Vietnamese - German Technical Cooperation
SOCIAL FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (SFDP) SONG DA
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) - GTZ

TRAINING STRATEGY
Consultancy Report No 22

by
Klaas Steur

November 1999

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1  PREFACE 1
   1.1 Composition of the Team 1
   1.2 Acknowledgements 1

2  OVERVIEW OF THE SFDP SONG DA 2
   2.1 Project Summary and Short History 2
   2.2 The Development of Participatory Planning Methodologies 3
      2.2.1 Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUP-LA) 3
      2.2.2 Participatory Village Planning and Development 4
      2.2.3 Technical and Organisational Options in Community Forestry 4
      2.2.4 Agricultural Extension Services and Participatory Technology Development 5

3  THE TRAINING COMPONENT OF SFDP SONG DA 6

4  TRAINING NEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN THE SONG DA WATERSHED 8
   4.1 Land Use Planning and Land Allocation 8
   4.2 Participatory Village Development Planning 9
   4.3 Community Forestry 10
   4.4 Agricultural Extension 10

5  INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK FOR AGRO-FORESTRY TRAINING 13
5.1 Agro-forestry Extension Centres in Son La and Lai Chau provinces 13
5.2 Agro-forestry High Schools in the Two Provinces 14
5.3 Community Forestry Training Centre Xuan Mai 16
5.4 Thai Nguyen Ago-forestry College - Thai Nguyen University 16
5.5 Central Forestry Vocational Technical School No. 1 (Voctech 1) 17
5.6 Management Training College of MARD 17
5.7 Binh Thang Training and Research Centre 17

5.1 Agro-forestry Extension Centres in Son La and Lai Chau provinces 13
5.2 Agro-forestry High Schools in the Two Provinces 14
5.3 Community Forestry Training Centre Xuan Mai 16
5.4 Thai Nguyen Ago-forestry College - Thai Nguyen University 16
5.5 Central Forestry Vocational Technical School No. 1 (Voctech 1) 17
5.6 Management Training College of MARD 17
5.7 Binh Thang Training and Research Centre 17

6 STRATEGIC ANALYSIS 19
6.1 Building up a Demand-driven Training System 19
6.2 The Role of SFDP in the Learning Process on Agro-forestry in the Provinces 19
6.3 Roles of Trainers 22
6.4 Training Materials 24

7 CONCLUSIONS 25

8 RECOMMENDATIONS 27

9.1 Focus Training Activity 29
9.2 Evaluation and Monitoring Procedure 29
9.3 Training of Trainers Course for LUPLA 30
9.4 Proposal for Terms of Reference of an Extension and Training Specialist 30

Annexes

Annex 1: Terms of Reference
Annex 2: Itinerary
Annex 3: Proposal for a Focus Training Activity
Annex 4: Proposal for Course Evaluation and Monitoring in SFDP Song Da
Annex 5: Proposal for a LUP-LA Training and Implementation Schedule
Annex 7: Review of the SFDP’s Training Manuals
Annex 8: Terms of Reference for a Long-term Training and Extension Specialist in SFDP Song Da

List of Abbreviations

AFU Agro-forestry Unit (project unit)
AEC Agricultural Extension Center (province)
AES Agricultural Extension Station (district)
AFVS Agro-Forestry Vocational High School
CD Cadastral Department (province)
CE Communal Extensionist
CU Cadastral Unit (district)
DARD Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (province)
DFPR Elaboration of Forest Protection Regulations (project methodology)
DPC District People's Committee
DPI Department of Planning and Investment (province)
ETVS Economic and Technical Vocational School
FDsD Forestry Development Sub-Department (province)
FMP Village Forest Management Planning (project methodology)
FPD Forest Protection Department (province)
FPU Forest Protection Unit (district)
FTA Focus Training Activity
GTZ German Agency for Technical Cooperation
LUPLA Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (project methodology)
M & E Monitoring and Evaluation
MARD Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
MOSTE Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment
PPC Provincial People’s Committee
PRA Participatory Rural Appraisal
PTD Participatory Technology Development (project methodology for agricultural extension)
SARD Section of Agriculture and Rural Development (district)
SFTC Social Forestry Training Centre
SPI Section for Planning and Investment (district)
TIP Training and Information Program
TOT Training Of Trainers
VDP Village Development Planning (project methodology)
VND Vietnamese Dong

1. PREFACE

The present report is the result of seven weeks of joint activities by a team of training specialists. It includes a review of the ongoing training activities in the SFD P and an analysis of the increasing training needs in the project area of the Song Da watershed. It assesses the present training capacities in the provinces and possible supporting institutions at national level.

Based on these observations, a strategic analysis is made. On the basis of this analysis, a new project strategy for training is proposed and an outline for training activities for the current phase of the project (1999-2001) is presented.

1.1 Composition of the Team

The team consisted of:

- Dr. Pham Duc Tuan, national short-term expert
- Drs. Klaas C. Steur, international short-term expert
- Dr. Nguyen Thi Thu, training coordinator of SFD P Song Da
Ms. Le Thi Huong Lien, interpreter

This report has been written and compiled based on the contributions made by all team members, taking into account the discussions with and recommendations from the SFDP project staff and the Vietnamese authorities. Where opinions were different or unclear, the team has sought solutions for which sufficient consensus can be expected. The present report reflects as much as possible the common views developed in the team. However, the international expert compiled the final report and thus assumes full responsibility for its contents.

1.2 Acknowledgements

In the first place, the author wishes to acknowledge the pleasant cooperation with the team members. The extensive knowledge and experience of Dr. Pham Duc Tuan of the extension and training system in Vietnam, the great enthusiasm and focus on new participatory extension methods of Dr. Nguyen Thi Thu and the remarkable language and communication skills of Ms. Le Thi Huong Lien where the main elements that built up the final result which is reflected in this report.

The persons whom we met, officials from government services and institutes, farmers and extensionists, who received us very hospitably and discussed and shared opinions with us, deserve our gratitude. They are too many to be named here personally (see Annex 2).

Thanks to the staff of SFDP in the various field offices and in Hanoi who managed to create such a pleasant and stimulating working environment and Mr. Wim Spieringhs from SNV who spent one whole very inspiring and informative day with us. Last but not least, special thanks go to the project’s CTA, Mrs. Elke Förster, who challenged and guided the mission very positively.

2. OVERVIEW OF THE SFDP SONG DA

2.1. Project Summary and Short History

The Social Forestry Development Project (SFDP) in the watershed of the Song Da is a Technical Cooperation Project supported by the technical Cooperation Agency (GTZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany and is being implemented by the Forestry Development Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) of Vietnam. In the provinces of Son La and Lai Chau, the project works in close cooperation with the provincial authorities, which are the Provincial People's Committee and the Departments and sub-Departments of the line agencies. A regional project office has been established in Son La town. At district level, the project has set up two district offices in the pilot districts of Yen Chau (Son La province) and Tua Chua (Lai Chau province). These offices are in charge of the implementation of project activities in close cooperation with the District People’s Committees and their Agriculture and Rural Development Sections (SARD) and corresponding units CU, FPU, Agricultural Extension Station and Veterinary Station. Through a contract with the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), the SFDP supports extension activities through the AES. Two SNV experts are in charge of this support in the districts of Yen Chau and Tua Chua.

The ultimate objective of the project is to stabilise and improve the ecological situation in the watershed of the Song Da River. This is to be brought about by the introduction of appropriate landuse practices in agriculture and forestry and the improvement of the living conditions of the local population in an ecologically and economically sustainable way. Direct contributions to this goal are being made by developing methodologies for the sustainable management of natural resources by local communities. The basis for this improved management is made by clearing farmers’ land rights in a participatory process of Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUPLA) which culminates in the issuing of land use right certificates to farmers.

Appropriate use of the allocated lands is promoted in a participatory process of Village Development Planning. This planning process results in an approved Village Development Plan (VDP), which is a commitment of the village and the district government service based on the demand of the villagers. Agricultural activities will generally form an important part of this VDP. For the improvement of the use and protection of the designated forestry areas, the project develops separate methodologies: for developing Forest Protection Regulations and for Participatory Village Forest Management Planning. Based on the approved plans for agriculture, the extension stations provide farmers with the required inputs and training. Proper training of the farmers, generally called "extension", is one of the main interventions for improved watershed management. The
training activities aim at the participatory development of improved technologies for sustainable forestry practices in the areas to be protected and for intensified production in the land assigned to agricultural use.

The project started with an orientation phase from April 1993 to April 1995. From April 1995 to the end of 1998, the project completed a second phase during which methodologies were developed and tested. In March 1998, the project was evaluated very positively and the plans for the next, current phase were approved (1999-2001). During this phase, methodologies are to be further elaborated and handed over to the provincial structures.

Finally, the project will have a fourth “hand-over” phase for further consolidation in another 3 years until the end of 2004. The capacity to manage the further development of the agricultural and forestry systems in the provinces should be firmly installed at the end of that final phase.

2.2. The Development of Participatory Planning Methodologies

In the development of adapted methodologies SFDP follows more or less the same procedure for all the methodologies. The different phases of the development process are as follows:

1. A methodology is piloted in a few villages.

2. The methodology is documented (systematised). Result: Technical Guidelines

3. The methodology is contracted out to institutions with technical and financial guidelines.

4. Based on the evaluation of the contract, methodologies are refined, and technical and financial guidelines are improved.

5. Methodologies and guidelines are integrated into the district.

6. Methodologies and guidelines are evaluated by provincial and national authorities and adjusted for province wide implementation.

7. Approval by provincial authorities.

For different reasons, the project methodologies are in a more or less advanced phase of the above mentioned process: e.g. Development of Forest Protection regulations is still being refined (4), VDP is actually being evaluated by provincial authorities in Son La (6) and LUP-LA has been approved (7).

Below is a brief overview of the developments up to date of these 3 methodologies.

2.2.1. Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUP-LA)

In cooperation with local Cadastral Units and Forest Protection Units, the project developed an adapted 6-step methodology for participatory land use planning and the proper allocation of land to the villagers. It includes the issuing of a so-called “red book certificate” that gives farmers the right to use agricultural lands for 20 and forest land for 50 years. The methodology has been approved by the PPC’s of both provinces, who now wish to implement it also in other districts.

The project now focuses on the training of local staff to ensure a wider scale implementation of the methodology. A specific training manual for trainers on landuse planning was produced and trainings were organized at province and district level. Project staff is monitoring the impact of land allocation for further refinement of the methodology.

2.2.2 Participatory Village Planning and Development

An effective methodology for the yearly planning of development interventions at village level has been worked out, the so-called Participatory Village Development Planning. The process is based on Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools and results in a Village Development Plan, which is based on the demands expressed by the villagers, their input capacity and the capacity of the district based on provincial development policies. The plans are proposed by the farmers in meetings in which the district and commune staff (mainly extensionists...
and forest protection officers) play a facilitating role. Plans are then approved by the district and submitted to the province, taking into account also the availability of resources for inputs and training. 80 villages are now being covered with this activity.

The methodology has been refined repeatedly. On-the-job training programmes have been developed and met the approval of the province. A Working Group at provincial level is seeing to the planning of application in wider areas of the province. The methodology has also drawn attention from other projects at national level.

A main point of attention of the project is presently the integration of the VDP with the central planning framework. Aggregated commune plans require some budget autonomy at district level to facilitate needs-based service response. In the field, an increased involvement of women in the planning and a clearer definition of extension activities in VDP have the attention.

2.2.3 Technical and Organisational Options in Community Forestry

Forestry activities are still under-represented in the VDP’s, because of the low priority farmers give to forestry concerns. Therefore, SFDP has made participatory Village Forestry Protection Regulations in 57 villages and assists in the development of separate Village Forestry Management Plans (currently 5 villages).

An outline of technical procedures for natural forest regeneration was completed in November 1998. These procedures have been used in the national "5 Million Hectares Reforestation Programme", where 1 million hectares are supposed to be reforested through natural regeneration. Also the ongoing Debtswap project makes use of the same concepts.

