russian to English and Turkmen languages ($240)

**Outputs and Outcomes**

A community survey (questionnaire data) for the first training course in the mountainous settlement of Nohur, revealed a wide range of emergent issues affecting the ecology of the area and the living standards of the community. The solutions and pathways forward were complex and interlinked and included: the planting forests and forest nurseries, the improvement of sanitary conditions, training school children in garment manufacturing and carpet manufacturing, equipping of schools with computers and TV, improved health care, improved ecosystem and pasture management, hard surfacing of transport corridors and water infrastructure for domestic and agricultural purposes. These issues were used as the basis for the major focus of the training courses.

The second training course was conducted in the borough of Morgunovka, an area characterized by high elevation but generally of undulating relief. The themes of the seminars were again derived from the survey in this area and dealt with the priority local issues of salinization (including methods of control amelioration and irrigation technology/water use efficiency and crop production systems) and soil erosion – wind and water (including the use of groundcover), restoration of degraded pastures, pasture improvement and management, greenbelts, ecosystem and land use management, irrigation technology as well as water use and management. Other issues and training focused on forestry and the conservation and sustainable use and protection of wild plants and animals, small business management training, small enterprise development (sheep and wool products, forestry and nurseries). Telecommunications was also identified as major issues in terms of lack of access to new information and networking for learning.

*Specific outcomes - Badhyz*

Forty five people from the piedmont areas of Badhyz were familiarized with the goals and objectives of the project and information was provided to a further 55 people; local tenant-farmers have been trained in agrotechnical and agromeliorative methods of desalinization of soils; and a complex plan has been developed to further improve the living standards of the local community.

The following table identifies the priority issue and the suggested action to improve the standards of living in the Nohur region:
Table 1 Priority objectives and actions to improve the standards of living in the mountainous settlement of Badhyz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Key problems</th>
<th>Priority objectives</th>
<th>Specific paramount measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nature protection</td>
<td>• Solving problems of environmental protection and utilization of the natural resources</td>
<td>• Develop strategies and practices to protect and conserve the Kushka tulips - an endemic and endangered species</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establish better networks of National parks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community services and support</td>
<td>• Water use efficiency and management</td>
<td>• Improving sanitary conditions nearby settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of ecological and recreational zones for long-term relaxation</td>
<td>• Establish additional water sources of the drinking water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• To establish a sanatorium in Eurolanduz borough for the local population’s relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organization of a recreational zone near the hydro sulfide source of Garachop for health and relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Telecommunications and technical support</td>
<td>• Funds for the improvement and supply of technical equipment in schools</td>
<td>• Equipping schools with computers and television for educational and cognitive purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Organizational and legal problems</td>
<td>• Improving private entrepreneurship through legal and business training</td>
<td>• Conduct trainings and seminars on the “Protection of wild animals and plants, entered in the Red Data Book of Turkmenistan” in daikhan associations, koshars and schools for educational purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Assistance and training in the foundation of small-scale enterprises, as well as other forms of private entrepreneur activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Establishing of small-scale enterprises for processing sheep hide and wool, and manufacturing finished products of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The creation of nursery forests for growing pistachio saplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve the state of pastures by sowing haloxylon and kandym</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specific outcomes - Nohur
The local community has restored an area of 8 ha of Juniper forests where about 4,500 saplings have been planted; works of reforestation of slopes along mudflow beds have begun; private nursery forests have been organized with methodical aid of the project experts, wherein about 15 species of sylvula are being grown; needs analysis have been completed in order to increase sources of incomes of the local population
amounting to 80 people; proceedings of the training workshops have been published and distributed to 70 people; carpet weaving looms (4 pieces, factory-made) and sewing-machines (20 pieces) were purchased for two schools N 15 and 16.

In addition, two experienced teachers were selected to teach traditional sewing and national patterns for female garments. A production contract between school N 15 and the sewing workshop in Garavul village has improved the output and profitability of this sector locally by 10-15%. The time tabling of school hours for handicraft has increased up to 36 hours per week (7th – 9th forms - 240 and 34 girls are taught at schools N 15 and 16, respectively.

In the future, study groups for sewing are planned for females in an attempt to further improve the skills base of the locals and their employment prospects.

The following table identifies the priority issue and the suggested action to improve the standards of living in the Nohur region:

**Table 2 Priority objectives and actions to improve the standards of living in the mountainous settlement of Nohur**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Key problems</th>
<th>Priority objectives</th>
<th>Specific paramount measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Community services and support</td>
<td>• Solving issues of environmental protection and utilization of natural resources</td>
<td>• Improving the sanitary conditions of nearby settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improvement of medical services</td>
<td>• Establishing forest nurseries in the school yards to grow saplings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of ecological and recreational zones for long-term relaxation</td>
<td>• Establishing a branch of a maternity hospital and improving the quality of medical services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Organization of a children’s camp for summer rest within the region of “Ipai-Kala”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Telecommunications and technical support</td>
<td>• Using funds for the improvement of technical equipment of schools N 15 and 16</td>
<td>• The provision of computers and television for educational and cognitive purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Technical training and support, and infrastructure for the development of school study groups dealing with embroidery and carpet-weaving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Organizational and legal problems</td>
<td>• Improving private entrepreneurship through legal and business training</td>
<td>• The provision of small business management training and support carpet-weaving and other enterprises</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

The project has provided a wide suite of training and information to the local communities in agri-production technology and irrigation technology including water use efficiency. The questionnaires have identified a number of priority issues for the region that will facilitate or remove the impediments and blockages to the different forms of private entrepreneurship and increased alternative sources of revenue for the local population. The training has also targeted specific measures to address the significant degradation facing the region.

In addition, a number of questions were considered at the national seminar held in Ashkhabad city on the sustainable economic development of the region. The key issue raised and in need of further consideration included:

- The effect of Turkmenistan social policy as a factor influencing sustainable development;
- The value, role and impact of the legislation in Turkmenistan in the development and facilitation of private entrepreneurship;
- Ecology of the area and its degradation as a negative factor impacting on the environment;
- Protection of biodiversity and cultural values through the development of recreation; and
- State support of the folk applied art – the national heritage of the Turkmen culture.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are tabled for further development and consideration:

1. That consideration be given to the urgent need for a sustainable improvement in the standard of living of the population in the mountainous and piedmont areas of Turkmenistan. The strategy must consider the ecological stability of the area, decrease of anthropogenic pressure on the mountainous-piedmont natural complexes and increase the biological productivity of the ecosystem;
2. Training and development be provided to stimulate the development of private entrepreneurship;
3. The development of platforms and processes to improve learning and the sharing of experiences as well as the outcomes of this project; and
4. The urgent need to strengthen and improve education and land use in the mountainous and piedmont areas of Turkmenistan.

For practical purposes the spreading of new forms of nature protection education, the project team consider it necessary to create educational paths of nature in the aforementioned areas. With a view to support the future the development of the folk-applied trades, the project team thinks that it is necessary to create an ethnographic museum, with up-to-date media and communications facilities.

As the training sessions have resulted in a measured improvement of the standard of living in the mountainous areas, it is recommended that this work should continue in this direction in Koiendag and Kopetdag reserves of Turkmenistan.
5. Uzbekistan

Background to Country

Uzbekistan is located in Central Asia, north of Afghanistan and covers an area of 447,400 km² of which 10.83% is arable land and 0.83% is under permanent crops. Russia conquered Uzbekistan in the late 19th century. Stiff resistance to the Red Army after World War I was eventually suppressed and a socialist republic was set up in 1924. During the Soviet era, intensive production of cotton and grain led to overuse of agrochemicals and the depletion of water supplies. This activity left the land contaminated, and the Aral Sea and some rivers half dry. Independent since 1991, the country seeks to gradually lessen its dependence on agriculture while developing its mineral and petroleum reserves. Current concerns include terrorism by Islamic militants, economic stagnation, and the curtailment of human rights and democratization.

Uzbekistan is a dry, landlocked country of which 10.8% consists of intensely cultivated, irrigated river valleys. More than 60% of its population lives in densely populated rural communities. Uzbekistan is now the world's second-largest cotton exporter, a large producer of gold and oil, and a regionally significant producer of chemicals and machinery. Following independence in December 1991, the government sought to prop up its Soviet-style command economy with subsidies and tight controls on production and prices. Uzbekistan responded to the negative external conditions generated by the Asian and Russian financial crises by emphasizing import substitute industrialization and by tightening export and currency controls within its already largely closed economy. The government, while aware of the need to improve the investment climate, sponsors measures that often increase, not decrease the government's control over business decisions. A sharp increase in the inequality of income distribution has hurt the lower socio-economic class of society since independence. In 2003, the government accepted the obligations of Article VIII under the International Monetary Fund (IMF), providing for full currency convertibility. However, strict currency controls and tightening of borders have lessened the effects of convertibility and have also lead to some shortages which have further stifled economic activity.

The climate is mostly mid-latitude desert, long hot summers, mild winters; semiarid grassland in east. The population is 26,410,416 (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of

- 0-14 years: 34.1% (male 4,583,228; female 4,418,003)
- 15-64 years: 61.1% (male 7,990,233; female 8,157,136)
- 65 years and over: 4.8% (male 513,434; female 748,382)

Infant mortality is 71.3 deaths/1,000 live births with a net migration of -1.72 migrant(s)/1,000 head of population. The percentage living below the poverty line is not known or is not readily available. The GDP per sector is agriculture: 38%, industry: 26.3% and services: 35.7%.

**IPP Title:** Risk Elimination with the Involvement of Local Communities in Mountainous Areas (the Case of Nuratau Range)
**Partner Organizations:** Ecocenter Biostan (NGO)/Uzhydromet (Central Government Focal Point for implementation of the UN CCD)/GEF-UNDP-Government of Uzbekistan Project, “Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve as A Model for Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan (NKBR)”

**Key Objective:**

Improvement of livelihood conditions and environmental security of local communities through establishing garden-forests

**Introduction and Background**

It is well recognized that poverty growth in many areas of Central Asia is one of the highest in the world. Uzbekistan reflects this trend and is experiencing pronounced growth of poverty in the Nuratau range, located in Navoi, as well as the Samarkand and Jizzax regions. Dissolution of the Soviet economy and social security system left a large part of the local population (especially women and youth) without support or hope of a permanent employment job and without hope for their future. Local customs and the poor levels of education of the local people mean that moving to neighboring cities in search for better life conditions is beyond their capabilities. Those who try only increase the army of jobless and become competitors for limited jobs with urban inhabitants. Their remote location causes difficulties in generating effective economies and services and this leads to increased pressure on the natural resources. Local lifestyle needs such as firewood-cutting, overgrazing and poorly designed local irrigation systems development are becoming major causes of soil erosion particularly of the slopes of the mountainous areas.

The majority of the mountainous areas of the Republic of Uzbekistan are located in the arid and semi-arid areas. These environments are fragile ecosystems with poor land use and prone to environmental degradation. Risk of land slides, mud-flows, and erosion are high in these areas of Uzbekistan. Compounding the problem is that Uzbekistan is prone to frequent earthquakes. As a consequence, slope erosion is a real threat for local communities. The regeneration and stabilization of the slopes is one of the major priorities in eliminating or, at least, decreasing the risk for local communities in the region. In these remote areas, conducting rescue operations is difficult.

Uzbekistan has mapped the areas of greatest risk and the areas targeted by this project (the Nurata district of Navoi region) are identified priorities. The area is remote with major problems being experienced in early spring, late autumn and winter. Poor communication compounds the problem. Despite the efforts, taken by the central and local governments (economic support and various legal limitations and prohibitions in nature resource use), the situation has not improved in recent years. Of significance is that local people don’t trust the financial institutions and use any surplus funds to buy more cattle. This compounds the problem by increasing the grazing pressure and the impact on the ecology of the area.

Ecocenter Biostan, in cooperation with the Hydrometeorology Centre of the Cabinet of Ministers of Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzhydromet), NKBR, local governments and
Communities implemented this grass-root level community initiative in Uzbekistan named “Risk Elimination in the Mountains Affected by Environmental Degradation with Involvement of Local Communities (the Case of Nuratau Range)”.

This project addresses the complex issues of the threat to the livelihood and environment of the rural households in the Navoi region. The project focuses on mobilizing and empowering at least two villages living in poverty in the Navoi region of Uzbekistan.

Collaborative modeling and the implementation of community gardening with local authorities is seen as a mechanism to promote community engagement, as well as increasing the environmental security and awareness of the local community. Gardening is used as an initiative for different stakeholders to cooperate in the establishment of gardens as a source of food production. The project is of particular relevance in developing greater food security for the children of the participating families. The project will help to alleviate poverty and improve the environmental sustainability and security of the local area.

**Project Objectives and Performance Targets**

**Objective**
The overall objective of the project was to increase the livelihood conditions and environmental security of local communities through establishment of ‘garden-forests’.

**Performance targets:**
This project was considered as the pilot, though there are some similarities to the activities conducted in the Farish district under the reforestation sub-component of UNDP. The project was conducted outside of state forest territory with the main aim of this project the improvement of environmental security and increasing the livelihood conditions of the communities as opposed to just reforestation.

The major performance targets are:
a) The involvement of the local communities in effective natural resources management and use planning;
b) Increasing community livelihoods via diversification of economic activities from cattle breeding to gardening and sustainable use of forest vegetation;
c) Decreasing the human pressure to fragile mountainous ecosystems;
d) Ensuring community security against preventable natural disasters like slope erosion, land-slides, mud-flows, and to some extent the severity of the impact of earthquakes;
e) To increase the knowledge of local people in gardening and nature resources management, planning and use;
f) Increasing of the engagement of local authorities and local communities in joint planning and management of natural resources; and
g) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the project for implementation in other parts of Uzbekistan and Central Asia or areas of similar environmental and socio-economic conditions.
Methods

This project targets the territory of Nuratau district of Navoi region as a follow up to a survey conducted by NKBR. Negotiation with local stakeholders, including local communities, regional and district governments, landowners and all other potential partners supported the project and were interested in being engaged in the process. Ideas discussed included reforestation of the slopes using local plants, and cash-crops (Juglans regia, Amygdalus spp., Pistacia vera, Rosa spp.) as well as fruit trees of local varieties (apple, apricot, etc.). Developing garden forests would combine environmental sustainability with an increase in food security and the subsequent improvement in livelihood, health and wellbeing of the targeted communities. Diversifying the local economy away from grazing only was also seen as a way of reducing the pressure on the ecology of the area and improving self-reliance. Finally, the use of mass media to increase the awareness and engagement of other communities was also considered as important.

The overall project method was to create a model of sustainable management of natural resources at the level of local communities targeted to the regional needs. This was done by establishing groups of people interested in sustainable management of ‘forest-gardens’ and household diversification. These groups were consulted and engaged in the development of the model and used for the dissemination of experience obtained to other parts of Uzbekistan and Central Asia with similar socio-economic and environmental conditions.

The project team worked in partnership with the local communities to develop the major initiatives required to address the problem including mud-flows and landslides. From these discussions community members identified that the best way to protect their villages was to reforest the slopes and reconstruct ancient protection systems. The project team’s role was to assist the villagers in establishing the forest-gardens and to identify and develop other elements of protection from natural disasters as well as the provision of technical support. New gardens and forests of cash-crops were designed to increase income and reduce the pressure on the natural mountain ecosystems.

The project provided local communities with necessary fencing materials, seedlings and other such materials as well as assistance in establishing a legal framework for these activities. The project team also provided training in gardening and forestry techniques.

The project implementation was monitored by local (district and province) authorities, local agricultural cooperatives (land owner), and local self-governance bodies, as well as the partner GEF/UNDP NKBR project.

Project Budget

The project had an overall budget of $18,000 US. These funds were used to organize the national workshops to translate the outcome of the sub-regional meeting (Bishkek) into the local context and plan the in-country activities ($5,000); contract the services of a national consultant to prepare a background paper containing an assessment of the current conditions and needs of the country for institutional capacity-building at the local and community levels to eradicate poverty and promote environmental
sustainability ($1,500); meet the costs of services to provide administrative support, organize and facilitate deliberations at the in-country workshops, project monitoring and evaluation ($4,000); provide the services to support the community-level initiatives for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability as well as seedling and other project consumables ($4,200); the purchase, acquisition and installation of computer equipment and the provision of internet access for an initial period to support the national and international exchange of information and experiences among participating organizations ($3,300).

During the project elaboration period and first stages of the project implementation Biostan supported the project with all necessary computer equipment and access to Internet. NKBR provided its field office and accommodation and in several cases NKBR also provided transport from Tashkent to the fields and/or back. Activities of Dr S. Zagrebin and Dr Z. Nazirov were covered by NKBR and Uzhydromet, respectively. Local people provided their horses and donkeys for transportation of seedlings and seeds to the remote mountainous areas. In several cases they provided the fencing materials and all the planting and fencing constructing activities were done by the local people. For the workshops and working meetings at the local level, local self-government (Mahalla) provided room.

Total additional input was equal to approximately US $5,500US or approximately 25% of total project cost.

**Outputs and Outcomes**

Biostan has in cooperation with its partners conducted the following activities:

An agreement was reached with partner institutions (Uzhydromet as the national responsible agency for UN CCD implementation (Uzhydromet), and GEF/UNDP/Government of Uzbekistan project “Establishment of Nuratau-Kyzylkum Biosphere Reserve as a model of Biodiversity Conservation in Uzbekistan” (NKBR)) on the cooperation and the roles of each partner:

- Uzhydromet provided the political and information support;
- NKBR provided political, technical and partial logistic support; and
- Biostan conducted the practical project work with communities and provided expertise.

A project area was selected to include the territory covered by NKBR. This was done to complement activities conducted under its framework. Negotiations with the local province and district level were conducted to insure inclusion of their opinions and to secure their political support.

Negotiations were undertaken with community leaders, self-governance bodies and the local agricultural cooperative (the main landowner in the area) to establish the legal framework for the proposed land use. Biostan proposed the lease agreement used by NKBR with certain modifications. Later it was discussed with participants of the project to ensure all sides agreed on the legal framework for plot lease.

In July, a national introductory workshop was conducted to transfer the outputs of the sub-regional meeting in Bishkek. The workshop was conducted with the participation
of various stakeholders from different regions of the country. Workshops were also conducted to discuss the situation with environmental security and to mobilize local communities at the selected villages (Keskan and Sentob, the most affected by mud-flows). At the same time Biostan took a part in the conference on engaging communities, organized by UNDESA to share project progress with other partners on the program implementation from both Central and South-East Asia.

