

Economic and political analysis for eco-regional initiative in Southeast Asia

Economics,
Policies and
Markets
Programme

In many countries, the decision-making mechanisms for State intervention have been unsettled by trade liberalization, decentralization and the increasing role played by civil society. However, while the conventional role played by governments is now in the balance, there are very few methods capable of offering viable alternatives. In an attempt to rectify this, a project has been implemented in Indonesia and Vietnam, with the aim of developing, adapting and applying decision support tools for agricultural policy purposes. Particular emphasis is placed on gradually involving the various stakeholders and decision-makers in drawing up and implementing new public decision-making processes. The project is also largely reliant on training local teams to use these methods and tools.



Workers
in a rice field
in Indonesia

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Methods

In order to take account of the complex interactions between the biophysical environment, agro-ecological conditions and the socio-economic environment when drawing up sustainable agricultural development policies, the chosen method combines quantitative and qualitative analysis tools: the CADIAC commodity system analysis

and dialogue for action method, the PACT institutional analysis method, outlook studies, participatory investigation and management tools and the MATA agricultural policy economic simulation model.

Achievements

The project began in 1998, and is now drawing to an end. It has enabled the development of new tools and original methods, training of researchers and analysts and the obtention of concrete field results. From a methodological point of view, a rapid participatory method for establishing stakeholder typologies (PRACTYP) has been developed, along with a method for institutional analysis of the relations between stakeholders (PACT), backed up by a support software and a user handbook. Different procedures have been established for participatory commodity system analysis, prospective analysis and

Pig farm
in Vietnam



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collective decision support. The various tools used by the project have also helped in building an integrated State decision support approach that is presented in a handbook due to be published soon. The project has largely been based upon partnerships with teams of local scientists and analysts in both Vietnam and Indonesia. These teams—around fifteen people in all—have benefited from numerous theoretical and practical training courses on the tools and methods used by the project. They have been closely involved in defining and conducting project activities, and are now in charge of perpetuating those activities by continuing the operations undertaken, thanks to the analysis and management skills they have acquired.

Two main practical objectives were set, in conjunction with the stakeholders concerned. For Vietnam, the aim was to work on improving the pork and rice sectors in the Red River delta, and particularly on producer-market relations. In Indonesia, the project set out to characterize incomes among poor farmers in West Java. The work done on these two topics has enabled a clearer understanding of the situation of producers and

other stakeholders (traders, service providers, decision-makers, etc) and the development issues in the zones considered. In the case of Indonesia, it has shown that improving the lives of rural households does not mean developing substitution activities but introducing alternatives. In the case of Vietnam, it has resulted in the establishment of an inter-professional structure for the pork sector, where farmers are now working with private traders to improve product quality, producer situations and commodity system efficiency, with the help of the agricultural services and local and national authorities.

The prospects

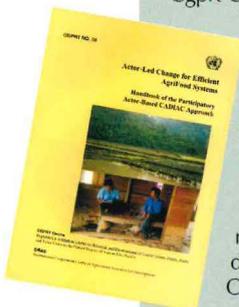
- The upcoming publication of a handbook presenting and illustrating the whole of the State decision support approach.
- Training for a wider audience (particularly in the PACT method), making use of improved distance learning tools, but also under a new project on policies for the development of secondary crops to supply urban markets in Asia (Metropol project).

Publications

Bourgeois R., Herrera D., 2000. Actor-led change for efficient agri-food systems: handbook of the participatory actor-based Cadiac approach. Bogor, Indonesia, Escap-Cgprt Centre, Cirad, 135 p.

Jésus F., 2001. Pact, a pro-active conciliation tool: analysing stakeholders inter-relation. Bogor, Indonesia, Cgprt Centre Monograph n. 41, 70 p.

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