

# QUANG NGAI RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (RUDEP) - PHASE 2

## Guidelines for Group Activity Implemented Trials



**VIETNAM-AUSTRALIA**

*Prepared for*

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Annex 2: Activity Group Implemented Trial Proposal

# 1 Background

The Quang Ngai Rural Development Program (RUDEP) aims to provide income generating opportunities for poor households in Quang Ngai Province and improve their livelihoods through mainstreaming participatory planning processes. A range of income generating activities have, and will continue to be, identified by household activity groups and Commune officials. Many of these activities will require technical advice and training from Provincial and District Extension Centres to introduce households to new and improved technologies. However, as RUDEP builds the capacity of households, activity groups and Communes, income generating activities (involving study tours, demonstrations, trials, training, etc.) will increasingly be identified, formulated and implemented by households and activity groups themselves. Allowing Activity Groups to implement trials will enable households to trial and compare new technologies with traditional methods. The participation of households throughout this process will contribute to increasing adoption levels with households being actively involved throughout implementation and evaluation. RUDEP has therefore composed this set of guidelines to assist activity groups, Commune People's Committees and Program staff to identify, formulate, implement and evaluate income generating trials implemented by households.

## 2 Rationale

Activity Group implemented trials differ from traditional extension methods and training approaches. The model encourages more intensive involvement of farmers in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating an agricultural trial. Activity Group implemented trials facilitate the opportunity for farmers to trial and evaluate new technologies and practices in comparison to traditional farming practices. Farmers' discussions on technical production issues are encouraged to build their capacity to collectively make decisions and find sustainable solutions to improve yields and incomes. Such an approach also builds the capacity of extension workers to manage and monitor agricultural extension activities in response to the demands of farmers.

## 3 Identification of a Trial

An Activity Group implemented trial can be identified through:

- Participatory planning meetings (e.g. PC/PA/PS meetings) or PRA/PLA exercises;
- Requests for technical assistance from an activity group or VSCF;
- An activity group placing a trial in their annual plan;
- Discussions with households, Village or Commune leaders and the identification of an income generating activity that could be implemented by an activity group; or
- Participation in a study tour and the identification of an income generating activity that could be implemented by an activity group.
- Activity group trials can also be proposed by Commune People's Committees or RUDEP Advisors if they consider the income generating activity to be feasible and capable of being implemented by an activity group in the Commune.

## **4 Potential Types of Activity Group Implemented Trials**

Activity Group Implemented Trials are small scale activities to meet one of the following objectives:

- Contribute to the adoption and popularisation (new varieties, technologies and approaches) of new types of plants, animals and occupations (off-farm) coming to Quang Ngai from other provinces or cities within Vietnam which have the ability to develop and generate household income.
- Contribute to increasing the productivity and effectiveness of agricultural and non-agricultural production activities (provide technical services, equipment etc.) such as by improving methods for producing, sowing, harvesting, storing and processing agricultural products, and assisting in making niche and original local products known to outside markets.

## **5 Formulation of Activity Group Implemented Trials**

Annex 1 outlines the process applied to formulate an Activity Group Implemented Trial. There are three critical components of this process:

- Consultation with households or activity group and identification of the income generating trial they would like to implement.
- Letter of request from an Activity Group to RUDEP through the Commune People's Committee for assistance in implementing a trial associated with an income generating activity.
- Planning meeting with the Activity Group to prepare a proposal that provides full details of the trial.

District Development Officers (DDOs) will play a key facilitation role and will assist the Activity Group to formulate the final proposal to RUDEP.

## **6 Budget of Activity Group Implemented Trials**

RUDEP has budgeted VND10,000,000 for each Activity Group implemented trial and has allocated sufficient funds for six trials per Commune per year. This budget is indicative; trials under this amount will still be funded, and under exceptional circumstances trials above this amount may be funded. All proposals must contain a detailed budget which will be reviewed by the PMU.

## 7 Activity Group Implemented Trial Proposal Outline

Annex 1 and Annex 2 provide the ‘Activity Group Implemented Trial Outline’ that must be followed. The proposal contains the following components:

- Background information on the socio-economic situation of the Hamlet, Village or Commune;
- Details of the Trial: what activity will be trialled;
- Justification: *why* the activity group wants to implement the trial;
- Objectives of the trial : including what is different between the trial and traditional practices;
- Target beneficiaries of the trial;
- Sustainability in terms of the ability to develop and expand the trial if it is successful
- Proposed implementation schedule for the activities, timing and people responsible;
- Gender and how gender issues will be incorporated into the trial;
- Potential environmental impact of the trial and how these concerns will be addressed;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the trial including an M & E schedule and tools;
- Budget split into categories: equipment; materials; inputs; external technical training or inputs; and other expenses; and
- Signatures of the Representative of the Activity Group, CPC and DDO, on the proposal.

## 8 Appraisal of Activity Group Implemented Trial Proposals

Activity Group Implemented Trial proposals will be appraised by the PMU prior to approval and funding. This will involve a meeting in which the PDAs/VPDAs, ATL and DDO will discuss the proposal and planned activities. The proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Feasibility of the trial, the income generating potential, and applicability for poor households in the Commune;
- The potential replicability and levels of adoption of the trial against:
  - Time for return (short or long term);
  - Potential profit (high or low);
  - Risk (high risk or low risk);
  - Applicable for poor households; and
  - Takes into account gender considerations.
- The proposal adequately addresses skill and technical knowledge gaps required to successfully implement the trial (e.g. adequate levels of training and technical support); and
- Operation, maintenance and equity in the use of any equipment that is purchased to support any trial.