The baseline survey of the selected project villages was conducted during July/August. In September/October workshops were conducted to discuss with the communities the process and target areas for tree planting, the number and kinds of seedlings and seeds as well as the people who were to be involved on behalf of each community in the project implementation (responsible for each plot). Of note is that community members expressed a high interest and level of understanding of the project ideas. There was active participation in the project by the local schools and local religious leaders. Community members themselves decided on who must take a lead in the project implementation at the each village level.

There is an agreement with NKBR that representatives of these two villages will join the Joint Management Committee formed under umbrella of “Community forest management and reforestation” in the neighboring Farish district of Jizzax province. This will ensure certain aspects of sustainability and the monitoring of the project outcomes after the projects completion.

In September, the UNEP’s ESTIS system was designed and a project web site established. The site contains basic information on the project area, selected villages, project partners etc presented in Russian. The site is continuously updated and filled with new information to demonstrate the project progress and development.

In September/October 2005, the community members constructed and or re-constructed the walls to protect selected plots from mud-flows and flooding. Over the next two months the area was prepared and planted with trees. The project supported the creation of a nursery in one of the selected villages (Sentob). This was seen as one of the tools to secure the sustainability of the reforestation and gardening activities in the area. The nursery is managed by woman.

In November 2005, a project evaluation visit was conducted with the participation of Dr Alexey Tikhomirov of UNDESA, Dr Sergey Zagrebin, the National Technical Coordinator of NKBR, Z Omonov, Director of Shirkat (agricultural cooperative) and representative of local self-governance (Mahalla) O Ruziev, accompanied by project team members (Mr Oleg Tsaruk, project manager, and Ms Irina Kim, expert on work with communities). The evaluation team checked the plots, the status and seedling condition. The project progress was also discussed with community members. The project evaluation team and community members expressed their satisfaction with the project implementation.

A computer was installed to increase the capacity of Uzhydromet and the Biostan’s computer was upgraded.

In November, the first draft of the Russian version of the manual for communities in gardening and reforestation was completed. According to the Memoranda of
Understanding (MOU) with NKBR this manual will be translated into Uzbek and possibly Tajik languages and printed by NKDR for future use by both projects and for dissemination in other parts of Uzbekistan during 2006. In November/December, this manual was revised and updated, and is ready for pre-printing design.

The total area covered by gardens in two villages is at present 6.5 hectares; 4.5 ha covered by forest-gardens, another 1.5 ha planted with Pistacia trees and almonds. Finally, another 0.5 ha was established as a nursery for fruit trees. Both villages have created a common system of protection against natural disasters which includes gardens, stone-walls at the bottom of side-canyons, and forest vegetation in the side-canyons.

While the project is regarded as a success at the time of the final report, some project activities had not been completed due to delays in the transfer of project funds from the UN. These activities include the:

- Final evaluation mission of the project team, partners, and local authorities;
- Concluding workshops at the local and national levels; and
- Publication of the final results at the ESTIS site and dissemination of the final project materials.

Conclusions

Even within the short time frame of the project, the results show clearly that the project outcomes would prove very useful for other mountainous communities affected by natural disasters such as mud-flows, land-slides and flooding.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that visits be organized for other communities to observe and learn from the project. Such visits should include representatives of the other mountainous communities, local self-governance bodies, and local authorities from other parts of the Uzbekistan as well as from other Central Asian countries.

2. It is also recommended that support for the communities involved be continued with the provision of additional resources of seedlings etc to establish home gardens and forest-gardens for the whole territory of the canyons, since this project was only able to create protection systems for the most vulnerable and dangerous areas.

3. It is also recommended that consideration be given to the protection of existing vegetation through systems which regulate the pressure on the ecosystem by grazing cattle.

Southeast Asia

6. Cambodia

Background to Country

Cambodia is located in south-eastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, between Thailand, Viet Nam, and Laos with a total area of 181,040 km² of which 20.96% is
arable land and 0.61% is under permanent crops with 2,700km² of irrigation. The region has a wide range of natural resources including oil and gas, timber, gemstones, some iron ore, manganese, phosphates and hydropower potential. Illegal logging activities throughout the country and strip mining for gems in the western region along the border with Thailand have resulted in habitat loss and declining biodiversity (in particular, destruction of mangrove swamps threatens natural fisheries); soil erosion; in rural areas, most of the population does not have access to potable water and declining fish stocks because of illegal fishing and over fishing.

Due to the regional civil violence and political infighting Cambodia's economy slowed dramatically in 1997-1998. Foreign investment and tourism fell off. In 1999, the first full year of peace in 30 years, progress was made on economic reforms. Growth resumed and has remained at about 5.0% from 2000-2003. Even with Cambodia's recent growth, the long-term development of the economy after decades of war remains a daunting challenge.

The population lacks education and productive skills, particularly in the poverty-stricken countryside, which suffers from a lack of basic infrastructure. The fear of political instability has historically discouraged foreign investment. The Cambodian government continues to work with bilateral and multilateral donors to address the country's many pressing needs. The major economic challenge for Cambodia over the next decade will be fashioning an economic environment in which the private sector can create enough jobs to handle Cambodia's demographic imbalance. About 60% of the population is 20 years or younger; most of these citizens will seek to enter the workforce over the course of the next 10 years.

Climate in the area is tropical; rainy, monsoon season (May to November); dry season (December to April); little seasonal temperature variation. The population of Cambodia is 13,363,421 people (2004 est) with an age demographic of

- 0-14 years: 38.3% (male 2,583,606; female 2,534,460)
- 15-64 years: 58.6% (male 3,742,178; female 4,095,303)
- 65 years and over: 3.1% (male 149,466; female 258,408)

Infant mortality is 73.67 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has a neutral migration status. 36% of the population is below the poverty line. The GDP composition per sector is agriculture: 35% industry: 30% and services: 35%

IPP Title: Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction through Integrated Community-based Development in Mountainous Areas

Partner Organizations: Family Health Promotion (NGO)/CIDSE-Cambodia (NGO)/Provincial Forestry Administration in Kampot Province (Local Government)

Key Objective:

To improve the institutional capacity of the Provincial Forestry Administration, Commune Councils, and community organizations in policy implementation and networking on the poverty/environment nexus (such as community forests) as a strategy to improve living condition of the poorest people in Kampot Province.
Introduction and Background

Cambodia is one of the world’s poorest countries and a major focus of the central Government is the reduction of poverty and the protection of the environment. The central government has decentralized their approach to this problem through the respective administrative authorities to grassroots level organizations called “Commune Councils (CCs)”. These relatively newly formed organizations (with membership selected in February 2002) were empowered to undertake local level initiatives to address the poverty environmental concerns. However, the CCs members are relatively inexperienced and lack the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their mandated responsibilities.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF) addresses these complex policy issues at the local level through its administrative arm called the “Provincial Forestry Administration (PFA)”. The PFA in Kampot province, in the south-western region of the country, entrusted the Family Health Promotion (FHP), a local NGO, to collaborate with community members of five villages in Lboeuk commune, Chhouk district of Kampot province to implement a pilot project titled “Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction through Integrated Community-based Development in Mountainous Areas”. The project’s aim was to alleviate poverty through integrated community development in mountainous areas in the province. The main objectives of this human development initiative are to organize Community Forestry (CF), build capacity of the community leaders, and facilitate the empowerment for the CF and the beneficiaries in the five target villages.

The PFA in Kampot province and the CCs in Chhouk district were directly involved in the project implementation process. It was here that the responsible officials of the PFA and others participated in the project activities and gained their practical skills and knowledge for being able to implement policy on the poverty/environment nexus issue. The project has closely engaged the PFA in Kampot and CC of Lboeuk as partners for performing the proposed project activities. The FHP assisted with and facilitated fund disbursement and ensured efficient project input delivery. Of note is that the partner organizations include FHP (NGO), CIDSE-Cambodia (NGO), and PFA in Kampot Province (Local Government).

Project Objectives and Performance Targets

The primary objective was to contribute to the institutional capacity building of the PFA, CCs and CBOs on policy implementation and networking to address the poverty/environment nexus. This strategy was adopted to improve the living conditions of the poor in Kampot Province.

Specifically, the objectives were:

- To enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (through the Provincial Forestry Administration), Commune Councils and the community organizations for local governance through the training on development management on poverty/environment nexus;
- To improve governance systems for natural environment protection and poverty alleviation through the formulation of community forestry by expanding the enforcement of the forestry law/land law, as well as the access to forestry resources;
To develop food safety and security for the poorest of the poor in the community; and
To promote networking for lessons learning at the international, national, and local levels

The performance targets for the project were:
- Up to 270 people from the target villages and field-related institutions were expected to participate in the training courses and advisory/comprehensive workshops;
- Up to 360 people from the target villages were expected to participate in the training courses on advisory and sustainable, agricultural techniques;
- Formulation of five Self Help Groups and subcommittees with 18 selected members in five target villages;
- CF formulation and management in the five villages;
- Lessons learning and networks through ICT;
- To facilitate access by the poorest of the poor in the target villages; FHP provided each of these families with one certificate for free services; and
- Stimulated villagers to build and rehabilitate small-scaled infrastructures like lanes passing through the villages and clean water wells.

**Project Budget**

The total project budget funded by UNDESA: $19,000 US. It was divided into three phases of delivery - the first $7,500, the second $10,000, and the third $1,500. An amount of 670,000 riel ($170 US) was funded by GTZ and the CF members.

**Methodology**

The project was of eight months duration; May – December 2005 (original proposal was for 12 months). FHP, however, commenced the project in January 2005 due to the need to integrate some sensory activities into the Integrated Community Development project supported by CIDSE Cambodia.

The FHP used six staff working in a team to facilitate implementation of the project with support from UNDESA. The team also linked to other projects that were supported by other donors. The activities of all the projects were managed under a single implementation plan. This allowed project staff to work effectively together to improve their project delivery. In particular, for the project supported by UNDESA, FHP commanded one project officer, two staff, and three more agricultural and FA counterparts from the government institutions. All of them were required to coordinate and plan their activities at the monthly meetings with the manager of the FHP.

**Project Output and Outcome**

*Training Courses*

Fourteen training courses were conducted on:
- Community organization sensitivity;
- Law enforcement;
- Leadership;
- Good governance, and Gender;
- Agricultural Technique on organic fertilizer and botanical pesticide; and
- Veterinary and conflict solution.
A total of 428 participants attended the trainings. The understandings of participants were rated as very good 60%, good 30%, and poor 10%. After training, the community leaders were able to organize their own community assistance groups. The outcome was that the community engagement proved to be successful and the right approach to improving local capacity and community wellbeing.

The capacity for productivity of the top 60% of participants improved considerably in terms of their knowledge, practice and behaviors toward sustainable daily farming activities. This outcome also resulted in the changing of behaviors of others by example.

The training also allowed for the resolution of community conflicts, concerns and issues through out of court settlement by two-sided negotiation, moral coordination, and referee mediation. It is expected that as the communities develop capable leaders and the participation of the target groups and stakeholders are included, there will be positive changes toward achieving community wellbeing.

**Workshop activities**

There were totally eight workshops organized on:

1. **Poverty and environment nexus**
   The objective of the workshops was to improve the capacity of the participants which included representatives from government institutions, private sectors, NGOs, local government, and target groups. There were 48 participants in total (13 women). The workshop achieved four substantive strategies: (1) community engagement to address the poverty and environment nexus; (2) understanding of community development; (3) practices of participatory development; and (4) access to sharing and utility of resources in justice for the poor.

2. **Land Law & Forestry Law**
   Workshops were conducted to improve the capacity of the CCs, the community leaders, and beneficiaries in the target areas. A total 97 people participated (48 women). The participants improved their understandings on Land Law, application of right to land tenure and participation of forestry development, and capacity of sensitivity and access to legal services for practical process.

3. **Draft/Approval of CF Bylaw**
   These workshops targeted the management of the CF committees in three locations. A tenure proposal was submitted to PFA and approved. A bylaw was drafted by the participants (representatives of CF) and facilitated by FA experts. The bylaw focused on the principle of leadership, membership, management, benefits, term and recognition. This draft bylaw has been lodged to secure approval from all levels.

4. **Organizing communities**
   Thirteen small groups of members of the CF were formulated in the four villages in the way of solidarity and mutuality, for formulating community forestry. An eight member committee was elected. CF recognition documents such as a tenure proposal, agreement, statute/bylaw, and management plan were prepared and pending approval by the PFA (legal practices of basic roles of management).

Forest areas have also been identified for the community forestry to look after and to benefit from its products at three separate locations: (1) “CF Phnom Tnot” (area:
between 900 hectares and 1,200 hectares) treated by the villagers in three villages (Trapang Kuy, Trapang Korki, and Damnak Trayeng); (2) “CF Phnom Pot” (area: approximately 600 hectares) treated by the villagers of Toul village; and (3) “CF Phnom Prakhonlom” (area: approximately 600 hectares) treated by the villagers of Trapang Tmor.

5. Sensitivity Meetings
Meetings to improve community organization were held monthly by the villagers themselves in five target villages. There were a total of 368 participants (113 women) attending the meetings under the facilitations of FHP.

The small groups of CF were formed to exchange information and share knowledge relating to the living conditions of outdoor families. The members received information from group leaders, subcommittees, CD workers and other agents. These networking meetings linked individuals, households and communities. The CF meetings (held every three months) focused on reporting on CF management process, exchanging information and communication, and the planning of activities. All of the CC meetings encouraged the development of effective processes for decentralization and recognition of community initiatives.

6. Exposure Visits
Two exposure visits were conducted at CF Damnak Nakta Tmorpun and CF Phom Preykhmoa. These visits were organized by CIDSE and CFRP in the Chhumkiri district of Kampot province. Thirteen people (5 women) attended over three days and included commune council members, the CF committee and group leaders, and villagers of Lboeuok.

At the end of the tour, the participants understood the CF formulation process and management approach. They also obtained an understanding of empowerment and recognition from both the local and central governments. Moreover, they were able to see first hand the improvements in the CF in comparison to their own CF. The participants were required to document the good examples, experiences and improvements in practice for their target areas.

7. Computer Installation
A computer was installed and used in the office of FHP. This added to the existing equipment of a computer, printer (four functions: printer, scanner, copier and faxing machine) and an office phone. Some necessary materials such as paper and ink, were also supplied. This has significantly increased the skills of staff and the opportunity for FHP to network with NGOs and other government agencies at the national and international levels through ESTIS. The use of ICT also has created opportunities for poor communities, especially the community forestry, to mobilize their rights through increased voice and wider communication. It is ensured that ICT will benefit the socio-economic development of the poor communities.

8. Building networks of CF
One network was built for Natural Resources Management (NRM). The purpose of the network is for mutual support on internal and external micro financing and technical provision and to share experiences and exposure visits between the target areas on issues and solution of conflicts affecting the working areas. Members of the
network are GTZ, CIDSE Cambodia/ICDP (Integrated Community Development Program), Community Forestry Research Project (CFRP), PFA and FHP.

The accomplishments of the network to date include meetings on NRM, training on conflict solution, and a workshop on forestry management and forest law. Each member is becoming more capable to receive and/or provide information about the process of activity implementation of the NRM. A community network was also built across three locations in the community forestry in Lboek. The network is designed to enhance the capacity of the participants and the ability to lobby with members and stakeholders.

Conclusion
As a pilot, the project created significant interest and engagement by the target communities. The stakeholder engagement in the project activity and training significantly improved their skills in management and leadership. This in turn improved the planning, governance and the implementation of strategies that improved the sustainability of the forests and improved the living conditions of the target group. Furthermore, the project outcomes of economic, social and environmental benefits created interest by other communities in the community arrangement.

The project which has targeted capacity building for poverty reduction through integrated community-based development in the Mountainous Areas in Cambodia has proven to be an effective approach. While the project was limited by time, a key learning is that the process of the CF organization will take at least three years to mature. Community leaders have limited skills and experiences to draw on and will require considerable ongoing training, mentoring and support to fully develop and realize the capacity that is needed to address the poverty environmental nexus. In addition, due to the limited time of exposure the community network and use of ICT platform is very limited. There is a strong basic need and desire by the communities to continue the work done to date to improve community forestry as well as the knowledge and information sharing and developing the networking abroad through the use of ICT platforms.

Recommendations
1. It is important to secure the involvement of the local government (the PFA and commune councils) in community engagement from the outset. These stakeholders are close to the communities and are pivotal in reflecting on and solving local issues.
2. Local governance is to be encouraged with strong linkages to the needs and values of the community and to decision-making process at all levels.
3. Centralized government needs to bring about changes that will empower and support the local people so that they are able to practice their initiatives and mobilize available resources.
4. The movement to empower local communities is increasing the voice of the civil society organizations. This is playing a major role in improving the balance of social governance (government, private sector and civil society).
5. Capacity building for the community leaders is still required for sustainability of the development process, since the project implementation and its achievements must be maintained and utilized.

6. The beneficiaries feel more engaged when the development maintains their traditional skills (e.g., the ways of protecting forests by a belief of spirit). This value is used as a simple principle by the community themselves and encourages self-regulation and resistance against abuses.

7. For enabling continual action of the CF, creation of job opportunities is needed for the poor. This should be done through vocational training and providing the necessary resources.

8. Special projects designed to assist poor families (earning hand to mouth) is a key solution to addressing social discrimination of individuals by the community. The projects need to provide opportunities for the poor to be able to join social actions.

7. Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR)

Background to Country

Laos is located in South-eastern Asia, northeast of Thailand and west of Viet Nam with a total area of 236,800 km² of which 3.8% is arable land and only 0.35% is under permanent crops. Laos was under the control of Siam (Thailand) from the late 18th century until the late 19th century when it became part of French Indochina. The Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1907 defined the current Lao border with Thailand. In 1975, the Communist Pathet Lao took control of the government, ending a six-century-old monarchy. Initial closer ties to Viet Nam and socialization were replaced with a gradual return to private enterprise, a liberalization of foreign investment laws, and the admission into ASEAN in 1997.

The government of Laos is one of the few remaining official Communist states and began decentralizing control and encouraging private enterprise in 1986. The results were significant with growth averaging 7% in 1988-2001 except during the short-lived drop caused by the Asian financial crisis beginning in 1997. Despite this high growth rate, Laos remains a country with a primitive infrastructure; it has no railroads, a rudimentary road system, and limited external and internal telecommunications. Electricity is available in only a few urban areas. Subsistence agriculture accounts for half of the GDP and provides 80% of total employment. The economy will continue to benefit from aid from the IMF and other international sources and from new foreign investment in food processing and mining.