The concepts of community forestry are actually being extended to a wider scope in the provincial institutions through various contracts and the establishment of a community forestry network. Furthermore, the community forestry unit of the project has prepared an introductory handbook and 2 training courses have been organised for a range of target groups, including teachers of the Mai Son Agro-Forestry Vocational School and the FPU of the Tuan Chau district.

2.2.4 Agricultural Extension Services and Participatory Technology Development

The Extension Stations are carrying out extension services in the two districts through cooperation contracts with the project and are using VDP as a planning basis for the needs-oriented extension concept that was introduced by the project. Two SNV experts provide technical assistance to the implementation of these activities, within the framework of a contract with SFDP. Options for improved agricultural production are being identified and tested by the local population, assisted by the extension service.

Organisational changes have been introduced in the extension structure based on a proposal by SFDP in 1997. In Son La province, a network of commune extensionists, recruited out of the local communities is being built up. The province has provided a budget for this to the districts and the commune extension workers receive monthly compensations that range from 120,000 to 160,000 VND per month. Also in Lai Chau province the principle of decentralising extension below the district level is being considered, but resources are insufficient to implement this province-wide. The Debt Swap project has financed payments for commune extensionists of 120,000 VND per month in 3 communes of Tú Châu.

Based on the demand voiced in the participatory planning process introduced by the project (VDP) the extensionists work on the development of technological innovations, focused on 5 main areas:

1. Upland soil conservation
2. Intensification of upland crops
3. Intensification of crops on paddy fields
4. Fruit trees
5. Intensification of animal production

The two SNV experts are responsible for the coordination of the extension activities in the two pilot districts, including the farmer-field trials. Special attention is paid to the following issues:
- Participatory trial design (Participatory Technology Development);
- Improved documentation, evaluation and interpretation of field trials;
- Economic analysis, in particular capital productivity and risk reduction;
- Training of extension workers and development of appropriate training materials and information for farmers;
- Advising the management of AES, budget control for the activities, guidance or on-the-spot training.

3. THE TRAINING COMPONENT OF SFDP SONG DA

The implementation of all the activities of SFDP Song Da, as mentioned in Chapter 2, is being supported by a training programme. The human resource basis both within the project as well as within the counterpart structure in the provinces needs to be strengthened and prepared for its tasks. Tasks, which to some extent only become clear while revising methodologies, are being refined and tasks of various actors are defined more clearly.

In 1998, a training needs assessment was carried out and on the basis of this, the training programme 1999-2001 was elaborated. This programme is being carried out so far with only a few changes (e.g. expansion of LUPLA training). For all the subjects, the project has a number of trainers available, partly within the project and partly within the staff of the institutions in the province. For some training courses, external trainers are being contracted. As the provinces accept the methodologies developed by the project, the demand for training on these topics increases considerably. There is a need for a more sustainable and systematic approach: the reason for the present mission.

One year into the third phase of the project, training is becoming more important and the need for a training structure more urgent. The report of the Project Progress Review in April 1998 states: "In addition to the activities in Yen Chau and Tua Chua, the project should develop and implement a major training and support programme to enable district and provincial institutions of the Son La and Lai Chau provinces to adopt selected programme elements of SFDP on a large scale."

It is exactly this challenge faced by SFDP and the provincial authorities, which requires increased attention for the training component. At this moment, there are indeed "selected programme elements" which are ready for implementation on a larger scale.

However, the provincial institutions suffer a chronic lack of operational budget and there will be a considerable delay between the decision to use the methodologies at a large scale and the location of extra funds for being able to implement this decision. The challenge for SFDP is to work out a path for the further institutionalisation of the new methodologies, so that implementation at a larger scale can be carried out. In the near future, external donors are stepping in and the procedures developed with SFDP will be of great use in effectively mobilising these funds.

There are several projects being developed or already operational in the area that provide good opportunities for increasing their efficiency by applying the project methodologies:

- The "Debtswab Project" already finances landuse planning and land allocation, natural forest regeneration and protection and small irrigation works.

- A considerably large Rural Development Project for Son La and Lai Chau provinces to be funded by the European Union has allocated budgets to use the SFDP LUPLA and VDP methodologies for investments in agriculture (irrigation), rural infrastructure and forestry.

Other possible sources of funding are an upcoming World Bank project and the national programmes 661 ("5 Million Ha Programme") and 135 ("Support to 1700 poor communes").

Training is the instrument, which is needed for the institutionalisation process of the new methodologies in the provinces. However, training resources are scarce. Operational budgets for training are limited. Well-qualified trainers are lacking or occupied with other activities. Appropriate and well-designed training materials are
available for only a few subjects.

The terms of reference for the present mission were prepared in search for an answer to this situation. The approaches to training in the current phase of the project need to be revised and a design is needed for a proper strategy on training in the current and the next phase.

Summarised, the main objective of this mission is understood by the consultant as the need to propose a project strategy for the development of (more) structured training activities, allocating the limited resources of the project in such a way that the best long-term sustainable impact can be expected from actual project interventions.

4. TRAINING NEEDS FOR SUSTAINABLE LAND USE IN THE SONG DA WATERSHED

Assuming that the new methodologies and innovations introduced by SFDP Song Da will indeed be implemented in both provinces at a considerable scale during the current and next phase of the project, the demand for training will increase considerably. This chapter makes an assessment of the training needs in the area based on the assumption that the different “products” developed by SFDP will subsequently be applied at larger scale. The specific needs of various target groups are considered. This assessment is made based on the assumption that the activities that have now been piloted in a number of communes will have to be implemented province-wide. Also the possibilities and the pre-conditions for such training activities are discussed.

Final goal of all the training is the transfer of the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for the sustainable management of the natural resources to the “grassroots” level. The ultimate objectives of the project can be reached only when the local communities themselves are able to implement the improved management practices.

4.1. Landuse Planning and Land Allocation

The training needs for LUP-LA show a high peak at the present stage, since most villages still need to be covered. Once the lands have been allocated, the required manpower for this activity will decline as only some further refinement of cadastral registration or settlement of conflicts will require the assistance of district staff. Furthermore, LUP-LA is seen as the basis upon which the other activities of VDP, community forestry and extension have to build. Therefore, the training need is high and urgent in the short term and very limited in the long term.

Farmers do not need training in LUP-LA, but there is certainly a need to make the objectives and procedures clear to all involved before the start of the process. If all provinces will have to be covered with this activity in the foreseeable future, an information campaign has to reach an estimated 110,000 heads of households in Son La and 70,000 in Lai Chau. It seems appropriate to think that a combination of mass media (radio), posters and personalised information through village heads should be the most effective approach. This implicates a need for expertise on mass communication at provincial level.

It is staff members of the Cadastral Units and Forest Protection Units of the districts who are mainly responsible for the implementation of the LUP-LA. Staff of Cadastral Department, Forest Planning and Investment Institute (FiPI) and Forest Protection Sub-Department (FpsD) at provincial level also play a role in the further process of registration and certification, but their training needs seem to be less critical. First priority should be given to training of district staff. This approach is reflected in the 1999 training programme for Son La which included 3 courses at provincial level and several courses at district level. Experience shows that organisation of training requires close monitoring.

Annex 5 presents a proposal for training and implementation through the deployment of two full time trainers per province. In addition to their tasks of training the district staff, they may also organise workshops or seminars on LUP-LA in which the specific tasks of province staff can be addressed. This proposal shall be reviewed once the further implementation workplan for 2000 for both provinces is in place.
4.2. Participatory Village Development Planning

Participatory Village Development Planning is a yearly exercise farmers have to become familiar with. Village Management Boards will play a crucial role and various sequenced meetings will be conducted by them with the villagers in order to improve planning and implementation and to assure that it will become truly participatory. Therefore, sometimes such meetings may also have a training objective: to enhance the capability of the community to learn and to motivate them to participate in the development process.

It is to be expected that (new) commune staff, particularly commune extensionists and commune planners will be able to play a stimulating and facilitating role in these meetings. (Not in the last place because they speak the local language!) Previous experience of SFDP shows that the quality of the VDP improves year after year and commune staff can certainly assist in this "learning by doing" process. With their help, the communities will continue to improve their skills for the management of the VDP and will gradually become able to manage most of the VDP-related activities independently. Commune staff should therefore be trained in order to understand fully the procedures involved in the village development plan and especially be well aware of the own possible role in the process. Good communication skills will be required in order to play this role of a facilitator, and training for commune staff should also address this issue.

Of course the motivation of the villagers for the VDP cannot only be induced through meetings and information. The genuine incentive for the villagers to participate is the concrete implementation of the VDP with a positive impact on their food situation and/or cash income. Therefore, the VDP activity must be conducted well in line with the supply of the required inputs. District staff, who have the main responsibility for the aggregation and coordination of the VDP’s, should ensure that VDP’s are in line with the availability of inputs and should see to the timely delivery of these inputs to the villagers. District staff is in charge of gathering the information from the VDP’s, provide feedback on it, assure the acceptance of the district and the allocation of funds, approve the plan and provide feedback to the villages. The planning and management skills required for this task are another obvious training need in support of the institutionalisation of the VDP.

Another factor, which will require training or at least activities that will increase awareness, is the gender issue. In VDP’s it is of great importance that also the specific needs of women are attended to and that gender aspects of possible interventions are well considered. Most project staff and local leaders do not have a good understanding of gender issues and training will be needed to improve the awareness for gender-related problems. The integration of this issue into all training activities seems to be more relevant than separate training courses on gender.

The total training demand is high. The capacity to meet this demand must be assessed carefully based on the in-house capacities of individual government agencies and the problems occurring when crossing responsibilities between line agencies at the same level.

4.3. Community Forestry

In the area of social forestry, the project has developed two procedures that are now in a process of further testing: Developing Village Forest Protection Regulations and Village Forest Management Planning. Farmers are involved in sequenced activities like meetings, presentations, field visits and joint forestry activities. The Village Management Boards play an important role in the process as the activities form part of the VDP activities.

At district level, staff of the Forest Protection Units have the main responsibility for these activities and at commune level commune, extensionists are involved. A large number of staff will need to be trained once these methodologies are approved. Even prior to approval, training material can be developed and tested. The gender component also deserves attention in these activities.

4.4. Agricultural Extension

"Extension" is quite a wide area. In those areas where VDP’s have been developed, SFDP supports now the implementation of a rather wide range of activities which are all classified as "extension": service delivery, farmer training, trials and demonstrations. Training will be required for strengthening the functions of the various actors in this extension system. The following target groups require attention:
Village Management Boards and Village Leaders will work closely together with the commune extensionists. As they develop their skills in a gradual learning process, they may assume certain tasks in the extension process and they may take the forefront in the application of technological innovations. They will need to be well aware of their role in the village, which requires a degree of understanding of the concepts used by the extension service. If extra attention can be paid to this target group (farmer leaders) in the form of short training courses where they can discuss and exchange experiences with each other, this will greatly support their own learning process and strengthen their leading role in the development of their villages. Preferably, specialised trainers who have no direct responsibilities for the implementation of the extension programme should provide such training.

Commune extensionists are a new group of actors and will form a vital element in the extension system. Therefore they are an important target group for a wide variety of training. At this moment, the tasks of the commune extensionist have just been defined and only little experience is available with this new function. However, a number of training domains can be pointed out which seem to be important:

- Although their education level may not permit that they fully understand the theory of complicated extension methodologies and concepts, it is very important that they know and accept their role in the system. It is recommended to use more explicitly Participatory Technology Development (PTD) concepts in the Extension Services and set up trials and experiments in cooperation between farmers and district or provincial specialists, assisted by CE’s. The objectives of PTD are to strengthen the existing experimental capacity of farmers and to sustain the local management in the process of innovation. Methodological training of the CE should not consist in the delivery of classical training courses that will explain the working of theoretical models like PRA, VDP, PTD etc. but should focus on its use in practice.

