

Advisory services for biogas sector development

The Vietnam Biogas Program for the Animal Husbandry Sector (2003-2010) is implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Overall objectives of project are exploiting effectively biogas technology and developing a commercial viable biogas sector in Vietnam.

Benefits of the programme are rural development and environmental protection. Biogas provides clean and affordable energy to households; clean kitchens for women to work in and clean sanitation around the farm yard; the programme creates great job opportunities (1.5 mln labour days) and it reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2007, the project is carried out in 25 provinces and facilitated the construction of 37,000 plants. In 2008 the project will be implemented in 32 participating provinces. It is expected that in 2010, the programme will cover more than 50 provinces in Vietnam resulting in the construction of over 140,000 biogas plants.

The project was awarded Energy Globe Award 2006 (category Air), which is the most reputable international award for contributing to sustainable development.

The biogas initiative is now maturing from a programme towards the establishment of a national commercially viable biogas sector.

SNV capacity development services

When analysing the different services provided under the biogas programme one can define: training, construction, R&D, quality control and finance.

In 2007, SNV's work is increasingly focussed on creating a biogas sector, meaning to involve independent stakeholders specialized to provide specific services for a biogas sector. Getting stakeholders 'on board' will lead to an increase in quality and efficiency and it secures the continuation of biogas activities in Vietnam. The following examples illustrate this.

Training

Whereas the programme used to organise and conduct training by its own staff, it is now outsourcing these services to vocational training schools that are, in their turn, interested in extending their portfolio. SNV advisors initiated this idea and facilitate advice from external specialists (ETC Foundation) and finance from Voctech Program.

Construction

An extensive survey on biogas constructors is now taking place to better understand their operation and to define training needs. SNV brokered additional funds through intermediary of the Asian Development Bank's M4P programme, and facilitates the process of market development.

Research & Development

Collaborative research takes place on the topic of bio slurry by the Institute of Animal Husbandry, Thai Nguyen University and the University Utrecht. SNV advisors initiated the cooperation with Universities via and MoU and managed to find external funding from Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

In 2008, other issues will benefit SNV services as well.

Quality control

Establishment of an *independent* quality control system to secure the operation and functioning of biogas digesters. To convince the Vietnamese partners and clients on the usefulness of an independent control system, SNV advisors provide examples from Nepal and other countries where this practice has proven to be successful.

Finance

Another great challenge will be to get revenues from green house gasses which may provide the funds that support the creation of a biogas sector in Vietnam. In May 2007, SNV advisors organised the selling of carbon credits to the Dutch rock band Normaal to showcase the potential of the carbon market. possibilities.

Maybe the most important achievement of SNV's advisory services is that, despite high daily workload, MARD increasingly recognises the importance of working on sector development and long term goals.

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