The climate of the area is tropical monsoon; rainy season (May to November); dry season (December to April). The population of Laos is 6,068,117 (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of

- 0-14 years: 41.9% (male 1,277,152; female 1,265,761)
- 15-64 years: 54.9% (male 1,642,895; female 1,688,175)
- 65 years and over: 3.2% (male 87,995; female 106,139)

Infant mortality is 87.06 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has no net change through migration. Forty percent of the population are below the poverty line. The GDP composition per sector is agriculture: 49.4%, industry: 24.5% and services: 26.1% (2003 est.).
**IPP Title:** Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM)

**Partner Organizations:** Village Focus International (NGO)/Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Extension Section, Salavan Province (Local Government)

**Key Objective:**
To support policy implementation, build institutional capacity, sensitize the community and establish networks for information sharing on the promotion and implementation of Lao PDR Natural Resource Law as a strategy to protect forest and natural land resources, and to increase income of the upland poor in Salavan Province, through community forestry.

**Introduction and Background**
The great majority of Laos people live in rural poverty and are dependent upon natural resources for food and income. Contemporary thought is that the most realistic pathway to an improved quality of life for these poor rural people is to enhance their skills and ability to use natural resources in a sustainable way while profiting from their use.

The policy framework that gives these village people rights to use, manage and profit from traditional lands is already in place in the form of the Land and Forest Law, yet most people (including officials) are unaware of this and do not know their natural resource rights or responsibilities. Furthermore, informed people are often reluctant to support the full implementation of the Land and Forest Law either because of vested interests such as illegal logging or profits from Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP) or, more importantly, from pressure from those in more powerful positions with similar interests. Finally, the district and provincial forestry officials – those with the most direct responsibility to support village people in natural resource use have limited technical resources, information and opportunities for training.

With this in mind, Village Focus International’s (VFI) objective in this project is to support NRM policy implementation and to build the local government and village institutional capacity. This is to include the sensitizing of the community to the issues and opportunities of sustainable land use as well as establishing networks for information sharing on the promotion and implementation of Laos Natural Resource Law as a strategy to protect forest and natural land resources. The end goal is to increase the income of the upland poor, through sustainable community forestry.

For the poor of the southern uplands of Laos and for many local government staff, especially at the District level, there is an almost complete lack of understanding of legal rights and responsibilities in regard to Land and Forest Law. This is often due to the low levels of education, training, resources and support. Since most poor people depend on the forest resources for their livelihoods, this is an issue that must be addressed.

Furthermore, for most upland people, the only marketable products they have access to are Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), but there is currently no comprehensive understanding of how these resources can be used for income generation and as a
strategy for natural resource management. Most people do not understand the market value of the NTFPs that are abundant in the forests around them nor do they have any connection to markets.

VFI is now working in the two most remote districts of Salavan Province (Taoi and Samoui), both of which have abundant natural resources and forest land but are the poorest districts in the province (and among the poorest in the entire country). In order to help local people break out of their cycle of poverty, VFI, in partnership with the Salavan Forestry Office, seeks to address this issue on no less than five levels:

- to support policy implementation for local governance on poverty-environment nexus;
- to enhance institutional capacity for the management of poverty-environment nexus issues;
- to help people (local officials and village people) understand their rights and responsibilities under the law in regard to forest and land use (the ability to use, manage and profit from the forest in a sustainable way);
- to create opportunities to market valuable forest resources as a strategy for proper resource management and livelihood improvement; and
- to promote networking on poverty-environment nexus at the local, national, sub-regional and inter-regional levels.

**Project Objectives and Performance Targets**

*Primary Objective*

To support policy implementation, build institutional capacity, sensitize the community, and establish networks for information sharing on the promotion and implementation of Lao PDR Natural Resource Law as a strategy to protect forest and natural land resources, and to increase income of the upland poor, through community forestry.

*Performance targets*

- To build central and local government partnerships in policy implementation;
- To build institutional and community capacity to manage poverty-environment nexus through training and implementation of the Laos Land and Forestry Law;
- To create a framework and foundation for NTFP (Non Timber Forest Products) to be marketed as a strategy for income generation for the poor in Taoi District, Salavan Province, Laos; and
- To establish international, national and inter-regional communication and lessons learning through networking.

**Project Budget**

- UNDESA Budget: $19,250US/year for one year (2005)
Methods

VFI undertook the project activities in close cooperation with the local government (both provincial and district levels) and with full leadership and participation of the village people. Regular contact, collaboration and cooperation with government officials was also maintained due to the policy (LUPLA and Legal) nature of the project.

ESTIS Network Establishment

VFI considered the provincial and district officials as the most important partners in efforts to protect and properly manage natural resources. Unfortunately for most officials, no access to information exists. Therefore, VFI helped to purchase and setup a computer and printer with access to internet resources. VFI staff trained and worked with key officials to allow them to access and use resources from both within and outside of Laos. This was done to ensure the official became better informed and educated and, hopefully, more capable managers of forest resources and more aware of and supportive of village needs and priorities.

Land Use Planning and Land Allocation

VFI worked with a provincial government counterpart, through which a national advisor (from the National Agriculture and Forestry Research Institute or NAFRI) on the LUPLA process was engaged. This advisor mobilized a team of LUPLA specialists to work with VFI, Salavan provincial and district officials and a village LUPLA team to do surveys, boundary mapping and, eventually, allocation of resource use zones. This process was only possible with the networks built at the national, provincial and district levels, and with the technical cooperation and training offered to the village LUPLA team. The district government produced an officially signed and stamped Village Land Use Certificate to the village giving the village authority over their own use, management and stewardship of village land and forest resources.

Laos Land and Forestry Law Development and Capacity Building

A series of information leaflets and materials were developed and distributed to improve the understanding and stewardship of Laos Land and Forest Law. The original draft of the guidebook was completed early in 2005 by a six-person team, including two VFI expatriate advisors, two VFI Lao field staff, and two Salavan Province government officials. Upon completion of the draft, VFI began discussions with the National-level Department of Forestry and NAFRI. Since this is a highly charged and sensitive issue, VFI has been forced to patiently wait until DOF were willing to go forward with the process to adapt, edit and approve the booklet. In late November 2005, DOF agreed to complete the editing process. VFI hopes this task will be completed in early 2006.

Creation of a framework/foundation for NTFP Marketing

The first stage in this process was the completion of LUPLA for each village. This has now been completed in 10 villages, VFI are specifically working on NTFP issues and this began in November 2006. Results will not be known until the first quarter of 2006. VFI completed NTFP surveys for the 10 villages in question, and all are in Lao language. Secondly, VFI took a study tour to central Viet Nam in order to meet with NTFP market representatives and with organizations that may be in a position to assist VFI (or villages directly) in the process of NTFP marketing.
International, Inter-regional, and National level Networking
In addition to the NTFP study tour to Viet Nam mentioned above, VFI built a strong network of people and organizations to support the Poverty-Environment Nexus project. Toward this end, VFI hosted a province-wide conservation workshop described below including representatives from UNESCO Ecotourism, NAFRI, and International Center for Tropical Agriculture, SNV (Dutch NTFP & Ecotourism Experts), An Italian Fair Trade Network, Jhai Foundation, Fair Trade Advocates and ENDA, Viet Namese NGO.

Project Outputs and Outcomes
The VFI project is on track in all activities, though completion of the entire project will only be fully realized over a longer timeframe. The timeframe for the project was too tight and limiting to complete all the project objectives. The following outputs and outcomes are presented as the progress achieved to date.

Computer/Internet Setup & ESTIS Development
A computer has been purchased and installed in the PAFO office in Salavan. The specifications of the computer are: 40 GB hard disk, 532 MB RAM, CD Writer, Speaker Phone, 17 inch monitor, Mouse, Keyboard and HP 1200 Printer. The equipment is in place in a designated room in the planning section of the Salavan PAFO.

Discussions between VFI and PAFO were undertaken to ensure a complementary understanding on how to best manage the computer’s use, especially in regard to ESTIS and online research use. VFI and the PAFO have come up with complete use regulations which are clearly and explicitly posted by a person in charge at the PAFO office.

An ESTIS website for the project was created by a VFI and PAFO team using ESTIS Builder in early November 2005. This is nothing more than the basic design and will be improved in a professional way in the near future.

Law booklet
The first draft of the Village Rights and Responsibilities for Land and Forest Use booklet has been completed by the VFI team and Salavan officials from the Taoi District Agriculture and Forestry Office (DAFO), Salavan Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO) and Taoi village people.

In order to finalize the development of this booklet the VFI will work with the technical division of the Department of Forestry and this process is underway. This is necessary to ensure that the formatting, word and sentence selection and meanings in this booklet are correct according to Lao law. VFI hopes to field test, adapt, finalize and print the booklet in the first quarter of 2006.

Study tour to Viet Nam/NTFP Marketing
The Viet Nam study tour took place during the period 22-28 August, 2005. Thirteen people participated, including four from Taoi and Samoui district government offices, three from the Salavan Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO), one person are from the Provincial Education Office (PEO) and five people from VFI.
The two main objectives for the study tour were to study non timber forestry product (NTFP) marketing in Viet Nam near Salavan Province (Kuangchi, ThetuenHue and Danang Provinces) and to visit potential partner organizations which have experience and successes in environment-poverty issues.

The VFI team visited two local NGOs in Hue City, toured Bach Ma National Park, visited the Hue Farmer’s Association, went to Danang City to visit a Eucalyptus and Acacia wood chip industry (which exports wood chip to Japan). The group also visited some NTFP traders in A Luei district, Konqchi Province close to Taoi and Samoui districts, who come and buy NTFPs in Taoi and Samoui regularly and send to Danang and export to China and other countries. In addition, the team also visited local and tourist sites in this region.

In general, VFI staff members feel it is absolutely necessary to establish good relations with officials, traders and NGOs on the Viet Nam side of the border. Product sales are likely to go to the Viet Nam market and so relations must be strong. VFI will act on behalf of village people to make sure that they are in a position of power or at least an equal party in this relationship.

Conservation Workshop
VFI, led by Hongthong Sirivath, organized a day-long, Salavan Province-wide Training Workshop on Development and Natural Resources Conservation and Management on 27th October 2005 at the convention hall of the teacher’s college. The workshop was chaired by Mr Boumtiem Phommasatid, deputy governor of Saravan and attended by 75 people, including high ranking officials from various departments at the province level, including all eight Salavan Province districts. NGO representatives and five resource persons from the central government level also attended (STEA, CPC, DOF, NTA and NAFRI).

This meeting was one of the best meetings of its kind in Laos, improving and opening up cooperation between PAFO and other NGOs working in Salavan Province, including CUSO, CAA, QUAKER, WWF, WORLD CONCERN and VFI.

The participants listened carefully to the input of the five resource persons who focused on Strategic Planning for poverty reduction using environmental protection and natural resources management. Following the presentation, the participants had the opportunity to share ideas in small groups on their experience in regard to development and natural resources management work, including problems and strategies in their own geographic areas. The results of this will be collated and will be useful for making a more complete strategy plan for the province in the future.

Conclusions
This project has proven to be highly successful and regarded as cutting edge in Laos. For a relatively closed political system, the fact that VFI has been able to create a complete annex of land and forest law, as well as extension materials to explain the law to local officials and village people was a major breakthrough in achieving the intended outcomes of the project. The making of this policy relevant to the lives of local people by helping them to improve their standard of living is a step not often
taken by development projects, and VFI has achieved this outcome through the project.

**Recommendations**

Given the progress of the project to date the following recommendations are proposed in order to complete the project and to continue to address the potential outcomes of poverty reduction and sustainable land use in Laos.

1. There is an ongoing need to continue to work with the Government officials to complete the final draft of the Legal Guidebook for Land and Forest Rights and Responsibilities;

2. There is a need to print and widely disseminate the Guidebook to officials, NGOs and other development organizations with follow up discussions to facilitate and secure understanding and ownership;

3. There is a need to create non Laos language extension materials to explain the NRM law to village people in Taoi and Samoui districts in Salavan Province;

4. It is recommended that extension material templates be made available to other organizations, to enable them to translate messages into other ethnic/cultural contexts;

5. There is a need to create a systematic process for the extension of these materials, possibly through the already established Traditions and Environment Volunteer Youth (TEVY) group;

6. Continue the LUPLA process in Taoi and Samoui districts, in order to complete village planning and to receive a Temporary Village Land Use Certificate;

7. Scale up the project by creating a ‘mobile unit’, with focus on LUPLA, Legal Rights and Responsibilities directly connected to community development; and

8. Focus mobile unit activities on approximately three provinces (perhaps north, central and south), with training offered to interested NGOs and the provincial and district government officials.

**8. Myanmar**

**Background to Country**

Myanmar, previously known as Burma, is located in south eastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Thailand and has a total area of 678,500 km² of which 15.19% is arable land and 0.97% is under permanent crops. Britain occupied Myanmar over a 62 year period (1824-1886) and incorporated it into its Indian Empire. Myanmar was administered as a province of India until 1937 when it became a separate, self-governing colony. Independence from the Commonwealth was attained in 1948.

Myanmar is a resource-rich country that suffers significant rural poverty. The Junta took steps in the early 1990s to liberalize the economy. However, the Myanmar economy continues to wrestle with inflation, microeconomic reform and continuing economic sanctions.
Published statistics on foreign trade are believed to underestimate the true value of the economy. While the Myanmar government shares a good economic relationship with its neighbors foreign investment is at present limited.

The Climate of Myanmar is tropical monsoon; cloudy, rainy, hot, humid summers (southwest monsoon, June to September); less cloudy, scant rainfall, mild temperatures, lower humidity during winter (northeast monsoon, December to April). The population is 42,909,464 (2005 est.) with an age demographic of:

- 0-14 years: 27.2% (male 5,967,487/female 5,717,795)
- 15-64 years: 67.8% (male 14,448,887/female 14,641,419)
- 65 years and over: 5% (male 939,092/female 1,194,784)

Infant mortality is 67.24 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has net migration of 1.8 migrant(s)/1,000 head of population. Twenty-five percent of the population is below the poverty line. The GDP per sector is agriculture: 56.6%, industry: 8.8% and services: 34.5% (2004 est.).

**IPP Title:** Kayah Poverty Environmental Nexus Initiative

**Partner Organizations:**
CARE Myanmar (NGO)/Township Peace and Development Committee (Local Government)

**Key Objective:**
To contribute to policy dialogue, improve institutional capacity for local governance; and promote networking for information sharing on poverty-environment nexus through the application of home gardening by women in poor rural areas in Kayah State.

**Introduction and Background**
Kayah State is located at the eastern side of Myanmar, bordering Thailand. With a total area of 4,529.56 km², it is the smallest of Myanmar’s states and divisions. The Thanlwin (Salween) River runs from north to south, dividing the state into two parts.

The total population of Kayah State is over 300,000 with the vast majority of the population living in the townships of Loikaw and Demosoe on the west side of the Thanlwin River where there is better security, soil fertility, some access to irrigated agricultural land, and where some health and education services are available. The population density of Loikaw and Demosoe townships is as high as 152 and 136 per km² respectively while that of the remaining townships in southern and eastern Kayah is much lower, ranging from 36 to 2 per km². There are over 20 ethnic groups and three main religious groups in Kayah State. Kayah State is rich in natural resources including timber and non timber forest products and gems such as emeralds. The main livelihood strategies are subsistence agriculture and the extraction of both timber and non timber forest products.

Shifting cultivation and overexploitation of the natural resources has caused difficulties in deriving a decent livelihood and resulted in significant environmental...
degradation. A climate of fear about the future is leading to a lack of confidence and this is compounding the threat to livelihood security. The social landscape is fragmented with a variety of ethnic groups and three major religious groups (Roman Catholic, Baptist, and Buddhist/Animist). There is economic competition e.g. border trade for timber and other forest products among various groups in the area leading to increased social insecurity in Kayah State.

A needs assessment conducted by CARE in May 2003 indicated that in general food shortage is the main threat to the livelihood of rural households in Kayah State in general. In all villages visited, it was reported that at least 70% of the households faced food shortages ranging from two to eight months per year, especially during the four months of rainy season from June to September. It was also reported that the duration of food shortage is increasing due to various factors including low productivity of upland agriculture, insufficient availability of rice produced from the low land paddy fields and limited alternative income generation opportunities within villages and the state in general. The impact of food insecurity is exacerbated when the security of the region deteriorates through conflict.

When food is available, the standard eating practice is three meals per day. Coping strategies for food shortage included borrowing rice (food) from neighbors, relatives and from neighboring villages, reducing food intake by means of reducing number of meals per day and reducing amount and quality of food per meal, selling labor, begging for food, using water instead of food to fill the stomach, and sending an able family member to work outside (mostly within the state and sometimes to Kayin and Shan State).

To cope with food shortages, most families borrow rice from a few rich households in the village as well as from neighboring villages with an interest rate ranging from 1:0.5 to 1:1. That means that borrowing one basket of rice a family needs to pay back 1.5 baskets to 2 baskets at the end of the year. Some borrow money with interest. The interest rate ranges from 8 to 20% per month. An average family needs to borrow 5 to 10 baskets of rice per year. It was reported that at least 50% of households in villages visited needed to borrow rice and/or money every year and most of them were living in an increasing debt cycle. The food produced from one year is used to pay back the previous year's debt, which means that families then need to borrow again simply to buy food. This results in a never-ending cycle of poverty.

It is the purpose of this project to use home gardening as a tool to empower and engage local women in poverty alleviation as well as a source of food production for poor families. This project also targets home gardening as a means to improve environmental sustainability. The project uses training in and use of environmentally friendly agricultural practices such as “natural composting” to reinforce environmental conservation. The education on the limited use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides is also used to strengthen environmental conservation awareness.
Project Objectives and Performance Targets

*Primary Objective*
To contribute to policy dialogue, improve institutional capacity for local governance; and promote networking for information sharing on poverty-environment nexus through the application of home gardening by women in rural areas where poverty prevails.

*Performance targets*
- Three participating community groups feel that their collaborative relationship has been enhanced;
- The Township Peace and Development Committee recognizes that the project intervention is appropriate, and that the lessons learned from the project are useful to promote policy dialogue among policy makers;
- Email network systems established among three community groups, authorities and CARE with other participating organizations (UN, INGOs, NGOs) in the sub-region; and
- Sharing of the lessons learned of the project at the sub-regional workshop held from 14 to 17 August, 2005 in Queensland, Australia.

*Specific objectives and performance targets*
1. Contribute to the policy dialogue concerning poverty-environment nexus in Myanmar. CARE Myanmar, through its program at the governmental inter-agency body, will be able to provide inputs of lessons learned from the project and promote policy dialogue among policy makers to address the issues of poverty-environment nexus.