- A recognised weak point in the functioning of the extension system is the poor availability of appropriate technology that can ensure meaningful increases in crop or livestock production. In the remote and variable environment of the provinces of Son La and Lai Chau, technology packages, which were developed under standard conditions, are not suitable. PTD is the approach for the development of local solutions. However, technical knowledge and experience is required for the technician in order to play not only a facilitating role, but also give technical orientation to the process. Finally, a close cooperation between farmer and extensionist is necessary to facilitate the transfer of newly gained experience back to the extensionist.

- In order to identify financially viable technological options, the extensionist must have a basic understanding of household economics and assist the farmer in comparing financial benefits of alternative options.

- In order to provide good services, the extensionist must further develop his understanding of the local farming and household systems. He should be aware of the different roles of men, women and children in this and develop an open eye for the need to improve the position of women and offer better chances for children. He (or she?) must be able to evaluate the local knowledge and traditions vis-à-vis the possible innovations.

- Furthermore, the extension work with the local communities requires good communication skills and leadership capacities. Another training domain for all extension staff.

District staff working on extension currently consists of 10-15 persons available in the different sections and stations of the district, such as Extension Stations, Cadastral Units, Veterinary Stations, Forest Protection Units, and other personnel of the SARD. In different ways, they all deal with farmers and they will work together with commune extensionists. This extension staff will form the linkage of the community-based and demand-driven extension work of the commune extensionist with the state policies. Their tasks will include assistance, training and coaching of the commune extensionists in their work in the villages, monitoring and evaluation of the activities and different forms of technical assistance according to their functions. Tasks which are all changing as the extension system is in transition from centrally planned to demand-driven. The decentralised deployment of district staff to “Group of communes”-offices will further strengthen this new approach towards the farmers.

Actually, in the pilot areas of the project, all this staff receives training on (participatory) extension methods. More specific training will be required, targeted at specific competencies required for their different functions:

- In the first place, the district staff needs to be skilled in methodologies they need to use in their work in the villages (LUPLA, VDP, PTD, DFPR, and FMP). As part of this, good communication skills are an absolute requirement.
Also technical skills are required. The combination of VDP and PTD will make it possible to learn lessons about innovations without having to rely too much on external technological inputs. However, in order to facilitate the unique and efficient learning moments that this combination can create for farmers and extensionists, extensionists need to have a clear understanding of agricultural, forestry and/or animal husbandry technology. The present staff has a rather high level of technical education and it is often argued that they do not need technical but only methodological training. However it is the opinion of the consultant that their technical knowledge, is too much a "knowledge of textbook facts". Because of this static approach which departs from technical "standards", technical staff tends to rather "prescribe" than "advise" farmers. They still lack the deeper understanding of the biological processes that would enable them to assist with flexibility and creativity the farmers in the search for appropriate solutions to the specific problems of the area.

Understanding of socio-economic concepts is too weak. If in farm or household economics "standardised" calculations are applied, it happens too often without understanding of crucial factors, which determine the behaviour of farmers in marginal areas, such as risk avoidance and food security. Also knowledge about the labour requirements of different activities, the availability of family labour and the gender specific complications, of the labour factor are often not understood. Thus the benefits or potential alternatives are not properly assessed. Finding solutions to the problems of marginal farmers requires analytic capacities rather than static knowledge.

5. INSTITUTIONAL NETWORK FOR AGRO-FORESTRY TRAINING

Below is an overview of the institutional network that can offer relevant support to meeting the training needs outlined above. Special attention is paid to the strong and weak points of the different institutions as potential sources for training or partners for cooperation.

The existing training network on agro-forestry throughout Viet Nam focus in and around Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Some of the institutions of this network belong to the provincial authorities, others report directly to different Ministries at national level. MARD manages 40 agro-forestry training units, including 2 universities, 1 college, 2 management training colleges, 14 technical high schools and 21 vocational technical schools. Furthermore, there are 5 agro-forestry universities under the Ministry of Education and Training. Many other Vocational Technical Schools are under MOLISA and the Agro-forestry Vocational High School systems belong to the provinces.

In Son La and Lai Chau the agro-forestry training capacities are limited to the Agricultural Extension Centres and the Agro-forestry Vocational Schools. Besides these institutions, the team visited some other relevant institutions in other provinces and had meetings with managers, teachers and consultants.

5.1. Agro-forestry Extension Centres in Son La and Lai Chau Provinces

Training is a main responsibility of the provincial AEC. They are therefore the natural partners of SFDP and the local authorities in the development of training. A strong point of the AEC's is that extensionists have a clear idea of the farmers' training demands because they work directly with local farmers. However, trainings are derived from centrally planned extension programmes rather than based on village specific demands and may consist largely of propaganda and textbook facts. Furthermore, training is only one of the tasks of the AEC staff and only a limited part of the training activities of the AEC are formal training courses. The general feeling is that the AEC's have been able to meet to a large extent the demand for technical training but they still lack training skills, particularly on ToT. More importantly, capacities for the development of training materials are low. In Lai Chau province, the number and qualification (experience) of provincial extension staff is lower than in Son La, where about 10 persons are involved in training.

Topic-specific, the following conclusions can be drawn: In LUPLA and forestry issues (DFPR, FMP), extension staff is not directly involved. For VDP, demand easily exceeds capacities depending on the rate of expansion proposed by the province. For specific extension approaches, like PTD, trial M & E, and household economics demand likewise exceeds capacities, particularly for the development of training material.

5.2. Agro-forestry High Schools in the Two Provinces
The Agro-forestry Vocational School (AFVS) of Son La province is located in Mai Son district, about 30 km from the provincial capital towards Hanoi. The one in Lai Chau is located in the provincial capital Dien Bien Phu. At longer term, these two institutions are the only two logical entities, which would be responsible for most of the training and education for present and future government staff at district and commune level (extension staff, forest protection staff, etc.). They are the only agro-forestry schools located in provinces. Both Vocational Schools belong to the provincial authorities and have a stable teaching staff, personnel organisation and a (very limited) budget resource. Thus the PPCs can assign training tasks to these schools as determined by provincial policies. A detailed description is given in Box 1 and 2.

Box 1: Short Description of Mai Son Agro-Forestry Vocational School (AFVS)

The High School was established in 1959. There are 22 teachers in 5 departments

3. Economics (4 teachers) 4. Forestry (4 teachers)
5. Cadastral (just established) 6. General issues (6 teachers)

Qualification of Trainers: 1 Master in veterinary, 1 Master in economics, 20 Bachelors, 2 college degrees

There are 3 training types:

1. Official training (following curriculum of Ministry of Education and Training)
   - Training duration: 2 years for students graduated from secondary school (after grade 12) and 3 years for students graduated from primary school (after grade 9).
   - Target groups: farmers

2. Short training courses:
   - Training duration: 1 week, 2 weeks, 1 month and so on.
   - Training 300 people in short courses every year following decision of provincial PC
   - Training topics: Cooperative management, skills relating to fruit trees, skills of extension (extension methodology, household economics management, animal husbandry, etc.)

3. Training linkage
   - Degree of Agro-forestry college (university level) with support from Thai Nguyen University or High School Degree of Cadastral
   - Target group: Forest Protection staff, Communal financing staff, Food and feed processing worker

Facilities:

- 5 computers
- 1 school farm of 15 ha in Na san.
- 10 classrooms
- 1 dormitory and 1 eating house
Box 2: Short Description of Dien Bien Economic and Technical Vocational School (ETVS)

The Agriculture High School was established in 1978 and in 1997, it was integrated with the Economic High School and renamed Economic and Technical High School.

There are 26 teachers with bachelor degrees (incl. 16 graduated from agricultural university)

The High School includes 3 departments:

1. Finance and Accounting (5 teachers)
2. Agronomy (5 teachers)
3. Husbandry (5 teachers)

Basic subjects (11 teachers)

There are 3 training types:

1. Official training (following curriculum of Ministry of Education and Training)
   - Training duration: 2 years for students graduated from secondary school (grade 12) and 3 years for students graduated from lower-secondary school (grade 9)
   - Target group: local people in Lai Chau province

2. Short training courses:
   - Training duration: 1 month, 3 months, 6 months
   - Target group: staffs and farmers from institutions in the area
   - Training topics: Finance and Accounting, Law, Economic Agriculture, Land Management.

3. Training linkage:
   - University level for
     Agriculture (with support from Hanoi Agriculture University)
     Forestry (with support from Xuan Mai forestry University)
     Law (with support from Hanoi Law University)
     Finance and Accounting (with support from Finance and Accounting University)
   - High School level for Cadastral
   - Target group: staff working for local institutions

Facilities:

Area of 4.5 ha for main office and 10 class-rooms

Area of 3 ha for school farm

10 ha forest
The weak points in both schools are mainly due to their (too) limited budgets, of which effects can clearly be observed in the poor status of facilities. More even in Mai Son than in Dien Bien Phu, where the school may benefit from its location in the province capital and the wider curriculum it offers. Both schools have acquired agricultural land for the development of a school farm. However, funds are lacking for developing a real demonstration and training farm.

In 1999 SFDP has signed a general framework contract and initiated activities in cooperation with Mai Son AFVS. A course on community forestry has been given by the Community Forestry Expert and concurrent to this mission, two consultants assisted the Mai Son AFVS in preparing and testing 10 training modules on household economics. This last activity was also used to assess the capacities of the teaching staff and their attitude towards change and cooperation. Initial results are encouraging as staff appear highly motivated and capable and embrace the possibility of improving teaching skills and contents.

5.3 Community Forestry Training Centre Xuan Mai

Community Forestry Training Centre - Xuan Mai Forestry College - is located on the way to Son La province about 40 km from Hanoi. The centre has implemented a Social Forestry Training Project supported by Switzerland and started its first phase from 1994 to 1997. Currently it is in the second phase of the project (from 1998 - 2001). Trainers of the centre have developed a good capacity in social forestry training especially focused on ToT. An new social forestry training curriculum has been compiled and implemented. The curriculum includes social forestry and many issues of forestry extension. The centre has a good capacity in developing and producing training materials and has adequate training facilities. At present, a lot of training documents are available in the centre for long-term and short-term training courses, which can be very useful as reference material for SFDP. The target group of the training are university students or administrative staff and researchers on province and national level.

In the past, the centre lacked practical trials of its methodology. Only since the second phase of the Social Forestry Support Project funded by Switzerland, has the SFTC got a new and important partner the Hoa Binh Agro-forestry Extension Centre, where the training subjects of SFTC can be put in practice and rechecked for its field relevance. In future, the Training Centre would like to collaborate with SFDP and use the project area for field trips and internships of Xuan Mai Forestry College's students.

Xuan Mai Forestry College belongs to MARD so it is difficult to assist the Agro-forestry Vocational Schools at provincial level.

5.4 Thai Nguyen Agro-forestry College - Thai Nguyen University

Thai Nguyen Agro-forestry College is located in Thai Nguyen City, 90 km from Hanoi. The college is also one of the partners of SFSP funded by Switzerland in its second phase from 1998 - 2001. Thus, the college has designed a new training curriculum and is designing its own training materials. The college is well integrated in international research and discussion through various cooperations. Trainers of the college take part in trials and demonstrations such as cultivation on sloping land, village organisation for farmers, and local networks. Students who will mainly become staff of province and national level organisations thus have a good overview of new technologies and approaches.

One of the out-reach activities of Thai Nguyen is collaboration in training with Mai Son AFVS. However this collaboration is limited to the use of Mai Son’s facilities for a college course to be taught by teachers from Thai Nguyen. Inevitably training topics and materials will thus ‘seep’ into Mai Son AFVS and could be the basis for a more ‘vocational level’ training content. The long distance and the fact that the college belongs to MOSTE make closer cooperation difficult.
5.5 Central Forestry Vocational Technical School No. 1 (Voctech 1)

Voctech 1 is located in Huu Lung district, Lang Son province, 90 km north of Hanoi. Currently, Voctech 1 is being supported by the training capacity enhancement project funded by The Netherlands. Objective of the project is to strengthen training management capacity, improve training facilities, develop training curriculum and enhance the out-reach activities through "field schools". Voctech 1 offers a training programme for skilled workers in 3 main fields: silviculture, wood processing and rural electricity.

