Capacity Building Training
Indochina Tree Seed programme

This note concerns the three weeks capacity building consultancy to the Indochina Tree Seed Programme undertaken by Lecturer, Arvid Sloth of the Danish Forestry College, from 19 August to 5 September 2000. Three days will be spent on investigation and advising on training strategy, which will be accomplished by visiting the Ho Chi Minh City Seed Enterprise and the CTSP in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Finally, a one-day workshop with TNA focus will be conducted at the CTSP.

Objectives
Primarily, it was the objective to implement a 10 days Training of Trainers Workshop at VTSP, Vietnam. Secondly, to assess existing training materials and comment on training strategy. During the consultancy, it was decided, upon request from NPM of CTSP, to extend the TOR activities by incorporating a one-day workshop and TNA discussion in Phnom Penh. All contributing towards the Project Document’s (PD) output III.

Findings

Training Needs Assessment (TNA).
Circumstances allowed that some elements of TNA could be achieved in advance. However, a substantive TNA, as a separate activity, was not carried out.

The Training
25 participants: 21 from VTSP, 2 from LTSP and 2 from CTSP. Main subject addressed: Training Needs Assessment, Curriculum Development, Setting Objectives, The Learning Process (Basic pedagogic), Matching Learning Style with Training Method, Presentation Techniques, Conflict Management and Evaluation principles. Ten training days were planned. A Saturday was added to exercise skills.

Developing a participatory approach during the training was an aspiration. However, before the workshop the participants represented a significant dependent learning style. The Consultant therefore choose initially to meet the participants learning style expectations, but gradually changed towards a participatory training style. Such an alteration of traditional expectations and roles naturally includes an exchange of obligations and responsibilities. The principle of the Training Cycle was adopted by all.

By the end of the workshop all participants had experienced the genuine difficulties in planning a workshop, selecting and using ideal training and extension methods. This brought about recognition of a good training is always being well planned pedagogically, not just an improvised presentation without ample preparation. The consultant consider this recognition as a significant achievement in it self.

An estimate of 60 pages handouts prepared by the Consultant, were given to the participants. In addition the participants called for more written information.

Workshop evaluation by the participants was very positive. It is noteworthy that a question inquiring on the relevance of the course did “only” on average receive a grading of about 4½ out of 5 possible. The Consultant is inclined to interpret this as a need for clarifying the importance of coming training and extension tasks. Other evaluation parameters included course contents, the actual training implementation, materials given, self-evaluation of the participants’
own contributions and the time frame. The written evaluation remarks called for support or pedagogic backup in the coming trainings in which the participants are going to be the responsible trainer. All logistics worked very well.

**Conclusion:** The 25 officers that participated in the course have now a strengthened capacity and motivation for carrying out training and extension activities. A process of developing good trainers has begun.

A positive change in the participants' behaviour from that of a receiver (student) to that of a participative contributor took place. An explicit independent learning style was not achieved but is usually a process that takes much longer time than just two weeks.

A weakness of the 2 weeks workshop is that only few subjects were granted time for actual skill building. Consequently, it is now important to build on the participants’ newly gained knowledge, motivation and self-confidence by assigning them to Training and Extension activities. Such activities should be allocated sufficient preparation time and be of a character that ensures initial and needed successes for the inexperienced trainers.

**Training Strategy**

Discussions of existing training strategies, training plans and training material took place with key persons at VTSP 5 September. Similar activity is scheduled with HCMC Seed Enterprise 7 September and with the CTSP 8-9 September. Consequently, the present findings are of preliminary and conditional character.

The Project Document (PD) emphasises the importance of capacity building, managerial skills, education, training (technical?) and awareness raising. Although, not mentioned directly in PD, the Consultant chooses to interpret this as an underlying understanding of that selected officers should become qualified facilitators i.e. proficient in pedagogic, communication, learning and adoption processes, training planning and implementation, extension, conflict management, negotiation etc. This interpretation is supported by the PD’s Project Matrix that has listed a register of capable trainers as one of the indicators for achievement of output III.

The Draft Review Mission Report (RM) does not directly specify the needs for training under its major recommendations but commends the project for conducted trainings. These trainings were primarily planned and implemented by TA. Again the Consultant is inclined to interpret this as that the RM finds training significant and critical in meeting the project’s sustainability. However, the Consultant is convinced that training on a larger scale must be undertaken by local officers that are well trained as trainers and equipped with sufficient technical know how and not by TA. Trainings should however, be encouraged and supported by the project, including TA components.

The RM, PD (output III and IV) and earlier consultants stresses that extension to seed users and seed source owners is important. The Consultant agrees fully.

To the Consultant two segments are evident in the target group for training and extension. The primary is staff of the CTSP, LTSP and VTSP (including its enterprises) and the secondary consists of selected staff of the Provincial Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s tree seed units, the Forest Company and NGOs working in the field of seed handling and conservation.

**Conclusion:** On the basis of the discussions and the review above the Consultant concludes that there exist a large unmet need and desire for upgrading staff in training skills (pedagogical
and technical) and that this is essential for the programme’s sustainability. The rationale being
that developing extension training skills on a more comprehensive scale that effectively
includes the secondary target has to be undertaken for reaching seed source owners in reality.
This process can begin by the assistance of the TOT trained officers but encouraged and
supported from the ITSP.

For Vietnam a two-pronged training & extension model comes into view.

**The low intensity but nation wide model:** The TOT trained officers must now exercise their
skills by conducting trainings to the secondary target group i.e. the Provincial Government
staff, Forest Company staff and NGOs working with gene conservation or tree seed
procurement. Support, follow up and sharing of experience are necessary, especially within the
first year.

**The high intensity pilot model:** The VTSP has established a pilot area for seed source
registration in the Thanh Hoa Province. To concentrate efforts and monitoring it seems wise
to select the same area for testing the development and the link of extension activities from
VTSP to Province to Districts and eventually to Seed Source Owners and users who must be
the prime beneficiaries. However, this will require considerable capable staff in the Thanh
Hoa Provincial Government seed unit supported by capable staff of the CFSC and funds
from the VTSP. **A strategy is needed for this.**

**Training and Extension Materials**

Training material exists primarily as lecture notes in English from previously conducted
technical seed procurement trainings and as personal notes.
Neither extension material nor ready to use training packages that include information,
objectives, overheads, exercise outlines etc exist.

**Recommendations**

- Develop a Training and Extension Strategy that outlines how knowledge best reaches and
  become adopted by secondary target groups, seed source owners and organisations
  embarking on gene conservation. Such a strategy should plan for extension implementation
  and monitoring in a Pilot area (Thanh Hoa). Moreover, there is a need to assess which
  extension activities could be implemented, and with which resources, on a national scale.

- Implement similar tailor made TOT workshops for selected staff of CTSP and LTSP.

- Follow up within a year is very necessary in capacity building. A shorter course of 3-4 days
  combined with 1-2 days small group discussions supported by individual consultation are
  strongly recommended maintaining the new trainers’ needs for continued motivation and
  pedagogic development.

- Practising training is vital for the participants’ development as good facilitators. Let the
  participants’ engage in trainings, specialise and develop different course packages.

- Developing a system that encourage that excellent training performance is recognised and
  rewarded equal to traditional and productive activities.

*Hanoi, 5 September 2000, Arvid Sloth. Edited 28.9.00 jao*