The appraisal meetings are likely to provide recommendations on the levels and sources of technical support or training required an indicative budget and some technical inputs that should be provided to support the trial.

## **Annex 1**

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### **Activity Group Implemented Trial: Steps Involved**

## **Annex 1: Activity Group Implemented Trial - Steps Involved**

### **1. Identification of an Income Generating trial**

An income generating trial is identified by an Activity Group, VSCF, Commune People's Committee or RUDEP Advisors. In all instances, these trials will be implemented by Activity Groups. Therefore, if an activity group does not exist prior to the income generating activity being identified, an activity group needs to be established.

### **2. Request to RUDEP or Government Agency for Assistance in Implementing**

Once the income generating trial is identified, the Activity Group will send a letter to the CPC which will forward the request onto the DPC and RUDEP, requesting assistance to implement a trial. This letter should identify clearly the activity to be trialed, location and justify the need for the trial.

### **3. RUDEP PMU Appraisal of the Request (Approval/Rejection)**

The RUDEP PMU will appraise the request from the Activity Group and give preliminary approval for the DDO to work with the Activity Group to finalise a proposal. This appraisal meeting will also give advice on activities and technical inputs required to strengthen the proposal and the trial.

### **4. Participatory Planning of the Trial**

The DDO, with support from RUDEP Advisors (if required), will work with the Activity Group to finalise a proposal. The proposal format is attached in these guidelines with all points required to be included a proposal.

### **5. External Technical Assistance Identified and Formulated**

Levels and sources of technical assistance and inputs will need to be identified when drafting a proposal. Should this involve a Provincial or District Department, a meeting should be conducted with the Activity Group members to finalise the implementation schedule and outline arrangements.

### **6. Final Proposal Written and Submission**

The final proposal (in Vietnamese) can be hand-written or typed and is submitted to the RUDEP PMU for funding. A proposal must contain all expenses and activities included throughout the trial; this must include the costs of all external assistance and training. The proposal must be signed by the Activity Group representative, a representative of the Commune People's Committee and the DDO.

### **7. PMU Appraisal of the Final Proposal (Approval/Modification)**

A short PMU meeting will be held to appraise the final proposal. Small comments may be given and slight changes required. Funds will be allocated on approval of the proposal, at which time the PMU will send a written agreement of support to the Activity Group, CPC and DPC and outline financial reporting and trial completion reporting obligations.

## **8. Implementation and Monitoring of the Trial**

The trial will be implemented after approval is received. Funds will usually be expended in three ways: (i) where the trial involves a contract for consultancy and technical guidance from a government agency or the purchase of goods and services valued at over VND 5 million, the PMU will transfer funds to the agency's account at a bank or the State Treasury; (ii) the PMU may provide amounts of cash up to VND 5 million to the Activity Group for the purchase of equipment, materials, supplies etc (with guidance from the DDO); (iii) the PMU may directly purchase services or goods itself for the project in emergencies (such as droughts or floods) or when equipment, materials, supplies, etc are not locally available. An important component of the trial will be to monitor the progress of the trial with a monitoring schedule included in the final proposal (with responsibilities outlined).

## **9. Evaluation of the Trial and Final Assessment**

Upon the completion of the trial, an evaluation should be conducted to assess the impact of the trial. This can be conducted through a Review Workshop in which Activity Group members present their assessment of the trial and technologies trialled.

## **10. Final Report Submitted to PMU**

A short financial report and trial completion report should be written and submitted to the RUDEP PMU by the Activity Group.

## **Annex 2**

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# **Activity Group Implemented Trial Proposal**

## **Annex 2: Activity Group Implemented Trial Proposal**

NAME OF PROPOSAL

Name of RUDEP Commune

Date proposal submitted

## **1. Background**

A short description of the socio-economic situation of the Hamlet, Village or Commune;

## **2. Details of the Trial**

A clear description of what will be trialled and how the activity was identified.

## **3. Justification**

Reason why the trial is appropriate for the households and activity group and problems it will address.

## **4. Objectives**

Outline clearly defined objectives with expected targets and indicators (emphasize differences between traditional practices and the technology that will be trialled).

## **5. Beneficiaries**

Target beneficiaries of the trial.

## **6. Sustainability**

The sustainability of the trial (including operation and maintenance of any equipment purchased) and ways that sustainability concerns will be addressed).

## **7. Implementation Schedule**

Implementation schedule showing activities, timing and people responsible;

## **8. Gender**

Gender and how gender issues will be incorporated into the trial;

## **9. Environment**

Potential environmental impact of the trial and how any concerns will be addressed;

## **10. Technical Assistance**

External technical assistance, training or technical materials required to assist in implementing the trial.

## **11. Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring and evaluation of the trial including an M & E schedule and tools;

## **12. Budget**

Budget using the following categories: equipment; materials; training; and other expenses (all costs must be submitted in tables).

## **13. Signatures**

Signed:

.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

Activity Group/VSCF

DDO

CPC Representative

### **Limitations**

URS Australia Pty Ltd (URS) has prepared this report in accordance with the usual care and thoroughness of the consulting profession for the use of the AusAID Quang Ngai Rural Development Program and only those third parties who have been authorised in writing by URS to rely on the report. It is based on generally accepted practices and standards at the time it was prepared. No other warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the professional advice included in this report. It is prepared in accordance with the scope of work and for the purpose outlined in the Program Design Document.

The methodology adopted and sources of information used by URS are outlined in this report. URS has made no independent verification of this information beyond the agreed scope of works and URS assumes no responsibility for any inaccuracies or omissions. No indications were found during our investigations that information contained in this report as provided to URS was false.

This report was prepared during **March 2003** and is based on the conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. URS disclaims responsibility for any changes that may have occurred after this time.

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