2. Generate at the grass-root level knowledge and information for policy dialogue at the national and local levels. Through regular monitoring, evaluation and research, the project management will document lessons learned and provide inputs.

3. Build local governance capacity for planning and implementation of projects for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability. At least two persons in each of the three participating community groups gain knowledge on the modern project management methods, and familiarity with the project implementation process so as to replicate similar initiatives in future. In addition, the Township Peace and Development Committee become aware of the importance of the project objectives and major components of project activities to improve their policy and program initiatives in poverty-environment nexus.

4. Promote collaboration among ethnic groups, participating community groups and local authorities (Township Peace and Development Committee). Eight cross-visits to ‘model’ home gardens held within and between villages. At least 500 women have participated in cross-visits. Four project monitoring trips of three participating community groups. Four steering committee meetings held at every after monitoring trip.

5. Build capacities of women and women-headed households in poverty alleviation and environmental conservation. 1000 women who make their own
decision to participate in home gardening. Two vegetable species requested by women and planted in their home gardens.

6. Improve access to food of poor and marginalized community. 1000 women who use seeds, tools and fertilizer inputs for home garden production. 75% of women participants can mention at least two improved methods or gained knowledge on HG. 1000 women participated in home garden trainings.

7. Promote active participation of Myanmar in the sub-regional networking on poverty and environment nexus. A report prepared after the completion of the project evaluation, and it will contain lessons learned. A person from Myanmar who shares the lessons learned from the project at the Brisbane conference (14-17 August 2005).

Project Budget
A total of $21,838 US was funded by UNDESA. A total of $159,900 US was funded by Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC).

Methodology
In order to achieve the expected outputs and objectives the project targeted housewives, villagers, the partner organizations as well as raised awareness amongst the authorities at different levels to promote home gardening for food production.

Working with local partner Organizations
CARE partnered with Karuna Myanmar (a Catholic Church based organization), Kayah Baptist Association and Buddhist/animist groups. These groups participated in the monitoring and evaluation process (ongoing) on a three monthly basis. Staff Training sessions were also conducted to ensure local partners participated and shared their local knowledge and experiences with CARE staff.

Advocacy with Government agencies and authorities
Awareness raising meetings were held individually with the State level Government agencies and local partner organizations. During August 2005, a workshop was held to improve local authorities’ awareness of the project and to secure the approval to work in the remote and sensitive areas such as Gay Kaw and Hoya. The project manager also liaised closely with the State medical officer in order to keep him informed of ongoing activities, process and constraints as well as to improve their understanding and support for the activities being implemented.

Build on existing local organization at the village level
Faith based organizations have been playing a key role in establishing and implementing the project activities at the village level and a close working relationship has been developed. In particular in terms of safety and security in very remote areas, the clergy have been instrumental in guaranteeing the safety of the project staff.
Participation, empowerment and forging community links
Participatory approaches are used in all aspects of the project to ensure ownership by the community. The monitoring trips with the local partners who represent three different religious groups contribute significantly to forging community links.

Gender, ethnic and religious equity and harmony
The project operates in a complex environment with risk of disharmony. Therefore, the project staff approach all activities with a strategy to treat all groups and participants equally. The project focuses predominantly on the participation of women. Women are encouraged to take an active role in decisions on activities such as the running of the feeding centers.

Linking with PROGRESS Kayah long term development program
The project works very closely with the PROGRESS team to ensure that there are close linkages and in particular it ‘paves the way’ for the PROGRESS project by community preparation for longer term development approaches. Both projects share the same office in Kayah and coordination mechanisms have been set up.

Project Output and Outcomes
The three dominant religious groups (Karuna Myanmar, Kayah Baptist Association, Kayah and Kaya Phoo, and Buddhist/animist groups) feel that their relationship has been improved through the achievement of mutual respect and understanding. One of the religious leaders from the Buddhist/Animist groups expressed that he was reluctant to meet with the other religious leaders because he was afraid that they will persuade him to change his religion. After meeting them during the monitoring trips and coordination meetings organized by the project, he was now able to contact them whenever it was necessary.

The Township Peace and Development Committee recognizes that the project intervention is appropriate, and that the lessons learned from the project are useful to promote policy dialogue amongst the policy makers. The Kayah State level authorities allowed the project to be implemented in Kayah State. The village level authorities supported the implementation. These indicate indirectly that the authorities accepted the intervention and felt positive toward the project management implementation process and goals.

Email network systems were established among three community groups, authorities and CARE with other participating organizations (UN, INGOs, NGOs) in the sub-region. The email network however has not yet been established. This is because the landline email connection is not available in the Kayah State and is not expected to be available for some time. The computers were purchased. The email training has been provided to the three religious groups. Currently, CARE continues its program in Kayah State and will be applying for the IP Star internet connection.

The Rural Livelihood Coordinator of CARE shared the outputs, outcomes and lessons learned of the project at the sub-regional workshop held from 14 to 17 August, 2005 in Queensland, Australia.

CARE Myanmar, through its program at the governmental inter-agency body, is now able to draw on the lessons learned from the project to promote policy dialogue among
policy makers. This dialogue will contribute to addressing the issues of the poverty-environment nexus. Village Feeding Committees have been formed with the village leaders, elders, religious leaders, mothers and care givers of the children to participate in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation activities for creating an ownership spirit and promoting the concept of self reliance. Strengthening their capacity to advocate and negotiate for their rights to the different groups such as authorities, and other groups for the development activities that CARE is implementing in the project area.

At least two project staff have been recruited from each of the three different community groups (10 project staff). These people now have knowledge on modern project management methods, and familiarity with the project implementation process. Hence, these staff will be able to replicate similar initiatives in future groups.

The Township Peace and Development Committee are now aware of the importance of the project objectives and major components of project activities to improve their policy and program initiatives in poverty-environment nexus. The State Peace and Development Council of Kayah State allowed the project team to work in the most remote and conflict prone area which resulted from the fact that they increased their awareness of the importance of the project objectives, and major components of project activities has been increased.

Eight cross-visits to ‘model’ home gardens have been held within and between villages including:

- The townships of Loikaw Tsp and Demosoe Tsp. This visit included the Kayah Buddha and Kayan Catholics group from 12 villages of Loikaw Tsp. these cross-visits included sharing the experience of home gardening as well social, cultural exchange including improving the level of understanding and tolerance of each ethnic group (24 guest villagers & 38 host mothers);
- The three villages of Demosoe Tsp to share knowledge of home gardening (76 guest & 30 hosts);
- A cross-visit was held in Simedae village of Gaykaw area with mothers and care givers from 18 villages to share feeding and home gardening experiences (36 guest & 15 hosts); and
- A cross-visit in Hoya village tract for model farming (tea plantation using contour farming) and mothers & care givers from 14 villages were participated (28 guest & 18 host).

Monthly meetings were held within the project villages to allow the participating mothers to share their experience on home gardening. Within the 38 villages at least 1,000 mothers participated. At total of 1,845 women have participated in the cross-visits.

Monitoring trips were conducted in the Nant me’ khone village tract of Demosoe Tsp where representative members from the three community groups of Buddha, Catholics and Baptist participated. The monitoring trip was also conducted in the Dau saw be, Dau ta shar villages (Kayah, Buddha) from Chike’ village tract of Loikaw Tsp, with representatives from three community groups involved. Monitoring trips were also conducted in the Semiedae, Gaykaw village tract of Phrusoe Tsp, and the Hoya in Phrusoe Tsp villages with good community participation.
Four project steering committee meetings were held in every village after the monitoring trip and included discussion on the project findings, the sharing the experiences and advising on the project’s direction and activities. All of the steering committee members said that they have never been to the area of the other religious and ethnic groups, and were not familiar with other groups and stated this was a good opportunity to improve their understanding and to develop a relationship with one another.

The project contribution to building the capacity of women and women-headed households in poverty alleviation and environmental conservation was highly successful. A total of 3,434 women including mothers and women headed household’s established home gardens. After the awareness campaign on the value of nutritious food, and also seeing the benefit of surplus family food, the mothers willingly grew winter crops such as carrot, radish and kale in their home gardens. 1,720 women have received seeds as radish, carrot, green mustard, kale and spinach for winter cropping along with potato, soy bean and ginger for rainy season cropping. In addition, project participants have received garden tools such as a knives, rakes, hoes and seed trays to assist in home gardening. To raise awareness of organic farming, the project distributed bio fertilizers and bio composters for improving home garden production.

Before the project team introduced radish and carrot as new crops, the villagers had no experience of growing or using these crops. After introducing the new varieties, most of the women now know the appropriate growing practices including the methods of direct seedling, seed bed preparation, food preparation and preservation. In one of the group discussions in Nwar le Woe village, 90% of the mothers indicated that they liked the new crops, can grow them well and will continue using them.

A total of 2,357 women attended informal trainings such as the usage of seed trays, garden tools and seed bed preparation. They also have participated in practical usage of “A” frames to establish contour farming in the rainy season. These women also have attended the food preservation training to prepare foods such as mustard pickle, dried soy bean cake and dehydrated radish for year round consumption especially to cope with the periods of food shortages.

Conclusions
The foundation for social networks among the local groups and between partners (Karuna Loikaw, Kayah Baptist Association, and Buddhist/animist) has been highly successfully and laid down in Kayah. The usefulness of home gardening as a means of producing food for the family has been recognized and adopted as an ongoing practice by the housewives, project partners and the authorities who participated in the project. The food production activities have continued and are expanding as a practice. However, it must be recognized that the sustainability of these practices cannot be guaranteed owing to the short implementation period and the need for ongoing support and mentorship. Therefore, the program should be followed up in order to ensure that the impacts of this initiative are sustained.

As a follow up to this initiative, a medium termed community engagement project, named the Promoting Rural Opportunity, Generating Resources and Ensuring Social Solidarity in Kayah State (PROGRESS Kayah), has been designed and is being implemented with the objective of improving the livelihood security of 5,000 poor and
marginalized people and households (HH) from different ethnic and religious groups in Kayah State. The project will empower 51 Village Development Organizations (VDOs), two partner organizations and one social network to collaboratively develop, implement and replicate models for community development (agriculture, water and health) that will also encourage a secure enabling environment. Key interventions will include support for sustainable agriculture (crops and livestock), improving access to water and sanitation and strengthening health and nutrition awareness. Creating an enabling environment in which local capacity can be built and development can occur, will help sustain and extend project outcomes.

**Recommendation**

In the current operating environment, no policy specific policy interventions are appropriate taking into consideration the conflict, inaccessibility and insecurity. Therefore, it is recommended that these types of programs are developed for the remaining population in Kayah State.

**9 Thailand**

**Background to Country**

Thailand is located in South-eastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, southeast of Myanmar and occupies a total area of 514,000 km². A unified kingdom of Thailand was established in the mid-14th century. Known as Siam until 1939, Thailand is the only Southeast Asian country never to have been taken over by a European power. A bloodless revolution in 1932 led to a constitutional monarchy. In alliance with Japan during World War II, Thailand became a US ally following the conflict. Thailand is currently facing armed violence in its three Muslim-majority southernmost provinces.

Thailand has a free-enterprise economy and welcomes foreign investment. Exports feature textiles and footwear, fishery products, rice, rubber, jewellery, automobiles, computers and electrical appliances. Thailand has recovered from the 1997-98 Asian financial crises and was one of East Asia's best performers in 2002. Increased consumption and investment spending and strong export growth pushed GDP growth up to 6.3% in 2003 despite a sluggish global economy. The highly popular government has pushed an expansionist policy, including major support of village economic development.

The climate of the area is tropical; rainy, warm, cloudy southwest monsoon (mid-May to September); dry, cool northeast monsoon (November to mid-March); southern isthmus always hot and humid. The population of Thailand is 64,865,523 (July 2004 est.). It is of note that this estimate explicitly takes into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS. The age demographic is

- 0-14 years: 24.1% (male 7,985,724; female 7,631,337)
- 15-64 years: 68.7% (male 21,998,552; female 22,538,765)
- 65 years and over: 7.3% (male 2,167,421; female 2,543,724)

Infant mortality is 21.14 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has no net change in population through migration. Over ten percent of the population are below the poverty
line. The GDP per sector is agriculture: 9.8%, industry: 44% and services: 46.3% (2003).

**IPP Title:** Local Government Capacity Building for Environmental Sustainability and Community Development

**Partner Organization:** Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (Local Government)

**Key Objective:**
To strengthen the institutional capacity of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) for implementing a strategy of solid waste management through community participation and community development.

**Introduction and Background**

Bangkok the capital of Thailand has a population of about 10 million people and covers an area of 1,578 km². The population density of the region is over 4,000 people per km². It is estimated that 21,753 households live in slum communities with very poor health standards, sanitation, water or basic social services. Most of these slums are associated with degraded environments and poverty resulting from unemployment, lack of skills and employment opportunities. Statistics show that the population is growing rapidly, and without intervention and support the trend to poverty is expected to increase.

In terms of waste and garbage, over 9,500 tons are generated daily and a significant proportion is not properly collected or disposed of. Forty-six percent of the waste is either solid or organic and 38% of this can be reused or recycled. Very little recycling occurs at present. With smart reuse and recycling strategies up to 84% of waste can be recycled.

There is an immediate and urgent need to develop efficient and effective means of collection and recycling. Relevant studies illustrate that, besides direct reuse and recycling, some organic waste can be transformed into organic fertilizer or form part of a biogas production system. It is considered that if training and support were provided as well as the necessary facilities, the reuse of the material and the transformation into valuable products would generate supplementary incomes for the households affected by unemployment.

Accordingly, it is the objective of this project to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) for implementing a strategy of solid and organic waste management through community participation and community engagement.

This project is a component of a larger project, titled “Environmental Management and Poverty Alleviation in Communities”. This project is currently being implemented by the BMA with its own funding. The BMA funded project is to invest a large amount of hardware in infrastructure development, supplying logistics, and undertaking institutional capacity building through the training of the BMA staff in social mobilization, extension training at the community level in compost production, marketing, etc. for recycled products, lessons learning and networking. The UNDESA-funded component aims to contribute to the aspects of training, database,
networking, and policy dialoguing at the BMA head-office and its 12 District Offices, as well as the participating communities and other stakeholders.

**Project objectives and performance targets**

The formal aim of this project is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) for implementing the strategy of solid waste management through community participation and community development.

Specifically, the objectives are to:

- Enhance the capacity of the BMA to implement community based pro poor environmental initiatives;
- Social mobilization and promotion of the participation of the community in self development for poverty alleviation and environmental management through the application of innovative solid waste management schemes;
- Extension training and marketing of the organic fertilizer and home gardening; and
- Enhance the capacity of the BMA and participating communities for networking and lesson learning on poverty environmental nexus at the local, national, and international levels.

**Performance targets**

- Enhance the institutional capacity of the BMA in organizing and undertaking community based policy initiatives for environmental friendly waste management and income generation among involved community inhabitants;
- Institutionalization of community based bottom up decision making on poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability;
- Formulation of community based innovative solid waste management schemes;
- New technologies for income generating waste management systems introduced to 12 communities. EM is produced from wet organic waste for gardening purposes and dish washing solutions are produced to reduce the deteriorating water conditions in communities and canals; and
- Information networks established for sharing experiences at the local and national and international levels.

**Project budget**

The UNDESA has contributed a total of $19,569US and the BMA has contributed a total of $109,225US. The UNDESA funds were used to support the training and development workshops and community engagement processes ($15,569) and the purchase of computer hardware and software ($4,000).

**Methods**

Twelve pilot communities and a further 24 network communities were involved in the project. Initially training and engagement processes were undertaken by BMA officers and selected community leaders. This was followed by the installation of grease trap bins, community grease trap tanks and community waste storage facilities. Public relations and awareness programs were implemented and included dissemination of the project objectives and purpose, and the results of the project. The project was also widely communicated by the use of websites both nationally and internationally.
The funds of the UN were used to run the workshops and to fund infrastructure such as the grease traps and bins. Waste storage, etc were provided by the BMA.

With delays in the allocation of budgets and the subsequent commencement of the project, not all installations planned for have been completed. Despite these challenges, all training was completed and all other project activity is expected to be completed over the coming months.

**Project outputs and outcomes**

Approximately 250 community leaders and BMA officers from the Social Development Department and the Public Health Department, and the project working committee were involved in the project and the training programs. This resulted in a wide cross section of the relevant stakeholders being sensitized to the needs of the community, environmental management and the value of the project activity.

Community workshops and meetings were conducted with stakeholders and were attended by the community leaders of 12 participating districts. In addition, the staff of the BMA also attended. The workshops focused on community participation in the policy implementation and the formulation of community visions and work plans. The workshops resulted in a clear articulation of the visions and actions for each community. Meetings were subsequently organized and delivered in which the 12 target districts (250 participants) were given the policy and guidelines for environmental management and poverty alleviation in communities by the Permanent Secretary for the BMA. These policies have been integrated into the various community action plans.

In-country workshops were conducted to train the trainers (BMA officials) in the project objectives, social mobility and participatory methods, installation and methods of use of grease trap and waste systems, recycling, and the production and sale of products such as organic fertilizers, as well as home gardening and income generation. Thirty-six district officials were engaged from each district and social welfare, community health and cleansing sections as well as 14 BMA officials from these departments in addition to the environmental quality control division. Training was also provided on the installation, maintenance and use of the grease traps, waste storage facilities and waste separation procedures. These participants and communities are now able to scale up their production and use of these facilities.

Grease traps were installed at the rate of one tank per 10 households in the communities of Phoon Bumphen (174 household bins and 18 tanks), Samakkee Ruamjai (112 household bins and 11 tanks as well as two sets of waste storage and four waste separation facilities) and a further 1,841 households bins in the 10 districts with 184 tanks. All involved communities can install and maintain their facilities.

Community workshops were also conducted on the production use and sale of organic fertilizer. The workshops included the community members from the 12 districts and BMA personnel. A total of 150 people attended this training and at the closure of the training were seen as competent in the production and marketing of these products.
Bi-monthly newsletters were generated and distributed to 3,000 households and organizations to publicize the work of the project and its progress. This has resulted in increased awareness, discussion at the community and organizational levels and has increased the level of interest in the project and becoming engaged in the process. All participants from the 12 communities have developed networks for the sharing of information of the project and the key challenges and successes.

The Brisbane based UN networking workshop also aided in the development of between project lesson learning and information sharing and this has been transferred to the project participants. The international communication and networking has been further enhanced by the purchase and use of three sets of computers and accessories with access to the internet and the other project members on the poverty environmental nexus in Northern and Central Asia through ESTIS and the web.