Voctech1 also organises Field Schools in other provinces, for instance in Son La. Similar interests in developing training on silviculture is certainly an interesting base for cooperation between Voctec 1 and SFDP in the near future. The field schools give students a good opportunity to practise, but the quality of the teaching programme still needs to be improved.

Voctech1 has produced some useful training documents such as on the process of job-profile formulation, and teaching methodology etc. which can be of interest for SFDP’s training activities. However, Voctech 1 cannot assist directly the provincial Vocational Schools due to the long distance to Son La and Lai Chau province and its organisation under MARD. Also, trainers of Voctech 1 need further training on and practical exposure to social forestry.

5.6. Management Training College of MARD

The college is located in Thanh Tri district- Hanoi and belongs to MARD. Its main responsibility is training for MARD staff, mainly at national and provincial level. Training focus is on management of state economy and management of state enterprises and co-operatives. The college has good facilities. Technical subjects and extension are still weak. Also, this college is far from the provinces and possibilities for cooperation are therefore limited.

5.7. Binh Thang Training and Research Centre

In Ho Chi Minh City, the Binh Thang Training and Research Centre with support from the Netherlands government organises practical training courses on pig production. Since pig production is a main source of (the very limited) cash income for many farmers in the project area, a good understanding of all aspects of pig production can be of great use for extension staff. The centre offers specific training programmes for the conditions of the smallholders.

There is a 2-week course for extension staff working at district and commune level and teaching staff of agricultural schools. Also key-farmers are welcome. For those who do not yet have any experience, the centre also offers a more complete 10-week programme. Special attention is paid to recruiting an increased number of female participants and participants from the Northern provinces. A number of extensionists from Lai Chau and Son La have already been trained at Bin Tang. It is recommended to involve this staff in specific actions on pig husbandry.

Summarising, it can be observed that the training capacity at provincial level is still very weak. However, it provides a sufficient basis for allocating training tasks with regard to the dissemination of project methodologies. Thus they can take over training tasks that the administration cannot cover.

AT national level there are quite some institutions that can make specific contributions to the set up of an improved structure at provincial level once such cooperation can be operationalised in a well structured plan. The current phase of the project should continue to explore cooperation on a case by case basis. In the next phase, those institutions which have proven to offer relevant support can then become partners in a project that will reinforce the provincial training capacities.

6. STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

6.1. Building up a Demand-driven Training System
SFDP Song Da strives to institutionalise the methodologies developed at a larger scale in the provinces and training is the main instrument to achieve the integration of the results of SFDP into the provincial structures. At longer term, SFDP aims at the development of a training system that will integrate the improved methodologies into a sustainable and coherent structure that will be able to transfer the lesson learned in the pilot districts to a wider area.

Just as with the build up of the planning and extension methodologies of the project, this training system will have to be built up starting at the basis. This implies a fundamentally different approach for the institutions and persons involved in this process. The existing institutions were built up and the majority of their staff was still largely educated in a top–down system where the instructor and his instruction materials formed the driving forces. In the new, demand driven training system, the learner and his needs for information will become the driving forces.

Because of its pioneering work with participatory methodologies and the knowledge about farmers’ demands which has resulted from these activities, SFDP is now in an interesting strategic position to support this fundamental change of the dynamics of training. SFDP Song Da has, through its pioneering work in the development of participatory planning and extension methods, placed itself in a strategic position to pursue the development of a new needs-oriented training and education system (for issues on natural resource management) in the provinces of Son La and Lai Chau.

It has piloted the development of a participatory planning of village resources concepts and, actually, there is quite some experience being built up about the work with farmers and their real demand. These experiences are now being extended to the provincial structures through the sharing of experiences and direct on-the-job training of new staff by the project’s pioneers. When a methodology is accepted, it seems to be the right moment to make the next step, to set up a more formal training system.

6.2. The Role of SFDP in the Learning Process on Agro-forestry in the Provinces

The build up of a demand driven training system has to be done in a learning process. SFDP, through its participatory development activities, has already contributed to this. In Chapter 2.2., seven steps are being described how the SFDP in cooperation with its counterparts has learned the new methodologies.

In general terms, the set up of a training system can be seen in three phases:

**Phase 1: Pioneering (= learning by doing)**

This phase corresponds to the 7 steps of the SFDP project mentioned in chapter 2.2. The new methodologies are being developed by SFDP in practice and, once accepted, must be worked out in detail. The results of the pilot activities should be well documented and all those involved should reach a clear and thorough understanding: learning by doing. Subsequently, the competent authorities should evaluate and formally approve the methodologies.

This step has currently been completed already for the LUP-LA activities and to a large extent also for VDP. Various agriculture and forestry extension products (e.g. DFPR) are also to some degree ready for wider application. Other products of the extension activities (e.g. FMP and PTD) are still in a more experimental phase.

**Phase 2: Integrating experiences in the system**

Changing methodologies is not finished with an act of official approval. It only enters a new phase: The methodology must now become the “own” methodology of the different institutes and of their personnel. Procedures must be adapted, instructions and manuals must be re-written and, most importantly, the staff will have to adapt the new concepts, which will often imply a fundamental change in attitude (e.g. the attitude of the extension worker towards the farmer is an important example). This change, which the pioneer staff have developed over many years, will now have to be brought about in a shorter time by the new users of the methodology.

Even the job profiles of various actors will change considerably and new jobs will have to be created or old functions abolished. The recent appointment of the new commune extensionists is a good example of such an adjustment to new methodologies. Furthermore, the planning and budgeting of the activities will become different and new incentive systems must be developed in order to improve staff performance. Monitoring and
evaluation procedures will have to be changed as well.

This transition process requires considerable time. It demands a lot of extra activities of direct on-the-job training, intensified coaching, development of instruction materials etc. The former pioneers, who learned the methodology by experiment, will now become the trainers and coaches of their colleagues who adapt the new methodology. SFDP is currently involved in such activities (e.g. on LUP-LA). This constitutes an intensive approach which facilitates a high quality of the learning process but only allows for limited expansion rates. The capacity limitations of using pioneers and in-house staff as trainers are quickly apparent.

**Phase 3: Integration of the new methodologies into the formal system of [education] and training**

The sustainability of the changes that are being developed in the first step and integrated in the second step can at a longer term only be guaranteed if they will also be fully adopted by and integrated into the specialised institutions responsible for training and education. Although still largely beyond the scope of the project, first attempts are already being made to introduce the results of the project in official education institutes. SFDP signed a collaboration agreement with the AFVS of Mai Son and some joint activities have already been undertaken. Although the schools lack many basic facilities, the reaction of teaching staff has been very encouraging. This institutionalisation of the project’s results in the training and education system is at longer term an absolute requirement for being able to sustain a positive impact of the project. It will transfer the training tasks from the provincial administration, where training is only one of many other tasks, to a specialised institute. Furthermore, this transfer may facilitate the dissemination of the new methodologies beyond the provincial borders. This last step in the institutionalisation of new knowledge is its integration into the curriculum of the formal (vocational or professional) education programmes.

One of the main obstacles in this process is the training of teaching staff. Because of the bottom-up dynamics of the development process, the teachers will have to acquire the necessary knowledge and more in particular experience, in direct contact with the field. For their training it is therefore necessary that they work with farmers and local government staff who are developing and refining the appropriate knowledge needed for the successful improvement of local production systems. An intensive cooperation between local government staff and teachers is therefore an absolute requirement in order to achieve the final institutionalisation of the locally acquired appropriate knowledge in the education system.

**Different Stages of Learning in the SFDP Song Da Project**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use Planning and Land Allocation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Development Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Forest Protection Regulations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Forest Management Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory Technology Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household economics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the dynamics of the above mentioned learning processes, the SFDP project follows the proper sequence in building up knowledge and skills, based on the demand which is detected through the participatory planning and development methods. Above it is visualised how SFDP’s interventions in the province can, throughout the years, finally contribute to the build up of a training and education system based on the demand on the provinces.

**6.3 Roles of Trainers**
In the transfer of knowledge and experience by the SFDP project to a wider area of application, *trainers or teachers* will play a very important role. The quality of trainers depends in turn on the way they were trained or how they acquired their knowledge and experience. Roughly, the quality of a trainer or teacher is determined by two different characteristics:

- His or her quality as expert in the field of study (*"technical"* expertise)
- His or her quality as trainer or teacher (*didactical* expertise)

Depending on the form in which knowledge is transferred, these two different qualities can be of more or less importance. In classroom teaching didactical qualities are an absolute requirement but if a trainer is functioning as the person who assists a trainee directly and individually in his job, expertise is the most important issue. In situation of a trainee directly working together with an expert, these didactical qualities will be less crucial.

In the learning process which is induced by SFDP in the two provinces, as described in the previous paragraph, the transfer of knowledge and skills from trainer/expert to trainee/counterpart takes different forms. In the initial stages of the project, there is an intensive working together of experts and counterparts who, through this working together, *learn the methodologies by doing* in an intensive cooperation, as graphically presented below:

In the second phase, *new staff* have to be trained to extend the acquired knowledge. If such trainers can be trained in an intensive way, in close cooperation and feedback with the experts and if proper attention is paid to the development of their specific training skills, a similar impact may be expected of their actions as in the pilot districts:

In the next phase, the pioneers will no longer be the trainers, but new specialised trainers have to be trained in order to reach out to a wider area. If such trainers can be given the opportunity to not only acquire knowledge but also obtain the experience in practice by working together with the experts or receiving intensive follow-up by the experts, the impact of their work will still be comparable with the original results:
However, if under time pressure and/or by lack of funds, the training of trainers becomes more indirect and follow up can not be given, the quality of subsequent trainers may deteriorate and the impact of their work will be less positive:

A further deterioration of the quality of the impact must be foreseen if insufficiently experienced trainers have to train trainers "of the second generation":

For SFDP it is of great importance to choose the right strategy with regards to training of trainers. Caution is needed not to allow the building up of the training system to speed up too fast. On the other hand, training of trainers should have full attention. No time should be lost with training of trainers exercises that do not contribute to the strengthening of the training capacity at longer term. In the final hand over of the project results to the provinces, foreseen for December 31 2004, the presence of a sustainable training capacity of a quality that guarantees the continuation of the project impact achieved in the pilot areas, may very well prove to be one of the most critical factors.

### 6.6 Training Materials

The project is giving high priority to the development of clear and appropriate training materials. Annex 7 gives an overview of the existing materials that were revised by the national expert as most of the materials are only available in Vietnamese. Development of training materials is largely done by experts and project staff. Two, almost contradicting points of attention may be noted:

- Clear and complete training material is of great help to trainer and trainees and gives structure to a course. It also makes it easier to discuss and oversee the relevance of a course before it starts.

- Easily available training material may divert the attention of the trainer from the specific needs of his trainees. Participatory curriculum development requires that a trainer must use the training materials in a flexible way and adjust them whenever required, to the level and subject matter needs of his trainees.

The following matrix illustrates the relationship between trainer, training material, and outcome:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality of trainer</th>
<th>Quality of training material</th>
<th>Likely quality of result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good trainer</td>
<td>Well designed material</td>
<td>Good result</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, training of trainers and development of training materials require equal attention. Only if the quality of both the trainer and the training materials is good, can optimal results be expected.

7. CONCLUSIONS

1. The actual training programme of SFDP Song Da is based on a very broad training needs analysis which lacks focus. Therefore, the activities are too much dispersed and without clear measurable results. A more or less equally divided response to a much too heavy demand has resulted in a "thin" programme that lacks a clear profile. It does not contribute to the systematic build up of a the training capacity which is required in order to achieve finally an effective and sustainable hand over of the project's methodological achievements to the provincial structures.

2. The success of the project in generating new methodologies generates an increased need for training. However, the project has only enough resources to finance the training in support of the activities in pilot districts or communes. The wider scale implementation of the developed training courses is a responsibility of the provinces.

