Australian Agency for International Development

VIET NAM:

CUU LONG DELTA RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT

Independent Completion Report

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Acknowledgements and certification

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This report reflects the viewpoints of the members of the Independent Completion Report team. It does not necessarily reflect the viewpoints of the either the Government of Australia nor of the provincial Government authorities or any of the agencies consulted during the ICR mission.

List of abbreviations

AMC	Australian Managing Contractor
ACR	Activity Completion Report
CESA	Community Environmental and Sanitation Activities
CLDRWSSP	Cuu Long Delta Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project
CPA	Community Participation Approach
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DOET	Department of Education and Training
DOH	Department of Health
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
GOA	Government of Australia
GOV	Government of Viet Nam
ICR	Independent Completion Report
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices survey
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs
NCERWASS	National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
NTP	National Target Program on RWSS
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OMM	Operations, Maintenance and Management
PCC	Project Coordination Committee
PCERWASS	Province Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
PDD	Project Design Document
PMB	Project Management Board (under PCERWASS)
PPC	Province People's Committee
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RWSS	Rural Water Supply and Sanitation
SA	Subsidiary Arrangement
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WSC	Water Supply Company
WSS	Water Supply and Sanitation

Exchange Rate:

- April 2000 Project Design AU$ 1 = VND 8,505
- July 2007 Project Completion AU$ 1 = VND13,677

Project goal and objectives

Project goal:	To reduce poverty and improve overall living standards and health of between 384,000 and 400,000 rural poor living in the Cuu Long Delta by assisting them gain sustained access to improved water and sanitation services.
Objectives:	• To improve community based planning, management, participation and maintenance of RWSS facilities; • To maximise health and socio-economic impacts of new and existing RWSS facilities; • To develop the capacity and ability of institutions/organisations responsible for delivering RWSS services; and • To develop and implement appropriate and sustainable water supply and sanitation services for poor and rural communities/villages and district towns.
Component 1:	**Water supply and sanitation promotion.** Improved hygiene behaviour in project rural communities (including district towns) and increased demand for water supply and sanitation services.
Component 2:	**Institutional capacity building.** RWSS institutions and organisations equipped with appropriate skills and developed processes and structures required for effective and transparent RWSS program delivery and reporting.
Component 3:	**District towns water supply and sanitation investment program.** Developed water supply and sanitation (toilets, drainage and solid waste) services for around 100,000 people in three district towns through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management
Component 4:	**Rural water supply and sanitation investment program.** Developed RWSS services including water supply and latrine construction for households and schools, solid waste disposal and drainage facilities for rural clusters and some small-scale rural micro-activities directed to poor households, through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management.
Component 5:	**Project management.** Project implemented as designed.

List of key dates

Feasibility study	February to April 2000
Project Design Document	May to June 2000
Project Tendering	April 2001
Subsidiary Agreements signed between AusAID and 5 PPCs	October 2001
AMC Mobilisation	October 2001
TAG No.1	December 2001
TAG No.2	November 2002
TAG No.3	March 2003
TAG No.4	November to December 2003
Resettlement TAG No.2	April 2004
TAG No.5	August 2004
Resettlement TAG No.3	September 2004
Mid Term Review	February to March 2005
Resettlement TAG No.4	June 2005
TAG No.6	January 2006
TAG No.7	February 2006
TAG No.8	October 2006
TAG No.9	May 2007
Project Completion	January 2008

Final cost summary

Province	GOA Contribution (AU$)			GOV Contribution (AU$)		
	SA Estimate	Actual	Variance	SA Estimate	Actual	Variance
Bac Lieu	4,371,000	4,616,200	245,200	2,148,000	1,859,562	-288,438
Ben Tre	4,371,000	4,616,200	245,200	2,148,000	1,813,124	-334,876
Kien Giang	5,365,400	5,610,600	245,200	3,143,300	3,400,836	-257,536
Long An	4,371,000	4,616,200	245,200	2,148,000	2,055,382	-92,618
Vinh Long	6,497,900	6,743,100	245,200	4,637,700	3,555,024	-1,082,676
Total	**24,976,300**	**26,202,300**	**1,225,998**	**14,225,000**	**12,683,928**	**1,541,072**

.

Expenditure Category	Expenditure (AU$)
Fixed Fees (Outputs)	5,338,575
Monthly Payments (inputs)	12,329,262
Reimbursable Training Costs	989,577
Procurement	7,202,088
Procurement Fee	284,043
Total	**26,202,300**

.

Component	Expenditure (AU$)
Component 1	2,454,361
Component 2	5,820,541
Component 3	3,615,248
Component 4	9,471,281
Component 5	4,840,282
Total	**26,202,300**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Initiative title:	**Cuu Long Delta Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CLDRWSSP)**
AidWorks ID:	INE453
Country/region:	Viet Nam, Mekong Delta Region – Bac Lieu, Ben Tre, Kien Giang, Long An and Vinh Long provinces
Primary sector:	Agriculture and rural development / rural water supply and sanitation
Date commenced:	October 2001
Date completed:	September 2007
Cost to GOA	AU$ 26,202,300
Total cost:	AU$ 38.9 million. GOV contribution AU$ 12.7 million.
Form of aid:	Grant: (i) Technical Assistance (AMC); (ii) Province Trust Fund
Country strategy contributed to:	Vietnam Australian Development Cooperation Strategy 2003-2007
Delivery organization:	Coffey International Development Pty Ltd. (Formerly SAGRIC International Pty Ltd.) in association with GHD Pty Ltd. and WELI (Viet Nam)
Counterpart organisation:	Province People's Committees of 5 provinces. Project Management Board (PMB) under the Province Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.
Economic rate of return or similar:	Project economic impacts are expected to be positive but may not occur until several years after completion. A cost benefit analysis was not included in the design of the CLDRWSSP and no rate of return calculations were made. The project has constructed 51 rural piped water supply schemes each having different outcomes depending on population, raw water availability and consumer socio-economic status. In general, based on Pricing Plans prepared for each scheme, the schemes will be cash-flow positive within about 4 years from commissioning, although unless the real value of tariffs is maintained some of the schemes will not achieve cash-slow positive status for up to 7 years.
Final initiative quality rating:	**3.5** (3 – 4.5 – 4 – 4 – 3)
Project goal:	To reduce poverty and improve overall living standards and health of between 384,000 and 400,000[1] rural poor living in the Cuu Long Delta by assisting them gain sustained access to improved water and sanitation services.
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ICR authors and organisations:	1) Mr Edwin Shanks (Team Leader / independent consultant). 2) Mr Peter Shea (Institutional specialist / independent consultant). 3) Mr Gerard Cheong (AusAID Water Resources and Infrastructure Group).

1. Consultations between the Government of Viet Nam (GOV) and Government of Australia (GOA) in 1998 prioritised support for rural development and small-scale infrastructure, with a focus on water resources in the Mekong Delta. Following this, preparations for the Cu Long Delta Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project were undertaken in 2000 to 2001. The objectives of this project aimed at developing replicable and sustainable models for providing water supply and sanitation services to disadvantaged rural communes and towns in 5 provinces (Bac Lieu, Ben Tre, Kien Giang, Long An and Vinh Long). In mid-2000 the GOV issued the *National Rural*

[1] The original PDD stated 500,000 beneficiaries but this number was reduced to between 384,000 and 400,000.

Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy (2000 to 2020) which was endorsed as part of the project design and which the project undertook to support.