A continuous improvement process has been developed through the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project activities and outcomes. This process will continue until the completion of the project.

Conclusions

The project has largely achieved what it had set out to do. This has been particularly effective in terms of encouraging local individuals groups and institutions to recognize and participate in environmental management and poverty alleviation. Even though a number of communities have yet to complete the installation of the grease traps and bins, significant progress is being made to this end. The few remaining groups are expected to finalize this in the immediate future. Some of the constraints confronting these communities and the project have included time, distance and budget. For example in the Phaendinthong Koy Roottaq-wa Community in the Nong Jok District (suburb of Bangkok) the inhabitants live far apart and it would not be possible to build grease trap tanks with the allocated budget. Hence, these people have instead established garbage banks after consultation with the BMA. In the near future once the community action plans are integrated into the BMA’s plans, the grease trap tank will be completed.

In terms of income generation, after training, many communities are producing cloth and dishwashing solutions as well as EM for their own consumption. This has the effect of reducing household expenditure. Of note is that most of these households are now developing products for sale with the help of the Loysai Anusorn School (which has been dedicating time to support the environmental conditions of surrounding communities). It is also expected that the BMA office will readily step in to provide additional marketing and support for these products and services.

The Phoon Bumohen Community in the Phasicharoen District has been famous for its garbage banks, which can increase family income by 1,200 – 1,500 Baht per month. The Wat Klang community have achieved success as well and can increase family incomes by 500 baht per month with waste separation. The Samakkee Ruanjai Community have also managed to augment family incomes by 1,200 Baht per month.

In a number of these selected communities, local people are making use of their bio fertilizers for backyard gardening. The various kinds of vegetables produced are
distributed amongst acquaintances and nearby communities, thus reducing their consumption costs. However, a number of people in the Phoon Bumphen Community are using bio fertilizers for growing vegetables commercially and are making up to 300 Baht a month per family. Where Morning Glory is grown in Premprachakorn Canal by the Samakkee Ruamjai Community, a family can generate up to 8,000 Baht per month.

This project has provided a significant opportunity for families to generate additional income. Organizations and institutions like the National Housing Authority, the community Organization Development Institute (CODI), Sripathum University, the National Institute for Development Administration (NIDA), Technology Prachomklao Pranakorn Nua University and the NGOs such as the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) have been able to co-jointly assist communities of underprivileged people who suffer from the current environmental problems and high rates of unemployment.

Through this project, BMA has shown considerable determination in committing itself to the improvement of the living conditions of the slum communities of Bangkok. In order to increase the effectiveness of this effort, greater financial and logistical support is needed over longer timeframes to facilitate the adjustment of communities to this new style of operation. The building of communities and their capacity is pivotal to this success. Inherent within this is the need to show flexibility in regulation to generate community cooperation and understanding. The bottom up community development approach has shown to be a key determinant in the project’s success. The ongoing evaluation of the project should be pursued to optimize success and evaluate the true benefit of the project.

Recommendations

The project has clearly demonstrated impact and success and it is recommended that the project be supported by the BMA for at least another three years. Furthermore, it is recommended that an external monitoring and evaluation team be formed to work closely with the project steering committee. Membership should include representatives of the BMA civil society committee. The following operational recommendations are also offered for consideration:

1. To ensure operational continuity and success, the BMA should support the project by integrating the Sufficiency Economy of HM the King, as declared by BMA to be a holistic and integrated principle of development.

2. That BMA integrate this project into the Development Strategies and Annual Development Action plan of BMA for the next three years.

3. That the project be duplicated and evaluated in the other 38 districts of Bangkok.

4. That the project be integrated into the curriculum of schools at all levels.

5. That the project processes and results be communicated to the other 38 districts of Bangkok to increase awareness, lesson learning and possible participation in the project.
6. That the project be offered to communities next to canals to develop water markets and water based eco-tourism to improve environmental conditions and income generation.

7. That the budgetary processes associated with the management and implementation of the project be streamlined to assist the efficiency of the roll out of the project and the burden delays placed on the local people.

8. That the timelines for the project implementation be extended to better reflect and accommodate the learning of this project.

9. That BMA provide the necessary support for existing community occupational groups.

10 Viet Nam

Background to Country

Viet Nam is located in South-eastern Asia, bordering the Gulf of Thailand, Gulf of Tonkin, and South China Sea, alongside China, Laos, and Cambodia with a total area of 329,560 km² of which 19.97% is arable land and 5.95% is under permanent cropping and 30,000 km² of land is irrigated. Natural resources of the area include phosphates, coal, manganese, bauxite, chromate, offshore oil and gas deposits, forests, and hydropower. Logging and slash-and-burn agricultural practices contribute to deforestation and soil degradation; water pollution and over-fishing threaten marine life populations; groundwater contamination limits potable water supply; growing urban industrialization and population migration are rapidly degrading the environment in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Viet Nam is a poor, densely-populated country that has had to recover from the ravages of war, the loss of financial support from the old Soviet Bloc, and the rigidities of a centrally-planned economy. Substantial progress was achieved from 1986 to 1996 in moving forward from an extremely low starting point - growth averaged around 9% per year from 1993 to 1997. Many domestic industries, including coal, cement, steel and paper, have reported large stockpiles of inventory and tough competition from more efficient foreign producers. The US-Viet Nam Bilateral Trade Agreement entered into force near the end of 2001 and is expected to significantly increase Viet Nam's exports to the US. The US is assisting Viet Nam with implementing the legal and structural reforms called for in the agreement.

Climate in the area is tropical in the south; monsoonal in the north with hot, rainy season (mid-May to mid-September) and warm, dry season (mid-October to mid-March). The population of Viet Nam 82,689,518 (July 2004 est.) with an age demographic of

- 0-14 years: 29.4% (male 12,524,098; female 11,807,763)
- 15-64 years: 65% (male 26,475,156; female 27,239,543)
- 65 years and over: 5.6% (male 1,928,568; female 2,714,390)

Infant mortality is 29.88 deaths/1,000 live births and the country has a net migration of -0.45 migrant(s)/1,000 population. Thirty-seven percent (1998 est.) of the
population is below the poverty line and the GDP by sector is agriculture: 21.8%, industry: 39.7% services: 38.5% (2003 est.)

**IPP Title:** Community-based Composting and Clean Vegetable Production in Huong Long Commune – Hue City –Viet Nam

**Partner Organizations:** Environmental development action (enda) Viet Nam (NGO)/Hue Farmer Association (Government NGO)/People’s Committee of Huong Long Commune, Hue City (Local Government)

**Key Objective:**
To model government/people collaboration and enhanced capacity for local governance through the improvement of community-based waste separation/composting and environmentally sustainable clean vegetable production in Hue City.

**Introduction and Background**
Viet Nam, in cooperation with UNDESA and enda Viet Nam, a non-government organization that has been operating since 1995, was responsible for looking for Vietnamese partners that were interested in developing a pilot project where environmental protection and poverty reduction could be simultaneously tackled. In this context, enda Viet Nam approached different local authorities and mass organizations in different provinces and cities to seek the possibilities of developing such a project. Hue Farmers’ Association and Huong Long People’s Community were eventually selected to be the local partners to participate in this program.

The initiative taken by Hue Farmers’ Association and Huong Long People’s Committee (PC) was to promote community-based solid waste collection where household organic waste would be collected separately to produce compost, which in turn would be used to feed the clean vegetable production.

Due to the rapid urbanization, tourism development and economic investment, Thua Thien Hue Province, as well as Hue City are faced with serious environmental problems, notably, the solid waste. On average, the City disposes 200m$^3$ of solid waste daily. However, the waste collecting system can only manage 70% of this amount. The remaining 30% of solid waste, mainly in the surrounding areas such as Huong Long Commune, are not processed through the City’s waste collecting system. This causes the risk of environmental pollution. It also causes degradation to the infrastructure and jeopardizes the city’s health. Huong Long Commune has four villages with a population of 9,330 divided in 1,835 households in which 816 households live on agriculture. The number of poor households accounts for 166 (5% of the commune population).

In the two proposed project villages of An Ninh Ha and An Ninh Thuong, the domestic solid waste is not collected, while the market waste is collected and burnt. There is a large amount of straw and residues from green bean crops not being reused. The animal waste also is not collected and it is contaminating the environment. Every year the Hue Health Centre, reports dozens of cases of food poisoning, in which the main causes come from the overuse of chemical fertilizer in vegetable growing and agricultural activities.
Currently, in Hue there is an increasing demand of clean vegetables to serve tourism and local consumption. Every day, on average Hue City imports 20 to 30 tons of various kinds of vegetables from other provinces to serve its consumer needs. To ensure the Hue’s consumers and tourists’ health, the Thua Thien Hue Province has set up a long-term plan to use 10 Ha of fertile agricultural land in Huong Long Commune in Hue City to grow clean vegetables. Therefore, the whole agricultural sector in the Huong Long Commune will have the opportunity to grow clean vegetables. As there are many varieties of vegetables capable of being grown, there is an opportunity to diversify the economy of the area. At the same time, a cycle of clean vegetable planting is only half that of rice and other kinds of plants. Thus, the coefficient of land use will increase, the economic interests will be higher and it will attract more laborers. This will contribute to the poverty alleviation and transform the social physiognomy of Huong Long Commune and Hue City.

As the solid waste causes environment and water source pollution, it will seriously affect the growth and quality of the clean vegetables, thus it will violate the technical requirements for clean vegetables. On the other hand, rural based domestic waste contains a high proportion of organic matter. Therefore, the organization for collecting, sorting and converting solid waste into compost for fertilizing the plants will require consistent attention and investment.

The land is available for extending the clean vegetable model/composting plant. The opportunity for success is high for the local authorities and the people of Huong Long Commune as the initiative fits well with the local culture and allows the parties to keep a strong sense of community linkage. The local organizations include the Government and NGOs and are interested in working on community development activities.

**Project objectives and performance targets**

The aim of the project is to model government and community collaboration and to enhance capacity for local governance through the improvement of community-based waste separation/composting and environmentally sustainable clean vegetable production.

**Objectives**

- To promote local government and community collaboration for policy implementation on the poverty-environment nexus;
- To enhance institutional capacity for local governance on the poverty-environment nexus;
- To improve community-based waste separation and composting systems;
- To promote environmentally sustainable production and distribution of clean vegetables; and
- To promote active participation of Viet Nam in the sub-regional networking on poverty and environment nexus.

**Performance targets**

1. Improved process of collaboration between local government and the community for policy implementation on poverty/environment nexus;
2. Improved environmental awareness/behavior of participating community members;
3. Enhanced institutional capacity of local government and mass organizations for environmental sustainability, employment creation, and income generation;
4. Systems established for community-based solid waste collection and composting;
5. Reduction of pollution from uncollected domestic and animal waste;
6. Improved means for income generation and job creation among participating community members;
7. Farmers’ use of compost in clean vegetable production;
8. Sustainable production/productivity of clean vegetable;
9. Improved soil quality; and
10. Lessons learning through networking with organizations in Viet Nam and abroad.

**Project budget**

Total budget funded by UNDESA: $19,200US. Contributions by local partners included:

- Land for composting plant and demonstration farm;
- Paved road to better access to the composting plant;
- Machines to facilitate compost production process (shredding and grinding machines);
- Human resources to manage and operate the project.

**Methodology**

The project was formulated on the needs of the local authority (Huong Long PC), the local government-organized mass organizations (Hue Farmers’ Association) and the farming communities (Huong Long Commune). The intended outcome was to reduce environmental pollution and to create incomes for farmers by promoting community-based solid waste collection and clean vegetable production using compost produced from collected organic waste.

Constructive partnership among involved partners were formed with open discussions and collective action planning to secure engagement and commitment as well as defining the tasks and roles for the member stakeholders.

Technical capacity was built through training and drawing on the experiences provided by the local non-government organization (enda Viet Nam). The training was targeted at community-based solid waste management, composting and communication skills and delivered through learning by doing process and community-based development approach.

The financial contribution of all involved partners was used as an indicator of stakeholder interest in and commitment to the project initiative.
Outputs and Outcomes

Although the project only officially started in July 2005 (due to a long procedure of project approval and budget transfer), enda and its local partners had undertaken all the necessary activities to start the project in January 2005.

Preparation phase

Orientation workshop
In February 2005, in cooperation with Hue Farmer’s Association and Huong Long Commune, enda organized an orientation workshop to introduce the main components of the project and to formulate a work plan for a survey which would be conducted in the project area (An Ninh Thuong and An Ninh Ha villages). This was done in order to have a shared understanding, and information on the volume of waste discharged from different sources, waste composition and vegetable farming.

Solid waste survey
In March 2005, a survey in An Ninh Ha and An Ninh Thuong villages was conducted to determine the project area, number of households involved, volume of household waste discharged, waste composition and vegetable farming. The survey showed that the average amount of household waste/day is 2.1 -2.5 kg in which 80% is organic waste. Inorganic waste comprises plastic (95% is plastic bags), the remaining is paper, broken glass and broken ceramic. Other valuable materials from waste were kept to sell to the informal recycling sector.

In addition, in Huong Long, there is a market (Dong market) and two schools (one primary and one secondary). There are 80 permanent sellers and around 50 mobile vendors operating in this market. Everyday they produce around 90 -100 kg waste in which the organic proportion is 80%. Waste produced from the two schools is mainly plastic and paper and amounted to one cubic meter a day.

The survey also identified the area and number of households in the two villages to be involved in the project in this pilot phase. Six hundred households in the area where waste collection services did not exist in An Ninh Thuong and An Ninh Ha villages were selected. A location for the constructing of the compost plant was also identified.

Sensitivity workshop
In April 2005, enda Viet Nam organized a sensitivity workshop in Huong Long commune. The main objectives of the workshop was to introduce the project to the communities and to examine the establishment of a community-based waste collection system (collection fee, collection schedule and method, collection means, collection operation and management). In addition, the design and estimated cost of the composting plant was explored as well as the process of compost production was undertaken via a learning by doing process.

Workshop outcomes included:

- The community representatives participating in the workshop were very interested in the project;
The initial operational and management scheme for waste collection and compost production as well as clean vegetable demonstration farm has been established;

Thirty households in both villages agreed to participate in the experiment of waste segregation and composting using the barrel production technique;

The working plan for this schedule was also defined;

A short training for ten voluntary households on waste segregation and composting was organized;

The design and estimated cost of the composting plant has been done; and

There have been eight persons from the two villages registered to be workers for household solid waste collection and for composting.

In May 2005, enda Viet Nam organized a training workshop for 30 households who would be involved in the composting experiment on waste segregation and compost production. Two barrels were provided to the community for the experiment. After 45 days, the first mature compost was harvested and used to feed the vegetables in the demonstration farm.

The trial using the barrels has demonstrated to the communities and local authorities the environmentally friendly features of the applied technique. Even though the two barrels were placed in the public space within the community, there was no bad odor and no environmental risk emerging from the composting experiment. This helped dispel the fear of possible environmental problems from waste decomposition and gained the confidence of the communities and local authorities in applying the composting technique.

The project provided communities with the opportunity to practice household waste segregation and composting using a simple aerobic technique. In addition, the compost produced was of good quality and well received by the local farmers. The experiment of solid waste segregation and composting proved to be a good approach for capacity building (learning by doing) and promoting the commitment of involved stakeholders in the pilot project.

After the contract between UNDP and enda Viet Nam was finalized in July 2005, the project officially entered its main phase. The activities and outcomes of this operational period follow.

During the period from July 2005 to November 2005, the following legal framework was necessary to facilitate the implementation of the different components of the project by the local partners:

The community-based solid waste collection and segregation was included in the socio-economic resolution of Huong Long People’s Council issued on 4th January 2005;

A contract between enda Viet Nam, Farmer’s Association and Huong Long PC was signed on 1st July 2005 (this was done before receiving the City’s approval for the project’s implementation);
The revised project proposal was translated and circulated to local partners as the basis for project implementation and the issuance of necessary agreements and regulations on 15th July 2005;

From a meeting between enda Viet Nam, the Foreign Affairs of Hue City, Farmer’s Association, Huong Long PC on 1st July 2005, the Foreign Affairs of Hue City highly appreciated the initiative and took the responsibility of reporting and submitting the project documents to Hue People’s Committee for approval;

Decision No 1158/UBND-TP Hue of Hue People’s Committee approving the project was issued on 25th July 2005;

A contract between Huong Long PC, the solid waste collection group and representatives of the involved communities (535 households) was signed on 2nd August 2005;

A regulation on environmental sanitation (waste segregation and collection) was formulated and disseminated to the involved communities of An Ninh Ha and An Ninh Thuong villages on 25th August 2005; and

A decision from Huong Long PC approving to provide 2,500m² of land for composting plant construction was made on 20th November 2005.

It is evident that the rapid issuance of legal documents concerning the projects implementation could only be achieved with the commitment and support of the local partners and the support of the City Authorities. The legal documents have created favorable conditions and clearer definitions of the roles and responsibilities of all involved partners. This ensured the project was developed in line with the objectives.

Organizational Structure
Enda Viet Nam provided the overall project management and co-ordination and the following groups were formed to support the implementation, management and ongoing activity on the initiative:

A Project Management Board was formed with three members including the president of the Farmers’ Association, Vice President of the Farmers’ Association and an Accountant;

A Community Management Board was formed included three members (vice chairman of Huong Long PC, two community leaders of the two villages); and

A local consulting board comprising four members from local organizations was established to facilitate the process of formation of community-based solid waste collection systems.

The Project Management Board was responsible for overall implementation and monitoring of project activities. The Community Management Board and the local Consulting Board are responsible for the implementation of planned activities that have been agreed by involved parties. Enda Viet Nam assigned a local project facilitator to provide technical assistance with the project. The Agricultural
Cooperative of Huong Long Commune was responsible for developing and following up the application of produced compost to clean vegetable production by assigning a person a member of the Co-op to work for the project. In the future, the Co-op will be responsible for promoting the use of compost to its farmers and to cooperate with the project to define the sustainable strategy and plan of marketing the product.

Based upon quarterly plans, the budget is formulated through community meetings with reference to the overall plan of the project and synthesized by the Community Management Board. The two collections, composting and vegetable experimenting groups operate on a voluntary basis and observe the contract signed with the Community Management Board. The involved households participate in waste segregation and collection system in line with the agreed regulation.

Installation of Computer Hardware/ESTIS software for Hue Association
In August 2005, enda Viet Nam provided technical assistance to the Farmers’ Association for the purchase of a computer set including a desktop computer, a printer and a dial-up external modem 56K. enda Viet Nam also helped the Farmers’ Association to install necessary software and internet connection to promote them to use the internet and to facilitate the e-communication with enda Viet Nam and other partners.