3. The acquisition by the provinces of funds for a wider scale training programme requires special attention. Opportunities exist to get financing for courses from the budgets of several international projects and national programmes.

4. Although in many documents, including the ToR for the present mission, the strengthening of training capacities of local institutions is mentioned as an important objective, the project has so far only considered training as an instrument for the development and handing over of its "products", but not as a product as such. Training is too much used just to support the functioning of the own SFDP staff, where possible in combination with the training of counterpart staff.

5. The training of provincial and district staff is being done without having a basis for it in a structured Human Resource Development Plan. Training of trainers courses are being organised for key staff, but generally there is little or no guarantee that the trained trainers will be sufficiently available for this task, not even on short term. A minimum standard of trainers (certification) is not assured. At longer term, the sustainability and quality of the training activities is therefore not yet sufficiently assured.

6. There is an urgent need for a more systematic evaluation of the impact of the training measures. However this is only possible when the objectives to be reached are clear and well in line with project objectives.

7. The LUP-LA methodology has been approved in both provinces, VDP is in the process of being approved for dissemination in Son La. A well structured training programme is now required to support further implementation.

8. Both Son La and Lai Chau have one Agricultural Vocational School, in Mai Son and Dien Bien respectively. These schools must be regarded as most logical partners for the development of a long term strategy on training and education for the rural sector in the provinces. However, the schools lack sufficient financial support from the provinces and are institutionally too weak to play a very significant role in the short term.

9. Courses are not sequenced. Most subjects are elaborated as course topics at an introductory level, not especially custom tailored to special target groups (politicians, administrative staff, implementers) and their level of exposure (introduction course, advanced, refresher course).

10. Financial incentives and disincentives are sometimes counterproductive for the quality of training. (For example, allowances for participants may encourage participation even though the subject of training does not have a high priority for the target group. Trainers may be discouraged to teach longer periods on locations in their own duty station, because they will miss the additional income of allowances for courses in the field.)
11. Provincial partners realise that the training programme needs to be better structured and that instead of meeting a high demand with a thinly spread across-the-board response, clear priorities will have to be set.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that SFDP Song Da should focus on training (design and methodology) as one more product to be developed, piloted and finally handed over at the end of the (fourth phase of the) project. Such would be very much in line with the long-term strategies of the project and its aim for sustainable results. A training system is required to assure the build up of a future human resource base that can manage the natural resources in a sustainable way.

2. If this is accepted, the project’s focus on training must be changed. As with the other products that SFDP Song Da developed, the project should not pretend to cover the very substantial training needs in the whole provinces, but instead initiate a pioneer activity on a limited scale but with high quality (to be called "Focus Training Activity (FTA)").

3. As focus of this FTA, the mission recommends to take the training capacity for VDP. Main attention should be given to those target groups who work directly with the villagers (district and commune staff). The expansion depends on the activity plan for expansion of the province. See Annex 3 for the FTA proposal.

4. Besides attention for the direct training needs in VDP, the FTA will also aim at the development of a system for development of training. Therefore, along the way, the experiences must be documented and analysed, terminating with the formulation of concrete proposals for institutional training development in the 4th phase of the SFDP project (see Annex 3, p. 8-9).

5. It is recommended to revise the actual training programme and divide the budget for training into two main components:

   1. Training support for ongoing project activities, to be selected and prioritised carefully.

   2. The delivery of a pilot "quality training product" as result of the FTA within the current phase of the project.

6. It is recommended to implement a monitoring and evaluation system that could at the same time be used to better focus the courses and make a selection of the existing training plan (see Annex 4). It is suggested to reduce in this way the existing plans to about 50% and use the resources for the FTA.

7. The available external expertise (12 man months for extension/training) should be planned in support of the development of this training product and if possible expanded.

8. During the current phase, the Vocational Schools should be given the opportunity to benefit as much as possible from the training programme, however, without already bearing the full responsibility for it. In any case, the teaching staff of the school should as much as possible be given the opportunity to benefit from the Focus Training Activities (ToT, development of teaching materials etc.)

The form and intensity of partnership programmes that SFDP can develop with these schools will depend on further support the schools can get. SFDP should actively encourage other projects and support programmes to participate in such partnerships. Depending on what further support can be found, one or more of the following activities could be components of the cooperation:

- Invite teachers on field trips
- Participation of teachers in ToT courses
- Joint development of training materials
- Participation of the schools in monitoring and evaluation of field courses
- Joint case studies, field studies
• Joint short courses
• Involvement of extension staff in regular school activities

9. In the case that the schools might already receive substantial support for their institutional development from international projects within the current phase or if support from the national budget was considerably increased, a more prominent role for the schools in the FTA should be considered.

10. In the development of training capacity, the project should, in close consultation with the provincial authorities, work out a system of positive incentives for trainers and trainees which are as much as possible linked to the results of the courses. Such a system should reward trainers for their efforts and select participants on the basis of genuine interest for the course objectives.

11. It is recommended that the provinces give high priority to the further implementation of LUP-LA. The provinces should assign LUP-LA trainers for a period of at least 3 years to train the district teams in charge of LUP-LA. In case the already trained trainers cannot be made sufficiently available for this full time assignment, it is recommended that an intensive ToT course, including follow-up and coaching will be organised by SFDP (see Annex 5 for a proposal). In that case, the provinces should provide a number of well qualified staff, whose deployment can also be assured for a number of years. Preferably, the number of candidates should be about twice the required number, so that in the ToT course the most qualified ones can be selected.

12. It is recommended that the SFDP Song Da project and the provincial authorities set up an efficient coordination with the EU Rural Development Project for Son La and Lai Chau in order to:

- Assure that the EU project activities make optimal use of the methodologies that have been developed by SFDP and approved by the provinces.
- Streamline the training budgets of the EU and SFDP in order to assure the required complementarity of both projects in the field of agro-forestry training


Based on the analysis, conclusions and recommendation of the present report, 3 specific actions are proposed:

1. A Focus Training Activity.
2. Systematisation of course development
3. An improved evaluation and monitoring procedure.
4. Training of trainers course for different topics (LUP-LA, VDP).

9.1. Focus Training Activity

Annex 3 presents a proposal for a Focus Training Activity focused on Village Development Planning. After approval of the VDP methodology, this proposal is to be discussed with the Provincial People’s Committee of Son La. The same proposal could also be submitted in Lai Chau province although some elements in the proposal may have to be scrapped when they would be considered to be less relevant. The position of the Commune Extensionist, for example, is not yet as clear as in Son La. In case the Focus Training Activity would initially be limited to Son La province only, it is recommended that some key staff from Lai Chau will participate in the training activities. This may place them in a good position to implement an adequately modified programme in their province at a later moment.

Another option that may be considered is to organise only one Training and Information Programme for VDP with a group of trainers that will attend to both provinces. If, due to lack of funds, the speed of implementation in new districts is slow, this may very well be the most efficient option.

The Focus training activity should not be used only to improve the training on VDP. An explicit objective is to
develop experience on course development which will become another product of SFDP Song Da. It will be an important instrument in assuring a sustainable and wider-scale use of methodologies developed by the SFDP. As such will it be the last “product” to be handed over at the end of the fourth phase. Therefore, the proposal includes systematisation of the experiences gained in this pilot as a continuous activity, which will built up consensus among the partners in the training system about methodology and strategy for further development.

9.2. Evaluation and Monitoring Procedure

In response to mainly the lack of focus and priorities that was observed in the ongoing course programme of SFDP Song Da, a proposal for improved monitoring and evaluation procedures is presented in Annex 4. Based on this guideline, the mission team screened the ongoing course programme and suggests a reduction in the ongoing courses as presented in Annex 6. (It is suggested to use the remaining funds for the implementation of the proposed FTA.)

9.3. Training of Trainers Course for LUPLA

LUPLA is the basis on which all other activities of the project can be developed. SFDP has given priority to achieve this first and the LUPLA methodology is now approved for province-wide implementation in Son La and Lai Chau. Trainers have been trained and a trainers’ guide has been prepared. However, if LUPLA has to be implemented in several districts at short term, the availability of trainers may be a problem. It is therefore recommended that a core group of LUPLA trainers will be assigned, at least two per province, who will be in charge of the training of district staff. Possibly, this staff will include persons who do not have yet been trained and who have little or no experience with LUPLA. See Annex 5 for a proposed schedule for LUPLA training and implementation, covering a whole province in 4 years time.

9.4. Proposal for Terms of Reference of an Extension and Training Specialist

The above mentioned training activities will be supported by an International Expert on Extension and Training. See Annex 8 for the Terms of Reference as suggested by the mission.

ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

For a short-term consultancy as Training/Extension Specialist

1. Objectives:

a. To review the SFDP training programme, improve the training concept and provide recommendations for implementation and monitoring & evaluation procedures.

b. To elaborate a revised training programme for the current phase with a strong focus on improving the training capacity of local institutions, using the example of a "training package for commune extensionists".

c. To prepare an outline for the long-term position on extension/training which is to start in January 2000.

2. Time Frame: 2 months, October - November 1999

3. Required Profile: The consultant must be familiar with extension and training concepts, curriculum design and institutional aspects of training in developing countries. A technical background in agriculture or forestry is useful. Experience in Southeast Asia is prerequisite, experience in Viet Nam is an asset.
4. **Background:** Since 1993, SFDP has developed and tested a number of methodologies in the following fields: land use planning and land allocation (LUPLA), participatory village development planning, community forestry, development of sustainable agricultural and forestry technologies, and agro-forestry extension. During the current phase these methodologies are handed over to provincial counterpart organisations for large-scale implementation. Subsequently, these organisations are requesting SFDP to provide training support. The main strategy of the project is to increase the capacity of local trainers and/or institutions at provincial level to respond to the rapidly increasing need for training in view of large national programmes and (planned) international projects in the project region.

SFDP has elaborated an outline of a training programme for the current phase (1999-2001) which aims at training several hundreds of government staff at provincial and district level. A national training expert is in charge of preparation, implementation and monitoring of the programme, supported by the technical taskforces (agriculture, forestry and M&E) in the project. In view of the absolute shortage of trainers in the region and the project, training components could be out-contracted to national training institutions or specialised trainers.

In order to support the training component of the project, and in view of the rapidly increasing demand for training, it is necessary to provide conceptual and practical recommendations for implementation of the training programme (incl. M&E).

5. **Organization:** The consultant will work in cooperation with the SFDP national training advisor (and an additional national short-term expert on training) to implement the tasks listed below. Regarding forestry, close cooperation with the community forestry unit (international and national experts) is required. In the fields of agriculture technology development and extension close collaboration is necessary with two SNV development advisors, who are stationed at district level.

6. **Detailed Tasks:**

1. Review the training programme elaborated by the project, including concept, target group (training needs, job profiles), training modules, local and national training capacity, timeframe and costs.

2. Assess training support and management of the project programme training programme: training course development, procedures for preparation, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation.

3. Assess the relevance and usefulness of training materials and training curricula developed by other projects and institutions (e.g. Helvetas Social Forestry Support Project, Xuan Mai Forestry College, Mai Son Technical School, Lang Son Vocational Forestry School).

4. Discuss with the national and local authorities the options for institutionalising SFDP methodologies and analyse the consequences (timeframe, target groups) for the training programme.

5. Assess financial implications of the training programme and options for co-financing

6. To elaborate a revised training programme for the current phase with a strong focus on improving the training capacity of local institutions.

7. Prepare a list of potential training contents and trainers and prioritize them in an outline for a training curriculum.

8. Elaborate practical recommendations for the development of training modules with regard to structure, presentation and training material.

9. Elaborate recommendations for monitoring and evaluation of the SFDP training programme

10. Recommend an approach in view of establishing and/or strengthening of a training centre in the project region.

11. Elaborate terms of reference and an action plan for the involvement of an international extension/training advisor for a period of 12 months.