2. The project was implemented through the Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (PCERWASS) in each province with guidance from a Project Coordination Committee (PCC) co-chaired by AusAID and the Province People's Committees. The project became operational in September 2001 and was originally intended to run for 5 years. Due primarily to delays in implementation of the program of construction works, a one year extension was granted in December 2004. The project finished in September 2007 by which time a majority of the construction works and other planned activities were completed on time.

3. The project design and objectives indicated two inter-related sets of outputs and outcomes. Firstly, a set of tangible results in the form of: (a) investment in the construction and delivery of improved water supply and sanitation systems and facilities on the ground; combined with (b) changed behaviors and practices resulting from health and hygiene promotion. Secondly, a set of institutional outcomes through introducing an improved 'investment and management model' for RWSS services. This model aimed at stronger integration of IEC programs and community consultation and participation in all stages of the planning, investment and management cycle.

4. **Water supply systems.** The water supply investments and systems supported by the project have been highly relevant to the needs of both rural and urban communities. The range of rural water supply technologies has been well researched and adapted to local conditions. Despite initial delays in construction, a majority of these investments have been delivered effectively. There is widespread opinion that the quality of schemes is higher under the AusAID project compared to those under other investment sources. The project has done much to demonstrate the importance of ensuring quality standards in construction and equipment for improved sustainability. Good attention has been given to developing pricing plans for the schemes and to ensuring adequate training in operations, maintenance and management for scheme managers and technicians. According to the M&E Summary Report prepared by the project, these factors appear to be substantiated by a high initial level of customer satisfaction. In this regard the project has made good progress and achievements in relation to the Project Goal.

4. **Rural sanitation.** Sanitation activities were directed mainly towards behavioral change rather than physical infrastructure development. This focused on student hygiene practices in 118 schools across the 5 provinces in conjunction with the construction of school toilet-blocks and sanitation facilities. This was a relevant focus and these facilities have been well received. Apart from this, the scope of sanitation activities was reduced as compared to the project design (which indicated additional activities household sanitation and commune waste collection systems). There is less articulated demand for sanitation services amongst households, local communities, local authorities and implementing agencies. Even so, community sanitation is an increasing environmental concern in all rural areas of Viet Nam and in the Mekong Delta especially. Sanitation is a sub-sector that needs to be 'driven from above' and cannot rely only on community demand and selection. It was repeatedly mentioned by project supervision missions that more resources should be devoted to constructing demonstration facilities and developing a strategy for awareness-raising around community sanitation. It is not clear why the project did not respond to this more fully. Some indications are it was due to insufficient funds. If this was the case, then the ICR team suggests that either resources should have been reallocated, or the objectives and outputs of the project should have been amended. Currently the project description gives a wrong impression of content and achievements of the project in this regard

5. The balance of resources devoted to water supply as compared to sanitation raises a question about the relevance of the overall project design. In particular, while the ICR team

believes the 3 district towns water supply schemes (under Component 3) have been well executed, and will have considerable benefits, we believe this Component should not have been included in the project. It was not directly related to the Project Goal and including this component created an additional level of complexity to an already demanding and logistically difficult project. It can be strongly argued that more resources should have been put instead into rural sanitation.

6. **IEC program.** The IEC program was aimed at schools and local communities. It has represented good value for money in terms of the quality of the materials produced and the efficacy of the range of communication methods. The M&E Summary Report indicates positive outcomes from this program. The IEC work is regarded as a strength of the CLDRWSSP as compared to other projects by many stakeholders. There is now widespread appreciation of the value of linking stronger IEC activities to the planning and construction of RWS schemes. It is also evident that the PCERWASS will maintain these activities as far as possible given their funding constraints. One weakness in early project implementation was the lack of synchronicity and coordination between delivery of the IEC program and actual construction and operations of the RWS schemes. Another constraint has been in the cross-sector coordination between the health, education and water supply sectors in the integration of IEC activities. The project established effective working relations with the education sector and schools, but linkages with the health sector were limited. The AMC made efforts to respond to this situation, but these are broader institutional constraints that need to be addressed on another level. It is suggested that adjustments to the project fund allocation arrangements could have been made at an early stage to 'facilitate' better operational linkages between these sectors. This, in turn, could have better demonstrated the value of enhanced inter-agency cooperation so vital to this particular sector.

7. **Community participation approach.** This was the most problematic aspect of the project. The way in which the CPA was initially introduced and managed appears to have severely impacted on overall effectiveness and efficiency. A large amount of time, effort and resources were put into a PRA approach and a level of community consultation and planning that was unsustainable and which seemingly had little grounding with counterpart agencies. From the outset, the project should rather have tailored the methodology and process to the clear recognition that: (a) it was critical and essential to get the pilot communes in each province through the first investment cycle in a timely manner in order to learn from experience (which did not happen until mid-2006); and (b) the project would eventually work in many communes over a wide area so the depth and breadth of the methodology had to reflect this practical reality. The final Project Implementation Model significantly reduces the level of community consultation and participation recommended by the project for planning future schemes. The ICR team is concerned that the revised model does not fully identify the level of disaggregated consultation required to respond to the specific needs of specific social groups – especially rural women. In this regard, the project may even have contributed to a lessening of these influences, given the difficult experience with the CPA, and because the project has withdrawn from the design theme of extensive pre-construction awareness raising and consultation.

8. **Investment and management model for RWS**. The Project Implementation Model published in 2007 (as a consolidated output) is a comprehensive document that incorporates the main technical guidelines introduced by the project. This will be of use to future initiatives. Developing the model over time has been a learning process that has done much to demonstrate that specific technical and managerial approaches need to be taken to the particular conditions for RWS services in the Mekong Delta. One important outcome is that this has evidently contributed to increased awareness at national level of the need for local adaptation in RWS scheme management systems. The Model is though primarily a 'project investment model' rather than 'scheme management model'. The project had an intended outcome of 'improved competency of RWSS facilities management groups', but it has only gone part of the way in strengthening such

on-going systems. This was primarily because of delays in construction and completing the investment cycle in the pilot communes. The sustainability of the Model in terms of replication in future GOV funded RWSS projects is not certain – this was the final conclusion reached by the AMC itself in the ACR. Discussions held by the ICR team generally confirm this situation. While elements of the model will be picked-up and maintained by the PCERWASS in future, it is uncertain to what extent the central thrust of the new approach towards stronger integration of IEC and stronger public participation and accountability mechanisms will be maintained.

9. **Management of rural piped water supply schemes.** While the project started out with the intention of supporting 'community management' of RWS schemes, it has progressively moved towards a model of scheme management by PCERWASS with community consultation in planning. The ICR team supports this change of direction. For the type and complexity of schemes constructed by the project, this is justifiable from both technical operations and financial management perspectives. However, it appears that the long time taken by the partners to fully focus on this strategic change of direction may have resulted in a situation whereby opportunities were missed to maximize project outcomes. The revised project approach was not agreed until the second half of 2005; while many of the important policy 'decisions' and 'directions' regarding the preferred management arrangements for RWS services and systems were being made by the province authorities and PCERWASS in the early project period. In many respects the project was 'running on the heels' of these policy decisions. The provinces had many investment schemes to manage in addition to the limited number under the AusAID project and they needed to assess the bigger picture. If the project had more quickly and flexibly responded to the emerging institutional needs and the diversity of options at an earlier stage, it is likely that the outcomes – in terms of institutional strengthening and sustainable scheme management systems – would have been greater. In particular, this may have led to an adjustment in resource allocation in the training program to more fully and widely support PCERWASS to introduce, test and strengthen new management systems and staffing arrangements etc.