A short demonstration on how to access to and to use ESTIS software on line was organized by enda Viet Nam to the members of the Farmers’ Association. Enda Viet Nam is helping the Farmers’ Association to build their own website where they can put information about the project and their own program. It is agreed that first the website will be designed in Viet Namese in order to share with the Viet Namese Farmers’ Association around the country. If it works well and additional funds can be found to cover the maintenance and updating cost of the published website, it will be translated into English to share with the ESTIS community. At this stage, as an outcome of the Brisbane workshop, the project is registered on the ESTIS web system and has a three page site:
http://www.estis.net/sites/endavn/ or http://jp1.estis.net/sites/endavn/.
As no feedback has been received, the website has not been further developed or evaluated. It is proposed that UNDESA needs closer cooperation with UNEP to facilitate the networking and experience sharing process among participating countries.

Solid Waste Collection System
Through community meetings, the collection routes, door-to-door collection schemes, and discharge sites at the compost plant were defined. Waste from the households is collected every two days at 17:00 with a warning using a bell. During the project life, the collection fee is 2,000 VND (subsidiary fee). Two collection/composting and vegetable experimenting groups (two workers/group) have been established. Their salaries come from the collection fee (50%) and Huong Long PC (50%). The project provides wastebaskets to households who have signed contracts with the collection groups and practicing waste segregation.

Two environmental promotional core groups comprising of 10 women/village have been formed. The core women groups are responsible for raising the community’s environmental awareness, and to instruct households on waste segregation as well as
monitoring the community’s waste segregation and collection practice. Training on waste segregation for these two core groups was conducted on two occasions. After the training, different promotional techniques were applied (community meeting, household visits, brochures and billboard at public places and clean up day mobilization).

Four public bins are placed on public points in markets and schools. Extra curriculum on waste segregation and the environment for students is being discussed with the schools.

As of November 2005, 450 households have signed the contract for domestic solid waste collection services based on the segregation of two main types of waste: kitchen waste and other waste (recyclable and non-recyclable). However, only 180 households are actively practicing waste segregation and participating in the established door-to-door waste collection system.

Kitchen waste is collected every two days and brought to the composting plant for secondary selection before composting. The remaining households still bury/burn their waste in their garden. They are reluctant to pay the collection fee and skeptical about the quality of the produced compost. It is obvious that more time is needed to encourage people’s participation in waste segregation and collection and to convince them about the compost quality. Environmental awareness activities need to be done more intensively by the environmental promotional core groups and more public meetings informing the ward regulation on waste segregation and collection to the communities need to be organized in the months to come.

The community-based waste collection system commenced in September 2005. Until now, approximately 1 ton of kitchen and organic waste is collected from different sources for composting every two days. Initial assessment shows that involved households are more and more getting used to waste segregation. Yet, the volume of organic waste is currently sufficient to feed the production of compost for experimenting clean vegetable production.

Composting

Huong Long PC in cooperation with the Agricultural Cooperative has officially allocated 2Ha of public farming land within the Agricultural Cooperative territory for the construction of the composting plant and the establishment of the demonstration farm for the experiment of clean vegetable production using the produced compost.

With technical support from enda Viet Nam, in September 2005, a composting plant using the box technique taken from Waste Concern (Dakha – Bangladesh) was constructed. The plant has six composting boxes and is equipped with shredding and grinding machines. The shredding and grinding machines were designed following the prototypes that have been developed by the Thai communities in Bangkok where the Viet Namese local partners have learned during the field visit organized by UNDESA within the Bangkok Workshop in 2004. The local authority has also built a paved road from the main road to the composting plant to facilitate the accessibility for waste collectors. The construction cost of the paved road was taken from the local infrastructure improvement fund contributed by local authorities and communities.
under the governmental rural transportation improvement program in which the slogan “Government and People do together” has been promoted.

There have been several technical problems during the construction process of the plant. For example, the perforated holes were too small and needed to be repaired, the Bamboo Aerators were not strong enough to hold the volume of organic waste and needed to be fixed and the gutter system for receiving rainwater was not big enough to drain the water during big storms. With close supervision of the enda Viet Nam coordinator and project officer, all these problems have been solved and the plant was able to receive organic waste by the end of September 2005. Until now, there are some small problems needed to be tackled e.g. the shredded organic waste receiver of the shredding machine needs to be strengthened to avoid shredded waste scattering on the ground. The designed grinding machine capacity can only respond to the volume of compost produced in this experimenting phase. In the future, as the volume of produced compost increases a bigger grinding machine will be needed.

With technical support from enda Viet Nam, training sessions on waste sorting, waste treatment, application of EM additive and box composting technique were conducted in October 2005. Currently, there are three boxes where treated organic waste is being decomposed. The compost produced is used to feed the clean vegetable experiment. At the beginning, as the applied box composting method is new to the local partners, the workers were confused with the production process (proportion of additives to be used, temperature measurement and record and humidity control). With the assistance of enda’s project officer and Agriculture Cooperative officer, the workers are now able to properly conduct daily monitoring of the composting process (temperature measurement, humidity control and additive addition).

The market for produced compost is being discussed by the farmers within the Agriculture Cooperative. Nevertheless, the compost currently produced is only for the purpose of the experiment clean vegetable program. If the compost proves to be productive, it will be promoted and sold to farmers. The revenue from the compost sale is to add to the salary payment of the working groups. From the experience of compost production in the preparation phase, several farmers are currently practicing the barrel technique to produce compost at home from their own kitchen waste to feed their flower and bonsai gardens.

*Clean vegetable production*

The compost produced is used in the production of clean vegetables. The location of the demonstration farm decided by the Agriculture Cooperative is next to the location of the composting plant. In the future, when the compost production scale is expanded, the Agriculture Cooperative will be in charge of promoting the use of compost to their farmers. The produced compost has been sent for quality analyses. The results showed that the mineral and nutrient proportion is fairly high and no toxic elements were found.

Together with the Huong Long Agriculture Cooperative and with financial support from the Huong Long PC, Hue Farmers’ Association has improved the watering system for the demonstration farm preparing for the implementation of clean vegetable experimentation.
From August to December 2005, two experiments have been conducted by the workers of the composting plant under the technical assistance and monitoring of The Agriculture Cooperative. The experiments have been designed to assess the impact of compost on the growth of selected vegetables in comparison with the growth of vegetables of the same species using the conventional farming techniques.

The first experiment conducted in August 2005 was on green lettuce with and without compost. The compost used was taken from the practical barrel composting technique developed in the preparation phase. However, as it is an unseasonable crop and because of continuous rain, the experimental vegetable could not grow well and therefore there was no big difference between the two experimental plots.

The second experiment was conducted in October 2005, right after the annual flood, and was done on five different vegetable species. This is also an unseasonable crop. However, this time the experimental vegetables are growing well. Initial observation shows that vegetables using compost grow better than the ones without compost. Initial estimation made by the Agriculture Cooperative shows that clean vegetable produced with compost application will bring higher income for farmers.

In December 2005, samples of the produced vegetable were taken to the Environmental laboratory of the Geography Department – University of Ho Chi Minh city to test their quality.

Sharing experience with Laos project
In September 2005, a group of around 20 members from the local authorities and communities met. Organized by the Farmers’ Association, both sides shared experiences in developing and implementing their initiatives within the “Poverty - Environmental Nexus” program. The meeting was followed by a field visit where the Farmers’ Association presented to the guests their activities including the Community-Based Composting and Clean Vegetable Production project in the Huong Long Commune, (Hue City, Viet Nam) the high yield cow raising model and timber processing. The field visit gave the guest group an insight into the market of forest products and by-products in Thua Thien (Hue Province) as well as how the Farmers’ Association has developed income generating activities for their members (timber processing and high yield pig raising).

Wrap-up workshop
By the end of October, in cooperation with the local partners, enda Viet Nam organized a wrap up workshop to initially evaluate the implementation process and achievement of the project. Representatives from the Foreign Affairs Department, Economic Department, Natural Resources and Environment Department and the City Environment Company of Hue City were invited. The representative from the Natural Resources and Environment was very interested in the initiative taken by the project and showed his support and willingness to expand and duplicate this initiative to other peripheral areas of the city. The City Environment Company was ready to cooperate with the local authorities in providing the collection service of non-kitchen waste for the project area and showed their interest in cooperating with local partners for project expansion. The Foreign Affairs Department appreciated the two-fold objectives (environmental improvement and poverty reduction) of the project and expressed their
support by reporting to and recommending the City People’s Committee for legally facilitating and financially supporting the expansion of this initiative.

**Conclusion**

Although the project was completed over six months, it has achieved the main objectives set out in the in-country project proposal. Institutionally, the project’s nature (establishment of community-based solid waste collection and composting) created opportunity for the local authorities, mass organization and particularly the communities to work together in a constructive manner. The regional workshop organized by UNDESA in Bangkok where potential partners of Hue City had opportunities to participate did motivate their interest and commitment into the project initiative.

Their commitment could be expressed by the following:

- The implementation of experimental activities (barrel composting and solid waste survey);
- The provision of legal documents necessary for project implementation right after the project proposal procedures between UNDESA and local partners had been concluded in July 2005;
- The provision of land for composting plant and demonstration farms;
- The construction of a paved road from the community to the composting plant;
- The purchase and installation of machines necessary for the compost production (shredding and grinding machines); and
- The establishment of the community-based environmental promotional groups.

The institutional arrangement of the project did facilitate the implementation at the local level (commune level). The clearly defined roles of involved partners i.e. City Farmers’ Association (management and monitoring roles), Huong Long People’s Committee (administrative roles), Commune Agricultural Cooperative (technical and promotional roles), communities (implementing and promotional roles) and enda Viet Nam (advisory and supervision roles) proved to be appropriate to foster the transparency and accountability of the project. However, to facilitate the up-scaling of the project in the future, it is necessary to promote the involvement of the City People’s Committee, the functional city authorities for environmental management and economic activities i.e. the Natural Resources and Environment Department, the Environmental Company and the City Economic Division. Their interest in the project was seen as a positive sign for the future replication of the project in Hue City.

Organizationally, the barrel technique for composting introduced in the preparation phase was a strategic step that gained the acceptance and supports from not only the local authorities but also the communities. Technically, the introduction of community-based solid waste collection with direction to waste segregation and composting by enda Viet Nam received strong support from the local authorities and communities.

The operation of the community-based solid waste collection system has been in place for only three months with 180 of the 500 signed households actively participating in this service. The others are still burying and/or burning their own waste in their gardens. Environmental promotion activity should be continuously done via the
community-based awareness raising groups to encourage them to be part of the process.

Segregation of domestic solid waste has been practiced more correctly by involved households. Compost production process using the aerobic box technique is becoming familiar to workers. The quality of produced compost has been recognized and has gained appreciation by the farmers. This is the promising basis for marketing the product to farmers when it is to be produced in a bigger quantity. Nevertheless, as there have been two composting techniques introduced, some households are applying the barrel technique to produce their own compost from kitchen waste in their backyards. As such, not all signed households will participate in the collection system service established. It is planned that a workshop will be organized at the end of the project to assess the possibility of applying these two techniques in the project area in order to have better orientation for project replication and expansion in the next phase.

The initial outcomes of the experiment using compost on selected vegetable species were positive. Estimation from the Agricultural Cooperative (Agri-Coop) technical officer shows that with the increase in productivity and price (clean vegetable) the application of compost will create a significant additional income to farmers. However, since we are still in the experimental phase, it is too early to be too optimistic about the income generation possibility that the used compost clean vegetable will bring about. This largely depends on the soil preparation, the proper application of compost in combination with other chemical fertilizers (N,P,K) and the marketing of the final products via the Agri- Coop. According to the Agri- Coop, to effectively promote and bring the clean vegetables to the customers, an on-site advertisement program and a retail network need to be established in the future. Much work still needs to be done before the goal of creating more income to reduce poverty could be achieved.

With regards to the networking of the environment and poverty nexus program via internet website, enda Viet Nam has achieved its commitment of creating its website in the frame of ESTIS. This website has been introduced to the Farmers’ Association using the computer and internet connection (dial-up) installed with the technical support of enda Viet Nam and the financial support of UNDESA. It is planned that a local Viet Namese based website will be created for the Farmers’ Association to disseminate the project information and their activities with the nation-wide Farmers’ Association network. enda Viet Nam can provide technical assistance for the initial design and publishing of such a website using the ESTIS program. Nevertheless, the question arisen is that of how the Farmer’s Association could maintain the existence and updating of their website given their limited technical and financial capacity in this field.

Generally speaking, the project encountered the following difficulties and shortcoming during its implementation process:

- Bad weather conditions during rainy season inhibit the project activities particularly the compost production process and vegetable growing experiment;
- Regular flooding in October is also a shortcoming for waste collection and compost production process;
People’s awareness on environmental sanitation and solid waste issue is low, therefore people’s participation in waste segregation and waste collection is still limited. Not all the participating households practice waste segregation and fully participate in the waste collection system; 

Composting technique is new to local partners. Construction of the plant should be revised and improved. The current composting process is not completely correct. It requires enormous efforts of enda Viet Nam's project coordinator and facilitator; 

Although the initial outcomes of produced compost and experimented vegetables are promising, promotion of compost use and marketing of vegetables are issues that need to be developed further; 

The commencement date of the project was far behind schedule and the budget is very limited for this brand new “R” initiative while the expected outputs are fairly ambitious; and

Communication of the outcomes of the projects and share of best practices among involved countries have not been well developed in this pilot phase. It has been restricted in only the design and publish of in-country websites.

**Recommendations**

Given the complicated and multi-folded objective nature of the project, six months is not a sufficiently long period for adequately testing the project’s effectiveness and sustainability. It is recommended, therefore that there is a follow-up period of at least six months after the end date of the project, where technical support is to be provided especially in the field of clean vegetable production, quality of compost and marketing of vegetable.

Dissemination of project outcomes and lesson learned is to be developed. Sharing experiences with Qui Nhon City, where a similar project under the financial support of UNESCAP, and with other projects of the same nature funded by UNDP in Viet Nam are being undertaken, will be a good opportunity for project lesson learned dissemination and replication. In the short term, financial support from UNDESA for Qui Nhon representatives to participate in the regional workshop that will be organized in Hue is necessary.

As the project is a pilot phase, further financial and technical support from UNDESA/UNDP is an imperative for the local partners (not only in Hue City but also in other provincial cities) to verify the project outputs and outcomes (Hue City) and in order to replicate and expand this initiative.

Networking to share experiences and lessons learned among participating countries is an important goal of the project. Nevertheless it has not been adequately developed in this initial phase. It is necessary to find a practical solution that encourages the active participation and the commitment of participating countries into this network through the established websites. Moreover, financial and technical support is imperative to help local partners set up and maintain their newly built websites and to enable them to partake in the international network for information and lesson learned sharing.
Critical Review of the Project Portfolio

The project portfolio makes a considerable attempt to deal with a range of systemic issues underpinning and driving the poverty-environment nexus. Generally, the IPPs address most of the necessary processes to achieve success. The generic strengths of the portfolio lie in the distributed network of engaged participants and the potential to learn from the process.

While all the IPPs attempt to address the policy and governance needs, the engagement of the community and stakeholders, the development of improved income generation and the knowledge of the land management needed to address the land degradation, they do so with great variability in approach. This diversity of approach affords a significant opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of the different approaches. Furthermore, it is recognized that most of the projects build on and link to a wide range of existing and proposed activity. In this sense, the leverage provided by the UN funding is significant.

Within the current project portfolio there is generally a solid attempt to address the policy and institutional governance issues required to make any significant or measurable change in the target countries. The project portfolio has achieved considerable behavioral and attitudinal change. The change has been achieved by the direct operational and strategic engagement of the Government (local and central) as well as the NGOs and the community. The key success factor in achieving this change is attributed to the direct involvement of these three sectors in the formation of the projects, their implementation and their iterative review and improvement.

A second key success factor appears to be directly attributable to the focus on the priorities set and derived by the local communities in partnership with the Government and NGOs. Not only were the project outcomes focused on what were the issues of importance to the communities but they were the ones deemed to be likely to make the most difference and fitted within the cultural and attitudinal environment of the communities.

In many instances, the impediments and blockages to success were negotiated with the Government agencies who then facilitated the appropriate changes to the legal and policy of institutional framework. The processes of joint education, awareness raising and technical support about the key priority concerns also were seen itself a key strategy in achieving success.

In many of the projects, the engagement of women directly improved the capacity and status of the women but also secured their direct engagement and ownership of the process and outcomes. As keepers of the hearth their engagement was seen as critical to securing the sustainability of the initiative and to provide a direct link to achieving the added targets of improved nutrition, health and sense of community. The engagement of youth also has proved successful. This process has provided them with an improved understanding and knowledge of how to address the future challenges they face but also has provided them with alternative employment options and a pathway forward and hope for the future.
The use of project funds to establish community gardens, recycling etc has shown to be effective in providing practical examples of what can be done. The sharing of these successes also has contributed significantly to the diffusion of the outcomes to other communities and word of mouth networks needed to secure wider uptake. This approach has addressed the concept of adult education through the processes used by practical people of learning by doing.

The ICT and lesson learning platforms (discussed in detail in the next section) have been established but not yet fully exploited. Some of the expected outcomes of the ICT lesson learning platforms has been dependent on the projects being completed so that the distilled results and lessons learned could be shared. The ICT websites have yet to realize their full potential and an evaluation of their use and effectiveness will be needed in the fullness of time.

The UNDESA has adopted a strategic decision in the management of the project portfolio of independence by brokering the entire project activity to third party providers including the final analysis and write up. This approach has provided considerable transparency in reporting on genuine contributions toward the achievement of the project objectives and their contribution toward the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals. While the primary targeted Millennium Goals includeGoal 1: Eradication of poverty and hunger and Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability the project portfolio also has made significant contributions to Goal 3: the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women with secondary contributions to Goal 4: reducing child mortality by improving the health and nutrition through reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

It is recognized and acknowledged that the projects were, in many instances, pilot projects and very small in the target and impact area. Despite this, they have been successful and made a difference that appears at this early stage to be sustainable. However, it is also clearly recognized and acknowledged that the issues that the projects were attempting to address are complex and require a long term concerted effort. Given the need for target communities to move toward self reliance and self governance, this will require further consideration and the subsequent development of further specifically targeted projects.