The consultant will write a concise report with practical recommendations with a maximum of 25 pages (excluding annexes). He will hand in a revised training programme for 2000 and detail the approach for commune extensionist training (training curriculum, trainers, structure of modules). At the end of the
consultancy the results will be presented and discussed in a meeting with project staff, and comments will be incorporated in the report.

**ANNEX 2: ITINERARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 16, 17</td>
<td>Visit GFA Hamburg, meeting with Mr. Paul van der Poel, project coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Departure to Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>Arrival Hanoi: Meeting with Mrs. Elke Förster, Chief Technical Advisor, Mr. Pham Quoc Tuan, regional coordinator, Mrs. Nguyen Tuong Van, project coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Meeting with Dr. Nguyen Thi Thu, Training Coordinator. Further discussions with project staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 7</td>
<td>Travel to Yen Chau with Mrs. Thu, Ms. Lien, interpreter/PR coordinator. Meeting with Mr. Hanh, district coordinator SFPD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Meeting at Extension station with: Mrs. Tam, director, Mr. Hue, deputy director, Mr. Phui, extensionist, Mr. Tang, veterinary expert, Mrs. Doi, Women’s Association, Mr. Giang, staff SFPD (just transferred from Veterinary station). Mr. Hanh, Mrs Thu, Ms Lien. Meeting with Mrs. Viên, Chairwoman District Peoples Committee. Visit to Van Lung village, meeting with Mr. Son, village head, village tour and maize harvest party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Visit to Mai Son Agroforestry High School, meeting with director Mr. Tuong and Training Coordinator Mr. Inh. Visit to School Farm of Mai Son Agroforestry High School Travel to Son La. Meeting at the SFPD office with Mr. Loi, Agricultural Expert and Mr. Viet, Community Forestry Expert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Travel to Dien Bien, accompanied also by Mr. Loi. Visit to Dien Bien Phu war museum etc. Reading documents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Meeting at DARD Dien Bien with deputy director Mr. Hong and Head of Forestry Sector Mr. Phu. Meeting at Agricultural Extension Centre with director Mr. Huong. Field trip with Mr. Thi, head of Cultivation Section of Agricultural Extension Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Visit to General School of Economics and Technology. Meeting with director Mr. Dung, Dep. Dir. Mr. Chi, Dep. Dir. Mrs. Ding, teachers of Law Ms, Hai and teacher of economics Mr. Phu. Travel to Tua Chua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 13</td>
<td>Meeting with director of SARD + Extension Station, Mr. Tu, SFPD district coordinator Mr. Xuan, staff member of Extension station Mr. Khanh, SFPD Agriculturist Mr. Tuan. Workshop with same group except Mr. Tu Field trip to Xinh Phinh commune with Mr. Xuan and Mrs. Hong, extension worker of Extension Unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 14</td>
<td>Travel to Son La Meeting with Director Mr. Minh of the Forestry Development Sub-Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Meeting with Director of Extension Centre Son La, Mrs. Thoa and Mrs. Phong, trainer for district and commune level. Meeting with director of DARD Son La, Mr. Chung , head of Personnel Organisation Sector Mr. Nghia, training staff member of POS. Travel to Hanoi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Meeting with Elke Förster.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Meeting with Elke Förster, Mrs. Thu and Mrs. Van. In afternoon joined by Mr. Tuan, national training expert and head of the Forestry division of the Department of Extension of MARD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 19</td>
<td>Meeting with Mr. Tuan, Mrs. Thu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting with Elke Förster and Mr. Ian Oxenford and Mrs. Tin Hta Nu, development training consultants.

Documentation, study

October 20
Visit to AIT, meeting with Mrs. Nguyen Thu Viet
Visit to College for Management Training, meeting with Dr. Nguyen Thai Van and Mr. Ming (Accompanied by Teamleader Elke Förster)

October 21
Meeting with Mr. Jan van Huis, social forestry specialist and Tran Van Han, Head Wood Processing Department of Central Forestry Vocational Technical School 1

October 22
Visit to Xuan Mai Social forestry training Centre.
Meeting with Mr. Dinh Duc Thuan, director and staff.
Meeting with Mr. Pham Quoc Tuân, regional coordinator SFDP

October 25
Visit to Thai Nguyen University.
Meeting with Prof. Dr. Nguyen Khanh Quac, rector of College of Agriculture and Forestry and Mr. Le Sy Trung, Vice Dean of Faculty of Forestry, Mrs. Vu Thi Que Anh, Mr. Nguyen Huu Tho, lecturer and former staff member of SFDP.

October 26
Meeting with Mrs. Thu

October 27
Meeting with Mr. Viet Community Forestry Expert SFDP Son La
Meeting with Dr. Le Hung Quoc, director of Department of Agricultural and Forestry Extension, MARD

October 28
Documentation analysis and report writing

October 29
Meeting with Elke Forster, Mrs. Thu

November 1
Meeting with Elke Förster and Henk Peters, representative SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
Visit to MARD, Personnel Department.
Meeting with Dr. Dang Dinh Hai, Deputy Director and Mr. Phung Hau Can, staff member

November 2
Study and report writing.

November 3
Presentation of preliminary conclusions and recommendations to SFDP staff, discussion.

November 4
Meeting with Wim Spieringhs, SNV

November 5
Meeting with Wim Spieringhs, Mrs. Thu, Mr. Tuan and Ms. Lien.

November 8
Planning of Focus Training Activity with Mrs. Thu and Ms. Lien

November 10
Visit FAO programme for Community IPM, meeting with Dr. Patricia Patterson, Country Programme Officer and Mrs. Dada Morales-Abubakar, IPM Training Officer.

November 11
De-briefing meeting with Ian Oxenford and Tin Hta Nu.
Visit Netherlands Embassy, meeting with Mr. Huub Buise, first secretary

November 12
Study and report writing.

November 15
Meetings with Elke Förster, project staff

November 16
Preparation with mission team on presentation
Meeting with Mr. Wijnand van IJssel, first secretary Netherlands Embassy

November 17
Presentation of mission findings and recommendations.

November 18
Finishing report

November 19
Departure from Hanoi Finishing report in Hongkong

ANNEX 3: PROPOSAL FOR A FOCUS TRAINING ACTIVITY

(Training and Information Programme for Village Development Planning)

Introduction
This proposal was prepared in line with the recommendations of the training and extension mission in November 1999. It responds to a direct demand for training on Participatory Village Development Planning in the province and it constitutes at the same time a concrete example for a "Focus Training Activity" as suggested by the consultancy team.

This proposal aims at providing a quality input for the establishment of a sustainable training system through a well focussed training activity. Strategy of this activity is two-fold:

1. Develop a training programme that responds to an immediate need for training in the province. The subject of participatory village development planning was chosen because this methodology has been developed and tested by SFDP in pilot districts and is expected to be soon approved by the province for wider use.

2. Pioneer a participatory methodology for course development that in a later stage can be handed over to the provincial training and education network. This is done in order to give follow up to the recommendation of the mission to make "participatory training development" another product of the SFDP Song Da.

Objectives

The Focus Training Activity of SFDP Song Da is an important element in the long-term strategy of the project. It aims at a direct actual training need at short term and at a need for institutionalisation at longer term.

Short-term objective:

To prepare the various actors involved in the VDP process for their respective roles in order to guarantee an efficient implementation of this new methodology in districts where it has not been applied so far.

Long-term objective:

To develop a training system which responds to the training needs of the rural communities and its service staff.

Institutional setting

A first draft of this proposal was already presented to the provincial authorities of Son La. However, details are still under consideration and should be worked out further in order to achieve firm commitments from all parties involved. Not clear is yet if a similar pilot activity can also be started separately in Lai Chau or that staff from Lai Chau would participate were possible in the activities of the FTA.

Special attention is also required for the possible role of the Vocational Agricultural High Schools. It is recommended that they should be given maximum opportunities to participate and benefit from this FTA. The level of cooperation with these schools still remains to be negotiated. The mission would even prefer that the schools would have the lead in this FTA. However, seen the current situation at the schools, this would require a very structural support to strengthen simultaneously the institutional capacity of these schools. Resources for such a support cannot be found within the actual frame of the SFDP project. Therefore, as long as such funds cannot be found, the mission recommends to involve teaching staff of the schools and work with them along the way towards more structured plans which can firmly support these schools as the important actors in the provincial Agro-forestry knowledge networks which they deserve to be.

Targets

Concrete and verifiable targets of this activity will be:

- The Training and Information Programme (TIP) for Village Development Planning effectively supports the implementation of VDP in new districts.

- The TIP demonstrates a methodology for the development of training programmes for government service providers.

- A proposal for the development of a sustainable system of training and education for the agro-forestry sector in the provinces.
**Target groups**

Target groups for this TIP are all those groups that play an important role in the VDP process.

The Department of Planning and Investment is the main agency responsible for the planning system in the province. Also various other agencies will be involved and all the staff that play a role in the planning process need to have a basic knowledge on the principles of the VDP methodology.

The following target groups can be identified that will need attention by the TIP.

**At province level:**
- Department of Planning and Investment
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Agricultural Extension Centre
- Forestry Development sub Department
- Veterinary sub Department

**At district level:**
- Planning Staff
- Sector of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Forest Protection Unit
- Agricultural Extension Station

**At commune level:**
- Commune Extensionists
- Statisticians

**At village level:**
- Village Heads
- Members of Village Management Board
- Farmers/heads of households (m/f)
- Housewives/members of households

The training requirements for these target groups vary from basic supply of information to intensive training, according to their role in the process. Four different categories can be distinguished:

1. Decision makers, politicians at provincial and central level, who need to be clearly informed about VDP and its results in practice.

2. Those who are involved at province and district level in the planning process and responsible for policy development, checking, screening and approval. This category mainly needs to have a good understanding of the VDP methodology.

3. The staff who is responsible for facilitating the participatory process in the villages (district and...
commune staff). These persons need to develop the required communication and extension skills.

4. The final target groups who need will learn to play their role during the final implementation in a learning by doing process, assisted by the extension staff.

Main focus of the TIP activities will be on category 2, the actors in the process whose role is regarded to be the most critical factor in the work at village level: the extensionists of the district Agricultural Extension Station and the Commune Extensionists.

VDP implementation scheme per district

The coverage of the VDP methodology in the various districts of the province will be extended at a pace that will mainly depend on the availability of funds and the capacities of district and commune staff for facilitating the process and coaching the Village management Boards.

The Training and Information Programme will assure that the staff in the districts and communes that will start to use the methodology can be trained in due time.

It is foreseen that the introduction of VDP in a district can be done in a period of three years. The district extensionists will spend 3 days per village when VDP is done for the first time. In later years, they will only need one day per village. If they will start the process in 9 villages during the first year and add each following year another 6 villages, 21 villages will be attended in the third year.

With a staff of 5-7 persons per AES, this would be enough to cover the whole district.

A very recently created new function is that of the Commune Extensionist. His function will not be very critical in the starting up of the VDP. But he will play an important role in the further integration of the VDP in the extension activities throughout the year. He will be involved in a number of development activities and at various moments he will, together with the village leaders, reflect on the VDP, evaluating the process it and preparing with them the agenda for the next VDP meeting. His influence can at longer term improve considerably the quality of the VDP.

VDP Training and Information Unit

A small group of trainers will be created, possibly under the coordination of the AEC or DPI, at province level. These trainers should have already a considerable experience with the implementation of VDP and should have very good communication skills. It is suggested to select these trainers out of a group of candidates through a Training of Trainers (ToT) course. The size of this group may vary according to the concrete training needs, which in turn will largely depend on the pace at which VDP can be introduced in the districts. However, it is recommended that the group will have a fixed core group of 3-5 trainers, who will work in close collaboration with the international expert on training and extension. One of them should assume the role of training coordinator.

This group will be responsible for the development and implementation of the VDP support training programme. SFDP will support this unit with Training of Trainers and assistance for curriculum development, production of training materials and the implementation of the training courses.

Once the courses have been developed, tested and evaluated, the province will take over the responsibility for the further training activities as they are required for the implementation of the VDP methodology in more districts.