10. In summary, the main difficulties and weaknesses of this project have been related to these institutional capacity building elements. The ICR assesses that the results of the project have been less than optimum in terms of the effectiveness of implementation and value-for-money in working towards these institutional outcomes. The project partners and supervision and coordination bodies were aware of all these issues and attempts were made to address them. However, we suggest that more concerted actions could have been taken at an early stage in project to change the approach and systems for project implementation in order to concentrate resources and activities in ways that would have addressed these issues better.

11. **Project design.** The ICR team believes that many of these difficulties can be traced back to weaknesses in the original project design. To put this simply – it was 'over designed'. The project was prepared at a time of major changes in the institutional environment associated with the administrative and decentralization reforms of the GOV. The new National RWSS Strategy was only just coming on-line and new ideas were being introduced in water supply and sanitation. Given this situation, a more realistic starting point would have been that it was not clear at the time which direction would be required for the development of sustainable RWSS services in the region. A more appropriate approach may have been to set-in-motion a process of joint analysis and formulation with PCERWASS and the province authorities. This could still have been guided by the same principles of introducing more participative approaches, integrated IEC, and combined with concentrated testing in pilot communes but avoiding a prescriptive approach. This would have enabled the project to respond better at an earlier stage to emerging institutional needs. Instead, the project was encumbered by a highly elaborated approach which, as it turned out, was flawed in some key respects.

12. **Project management and coordination.** The effectiveness and efficiency of early project implementation was constrained by a number of management related difficulties, including: (i) an imbalance in the Technical Assistance inputs between the 'hardware' and 'software' components; (ii) an imbalance between these TA inputs and the provision of more regular project management advice and support for the provinces; (iii) some delays in the preparation and ratification of cross-cutting implementation guidelines; and (iv) the sometimes extended process and time required to reach consensus across all 5 provinces on matters related to project strategy and procedures. The Project Coordination Committee worked well as a forum for the exchange of information and for endorsing recommendations on key issues. However, the PCC was not a decision-making body and agreements reached were subject to follow-up decisions and approval by each province. It is not evident, however, whether introduction of an additional project management or coordination 'level' or 'unit' in the GOV arrangements would have improved overall coordination.

13. From mid-way through the project, the level and quality of management support provided by the AMC to the provinces was increased, stronger management monitoring systems were introduced, plus more attention was given to developing and introducing standard implementation procedures and guidelines. These steps helped to increase effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in the scheduling and completion of the program of construction works. At the same time, overall value for money was limited by the large amount of human resources, time and energy, that were devoted to the CPA and IEC approach that proved to be not viable.

14. **Monitoring and evaluation.** The attention given to M&E and quality of the outputs from this set of activities represents one of the most positive aspects of the project. A systematic effort was made to introduce improved Management Information Systems and evaluation methods for RWSS. Counterpart agencies indicated this has been one of the main project benefits. There is now wider appreciation of the value of conducting post-construction studies and feeding the results of these into future planning. The regular AMC monitoring has been of high quality, with comprehensive reporting on progress. The main weakness in monitoring and reporting has been in gender analysis. The M&E Summary Report presented in the Activity Completion Report is a useful document. This substantiates many of the conclusions reached about the quality and effectiveness of the RWSS investments. The ICR team believes it is unusual for a project to conclude with such a clear summary documentation of M&E results, for which the project should be commended.

15. **Sustainability.** The prospects for sustainability of the rural piped water supply schemes and the district towns schemes are favorable. The project has been effective in putting in place many of the required elements for this. Because the urban water supply has a higher economic return and better management framework, the component is likely to be sustainable as a stand-alone activity. Because many of the smaller rural schemes are in remote and poor areas, their long-term viability is not fully certain; and effectiveness of the provincial strategy to cross-subsidise between schemes still needs to be verified. Sustainability of the IEC work under PCERWASS and the schools IEC program will depend primarily on continued funding availability and commitment of the respective agencies. As indicated above, sustainability of the main institutional capacity building outcomes of the project is less certain.

16. **Lessons for the National Target Program on RWSS.** The experience of CLDRWSSP has again highlighted many of the constraints in the RWSS sector that were documented in the Joint Government-Donor review of 2005. In particular, institutional constraints that exist in achieving better coordination and synergy between RWSS related services on the ground (between the health, education and water supply agencies). This is largely a result of local government and programmatic budgeting systems that do not enforce or provide incentives for these operational linkages. The highly 'programmatic' nature of the budgeting process in Viet

Nam is itself part of the problem, since this tends to concentrate resources within line-agencies for specified types of investments and activities. Similar observations can be made with respect to community sanitation (in the coordination needed between water supply, environment, trade and industry and urban management agencies). It is unlikely that providing direct support through the NTP will in itself resolve these underlying systemic constraints.

17. There are many constructive lessons from this project for the NTP. It has clearly demonstrated that different approaches to the management of rural water supply systems and services need to be taken in different contexts. It has shown the value of ensuring budget allocations for IEC programs are made available to PCERWASS and the necessary adaptation of IEC methods to different cultural contexts. The project has developed a useful set of technical guidelines and training materials that could be more widely adopted. The M&E Summary Report is a good example of the type of evaluation methods that may be conducted by other provinces. The project has also demonstrated the importance of higher equipment and construction quality standards in contributing to sustainability; this needs to be broadcast within the government sector and in particular amongst provincial departments.

18. Project experience has shown the need for more nuanced interpretations and approaches to community participation as well as to cost coverage. The RWS sector in Viet Nam, as in many countries, is characterized by divergent ideological positions amongst donors as well as different government agencies. In the early part of the decade donors were strongly advocating 'community management' while the emphasis now is more towards 'privatising management'. Whereas the CLDRWWSP began with a strong emphasis on the 'community participation approach' in practice the PCERWASS were already thinking along the lines of becoming 'public utility companies'. These are not mutually exclusive approaches; but this does indicate the need for more practical institutional development strategies that are geared to specific circumstances.

19. While this ICR makes a somewhat critical assessment of the performance and outcomes of the CLDRWSSP, it should not be construed that this is a criticism of the 'project modality' *per se*. In fact, the CLDRWSSP experience has reaffirmed the importance of focused project interventions in certain situations. In particular, we suggest this will be important to get-to-grips with the issues of community sanitation and waste management systems in rural areas of Viet Nam. This is a priority set of issues, that currently falls between the mandate of many agencies, and for which improved approaches need to be devised and tested on a concentrated basis. A project-type initiative designed to test such interventions in different parts of the country could be valuable in informing future implementation of the National RWSS Strategy.

20. **Options for enhancing sustainability.** These should maximise lesson-learning linkages with the National Target Program. Every opportunity should be taken to bring the experience of the project to the attention of NTP planners at national level and in other provinces. It is proposed AusAID should prepare a set of 'Briefing Notes' on key project results and experience to distribute through the RWSS Partnership and the partnership website. It is recommended a Post Evaluation is conducted in 2008 to follow-up operational performance of the rural piped water supply schemes. This would enable a fuller assessment of sustainability and of the on-going scheme management arrangements. The evaluation would ideally be conducted as part of the on-going AusAID support to the NTP. Government personnel and international advisors from the NTP could be directly involved in evaluating and disseminating the results through the RWSS Partnership.

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Project background

Following consultations between the Government of Viet Nam (GOV) and Government of Australia (GOV) in 1998, which prioritised support for rural development and small-scale infrastructure, an identification mission was undertaken in 6 provinces of the Mekong Delta in January 1999 focusing on opportunities to support the rural water sector. That mission recommended that AusAID prepare a project to develop replicable and sustainable models for providing water supply and sanitation services to disadvantaged rural communes and towns in Bac Lieu, Ben Tre, Kien Giang, Long An and Vinh Long provinces. It was intended these models would cover the provision of water supplies, human sanitation facilities, solid waste management systems and minor drainage systems to improve household living conditions and handle the increased volume of waste water. The models were to promote community participation in planning and operating facilities, and to support cost recovery, health and hygiene awareness campaigns and environmentally sound implementation and management.