Within the limitations of the existing suite of projects (resources and funding), there was a recognized constraint to addressing the need for sound market analysis or business planning. At this juncture, the project portfolio would provide only a limited analysis of the potential of the market or the competitive impact the activity may have on other local communities in the region – positive or negative multipliers. There is a need to follow up on the projects to assess the full benefit of the portfolio as well as any unintended consequences or negative impacts that were not foreseen at the outset. This may include downstream impacts on other business activity or unexpected economic leakage from the area due to other non target factors. Other limiting issues included the ability for a full analysis of the continuity of supply or storage of any produce/products.

As the targeted communities are generally poor and not well educated, it is reasonable to assume that there is a lack of business acumen in the local community to run new
ventures or to efficiently operate existing businesses. This is still seen as a critical point for ongoing consideration and development.

Production chains and supply chain logistics are raised as an issue for further consideration as it is recognized that this was generally not dealt with in the current round of projects. These issues need to be mapped and defined where new products and/or services are provided into the market place.

Quality assurance of the products is not explicit in many of the projects. While important, it was recognized that in many instances this fell outside of the scope of the existing projects. In most project areas, an analysis of the economic anchors also has not been explicitly identified or dealt with in any detail. It was noted that in most reported cases it has been shown that regional economic improvement relies heavily on building on existing businesses and leveraging off the economic anchors. In addition, the importance of inter-regional economic and social networks has not been explicitly explored or analyzed and may provide significant opportunities for further economic development.

Economic leakage is sited as the single biggest issue restricting growth in many areas. There is no clear or overt strategy in any of the projects to stem economic leakage from the region/community. In most instances, money is generated in the region, moves out or is lost from the region because supporting businesses are owned outside of the area, or goods and services are purchased externally. This drains the money from the economy and no multiplier effect is realized. Community or philanthropic business investment in the region needs to be considered in any future project activity otherwise expected gains may be lost from the region and the region remains subsistent, operating on a resource and capital mined economy. This point was seen as worthy of listing for consideration in future project development.

There is an ongoing need to more fully develop the comprehensive engagement process, including gaining shared goals and ideals, language, knowledge and decision making processes including capacity building. This is regarded as a key success factor in the current portfolio of projects. The degree in which it succeeded and how future projects can capitalize on the lessons learned and improve on this process needs now to be evaluated and iteratively improved for the next suite of projects. Part of this need is to consider how adults engage and learn, including experiential learning processes, appreciative enquiry and continuous improvement/learning. The diversity of the project portfolio and the approaches taken provides a useful opportunity to significantly contribute to such an analysis.

**Use of ICT Platforms for Lesson Learning and Networking**

The Poverty Environment Nexus Project aims, among other things, at developing networks for the promotion of information exchange, access to new knowledge sets and to build a communication portal between members of the project team and other interested parties. “Networking” in this context is seen as having three dimensions:

- Relational Networking: (linkages between the project team’s work and activities)
Network Governance: (inter-dependency and collaboration for mutual support and benefit)

Digital Networking: (information-sharing through the use of the Internet and websites, etc.)

The mid-term project review workshop was developed in part to provide a personal relationship and a physical ICT connection between the two sub-regions to share information on each other’s concerns and opportunities and to build on-going relationship for continuous data and information sharing and peer support.

The workshop provided a detailed overview and insight into the UNEP-developed ESTIS (Environmentally Sound Technology Information System) information management system and support infrastructure. This system was to be used for the establishment of the first level of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) networks on poverty-environment nexus among the project participating organizations and other relevant organizations and individuals. While the physical infrastructure was provided by the project to stimulate the connectivity for lesson learning and information sharing, the extent to which this was utilized is not yet clear. Accordingly, as reported earlier, this now needs to be evaluated.

Through the workshop process the UNEP expert, Mr Kyle Barrow, Associate Web Application Technician, UNEP/DTIE/IETC, provided a detailed insight on the role and potential of the ESTIS ICT system. Mr Barrow also provided a half day practical session on web page design and the establishment of a website using the ESTIS system, as well as how to use the system for network building and maintenance.

The basic strategy for the establishment and development of the ICT networks was to set up national-level networks using national languages, which are connected to each other at the regional and inter-regional levels with the participation of volunteer organizations for the network maintenance. The following describes the framework that was used for the formulation of the networks.

National Level Networks
The participating organization of each project were responsible to set up at least one website at the national level, using the ESTIS system in English, as well as their own languages such as Russian, Vietnamese, Laos and to maintain the website. These websites are to be used mainly for networking and communications at the national level. This has occurred and all countries have advised of the establishment of the sites and their operational implementation.

Regional Level Networks
At the regional level, a volunteer organization was identified for each of the Central Asian and Southeast Asian regions. These organizations have websites and networks for their own programs, and were agreeable to connecting their networks with the networks to be established through the poverty-environment nexus project and the ESTIS system. Russian language will be used for the Central Asian region, and English language for the Southeast Asian region. This goal has largely been achieved and the effectiveness now needs to be evaluated.
**International Level Networks**

To begin the establishment of networks at the international level, the project teams were linked to an ESTIS website established at the Institute for Sustainable Regional Development (ISRD) at Central Queensland University, Australia. This site provides hot links to other national and international research and development providers. As the project reports are now completed and expected to be loaded onto the respective sites it is expected that the lesson learning and networking may now become more proactive.

The ESTIS ISRD site has provided to the project team (website address): [http://au1.estis.net/sites/isrd/default.asp?site=isrd&page_id=E54523E0-0E1A-4FC0-8D53-8928FB62781D](http://au1.estis.net/sites/isrd/default.asp?site=isrd&page_id=E54523E0-0E1A-4FC0-8D53-8928FB62781D)

- Links to Australian University Community Engagement Alliance (AUCEA) – a network of 38 Australian Universities;
- Links to the Asian Pacific Extension Network, etc. (to support a knowledge network on regional engagement, capacity building, regional governance and technology uptake); and
- Help to source specific information requests at the individual level where appropriate;

A key consideration raised in developing networks for lesson learning and information sharing, is the need to recognize that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is only a tool and should not be seen as a substitute for interaction between people. The current ICT platforms can provide access to a range of services including Internet, CD-ROM, email, access to online libraries, universities, etc. However, the utility of the system is limited by the available infrastructure. Furthermore, it is recognized that alternative access to ICT platforms can now be gained by some users by using the emerging technology of cellular/mobile (satellite) communication systems.

ICT platforms have provided the project team with support and connectivity for their remote workers. The system also has made provision for mentoring and professional development, as well as information, support, advice and training. The system has provided for the sharing of project team experiences, access to a broader range of knowledge and information networks. Provided that support is ongoing from the participants, the system will be self-sustaining. However, as most of project participants reported, the degree of use has been variable between the projects.

It also recognized that there are hidden costs in ICT systems. This includes the need for continuous upgrades to ICT systems due to the rapidly developing nature of the technology and that some back up and support may be required. Success or failure of any ICT network is dependent on a highly supportive personalized environment i.e. backup, use, training and maintenance, etc. The system developed was based on a non-threatening framework that was designed to empower people to work more effectively through interaction.

There is an ongoing need in establishing the ICT platform to ensure that the clear ethical guidelines required in sensitive countries are in place to avoid any legal or
political embarrassment through inappropriate activity. While this has been provided within the ESTIS platform is not necessarily provided through the wider internet/web network. In addition, there is a need to be aware of and respect copyright and intellectual property rights, as well as the political sensitivities between countries.

In order to be sustainable, the system has been constructed in such a way that there is a clear understanding of what the user will obtain by using and continuing to engage in the network. To meet this end, information must be current, accurate and useful, and communication flow must be two-way (eg. instant messenger, email, chat rooms, etc). Most of all the system must be reliable and easy to use. The ESTIS support provided was designed to provide training for users prior to initial use and provide some framework of support for updating of skills and developing the “virtual” team (non-technological). The ESTIS web site www.estisglobal.net is referred to for more information and a self help guide to the use of ESTIS.

ESTIS was seen as the ideal platform for the project portfolio as it provides the freedom to share using standardized quality information and system design in any language. The system has shown to provide a fast and reliable web-based system that is free to the IPP project users, accessible anywhere and capable of building web-based communities using a self help menu driven approach.

The ESTIS system was used by the project team to establish a web global network on the Poverty Environmental Nexus. The primary objectives for the system were to:

- Provide a portal for access to new knowledge and the sharing of information;
- Provide a mechanism to support the skills development and capacity building of the project team;
- Build a wider network of partnerships and alliances interested in the Poverty Environmental Nexus;
- Have a self supporting infrastructure, low maintenance and cost and capable of access through a range of limited systems capability; and
- Provide for the staged development and sustainability of the network.

The informal system using the internet plus ESTIS will provide the advantages of building on the existing ICT internet usage patterns and platforms of the project team. The system will be able to expand to meet the individual growth needs of the users as well as providing a global platform to build new networks and partnerships/alliances. The system has a relatively low cost and is generally accessible.

This system will allow for access to platforms such as the Hot Mail system (most of the project teams indicated that they are on-line). This system will support email, email discussion groups – potentially offering a closed system for the project team, instant messenger, bulletin boards, etc. In addition, with further growth of the project activity, the access to the web could potentially provide an alternative commercial platform for product exposure and marketing.

**Conclusions**

The problem of poverty eradication and environmental protection remains a significant and major concern for many countries and the international community.
Those living in poverty are more often than not exposed to environmentally degraded areas. To address this global concern, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) launched the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project to focus on the widely spread problems of poverty and environmental threats to communities. The project portfolio has dealt in a hands-on way with the Poverty-Environment nexus. The project has successfully focused on institutional capacity building and networking to eradicate poverty in environmentally degraded regions in two of the Asian regions covering five countries each; in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) and Southeast Asia (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam).

Specifically, the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project was designed to and has achieved:

- The improvement of institutional capacity and the articulation of policies and practices for local governance for poverty eradication, as well as environmental sustainability and regeneration, through community based initiatives;
- enhanced community-based productive activities for poverty eradication and environmental sustainability; and
- established sub-regional and inter-regional ICT networks for the sharing of information and the provision of access to new networks and knowledge.

In order to achieve these objectives, the poverty-environment nexus project has approached the problem from the community demand side perspective. The approach taken has targeted the engagement of community-based organizations, the NGOs and the local and central government agencies in a partnership model. The project has specifically targeted poverty in the participating communities. Through this approach, the project has been successful in empowering the stakeholders and strengthening the community systems to improve environmental sustainability.

The project portfolio has achieved considerable behavioral and attitudinal change. This success is thought to be directly linked to the strategic engagement of the Government (local and central) as well as the NGOs in partnership with the community. The key success factor in achieving this change is attributed to the direct involvement of these three sectors in the formation of the projects, their implementation and their iterative review and improvement. Success also seems to be directly attributable to the focus on the priorities set by local communities themselves and undertaken in partnership with the Government and NGOs. The chosen project activities are culturally and attitudinally aligned. In many instance, the impediments and blockages to success were negotiated with the Government agencies who then facilitated the appropriate changes to the legal, policy or institutional framework.

The engagement of women directly improved their capacity and status and secured their direct engagement and ownership of the process and outcomes as well as providing a direct link to achieving the added targets of improved nutrition, health and sense of community. The engagement of youth also has proved successful. This process has provided them with an improved understanding and knowledge of how to address the future challenges they face but also has provided them with alternative employment options and a pathway forward and hope for the future.
The use of project funds to establish community gardens etc has shown to be effective in providing practical examples of what can be done. The sharing of these successes also has contributed significantly to the diffusion of the outcomes to other communities and word of mouth networks needed to secure wider uptake.

The ICT and lesson learning platforms have been established but not yet fully exploited. Some of the expected outcomes of the ICT lesson learning platforms has been dependent on the projects being completed so that the distilled results and lessons learned could be shared. The ICT websites have yet to realize their full potential and an evaluation of their use and effectiveness will be needed in the fullness of time.

The UNDESA has adopted a strategic decision in the management of the project portfolio of independence by brokering the entire project activity to third party providers including the final analysis and write up. This approach has provided considerable transparency in reporting on genuine contributions toward the achievement of the project objectives and their contribution toward the achievement of the UN Millennium Goals. While the primary targeted Millennium Goals include Goal 1: Eradication of poverty and hunger and Goal 7: Ensuring environmental sustainability, the project portfolio also has made significant contributions to Goal 3: the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women with secondary contributions to Goal 4: reducing child mortality by improving the health and nutrition through reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

It is recognized and acknowledged that the projects were, in many instances, pilot projects and very small in the target area. Despite this, the projects have been highly successful and made a difference that appears, at this early stage, to be sustainable. However it is also clearly recognized and acknowledged that the issues that the projects were attempting to address are complex and require a long term concerted effort. Given the need for target communities to move toward self reliance and self governance, this will require further consideration and the subsequent development of further specifically targeted projects.

Within the limitations of the existing suite of projects (resources and funding), there was a recognized constraint to addressing the need for sound market analysis or business planning. At this juncture, the project portfolio provides only a limited analysis of the potential of the market or the competitive impact the activity may have on other local communities in the region. There is a need to follow up on the projects to assess benefits and any unintended consequences or negative impacts that were not foreseen at the outset. This may include downstream impacts on other business activity or unexpected economic leakage from the area due to other non target factors. Other limiting issues included the ability for a full analysis of the continuity of supply or storage of any produce/products.

The project portfolio makes a considerable attempt to deal with a range of systemic issues underpinning and driving the poverty-environment nexus. Generally, the IPPs address most of the necessary processes and achieve success. The generic strengths of the portfolio lie in the distributed network of engaged participants and the potential to learn from the process.
The diversity of approach taken by the ten IPPs affords a significant opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of different approaches to the Poverty-Environmental Nexus. As most of the projects build on and link to a wide range of existing and proposed activity, the UN has achieved significant leverage in the use of its funds.

Recommendations

This section contains a list of recommendations that have been distilled from the analysis of the project final reports of each of the ten IPPs. The ten IPPs have been critically analysed to identify systemic issues of strategic significance to the UN in embarking of future project activity dealing with the Poverty-Environmental Nexus. Accordingly, the following conclusions and recommendations are made for further discussion and deliberation. The project activity and outcomes have shown that:

Strategic issues

1. Information on what succeeds in building the economy and sustainability of local communities is at best incomplete and fragmented. Accordingly, it is important to maintain and exchange views and information on the vital issues of poverty alleviation in the context of environmental sustainability.

2. There is a need to develop a formal understanding of what agencies are involved in what projects and with what degree of success in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels to ensure projects are well targeted and effective.

3. There is a need to develop enhanced mechanisms for formal and informal communication and knowledge sharing as well as the exchange of information across the organizations and instrumentalities associated with addressing the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels.

4. There is an ongoing need to foster genuine cooperation and collaboration between the community, NGO, and central and local Government as a way of achieving the goals of poverty alleviation in environmentally degraded areas.

5. In areas of political sensitivity or community unrest the use of local NGOs in partnership with the community seems best suited to negotiate pathways forward with the Government or statutory authorities.

6. There is a need to develop better and more inclusive decision making processes that improve community self determination and governance that involves all levels of Government, NGOs and the Community.

7. There is a need to develop improved information gathering and data management processes for informed decision making on the poverty-environmental nexus at the local, national and international levels.

8. All projects directed toward the poverty-environmental nexus have well developed project evaluation processes to measure and assess project processes.
and outcomes, and that the evaluation of projects continue and be undertaken well after the project has been completed (ie >12 months) in order to determine the degree of sustainability of the outcome.

9. There is a need to ensure that the whole community (community, NGO, industry and government) are kept well informed and engaged in project development and implementation through sharing information about project activities, achievements and progress.

10. There is an ongoing need for training and development on the poverty-environment nexus issues and in particular on developing skills in markets, marketing, financial analysis and supply chain management.

11. That the generic dot point included in Appendix IV are debated and developed for public use as a framework for developing projects and assessing project suitability in addressing the poverty-environmental nexus.

Operational needs

12. That consideration be given to improving the operational efficiency of the administrative and financial transaction processes of the UN as they relate to meeting short term project timelines.


Department for International Development (DFID), (2004b) Climate change deepens poverty and challenges poverty reduction strategies.


Twyman, C (1998): Policy Frameworks and Context I: Issues and linkages to poverty, natural resources and desertification, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield.


Appendix I  Mid Project Review Workshop Schedule

The IPP focal points from the ten participating countries attended all the five workshop sessions that were focused on refining the project methodology, confirming the re-orientation of the IPPs, and developing a network of project participating organizations and enhancing the potential of achieving quality outcomes through peer review and shared learning (see sessions 1-5 below). In addition, all workshop participants attended keynote plenary presentations of the International Conference on Engaging Communities in order to develop a broader understanding of the current leading edge information on community engagement practices in different countries. Furthermore, the workshop attendees were afforded the opportunity to interact with other conference participants in order to develop networks. On the final day, participants also were encouraged to attend relevant concurrent sessions of the conference to gain wider insight. The workshop schedule follows.

Session 1: (15 August 2005, 10:40 a.m.–12:10 p.m.)

Module 1: Overview

The UN team (Mr Alexei Tikhomirov and Mr Yoshinobu Yonekawa of SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA) provided a project overview (the background, objectives and status of the Poverty-Environment Nexus Project, details of the participating organizations, as well as the purposes and process of the Brisbane workshop). Professor Robert Miles, UNDESA consultant and the workshop resource person (Executive Director, Institute for Sustainable Regional Development, Central Queensland University), provided an overview of the key findings of the desk top review of the projects and an outline of the key considerations in developing ICT networks.

Mr Kyle Barrow, Associate Web Application Technician UNEP/DTIE/IETC, closed the session providing a detailed insight on the role and potential of the ESTIS ICT system (Environmentally Sound Technology Information System). In follow-up to the sub-regional meetings in Bishkek (October 2004) and Bangkok (November 2004), the project expects to utilize the UNEP-developed tool for information management, ESTIS, for the establishment of ICT networks.

Mr Amitava Mukherjee of UNESCAP briefed the workshop participants on the engagement of UNESCAP in this project initiative, as well as the functions of the Poverty Reduction Section of UNESCAP.

UNDESA had requested that the ten IPP participating organizations register themselves in the ESTIS system, and become familiar with the system as much as possible prior to their participation at the Brisbane conference.

Session 2: (15 August 2005, 2:10 p.m.-3:20 p.m.)

Module 2: Country Experiences –Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, Including Monitoring and Evaluation
The workshop participants divided into two separate groups by geographic region, namely: Central Asia and Southeast Asia. Each country representative provided a brief overview on their project and their experiences to date. The goal was to provide the attendees with a summary of the implementation status of the IPPs, as well as major challenges encountered, and lessons learned through the project implementation.