Monitoring, evaluation and systematisation of the Focus training activities will be done by SFDP Song Da. On the basis of this, SFDP will develop recommendations for a further institutionalisation of this Focus Training Activity in the provincial structure of Agricultural Education and Training in a next phase. (After 2001).

Plan of activities

Although some details cannot be overseen completely at this moment and small modifications will certainly occur, the following steps can be foreseen:

1. Formation of a provisional core group for the FTA and making of operational arrangements.
2. Identification of the most critical actors in the VDP process and decide what kind of information or training they will need. For the most critical target groups, a more detailed analysis will be made of their tasks in participatory activities with representatives of the target group, their clients and their supervisors.

3. Formation of working groups for job profiles. Facilitated by the expert on training and extension and the training coordinator, working groups will be formed to work out the job profiles of the different target groups. These groups will have to be composed of representatives of the target group, their clients, supervisors and other persons that are directly involved in their functioning.

4. Based on the above mentioned analysis, the planning of the course activities to be undertaken will be made and the curriculum for the different training courses and information activities will be designed. This will include:

- General objective
- Target group
- Training objectives
- Training contents
- Training design
- Trainers
- Training materials
- Organisation and management of the courses
- Budgeting

5. For the different training courses, training materials, which are appropriate for the level of the participants, will have to be gathered, adapted and/or produced. SFDP has already developed an extensive training material for VDP, which is currently being revised. Also external sources may be able to supply interesting training materials or may assist in the production of appropriate materials. Also a guide for the trainers will be made, including suggestions for the methodologies and training materials to be used.

6. A Training of Trainers course will then be organised. Participants will be staff of the Agricultural Extension Centre, DPI, teachers of the Agricultural High School and other potential trainers. (Maximum 20) Trainers in this course will be experienced SFDP staff assisted by the International Expert. The ToT course will include practical application of VDP in selected villages.

7. Based on the results of the ToT, trainers for the different training activities will be assigned and final arrangements for the implementation of the Training and Information Programme in the new districts will be made, including follow-up to the new trainers.

8. Then the actual Training and Information Programme can start. During the implementation in the first district, the training coordinator SFDP and the International Expert will still support the group of trainers. Afterwards, the group will work without further assistance, completely managed and funded through the Agricultural Extension Centre.

9. SFDP will be in charge of monitoring, evaluation and systematisation of the training process. Further guidance will be provided when necessary.

10. Based on the results of the first year of training and the systematisation of the course development process, SFDP will formulate a proposal on further institutionalisation of the training programme as part of its support to the province in a 4th phase of the project from 2001-2004.

**Gender aspects**

The TIP will pay special attention to the improvement of the role of women and attention for their specific needs in the VDP. Gender issues will be an integrated part of the training activities, both in the ToT as well as in the
training programme for the district extensionists.

In order to improve the participation of women in the VDP activities at village level, SFDP will assist the trainers of TIP in the design of a workshop for village women that will specifically strengthen their participation in the activities. This course will be developed with the trainers of the TIP, who will train selected district staff as trainers for this workshop. SFDP will finance the first ToT of the course. Afterwards it will become also a regular activity of the district AES’s, who will train women in all communes.

Time-schedule

Below is a tentative time schedule for the activities:

Number and duration of training courses

Although many details will only become clear when the final planning of the courses will be done, some indications for the required duration of course activities can already now be estimated.

On the next page is a tentative course programme, which can be used as a basis to plan and budget for this Training and Information Programme.

Note that SFDP only finances the Training of Trainers course and the implementation of course for AES staff in the first district. From then on, the province is supposed to take over the responsibility for further implementation. Short courses and presentations at the village level are considered to be part of the regular extension activities and are not included in SFDP’s training budget.

The number of districts to be covered will largely depend on availability of funds. Training capacity will no longer be a limiting factor. The Training and Information Programme installed at the province level can, even with a minimum number of 2 available trainers, train 1 district per month.

If one trainer will be given the task to do additional follow up and monitoring, they can still easily train all district extension staff in the province in a period of 2 years.

If this was indeed achieved, the VDP could be ongoing in all villages of the project after a period of 5 years.

Systematisation of the Focus Training Activity of SFDP Song Da

For the long-term sustainability of the training activities, it is of great importance that the experiences with the Focus Training Activity will be analysed and documented systematically. The objective of this systematisation is to induce a process of participatory validation of the course development process, in order to obtain a model for replication in the future.

Just as for the other methodologies, the activities of SFDP on course development methodology will have to follow these steps:

- Experimentation
- Validation
- Implementation
Dissemination

Systematisation is the process in which the different stakeholders involved in the experiment (or pioneer experience) save in a participatory way the validated processes and products in a replicable system for being (re-)used in other similar circumstances. The final product of this systematisation will be a system on how to develop further courses in the province. The systematisation is an activity that analyses the experiment, looking at the following "chain of reactions":

\[ \text{INPUTS} \rightarrow \text{PROCESSES} \rightarrow \text{PRODUCTS} \rightarrow \text{IMPACT} \]

A chain that can be divided in a flexible part, which is highly influenced by the experiment itself and an inflexible part, which is much more pre-determined:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexible part</th>
<th>Inflexible part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INPUTS ---&gt; PROCESSES ---&gt;</td>
<td>---PRODUCTS-----&gt; IMPACT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is important to do the analysis with the participation of all actors involved in the process, so that they will learn from the experiment and agree on the system to be followed in the future.

At this point not all elements that will need to be analysed as part of the systematisation can be overseen. But some main elements to be considered in the particular case of the proposed Focus Training Activity on Village Development Planning are listed in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Flexible part</th>
<th>Inflexible part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INPUTS</td>
<td>PROCESSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• VDP practice</td>
<td>• Participatory job analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Experiences</td>
<td>• Curriculum design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reports SFDP</td>
<td>• Writing training materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Report AEC</td>
<td>• Training of trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demand farmers</td>
<td>• Course organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demand extensionists</td>
<td>• Course planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Province policies</td>
<td>• Recruitment participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Actual training program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Logistics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The systematic analysis of these elements will facilitate lessons to be learned about the following aspects, which will be of great importance for the future course development activities in the region:

The final product of this systematisation process (which is a learning process involving all relevant stakeholders) will be the information upon which SFDP will be able to formulate concrete proposals for the institutionalisation of the training system in both provinces which will have the support of the stakeholders involved. The joint learning process of systematisation will have established already a consensus basis about the strategies to be followed and concrete actions to be taken, such as:

- The problem analysis process for the training needs.
- The establishment of training objectives.
- The institutions to be responsible for development and implementation of training.
- The role of the target groups in the process of curriculum development.
- The inputs needed.
• The financial requirements.
• Possible support institutes outside the provinces
• Evaluation procedures.

ANNEX 4: PROPOSAL FOR COURSE EVALUATION AND MONITORING IN SFDP SONG DA

This proposal has been made in order to improve training courses of the SFDP Song Da project.

The evaluation consists of three parts, each with different objectives:

1. Before: As an instrument for selection: are the courses relevant and well designed? Based on this more or less priority can be given

2. At the end of the course: Did the participants learn effectively? Based on this the course can be improved in terms of organisation, methodology and content.

3. After the learned has been put into practice. Did the course produce the impact for which it was designed? Based on this, training strategies can be adjusted.

1. Pre-course evaluation

Before a proposed course can be approved, the questions in the following checklist should be clearly answered. If no clear answers can be obtained about a proposed course, it should not be approved.

Furthermore, the management can, based on the analysis that this pre-evaluation provides, rank the priorities of different proposals and make a proper selection out of a demand which is larger than the capacity of the project.

1.1 Justification

In the first place, it must be clarified whether the course is justified or not. Does it address the project’s goals and target groups and is the course objective in line with the development of knowledge, skills and/or attitudes required for improved performance of the target groups.

These questions are most important. If the justification is doubtful, courses should never be approved.

1.1.1 Target Group and Problem to be Addressed

The target group must be clearly defined and a description must be made of the role of this target group in the achievement of the project’s objectives.

• What are the problems faced by this target group, which hamper them in effectively fulfilling their task?

• How relevant and urgent is this problem for the progress of the project?

• What is the ultimate objective to be reached? (As much as possible, this objective should be translated to an as concrete as possible quantifiable and verifiable target.)

1.1.2 Training Objective

Based on the above mentioned problem description, a behavioural objective of the course can be formulated. What are the knowledge, skills and/or attitude that the participant will acquire in this course?
1.1.3 Alternatives for Training

Are there other ways to acquire this knowledge, skills and/or attitude? (through colleagues, other sources of information etc.?)

1.2 Quality and Costs of the Course

Based on the following questions, expectations about the quality can be formulated. These questions are of a less absolute importance than those about justification. If the justification of the course is positive, but doubts exist about the course quality or costs, the proposal should be improved first. For example, reduce costs, contract a better trainer, make use of other training methodology etc.

1.2.1 Training Design

A short description on how the course will be given, the methodology that will be used, the sequencing of the courses in relation to cycles of job activities etc.

1.2.2 Trainer

Qualifications and experience of the trainer.

1.2.3 Costs

Including an argumentation why such costs are necessary.

A point of special attention in the costing of courses is the payment of costs to participants. It should be avoided that there is any financial incentive for participants in the course. Participants should come to a course out of genuine motivation to learn. They should know the objective of the course and be interested in only that. Generous cash allowances to participants may cause a derail in the selection of the right target group, may have a negative impact on subject matter interest during the lessons and may make participants less critical about the quality of the training.

However, attentions and services directly spent on participants during the course and focused on the creation of a pleasant and relaxed learning environment may prove to be wise investments.

2 In-course evaluation

2.1 Evaluation of the learning process by the trainer

The monitoring and evaluation of the learning process during a course is the responsibility of the trainer. There are many forms and ways of evaluating participants and it would not be wise to prescribe this in a rigid way. The way such evaluations will be conducted will depend on the preferences of the trainer, the capacities of the target group and the characteristics of the training objective.

But the project should always require its trainers to do an evaluation and to report on the results.

2.2 Evaluation of the Course by the Participants

Besides the evaluation of the participants learning achievements, there should also be always an evaluation of the course quality as perceived by them. Generally, trainers will include such an evaluation at the end of the course and will produce a report about this.

A standard questionnaire (already available) will be filled up by the participants. Such a tool may provide the management with valuable information about the quality of certain courses. However, results of such questionnaires should be interpreted with great restriction. Participants at the end of a course tend may be very mild in their judgements (especially about the trainer) or very critical (more often about the meals or accommodation). A sound sense for relativity will be required.
3 Post course evaluation

The basis of the post-course evaluation will be the pre-course and in-course evaluation.

Depending on the importance of the evaluation questions and on the availability of resources, the post-course evaluation can be done in different, more or less extensive ways:

1. End-of-course evaluation

There should always be an end-of-course evaluation based on the results as reported by the trainer and the participants’ evaluation. This evaluation will include:

- Training objective.

If the objective has been correctly formulated and enough practical exercises and field work have been included in the course design, it will be part of the in-course monitoring and evaluation of the learning process by the trainer.

- Training design.

Training design needs to be reviewed based on evaluation results and revised accordingly in future courses.

- Trainer

Based on the results of the training, also the quality of the trainers requires attention. In case of free lance or institutional trainers contracted outside, the project will continue or discontinue making use of their services. For well identified and institutionally supported training staff within the partner institutions of the project, it is recommended that the project develops an on-the-job ToT programme in which trainers will be individually coached by the project.

- Costs

After each course, financial management and accounting must be evaluated and learned lessons must be used to improve planning of further courses.

2. Impact evaluation

A real impact evaluation cannot always be done since it is expensive and time consuming. The decision to do this should be made on the basis of the strategic importance.

The evaluation of the course impact can only be done after a considerable time span and requires detailed field study. These impact studies require time and funding and should be well planned and strategically targeted. It is recommended that impact studies be included in the yearly planning of activities, starting 2001.