A feasibility and design mission was conducted from February to April 2000 leading to preparation of the Project Design Document (PDD) for the Cu Long Delta Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project (CLDRWSSP) in December 2001. The Australian Managing Contractor (AMC) was mobilised and the project began in September 2001. One Subsidiary Arrangement between AusAID and the 5 provinces was signed in October 2001. The project was implemented through the Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (PCERWASS) under the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). Guidance was given through a Project Coordination Committee (PCC) chaired by AusAID and the Vice-Chairpersons of the PPCs on a revolving basis.

In August 2000 the GOV issued the National RWSS Strategy (2000 to 2020) which the PDD endorsed as part of the project design and which the project undertook to support. The National Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (NCERWASS) was nominated to represent the central government on the PCC. In each province, the CLDRWSSP has been one of several sources of investment in the RWSS sector; the main others being the GOV National Target Program (NTP) on RWSS and 2 World Bank financed projects.

1.2 Objectives of the ICR

This Independent Completion Report (ICR) on the CLDRWSSP is based on a mission undertaken from September 10th to 18th 2007. The specific objectives of the ICR as given in the Terms of Reference were two-fold (see Annex 8). Firstly, to report on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the CCLDRWSSP with particular reference to lessons learnt from this initiative. Secondly, to make recommendations on viable options for enhancing the sustainability of the project outcomes.

The mission began with an AusAID briefing in Ho Chi Minh City. Visits were made to all 5 provinces in the project area. The itinerary included meetings with the PPC, the PCERWASS and other relevant provincial departments, mass associations and Water Supply Companies. Field visits were made to rural water supply schemes and activities in one commune in each province, as well as to schools. Site visits were also made to 2 of the 3 district towns water supply schemes. A half-day review session was held with staff of the AMC and AusAID to present and obtain feedback on some of the main issues emerging from the ICR and a meeting was held with the Head of NCERWASS. The itinerary and list of persons met is given in Annex 10.

1.3 Evaluation questions and issues

The ICR methodology was described in a Focus Paper prepared in advance of the mission (given in Annex 9). This singles out a number of strategic issues relating to the socio-economic development context and institutional context of the project. Specific questions relating to each of the 5 main project components are also identified. These issues and questions were derived from our initial reading of the project documentation and used as a checklist to guide the ICR meetings and field-visits. The methodology embraced two main aspects of the project, as follows:

- **Tangible results.** Firstly, as described by the Project Goal, the CLDRWSSP was to – 'reduce poverty and improve overall living standards and health of the rural poor by assisting them gain sustained access to improved water and sanitation services'. This is further articulated in two of the Project Objectives, as follows: (i) to maximize health and socio-economic impacts of new and existing RWSS facilities; and (ii) to develop and implement appropriate and sustainable water supply and sanitation services for poor and rural communities/villages and district towns.

This implies a set of physical project outputs as well as outcomes in the form of changed behaviors and practices. This is through the construction of improved rural water supply and sanitation (RWSS) systems and facilities and through better designed and implemented health and hygiene promotion programs. In one sense, therefore, this project has been about the 'delivery' of these improved RWSS services, facilities and systems on the ground. In this regard, the ICR team has been concerned with how well the project has delivered these tangible results. This includes matters such as the effectiveness of the strategy for poverty targeting; the appropriateness of the design of the RWSS systems; the quality of construction works and facilities; the sustainability of the operations, maintenance and management systems; and the relevance and effectiveness of the health and hygiene promotion methods and materials and so on.

- **Institutional outcomes.** Secondly, the design of the project indicated that it should introduce an 'institutional change' process aimed at strengthening the delivery of RWSS services. This is expressed through the other Project Objectives as follows: (i) to improve community based planning, management, participation and maintenance of RWSS facilities; and (ii) to develop the capacity and ability of institutions/organisations responsible for delivering RWSS services.

These institutional capacity building efforts have been focused on three main areas: (i) the integration of better designed Information, Education and Communication (IEC) programs and capacities within the mainstream activities of the PCERWASS (under Component 1); (ii) the integration of stronger methods and processes of community consultation and participation in the design, delivery and management of RWSS services and systems (under Component 4); and (iii) developing an overall 'investment and management model' for improved RWSS services (under Component 2). Implicit within this was that the project should create replicable models and approaches that could be incorporated into implementation of the National RWSS Strategy in future. The second main focus of the ICR has been to assess to what extent the project has achieved these institutional capacity building objectives.

There are, of course, intended causal linkages between these main elements of the project as articulated in the Goal and Objectives (the tangible outputs and benefits – and capacity building to strengthen services to deliver these benefits). These linkages were expressed in the PDD in the relationship between the 5 project components [1]. During the course of the ICR mission, however, it became increasingly apparent that for this particular project this has created a dichotomy that has resulted in a number of significant conceptual difficulties and implementation problems for the project. To put this simply – is this a RWSS 'investment project' (as measured by the number of RWSS schemes or population served, and the district towns investment certainly falls into this

definition) or is it an 'institutional capacity building project'? To some extent it has tried to be both. However, due to circumstances related to the scale and scope of activities, as well as features of the original project design, this has not been an easy balance to achieve.

It could be construed this is a 'conclusion' of the ICR and hence not appropriate to include it in the methodology description. We think it is important to make this point up-front, however, because to a great extent this problematic determined the course of our investigations and lines of questioning during the mission. We found that we had to unravel a quite convoluted debate that has taken place over the life of the project on the coordination and synchronicity between the 'hardware' and 'software' components; between the engineering and community development activities; between the demands of keeping-up with an ambitious infrastructure construction schedule, and the time and patience required to introduce and embed new institutional processes. It was necessary to make a detailed review of a wide set of project documentation to assess if appropriate responses were made to the difficulties in implementation associated with these factors. It has also been necessary to get a balanced understanding of different stakeholder viewpoints and opinions on these matters.

1.4 Information sources and comments on the ICR process

The main sources of information for the ICR have included: (i) reports produced by the AMC and PCERWASS including annual plans, 6-monthly reports, implementation guidelines and technical reports etc.; (ii) available M&E data and reports; (iii) reports from the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the Mid Term Review; (iii) reports and data prepared for the ICR mission by the PCERWASS in each province; (iv) meetings and discussions held with the various stakeholder groups during our visit; and (v) a review of secondary information sources, including GOV legislation etc. A principal source of information and analytical reference point has been the Activity Completion Report (ACR) prepared by the AMC. This presents a fairly comprehensive summary of project achievements and experience, together with a detailed and useful M&E Summary Report. The good quality of the M&E data provided has assisted the ICR team tremendously. Due primarily to time constraints, there are some aspects of the project the ICR team has not been able to fully examine. In particular these include the environmental management aspects and the Community Environmental and Sanitation Activities (CESA) under the 3 district towns water supply schemes. Due to the fact that we visited only a limited number of RWSS schemes in each provinces, it was also not possible to make a full technical assessment of these schemes. The ICR should not, therefore, be considered as a technical review, while technical innovations made by the project are highlighted [2].