The IPP presentations/discussions covered:

(1) Title of the IPP, Name(s) of the Implementing Agency and Partner Agency;
(2) Implementation Status: Has the project started? Has the contract with the UN been concluded? Is the project under smooth implementation?;
(3) Major Challenges Encountered: Brief illustrations of the major challenges and proposals on how to overcome them; and
(4) Lessons Learned on Project Implementation.

Session 3: (15 August 2005, 4:30 p.m.-5:40 p.m.)

Module 2: Country Experiences –Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, Including Monitoring and Evaluation (continued)

The presentations on country experiences were followed by detailed group and individual discussions where the participants discussed common strategic issues on project implementation and preparation of future activities. Throughout this process, the workshop participants spent time with the UNDESA program managers and with the resource person.

A short consolidated session with the participation of the two geographic groups provided a wrap-up for these meetings at the end of the session.

Session 4: (16 August 2005, 11:30 a.m.-12:40 p.m.)

Module 2: Country Experiences –Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, including Monitoring and Evaluation (continued)

The workshop participants again divided into two separate groups by geographic region, Central Asia and Southeast Asia. The goal was for each IPP country to further refine the project methodology and implementation strategy.

This session saw further detailed group and individual discussions where the participants explored in more detail specific strategic issues for their project implementation. Throughout this process, the workshop participants spent time with the UNDESA program managers and with the resource person.

A short consolidated session with the participation of the two geographic groups provided a wrap-up for these meetings at the end of the session.
Session 5 (16 August 2005, 4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.)

*Modules 3 and 4: Roundtable Discussions on Using the ICT Platforms of the Future and a Presentation of a Summary of the Workshop Discussion and the Workshop Evaluation*

The resource person, Professor Robert Miles, presented a general plan to establish the ICT networks. Mr Kyle Barrow of UNEP/DTIE/IETC and Mr Alexei Tikhomirov of UNDESA made brief responses to the presentation of Professor Robert Miles. General group discussions followed.

Professor Robert Miles also presented a summary of the workshop discussions. The workshop participants were provided with copies of a draft of the workshop discussion summary and held a 10-minute session to discuss the subject.

The workshop discussions were completed and the workshop participants submitted workshop evaluation questionnaires.

(A half-day informal briefing session on ESTIS was undertaken by Mr Kyle Barrow of UNEP/DTIE/IETC in the morning of 17 August 2005. Although one participant had to leave Brisbane on 16 August 2005, all the other workshop participants attended the informal session.)
Appendix II    Mid Project Review Workshop Program

Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions

Organized by

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the Central Queensland University

PROGRAM

SATURDAY, 13 August 2005

All day          Participants’ Arrival

SUNDAY, 14 August 2005

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Pre-conference Day Tours (Optional)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 noon</td>
<td>Registration commences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Opening Ceremony</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Shigeru Mochida, Deputy E-S, UNESCAP, on behalf of Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary, UNESCAP</td>
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<td>4:25 p.m.</td>
<td>Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General on Economic Development, UNDESA</td>
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<td>4:35 p.m.</td>
<td>Peter Beattie, Premier of Queensland</td>
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<td>4:55 p.m.</td>
<td>Federal Representative</td>
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<td>5:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Panel Discussion on TV, “Focus on Democracy”</td>
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<td>Facilitator: Maxine McKew; Panel Members: Mary Robinson, Jose Ramos-Horta, Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Peter Beattie and Rehman Sobhan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Premier’s Welcome Reception and Exhibition Opening</td>
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NOTE:
The participants of the UN Workshop 2 are requested to attend the plenary meetings as listed in this program. The shadowed (yellow-coloured) areas indicate the program of the UN Workshop 2.
### Monday, 15 August 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>7:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration commences.</td>
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| 8:30 – 10:00 a.m.| Plenary: Welcome & Keynote Presentation  
Chair: Michael Hogan; Incorporating Indigenous Performance; Speech by Mary Robinson, Executive Director, Realizing Rights; Ethical Globalization Initiative, New York, USA  
Respondent: Rehman Sobhan, Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Bangladesh |
| 10:00–10:40 a.m. | Morning Tea                                                           |
| 10:40-12:10 p.m. | **Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions**  
**Session 1:** (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 90 min.)  
Module 1: Overview  
Chair Person: Alexei Tikhomirov (UNDESA)  
Presentation by Yoshinobu Yonekawa (UNDESA) and Remarks by Amitava Mukherjee (UNESCAP) (20 min.)  
General Discussion on the Presentations by UNDESA/UNESCAP (20 min.)  
Presentation by Kyle Barrow (UNEP) on ESTIS (30 min.)  
General Discussion on ESTIS (20 min.) |
| 12:10-1:10 p.m.  | Lunch                                                                 |
| 1:10-2:10 p.m.   | Plenary:  
**Keynote Presentation:** “Challenges of Global Events for Engagement” by Jose Ramos-Horta, Foreign Minister, Timor-Leste;  
Respondent: Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Assistant Secretary-General on Economic Development, UNDESA, New York, USA |
| 2:10-3:20 p.m.   | **Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions**  
**Session 2:** (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 70 min.) |
| 2:10-2:35 p.m.   | **Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions**  
**Session 2:** (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 70 min.) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2:55-3:10 p.m.</td>
<td>Module 2: Country Experiences – Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, Including E+M (70 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The participants will be divided into two groups by geographic sub-region: Central Asia and Southeast Asia.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Short Presentations on Each Country Experience (5 minutes for each country) (25 min.)</td>
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<td>Sub-regional Discussions to Identify Key Issues/Learning and Strategic Suggestions on Each Project (35 min.)</td>
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<td>Wrap-up Discussions in a Consolidated Meeting (10 min.)</td>
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<td>3:10-3:20 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:20-3:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:50-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Plenary: Keynote Speech on “ICT and Engagement” by Stephen Coleman, Cisco Visiting Professor in e-Democracy, Oxford Internet Institute, Oxford, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: Guido Bertucci, Director, Division for Public Administration &amp; Development Management, UNDESA, New York, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30-5:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session 3: (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 70 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30-5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Module 2: Country Experiences – Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, Including E+M (70 min.)</td>
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<td>Individual Preparation of Each Country Strategy Set-up (60 min.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The UN Team (UNDESA/UNESCAP/UNEP and Robert L. Miles, Resource Person) will be available for consultation and technical input. Consultation among the participants is also encouraged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30-5:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Wrap-up Discussions in a Consolidated Meeting (10 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<td>8:30-9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Conference Round-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 -11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Plenary:</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Keynote Presentations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Communities as Commonwealth” by Tim Costello, Chief Executive Officer, World Vision Australia</td>
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<td></td>
<td>“Engagement and the MDGs/Role of Civil Society” by Erna Witoelar, UN Special Ambassador for the Millennium Development Goals for Asia and the Pacific, Jakarta, Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30-12:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-12:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Session 4: (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 70 min.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:20-12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Module 2: Country Experiences – Progress Review and Strategy Set-up, Including E+M (70 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-12:40 p.m.</td>
<td>The participants will be divided into two groups by geographic sub-region; Central Asia and Southeast Asia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:40-1:40 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:40-2:20 p.m.</td>
<td>Plenary:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keynote Speech by Olivio Dutra, Minister of Cities, Brasilia, Brazil;</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent: Adil Khan, Division for Public Administration &amp; Development Management, UNDESA, New York, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20-3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>MAJOR PANEL- ENGAGING PEOPLE IN ACHIEVING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (70 min.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chair: Rehman Sobhan Chairman, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dhaka, Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Erna Witoelar, United Nations Millennium Campaign, Jakarta, Indonesia (invited)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'We the Peoples' Civil Society Engagement with the Implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, Pera Wells, World Federation of United Nations Associations, New York, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rhyl Jansen, World Federation of United Nations Associations, New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00-5:30 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Workshop 2: Interregional Information Exchange on Poverty-Environment Nexus Initiatives in the Central and Southeast Asian Regions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-4:10 p.m.</td>
<td>Session 5: (Venue: Merivale’s Boardroom 1, Ground Level (MB1), 90 min.) Chair Person: Yoshinobu Yonekawa (UNDESA)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 4:10-4:20 p.m. | Module 3: Roundtable Discussions for Future (60 min.)                     
|              | Presentation by Robert Miles, Resource Person, on a General Plan to Establish ICT Networks (10 min.) |
|              | Response by Kyle Barrow (UNEP) (10 min.)                                 |
| 4:20-4:30 p.m. | Response by Alexei Tikhomirov (DESA) (10 min.)                           |
| 4:30-5:00 p.m. | General Discussion (30 min.)                                             |
| 5:00-5:30 p.m. | Module 4: Presentation of a Summary of the Workshop Discussion and Evaluation of the Workshop (30 min.) |
| 5:00-5:05 p.m. | Presentation of a Summary of the Workshop Discussions by Robert Miles (5 min.) |
| 5:05-5:15 p.m. | Discussions (10 min.)                                                   |
| 5:15-5:30 p.m. | Workshop Evaluation by the Participants (15 min.)                        |
| 7:00-7:30 p.m. | Pre-dinner Drinks                                                        |
| 7:30 p.m.    | Conference Dinner                                                        |
# WEDNESDAY, 17 August 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:30-9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Conference Round-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Plenary:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Keynote Presentation</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mavis McDonald, Permanent Secretary, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, UK;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respondent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Georgina Beyer, Member for Wairarapa, Wellington, New Zealand;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respondent</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:30-11:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00-12:30 p.m.</td>
<td>The UN workshop participants to attend relevant concurrent sessions of the Conference, in consultation with UNDESA staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30-3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>The UN workshop participants to attend relevant concurrent sessions of the Conference, in consultation with UNDESA staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00-3:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Plenary:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Keynote Presentation &amp; Closing</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speech</strong> on “Community Engagement in a Changing America” by Robert Putnam, Peter and Isabel Malkin Professor of Public Policy, Harvard University, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30-5:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Brisbane Declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15-5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing Ceremony. Facilitated by Michael Hogan</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Conference concludes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# THURSDAY, 18 August 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All day</td>
<td>Participants’ departure</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-conference day tours (optional)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix III List of Project Leaders

#### Central Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of Participants</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Ms. Aigul Zhan瑟rika 沃</td>
<td>Executive Director , CAMP Consulting Public Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Mr. Asybek Aйdaraliyev</td>
<td>President/Chairman, International University of Kyrgyzztan/ National Center for Mountain Regions Development in Kyrgyzztan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>Mr. Eyeberdyev Bekmurad</td>
<td>Assistant to the Chairman of Interstate Sustainable Development Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>Mrs. Munavvvara Dodkhoeva</td>
<td>Director, NGO Secure Motherhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>Mr. Oleg Tsaruk</td>
<td>Board Member, Ecocenter Biostan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Southeast Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name of Participants</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Mr. U Shwe Thein</td>
<td>Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Mr. Richard L. Reece</td>
<td>Director, Village Focus International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Mr. Bang Anh Tuan</td>
<td>Programme Manager, ENDA Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Mr. Kuy Sophal</td>
<td>Partnership Program Officer, International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity (CIDSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Mr. Nob Sarom</td>
<td>Executive Director, Family Health Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Khun-Ying Dr. Nathanon Thavisin</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>Ms. Siriporn Rattanakumnerd</td>
<td>Community Development Officer, Community Development Department, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### International Organizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Organization</th>
<th>Name of Participants</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>Mr. M. Adil Khan</td>
<td>Chief, SGMB, DPADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>Mr. Alexei Tikhomirov</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator, SGMB, DPADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa</td>
<td>Programme Coordinator, SGMB, DPADM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESA</td>
<td>Prof. Robert Miles</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>Mr. Robert Rodriguez</td>
<td>Information Network Officer, Chief of Information Technology Unit, UNEP/DTIE/IETC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>Mr. Kyle Barrow</td>
<td>Associate Web Application Technician, UNEP/DTIE/IETC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>Mr. Yap Kioe Sheng</td>
<td>Chief, Poverty Reduction Section, Poverty and Development Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCAP</td>
<td>Mr. Jorge Carrillo-Rodriguez</td>
<td>Human Settlements Officer, Poverty Reduction Section, Poverty and Development Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## List of Project Team Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/City Organization</th>
<th>Name of Participants</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAMBODIA</td>
<td>Mr. Nop Sarom</td>
<td>Executive Director, Family Health Promotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMBODIA</td>
<td>Mr. Kuy Sophal</td>
<td>Project Officer, DPA (former CIDSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMBODIA</td>
<td>Mr. Pho Sovutha</td>
<td>Forest Administration Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAZAKHSTAN</td>
<td>Ms. Aigul Zhanserikova</td>
<td>Executive Director, CAMP Consulting Public Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAOS</td>
<td>Mr. Richard L. Reece</td>
<td>Director, Village Focus International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAOS</td>
<td>Mr. Thongdy Chantavong</td>
<td>Deputy Head, Provincial Agriculture and Forestry Office (PAFO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYANMAR</td>
<td>Mr. U Shwe Thein</td>
<td>Rural Livelihood Coordinator, CARE Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MYANMAR</td>
<td>Ms. Daw Aye Aye Khaing</td>
<td>Project Manager, CARE Myanmar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>KhunYing Dr. Nathanon Thavisin</td>
<td>Permanent Secretary, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THAILAND</td>
<td>Ms. Siriporn Rattanakummerd</td>
<td>Representative, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIETNAM</td>
<td>Dr. Truong Manh Tien</td>
<td>Director General, Department of Environment, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIETNAM</td>
<td>Mr. Bang Anh Tuan</td>
<td>Programme Manager, ENDA VIETNAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUE, VIETNAM</td>
<td>Mr. Le Khanh</td>
<td>Director, Hue City Farmers’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUE, VIETNAM</td>
<td>Mr. Nguyen Dang Thanh</td>
<td>Vice Chairman of Hue City People’s Committee - Head of Organization Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUE, VIETNAM</td>
<td>Mr. Phan Canh Viet Cuong</td>
<td>Deputy Director of Hue City Bureau of Foreign Affairs - Member of Organization Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HUE, VIETNAM</td>
<td>Ms. Tran Vu Quynh Trang</td>
<td>Consultant of Hue City Bureau of Foreign Affairs – Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP/PEP, Vietnam</td>
<td>Ms. Kim Thi Thuy Ngoc</td>
<td>Research and Communication Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP/PEP, Vietnam</td>
<td>Dr. Nguyen Trung Thang</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESAA NEW YORK</td>
<td>Mr. Stephen Carson</td>
<td>Senior Technical Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESAA NEW YORK</td>
<td>Mr. Mohammed Adil Khan</td>
<td>Chief, SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESAA NEW YORK</td>
<td>Mr. Yoshinobu Yonekawa</td>
<td>Program Coordinator, SGMB/DPADM/UNDESA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDESAA NEW YORK</td>
<td>Prof. Robert Miles</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix IV Generic Community Development Dot Points

The following generic comments are provided on community development:

- Projects must be seen as culture change and processes put in place to limit short term negative impacts on those who do not directly benefit from the project (e.g. negative impacts on men from rise in status or income of women);
- Community ownership – people must want to be involved and be clearly able to see the benefits for them;
- Community must be able to influence the decision making and direction of the project – imposed projects won’t work, even if outsiders believe there are benefits;
- Must not be seen as charity – charity maintains poverty – so should incorporate some sort of ‘buy in’, ‘pay back’, etc. that is fair and equitable: still needs to be fairly easy to engage initially – maybe put a percentage of income earned into a project/infrastructure that has whole of community benefit e.g. improved water supply, electricity, medical centre, school, etc.;
- Project must give those involved status within the community – being involved is a privilege – not charity that reduces status – status of these people will already be low;
- Benefits to broader community must also be sold well, so that whole community is supportive and doesn’t try to undermine the process;
- Must have clear and proactive support from ‘people in power’ – local government, bureaucracy and community elders – this needs to be well established before project begins;
- Must fit within the existing culture and values of the community as it is now – value add as much as possible to existing networks, social infrastructure and positive existing practice – rather than introduce the totally new, unless absolutely essential;
- Should use local assets and resources where possible without diminishing the environment;
- Should involve systems change – how the community and people interact with their environment and each other;
- Should include specific actions and measurable results that improve community life;
- The income produced must be fair and reasonable for the effort required to make it;
- Impediments to the market process need to be identified and addressed – consider:
  - Market demand
  - Transport costs
  - Overheads
  - How direct can the selling be
  - Where does the greatest margin of profit go
  - Quality Assurance
  - Sourcing of raw materials
  - Permanency of supply of raw materials;
- If worker is seller – consider the time involved in marketing, as well as making/working;
- Development of networks that support peer group learning and community change – community building;
- Development of market/supply chain networks that keep costs down, money circulating locally and value add to raw products;
- Processes that encourage people to grow their business, involve others;
- Steam leakage of $ and/or people to larger centers once income starts to rise;
- Must generate responsibility and ‘can do’ and ‘give back’ attitudes;
- Identify community assets – including elders with traditional knowledge, artisans, crafts people, etc. – promote their worth and value within the community, encourage skills transference;
- Should look towards moving to a diverse economic base – complex problems seldom have simple solutions;
- Recognize that very small interventions at a local level can trigger social change and that as many people as there are who work for personal benefit, just as many will work for community benefit – so set possibilities for both types of outcomes into project;
- Have some early achievable goals for community participants – celebrate both effort and success;
- Education programs that link negative actions with negative consequences and positive actions to positive consequences;
- Support the development of strong local organizations/networks that can influence decisions locally and outside the community;
- Support/encourage the development of strategic future oriented thinking that helps people set long term goals and work towards them;
- Keep all language, learning materials, instructions, etc. culturally appropriate;
- Keep training interactive – let participants learn from each other – let instructors be willing to learn too. All interactions must be based on respectful relationships. People must have a sense of worth and confidence before they will use what they know;
- Set realistic goals and timeframes – community change and culture change take time;
- Are community leaders (formal and informal) identified and engaged?
- Are the formal and informal community communication pathways understood and able to be utilized?
- Is the inter-regional socio-economic connectedness understood?
- Is there a common language and a shared vision?
- Is there the capacity and capability in the community to do the job – time, resources, skills and funds?
- What action is actually needed that will make a difference – what are the six things that can and should be done to make a start – real time solutions that create real wins – small steps to success and confidence building?
- Use of tools such as appreciative enquiry, adult learning theory, experiential learning and continuous improvement/learning processes;
- Assessment of impacts of any incentives and assistance (positive and negative) – there are real problems in developing dependency models and tensions with perverse subsidies and support systems;
- Identify the range of food supply options, strengthen existing food production systems and identify technological barriers to improving food supply; and
- Venture capital and capital raising needs – also consider tapping into regional economic capital