This done, it is a pre-requisite that in the pre-course evaluation target group and objectives have been worked out well and verifiable targets have been formulated.

ANNEX 5: PROPOSAL FOR A LUP-LA TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

This is a proposal for the implementation of Land Use Planning and Allocation in one whole province in 4 years time.

It departs from the assumption that the province approves the methodology and there are funds available for implementation. Experienced SFDP staff is used for the initial training and assistance to new trainers at the province level.
District staff, 5 of FPU and 5 of CU per district will be the main responsibles for carrying out the actual activity of participatory planning and allocation. This training proposal targets only this staff of the districts. Specialised training requirements of provincial staff will have to be addressed separately, if needed.

The LUP-LA activity takes about one moth per village. It seems possible to form 5 teams per district, which will then need about 2 years to finish their job in all the about one hundred villages of a district.

These teams will need to be started up through intensive training and follow-up by experienced trainers. There are already trained and experienced trainers available in the provinces and a detailed guide for trainers has already been developed.

If in each province two trainers will be assigned to train district teams, all the teams of a province can be trained in two years time.

Manpower requirements:

Experience SFDP or province staff LUP-LA trainers (2) 8 man months
Specially assigned trainers (2-3) 72 man months
FPU district staff (5 per district, 10 districts) 1000 man months
CU staff (5 per district, 10 districts) 1000 man months

The new trainers will receive a 5 day intensive ToT course by SFDP, making use of the already prepared training Manual for Participatory Land Use Planning.

Afterwards, the new trainers will work one by one together with the experienced trainers in the first courses to be given to district staff of Cadastral Units and Forest Protection Units, who will be in charge of the implementation of LUP-LA.

It is suggested that in districts where LUP-LA is going to be implemented, 5 teams of 2 staff members (one CU, one FPU) be formed. 2 districts can be trained simultaneously by 2 trainers. Only during the first training courses, when one new and one experienced trainer work together, a group of only 10 staff should be trained, so that the two trainers can stay together.

A 3-step training programme is recommended for the training of district staff:

1. Two trainers give a one-week course to 20 participants, making use of the Training Manual.

2. Each trainer completes the LUP-LA activity in one village with a group of 10. (1 month is required for completing LUP-LA in one village.)

3. Teams work now independently but each team receives still 1 day attention of a trainer per week during the first time.

In addition to this, it is suggested that the trainers give still some further follow-up to the field activities.

See below for a tentative time schedule for the activities:
ANNEX 7: REVIEW OF THE SFDP’S TRAINING MANUALS

There are 6 issues in the SFDP’s training program, as follows:

- Land Use Planning and Land Allocation (LUP-LA)
- Village Development Planning (Village Development Planning)
- Community Forestry (CF)
- Agriculture and Agro-forestry
- Extension
- Management and organisation

Each issue has its own appropriate topics and its training manuals. Details are as follows:

1. **Land Use Planning and Land Allocation:**

Son La People’s Committee approved the Participatory Land Use Planning and Land Allocation for implementing in the whole province. This is the official document guiding content and implementing step to carry out LUP-LA at communal level. It’s a clear document and appropriate with staffs at province and district levels. However, practical training courses are still in need to apply for staffs at all levels, especially at the
There are 2 manuals of LUP-LA with rural participatory for trainers.

- The manual of Herbert Christ only provides the guide to do land use planning. The positive point of these manual is having detailing steps to guide trainers such as: Introduce in the beginning of training course, management and training methodologies, how to arrange the time and so on.

- GIS & MAPINFO manual guides map on computer to support for land use planning. This is appropriate manual for staffs at province and district levels that have had already some skills in using computer. The manual is clear with nice illustrations. However it is still necessary to apply in practical situation to be clear about its usefulness.

2. Village Development Planning

Manual of Participatory Village Development Planning was written clearly with all Village Development Planning steps and contents. But in the manual, only planning cycle and implementing management as well as monitoring and evaluation are clear, the rest including planning in villages is too simple and it is difficult to follow. Otherwise, also it is called "social-economic development planning" but it almost focuses on Agriculture and forestry part, while the information about others including social information are not emphasized correctly (only by collecting data, in fact that is collecting data form authorities and still not shows the participatory of local people).

It is not necessary to have a manual on PRA training in Village Development Planning. This content should be combined with Village Development Planning guideline because PRA tools have to be applied in process of Village Development Planning. The only thing should be mentioned is that which PRA tools are suitable to apply in Village Development Planning. This manual introduces some simple and appropriate tools for Village Development Planning process such as household economics tool. But with the rest tools with sample, it is easy to get confusing because villagers don't build up by them selves but the implementers collect data following traditional way. Also the manual is not followed to practice with steps in detail.

In training document for Village Management Board, it is still too theoretic and not appropriate with village level. This document should be re-write to be more practical and easier to understand for farmers, especially mountainous farmers.

Information and skills for working in groups is a translated document and the translator tried to make it similar with Vietnamese situation. Thus, content of document is very useful for introducing the skills for staffs working in the field of rural development when they work in groups. But although this is a training skills document but it still lacks of exercises for each skill in detail. That's reason why it is difficult to apply for trainees even for province level. It's more practical if this document can be developed to the training manual for trainers.

3. Community Forestry

Manual of Introduction to Community Forestry is translated document. It's content is quite interesting but it focus mainly on theory and explanation, thus it is not very suitable with staffs at communal level and even for district level. It makes sense if this document is used for researchers.

The rest documents relating to community forestry are technical trainings in detail such as: nursery technique, forest plantation technique, forest plantation design, guideline to apply some local seedlings etc. Although there are some documents like nursery garden techniques, technical solutions in forest management which are simpler and having illustrating picture, in general, these documents are only suitable for technicians at province and district levels.

4. Agro-forestry

Experimental methodology in the field - a translated document is easy to read and understand. This document
is like a guideline for researcher in the field than a training manual. Especially, the role of farmers participating in experiment activities isn't showed in the document.

The document is veterinarian's guidelines at basic level should be used at reference for veterinarian the training document although it is short and simple.

Training manual for household economics is the manual for trainers with useful content. The way of dividing the lecture to modules is very good and easy to understand. Especially, each module has detailing exercise to practice. However, because this document is for trainers so it should have some detailing guidelines such as: how to use training for training activities; program of all course and duration for each module, preparation for training course, objective of each module, training methodology, facilities needed for each module, how to do exercise and some notices. Thus after finishing training courses, trainers can use this document to carry out training immediately.

5. Extension

Training for agro-forestry extension is translated document and was revised. It is easy to understand and useful and can be used as training manual on extension profession for extensionists at province and district levels. However it is necessary to add more exercises for each topic of extension. It should be developed to be manual for trainers.

Extension methodology and transferring new technologies for farmers include 4 parts, but in fact, two-fist parts were introduced in document named "training for agro-forestry extension". The third part should be methodology for transferring new technology to farmers in order to be more practical for training activities. However, it should be combined this part with the document 'training for agro-forestry extension". The forth part should be use as content of extension organisation.

Extension document production method can be used as training manual for extensionists at district and provincial level. However this document only mentions about brochures and some Ao pictures while it still lacks of some contents newspaper articles, small books, guidelines, posters ... Otherwise, participatory extension document production method now is a popular method in the world in order to increase the using value of the documents and preventing the "scientists' language". But this document doesn't mention about participatory method.

6. Management

The document guiding using database on "action plan" is practical and appropriate for the SFDP and provincial staffs that have had already some basic knowledge on using computer.

Planning is a translated document but it focuses mainly on theory and it's still too long.

In conclusion, training documents in the SFDP are not systematic. Some documents are for trainers, some are for district and provincial levels, some are for all levels. Otherwise, there is no united procedure for steps to produce training manuals.

Other training manual resources

At present, there are a lot of institutions involving in compiling agro-forestry-training documents. In general, those documents have a disadvantaged point is lacking of analyzing job profile of target groups and almost are emphased on theory and only be suitable with high levels. However, there are some institutions assisted by international project produce some training documents that are good for the SFDP to refer and use.

Firstly, Xuan Mai Social Forestry Development Centre (SFDC) has compiled some training manuals for short-term courses on social forestry, forestry extension and TOT methodology. The SFDP can use these documents to refer and collaborate with SFDC's experts in order to compile training manuals for the SFDP.

Also, the project can refer to some steps to formulate job profile on silviculture and training methodology of VOCTECH 1 in Huu lung, Lang Son.
ANNEX 8: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A LONG-TERM TRAINING AND
EXTENSION SPECIALIST IN SFDP SONG DA

(previously Agriculture/Extension Specialist)

1. Objectives:

1. A functioning training program for SFDP methodologies supports the implementation of this methodology in new districts (expected focus: VDP).

2. The training program is handed over to a suitable training institution for further implementation.

3. The extension system in Son La and Lai Chau province is implementing main elements of a demand oriented extension concept tested in the project districts by making best use of existing personnel and financial resources.

4. The overriding issue of gender orientation is well coordinated within all SFDP activities and methodologies

2. Time Frame & Duty

Station: 15 months, starting from February 2000. Duty station in Son La Town with travels to the 2 project provinces and to Hanoi

3. Required Profile:

The consultant must be familiar with training and extension concepts, curriculum design and institutional aspects of training institutions in developing countries. A technical background in agriculture, agro/forestry or forestry is useful. Experience in S.E. Asia is prerequisite, experience in Viet Nam is an asset.

4. Background:

Since 1993, SFDP has developed and tested a number of methodologies, such as land use planning and land allocation (LUPLA), participatory village development planning (VDP), community forestry approaches for forest protection and management, and approaches for demand-oriented extension service. During the current phase these methodologies are being handed over to the provinces for up-scaling. LUPLA was the first methodology to be authorized by the province in May 99. VDP authorization is pending. Larger scale implementation generates a training demand and SFDP is requested to assist in meeting this demand.

In order to anchor new methodologies firmly into administrative structures, a congruent training approach is required, including the design of sequenced training modules for different target groups, design of training material, qualification of teachers, and thorough quality management. A short-term consultant in Oct/Nov. 1999 confirmed that the capacities within the institutions cannot fulfil these tasks and instead provincial training institutions need to be involved in this process.

In addition to setting up a training structure for integration of SFDP methodologies, SFDP is cooperating closely with the two SNV advisors addressing agricultural technology identification and extension issues in both project districts. Based on this field experience, the extension approach has to be handed over to the two provinces.

5. Organization:
Considering the central importance of training for the sustainability of the introduced methodologies, it is desirable that this long-term position commences soon. Close cooperation with the national training expert is required, as well as close coordination with the technical staff responsible for LUPLA, VDP, community forestry approaches and agr. extension approaches. Teachers from Maison Vocational School are integrated into the process. With regard to agricultural extension, close cooperation with SNV experts is required.

6. Detailed Tasks:

In accordance with the PPM, and the annual plan the consultant will fulfil the following tasks regarding training:

- Review the training strategy proposed by the STE on training (Nov. 99) for VDP in Son La province based on the implementation of VDP by the province
- Differentiate and design sequenced training modules for different target groups with regard to the Focus Training Activity (VDP)
- Organize and support the production of training material
- Organize and monitor the training of trainer course and develop certification criteria for trainers
- Systematize improved course preparation, monitoring, evaluation and adaption
- Closely cooperate with the identified training institutions in developing the training strategy for SFDP modules in view of future clients, training needs and financing options
- Standardize the method of developing a training strategy (participatory curriculum development) to be used for other subjects (Elaboration of Forest Protection Regulations, Forest Management Planning, Participatory Trial Design, etc.)
- Review the Focus Training Activity and its actors and make recommendations for the next phase (draft to Project Progress Review, final by end of consultancy)

The consultant will fulfil the following tasks regarding extension:

- Assist in the further differentiation of elements in the extension approach (participatory trial design, farmer field schools, monitoring and evaluation, building up a knowledge base, …)
- Facilitate the integration of these elements into the provincial extension approach and budgeting through initiating evaluations and workshops