1.5 Audience for the ICR

According to the new guidelines issued by AusAID in early 2007 on preparation of the ACRs and ICRs, it is understood that in future the ICRs should have more of an 'evaluative function' than in the past. It is also intended the ICRs will be published electronically and made available to the wider community of professionals implementing Australian aid. While we fully endorse the intention to make the ICRs publicly available, it should be recognized this presents some potential difficulties for preparation of the reports. Firstly, there are many situation-specific details and procedural matters regarding any project which need to be covered, but which would obscure the analysis when writing for a wider audience. More importantly, there may be issues of a sensitive or contested nature to one or more partners that may not be appropriate to fully cover in a public document depending on the specific situation. This potentially makes criticism and quality ratings a difficult task since overall performance may be downgraded due to a range of factors which do not necessarily reflect on the performance of any individual partner.

1.6 Structure of the report

The following sections examine the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the project (Sections 2 to 6). We have structured this according to the 5 main components, since this appears to be the most logical way of making the analysis for this particular project. Based on this analysis, the report goes on to assess overall quality of the initiative (in Section 7) followed by lessons and conclusions (Section 8). Under each component, reference is made to the Verifiable Indicators used in the AMC's Activity Completion Report (see Annex 2)[2]. Supplementary text information and data indicated by closed brackets [X] are provided in Annex 1.

2. WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROMOTION (COMPONENT 1)

OUTCOME: Improved hygiene behavior in project rural communities (and district towns) and increased demand for water supply and sanitation services.

Quantifiable Indicators:

- Research undertaken and documented to assist in understanding hygiene behavior in rural communities to guide project implementation.
- Design and delivery of IEC Programs by RWSS institutions.
- Improved hygiene behavior in schools.
- Improved household hygiene practices and understanding of RWSS infrastructure with regard to water and sanitation.

2.1 Relevance

The component was geared towards two main outcomes. Firstly, it had the direct aim of promoting improved hygiene awareness and behavior and sanitation practices in schools, amongst households and local communities. Secondly, it was designed as a platform for mobilising local communities to take part in the design, construction and management of the RWSS systems. This included an IEC program that developed in two main areas. First, the Healthy School IEC Program focusing on student hygiene practices; this was conducted in 118 schools across the 5 provinces in conjunction with the construction of school toilet-blocks and sanitation facilities. Second, an improved household health and hygiene promotion program that was delivered by community based 'Communicators' and PCERWASS staff trained in IEC techniques.

With respect to the latter, the IEC program was designed to go hand-in-hand with the Community Participation Approach (under Component 4) as well as being an integral part – and essential first stage – in the overall Project Implementation Model [3][3]. Previous IEC programs in the RWSS sector in Viet Nam tended to be *ad hoc* and not well integrated in the mainstream work of PCERWASS. The PDD anticipated a situation whereby the 'basic demand' for improved water supply and sanitation needed to be increased at the outset of the project, which would be achieved through a better integrated and up-front IEC program. Community involvement in all stages of RWSS scheme planning would be a major criterion for proceeding to the technical design stage. In practice, according to project reports, the early CPA / IEC exercises revealed that – "…there was already a high demand for improved water supply in project communes" and that "the IEC campaigns were therefore not likely to much impact on demand". This suggests that relevance of the IEC program was perhaps limited in terms of its overall timing and phasing of the content of messages [4]. This viewpoint was reinforced in discussions between the ICR team and province

[2] These Verifiable Indicators are adjusted from those given in the original Log Frame, as endorsed by AusAID for final reporting purposes in 2006. As explained by the AMC, reporting against the original Log Frame would not reflect developments in the Project over the 6 years of implementation.

[3] The integrated nature of the CPA and IEC work was essential to the project design, and the ICR team endorses this basic approach. However, for clarity of presentation we focus primarily on the IEC program under this section, while the CPA methodology is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.

officials, in terms of the need for better synchronicity and coordination between the IEC program and actual implementation of the RWS schemes.

The aim to promote improved hygiene awareness and sanitation practices is of course highly relevant. In Viet Nam the advancements made in basic sanitation conditions and facilities amongst the rural population have lagged behind improvements in domestic clean water supply[4]. This is a particularly pressing concern in the Mekong Delta. The project opted to concentrate mainly on improved sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion in schools; this was a relevant and appropriate focal point and the Healthy School IEC program has had good results.

2.2 Effectiveness

2.2.1 Quality of IEC methods and materials

During the ICR mission, a majority of provincial stakeholders spoke in positive terms about the IEC program. This was mentioned as a strength of the CLDRWSSP as compared to other projects and programs. Particular mention was given to the effectiveness of the printed leaflets and posters in terms of their relevance to "southern behaviors" and appropriate depiction of living conditions in the Mekong Delta [5][5]. Favorable comments were also made on the range and combination of communication channels and media (simple printed materials, face-to-face communication methods and special events such as school festivals and competitions). It was originally intended the project would use IEC materials produced by NCERWASS, but these were not forthcoming and it was found that materials produced centrally were often not appropriate to local conditions. The project therefore had to increase resources to research and directly produce its' own IEC materials. The project made a good effort to publish these materials in an attractive format and there has been a generally effective dissemination mechanism. In addition, the materials have been made more widely available through posting on the national RWSS Partnership Website.

2.2.2 Cross sector coordination

A major weakness in the design and delivery of many previous IEC programs has been the lack of effective inter-agency coordination between the water supply, health and education sectors. This was identified as a major institutional constraint in the PDD [6]. According to many project reports, the CLDRWSSP also suffered from these constraints [7]. The ACR states this was in large part due to the fact that GOV counterpart funds for the project were channeled through PCERWASS, with no counterpart fund allocations to either the Department of Education and Training (DOET) or the Department of Health (DOH). Thus there were limited incentives for these other departments to become involved. This may be a valid explanation. Nonetheless, given that these systemic constraints were identified in the PDD, decisions could possibly have been taken at an early stage to adjust the AusAID funds and/or GOV counterpart funding arrangements to facilitate these linkages. DOH involvement could have been greater had the PPCs been decisive about this linkage.

The AMC did make efforts to get the support of the provincial authorities to strengthen these operational linkages between PCERWASS and other stakeholders and to increase the level of cooperation on the ground [8]. Even so, with respect to the health sector linkages, the AMC's 5th Annual Plan (2006 to 2007) came to the rather depressing conclusion that – "While most PCERWASS have initiated some contact with the Preventative Health Stations, it became very clear during the year that it would not be possible to establish any sustainable collaborative

[4] Stockholm Environment Institute (2005) *Final Report on the Joint GOV / Donor Review of Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Health in Viet Nam.*

[5] The main leaflets including: clean water sources; keeping water clean; looking after your piped water source; rain water collection; water meter – how much did you use; water treatment; hand pumps.

relationship of this nature in the time available, if at all…health activities of this nature are not within the PCERWASS mandate…the different levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy complicate working relationships between the two government agencies".

Closer linkages were established with DOET, the District Education and Training Sections and the Head Teachers who became active players in the Healthy School Program. This represents a good level of cooperation established by the project. In the household health and hygiene IEC program, the project initially worked through 900 'Communicators' recruited by the project from the local communities, but this was found to be unsustainable. The ACR concludes it would have been better to work though existing structures and systems, such as the Village Health Workers under DOH and the Commune Clean Water Committees.

2.2.3 Synchronicity between IEC and the construction program

As indicated above, one weakness in early project implementation was the lack of synchronicity and coordination between delivery of the IEC program and construction and operations of the RWS schemes. This was associated with the long lead-in period devoted to the CPA / IEC activities before the schemes commenced (as according to the original project design) exacerbated by delays in the construction process and the necessity of conducting detailed water resource surveys. While there is now widespread recognition of the value of integrating improved IEC methods and messages in RWS programs, and the project IEC materials are universally highly regarded, it is arguable that the impact was considerably lessened as no clean water supply was made available until much later.

2.3 Efficiency

The IEC Program has represented good value for money in terms of the quality of the materials produced and the efficacy of the range of specific IEC methods used. Overall efficiency of these initiatives could have been enhanced if a better institutional analysis had been made in project preparation to identify existing organisational structures and systems, and community level organisations, through which the project could operate most effectively to deliver the IEC program.

Efficiency could also have been enhanced through a clearer definition of the purpose of different elements of the IEC program. Sanitation and hygiene do require more concerted long-term efforts in awareness-raising. In this respect the project design was correct in emphasizing the need to focus on creating greater 'basic demand' for sanitation services. This needed to be separated out from 'selection demand' in terms of communities choosing from a range of viable technical options for RWSS systems. This was, in turn, different from introducing a 'demand responsive' approach linked to community self-management of RWS schemes by communes and user-groups (as implied in the National RWSS Strategy). It is not clear to the ICR team whether, in fact, this distinction was made in design and phasing of the IEC program; but it appears these differing aspects of 'demand' became somewhat mixed-up in early project implementation.

2.4 Impact and sustainability

2.4.1 Knowledge and practices

The M&E Summary Report indicates positive outcomes from the Healthy School IEC Program and facilities construction in terms of changing practices [9]. ICR team discussions with the school teachers, DOET and PCERWASS staff indicates the universal opinion that girls had benefited especially from the construction of toilets and cleaner sanitation. While the Healthy School Program was effective, it was only conducted in a limited number of schools in each province and district. If more resources had been channeled into this activity, then its overall impact may have

been enhanced. The M&E Summary report also indicates some positive results in terms of responses to the household IEC Program [10].

The influence or impact of the IEC program on the rate of household connections to the piped water schemes or number of households registering for new water jars is less easy to ascertain. Only in Long An Province was this relationship specifically mentioned; as stated by the PCERWASS Director – "…compared to other projects to date, ours has been a strong IEC program. It has resulted in increase of connection by households to water supply". In other provinces, the relationship between the IEC program and creation of demand was not clearly expressed.

2.4.2 Continuation of the IEC program activities

The sustainability of the IEC program as designed and introduced by the project is, however, not assured. With respect to the printed materials, all provinces indicate they wish to continue reproducing and using these. However, this depends on available funding through the National Target Program [11]. Similarly, with respect to the Healthy Schools IEC Program, continuation and scaling-up this initiative will depend on the commitment of DOET and the District Education Sections and available funding. There were positive indications towards this in some provinces. There is, nonetheless, widespread appreciation of the value and importance of linking stronger IEC activities to construction and operation of RWSS schemes. It is evident the PCERWASS will maintain these activities as far as possible given these funding constraints.

2.4.3 Institutional integration

The original intention was that these various IEC elements covering water supply, sanitation and hygiene would form an integral part of the overall Project Implementation Model. It was further intended these would be integrated more fully within the regular functions and activities of the PCERWASS. As it turns out, the final Model documented by the project in 2007 does not assign any health and hygiene promotion responsibilities to the implementing agency (i.e. PCERWASS as the target audience of the manual)[6]. Instead, it simply encourages the health and education sector agencies to become involved. The wording of the manual indicates that PCERWASS should "notify" DOET and DOH of any WSS construction taking place in a commune and "request" them to undertake associated mobilisation and awareness raising activities.

This does not appear to represent a significant advance on the situation that existed at the beginning of the project. The final Model implicitly concludes that the approach to achieving greater integration of better designed IEC programs in RWSS has failed. In this respect, the ICR team questions the extent to which PCERWASS can have direct responsibility for health and hygiene promotion amongst local communities or in schools. This should be the prime responsibility of DOH and DOET. So the real issue here is that of inter-agency coordination and cooperation. The AMC was well aware of this and made efforts to respond [12]; but these are systemic constraints that need to be addressed on another level with respect to programmatic and local government budgeting systems. Such constraints were partly identified during project preparation. From the outset, this was recognized as significant risk for the project. However, it appears that the structures and systems for project implementation did not sufficiently pave-the-way for showing how these institutional constraints could be ameliorated. As suggested above, adjusting the project fund allocation arrangements at an early stage to 'facilitate' better operational linkages between the health, education and water supply sectors could have been possible. This, in turn, could have better demonstrated the value of enhanced inter-agency cooperation so vital to this particular sector.

[6] CLDRWSSP (2007) *Project Implementation Model for Investors in the RWSS Sector in the Mekong Delta.*

3. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING (COMPONENT 2)

OBJECTIVE: RWSS institutions and organisations equipped with appropriate skills and developed processes and structures required for effective and transparent RWSS program delivery and reporting.

Quantifiable Indicators:

- Documented Project Model for RWSS implementation, incorporating community engagement, IEC activities, training and M&E developed and regularly reviewed;
- Developed set of planning procedures and guidelines for RWSS program planning and implementation;
- Improved provincial tariff structuring and setting processes;
- Improved competency of RWSS facilities management groups.

3.1 Relevance

This component sought to introduce an improved investment and management 'Model' for RWSS services. This intention was certainly valid at the time of project preparation. The new National RWSS Strategy was being introduced and there was a need to demonstrate viable and appropriate investment strategies for the sector (and for NTP-I). There was also an overall need to strengthen and modernize management of the PCERWASS system. Meanwhile in the late 1990s a considerable amount of international experience on RWSS was becoming available, together with experience from earlier UNICEF projects in Viet Nam. This strongly suggested that a common reason for failure of many past initiatives was the lack of community involvement in decision-making, design aspects, operations and management of RWSS schemes.

3.1.1 Design features

The 'project model' was first articulated in the PDD, which put forward an approach ("structure, systems and processes") that was to be introduced in the first year and subsequently reviewed and revised throughout life of the project[7]. This model had several key characteristics. As described above, the integrated CPA and IEC activities would commence before feasibility studies for new RWSS schemes. This would – "develop social readiness for the proposed schemes, and lead consumer input into problem identification, options for technology solutions, design, construction, operations and maintenance of schemes". Scheme approval would be dependent on demonstrated community participation, which would create ownership lacking in previous schemes. Community engagement was further recognized as a pre-condition for sustainability.

This approach was justified in the PDD in terms of its adherence to the National RWSS Strategy that signaled a shift towards: (i) introducing a demand responsive approach: (ii) achieving full cost recovery; and (iii) a stronger decision making role for users of RWSS schemes and facilities. The project design implied that a majority of project training would be focused around introducing this new model as a catalyst for institutional change. The PDD did not specify that the RWSS schemes would necessarily be fully 'community owned' and 'managed'; but rather – "Once completed, the schemes may be managed by either PCERWASS the community or a combination of both" (this point is significant to our later discussion).

Given the centrality of this proposed model to the overall design in the PDD, it is essential to consider its relevance both in terms of circumstances that existed at the time of project preparation, and retrospectively in light of the content of the Implementation Model that the project documented as a final output in 2007. The PDD was based on a lengthy problem analysis. However, the ICR team believes that in certain critical respects it was a partial analysis that drew some wrong conclusions. Firstly, as the early years of project implementation were to show, the province authorities and PCERWASS were, in fact, thinking along quite different lines for how to develop

[7] Project Design Document (2000) – Section 2.3.6.

RWSS services. This suggests that the proposed new approach was not fully 'grounded' or 'validated' with the counterpart agencies during preparation, and there was a lack of local ownership or understanding of the project design and purpose[8]. Secondly, the PDD suggested that the PCERWASS had limited capacity to deal with more participative forms of management – but it did not identify specific 'openings' or 'opportunities' in existing local governance institutions and systems that the project could build on. In particular, it is remarkable that no mention was made of the GOV legislations on Grassroots Democracy that were initiated in 1997. Even at that time, this could have provided a platform for introducing stronger participatory approaches that would have been readily understandable to counterpart agencies and local communities [13].

3.2 Effectiveness

3.2.1 Introducing and adjusting the project approach

From early on, the project ran into conceptual and methodological difficulties with introducing the new approach. The methodological difficulties were associated mainly with the methods of participation employed (see Section 5). In this section we cover broader policy-related issues with respect to the RWSS investment and management model (and its bearing on the National RWSS Strategy). Throughout the project, there was active discussion around these issues which was well documented in TAG reports and AMC reports. From these, it is possible to provide a synopsis of the evolution of the thinking and approach of the project, as a means to assessing its effectiveness.

The early TAG reports commented on the lack of consensus and understanding amongst both AMC staff and counterparts in PCERWASS on the new approach. As noted in the 2nd TAG report from 2002 – "The efficacy and benefits of the more thorough preparation for community ownership and responsibility through the CPA is demonstrably misunderstood by PCERWASS and some project personnel…Given that AusAID is funding an innovative pilot approach to implementing the National Strategy, and if it works well it will provide a model for national implementation, it is imperative the project deals with this…".

By 2004, however, the TAG analysis of the situation had changed. The 4th TAG report from November 2004 states that – "The project design is based on assumptions derived from the National Strategy, several of which have proved misleading or erroneous. These threaten the sustainability of the overall approach adopted by the project, and a review of the relevance of the CPA model is needed…". This TAG mission recommended that – "Modifications to the CPA will be needed to ensure it remains relevant to PCERWASS partners, and is sustainable as an approach to community RWSS. This in turn implies changes to the IEC, gender and environmental strategy…and related training plans". It is notable that the analysis made by the Mid-Term Review in late 2005 was different again [14][9]. The MTR strongly re-emphasized the validity of the original approach of the project; and as such this appears to represent a number of mixed messages being given to the project.

What happened in the intervening period alter viewpoints on relevance of the approach? As described by the AMC[10] – "Extensive consultation with each PCERWASS has taken place to obtain an understanding of their preferences and experiences with community managed schemes. It

[8] It is noted by the AMC that PCERWASS saw the project primarily as an investment project, and GOV approval of the project was on this basis rather than on the basis of institutional change and development.

[9] The Mid-Term Review included team members who were involved in the deisgn of the project including the MTR Team Leader who was employed by the Project Design Consultant (Coffey MPW PTY LTD) to design the community and IEC aspects and the MTR Engineer was employed by AusAID at the time of the Project Design and involved in the formulation of the PDD.

[10] AMC 6-Monthly Progress Report No.3 – April to December 2004.

is only once PCERWASS agrees with the principles and extent of community management that it is appropriate to have direct consultations with the communities involved". The AMC goes on to note that – "The term 'Community Management' continues to cause confusion amongst both project and counterpart staff. We suggest the term 'Sustainable Management' would be more appropriate terminology and a clearer distinction be made as to whether discussions are directed toward piped schemes, school sanitation schemes or individual household solutions. Sustainable management of piped schemes will contain elements of both centralised and community management".

3.2.2 Management model for piped water supply schemes

For the more complex piped RWS schemes, over time, the project has progressively moved towards supporting a model of scheme ownership and management by PCERWASS together with commune and community consultation in planning and supervising the schemes. This was in response to the direction already being set by the provinces which was explained in some detail to the ICR team. From 2001 onwards the province authorities and PCERWASS were already reviewing experience from earlier schemes that had been handed over to commune ownership and management. It was found that many of these schemes were degrading quickly and the communes were unable to achieve sufficient tariff revenue to cover the costs of O&M [15]. This led to PPC decisions in Bac Lieu and Vinh Long in 2003 to progressively bring existing and new schemes under PCRWASS management. Kien Giang and Ben Tre have followed suit, while only Long An has maintained the orientation of community management. As noted by the PCERWASS Director to the ICR team – "Community management is the willingness of every donor when they come to Viet Nam", while going on to suggest that the reality of the conditions for RWS in the Mekong Delta necessitates an alternative approach.

The project puts forward 3 main reasons why most provinces were not in favour of full community ownership and management[11]:

- Firstly, the piped water supply schemes are comparatively complex works that require a level of technical maintenance and management systems for collection of water bills, customer service, administration and financial management that cannot be ensured by the communes without external service support.
- Secondly, an advantage of bringing all schemes under unified management is that cross-subsidisation can be made from schemes that are operating close to capacity and providing revenue above OMM requirements, to schemes that are unable to cover these recurrent costs (often smaller schemes in remote location).
- Thirdly, the legal basis for handing over State funded infrastructure assets to 'user-group' management organizations, and regulations for operations and fee collection is not clear.

The ICR team supports the first two technical justifications for the revised approach to piped-scheme management subsequently adopted by the project. However, it appears that a long time was taken by the partners (AMC, PCERWASS, the PCC and hence AusAID) to fully agree and focus on this strategic change of direction. This may have resulted in a situation whereby opportunities were missed to maximize project outcomes. The revised approach did not begin to be formulated in detail until the second half of 2005, through preparation of the Capacity Building Framework for Sustainable Management of Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes (December 2005). As noted by one PCERWASS Director to the ICR team – in the AusAID project many meetings and workshops

[11] CLDRWSSP (2006) *RWS Piped Scheme Management Models: the CLDRWWSP approach and key elements for sustainability*. In: Proceedings of the National Workshop on Rural Piped Scheme Management Models for Rural Areas of Viet Nam, Ho Chi Minh City, December 2006.

were held to align with the new management model, but this was only decided in a workshop in 2005, two years after the province had already made the same decision.

With respect to the third point on the legality of user-group organizations, it can be said this is not really a valid justification. It can equally be argued that one of the primary concerns of an institutional capacity building project – that is aimed towards community management – should precisely be to assist in 'formulating' and 'testing' such new regulations. These would be piloted in some communes then adapted as required before formal 'legislative decisions' are given.

3.2.3 Training for institutional change

All the counterpart agencies commented on the value and effectiveness of the training provided by the project, particularly for the PCERWASS (see Annex 5). Several PCERWASS Directors noted to the ICR team that compared with other projects, the amount and quality of training provided by CLDRWSSP has been a strength and advantage. In the early stages, it appears that the absence of an agreed model for management of the RWS schemes resulted in a lack of focus in the training program. This was resolved through introduction of the Capacity Building Framework in 2005 [16].

However, concerns were raised both by the Mid-Term Review and by the AMC itself about the effectiveness of this training in influencing and changing institutional systems [17]. The ACR notes that – "Institutional capacity building requires the ability to address all elements of the institutions. This cannot be achieved unless the structures of the institutions are open to change. This was not the case in this project and consequently capacity building was mostly limited to increasing skills and knowledge of individuals. However, some significant institutional capacity building was achieved in areas of community consultation, IEC program design and implementation, water tariff pricing…".

The ICR team differs from these viewpoints on the willingness or ability of the PCERWASS to change. From our assessment, it is clear that some of the PCERWASS at least were actively thinking about and already introducing improved performance related management systems, partly by creating competition between schemes [18]. This raises a question as to whether an opportunity was missed to quickly scale-up the training provided by the project to more fully support the provinces in introducing the new management systems. For example, the project has conducted OMM training for scheme Operators, but only for those on the project funded schemes. Could this training have been more quickly provided for technicians from other schemes as well with project support? It is clear that some of the guidelines and training modules introduced by the project will continue to be used by the PCERWASS in future. Nonetheless, we are left with the question that if the original project design had been more sensitive to the situation and needs of the PCERWASS at the outset, and if the revised project model had been agreed earlier, then would the outcomes of the project have been more substantial in terms of institutional change and capacity enhancement?

3.2.4 Tariff pricing policies

A concerted attempt was made by the project to introduce improved principles and systems for revenue collection for the rural piped water supply schemes. This included preparing a Pricing Plan Manual in 2005, supporting the provincial authorities to undertake a review of the tariff systems, training for PCERWASS and the preparation of Pricing Plans for each piped water supply scheme. This was a comprehensive approach that has done much to raise discussion about the importance of this issue to scheme sustainability and project sustainability.

As according to the PDD (and nominally according to the National RWSS Strategy) these efforts were initially aimed at 'full cost recovery'. However, as in many water supply projects, there have been differing interpretations and ideological viewpoints about what this implies. While the

PCERWASS accept the financial and economic logic of achieving cost coverage, they also point towards the social objectives of extending improved RWS to the remote rural areas. The PPCs however have not accepted the principle of full cost coverage and the existing tariff systems are largely being maintained. These aim at covering OMM costs but not capital replacement costs. This is combined with the move towards bringing schemes with fuller and lesser connectivity rates into unified management which may (or may not) allow an adequate level of cross-subsidisation.

The ICR team does not put forward a definite opinion on this matter because we accept the rationale of the viewpoints from different perspectives vis-à-vis social and economic objectives. In summary, it can be said the project has been effective in ensuring that Pricing Plans are prepared for each scheme and there is increased awareness amongst local government authorities of the cost of supply. The Pricing Plans take into account economic benefits, consumer affordability, operational costs and subsidy requirements for the initial years of operations until a break-even level of connections is reached. This provides a good basis for operations and will allow an assessment of sustainability to be made. The project has been less effective in influencing province decisions and policies on tariff systems. In this respect, it also appears that the province authorities were already determining the direction they would take in the early project period, while it was only later that the AMC was in a position to step-up its efforts to fully engage with these issues.

3.2.5 Documentation of the model

From 2004 onwards the TAG mission reports were generally concluding that – "…a satisfactory resolution on management models for water supply systems has been reached in all five provinces" and the project should fully document the investment and management Model as a matter of urgency. As explained in AMC reports, due to the delays in procurement and construction – "…the first full RWSS cycle was not completed in the first two communes until August 2006, almost 2.5 years later than originally envisaged"[12]. Consequently, a review of the Model was begun at a very late stage and it was not until mid-2007 that the project published the **Project Implementation Model for Investors in the RWSS Sector in the Mekong Delta**.

In overall terms, therefore, it has to be concluded the project was less than effective in achieving the original plan of introducing the approach (in year one) and early completion of the investment cycle in the pilot communes. This would have allowed timely review and adjustment of the Model based on practical experience of operating schemes on the ground. This was partly attributed to the inappropriateness of the original project design – at least to PCERWASS partners and the actual conditions and circumstances for management of RWS services in the Mekong Delta – if not in terms of the principles for improved participation advocated in the PDD.

3.3 Efficiency

In assessing efficiency under this component, it is necessary to consider the added-value and value-for-money of the considerable time and resources that were put into developing (and re-negotiating) the project implementation model. Certainly there has been an enhancement in the incorporation of technical guidelines and quality standards in the investment cycle. This has been a learning process that has done much to demonstrate that specific technical, institutional and managerial approaches need to be taken to the particular conditions for RWSS services in the Mekong Delta. Nonetheless, it needs to be asked how much reform this really contains? It is also necessary to consider the counter-factual scenario – would the overall planning and management systems of the PCERWASS have been significantly different today without the project?

[12] One of the fundamentals of the project design was the use of a four cycles approach to produce a final Project Implementation Model. The idea was that at the end of each annual cycle, the model would be adjusted, and trailed again the next year, over the four cycles.

These are, of course, not easy questions for the ICR team to definitively answer. One way of assessing this is to consider the content of the Project Implementation Model itself. In this respect, it is notable that it is primarily presented as a 'project investment model' rather than 'scheme management model'. It mainly deals with the initial planning, design, construction and early operations stages – rather than with the institutional systems and arrangements for on-going sustainable management. These basic investment steps and procedures are generally well known. Moreover, at the time of project preparation, guidelines were already available that served this basic function and which could have provided a starting point for integrating stronger participation steps in the construction cycle [19]. It can be argued that such contents could or should have been issued as a simple 'project procedures manual' at the beginning of the project (rather than being an end product). The project had an intended outcome of 'improved competency of RWSS facilities management groups' which, according to the PDD, may have included schemes owned and managed by PCERWASS, community organisations or a combination. The project has only gone part of the way in strengthening such systems. In these terms, the value-for-money of the resources put into this component is only partly realized.

3.4 Impact and sustainability

3.4.1 Wider dissemination of lessons and experience

The Project Implementation Model published in 2007 is a comprehensive and clearly presented document that explains the essential steps in the investment cycle and associated community consultation processes (see Annex 6). It incorporates technical guidelines introduced by the project in a number of Annexes covering – community engagement, maximising health benefits, involving schools in RWSS, key material and equipment specifications for piped water supply schemes, household M&E, technical evaluation, capacity building for OMM, operator training, and IEC communicator training. The project made a good effort to validate and share these lessons. This was both internally through review workshops with the 5 provinces, and more widely with other provinces, through NCERWASS and with other projects and programs. This included a National Workshop on Rural Piped Scheme Management Models organized by the project in 2006. In this respect, one significant outcome of the project is that it has evidently contributed to increased discussion and awareness at national level that different approaches to piped water supply scheme management need to be taken in different regions and contexts[13]. Whereas in the early part of the decade policy statements from national level were singularly towards 'user-managed' and 'community-managed' schemes, there is now a more nuanced consideration of a range of appropriate management options that may apply in different situations [20]. The national workshop organized by the project has also led on other events to investigate these issues further [21].

3.4.2 Replication of the model

The sustainability of the Project Implementation Model in terms of replication in future GOV funded RWSS projects is not certain. This was the conclusion reached by the AMC itself in the ACR – and discussions held by the ICR team generally confirm this situation. While elements of the model will be picked-up and maintained by the PCERWASS in future, it is uncertain whether the central thrust of the new approach towards stronger integration of IEC and stronger public participation and accountability mechanisms will be maintained. In this regard, the project may even have contributed to a lessening of these influences as it has withdrawn from the design theme of extensive pre-construction awareness raising and consultation.

[13] Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation / MARD (2007) *Report on the Management and Operation of Rural Water Supply Schemes.*

The ICR team is supportive of the justification given by the project to move towards scheme management by PCERWASS with community consultation in planning and managing the schemes (rather than full commune management). For the type and complexity of schemes constructed by the project, this is justifiable from both technical operations and financial management perspectives. It could be argued that if the project had started with a much more direct and practical strategy for increasing commune capacity (combined with much earlier completion of schemes in the pilot communes to gain experience) then it could have moved towards a model of commune management. However, it is unlikely whether either PCERWASS in most provinces or the commune authorities themselves would have fully supported this direction. Furthermore, PPC support for commune management would not have been forthcoming, following their review of UNICEF schemes in 2000 which found that such an approach was not successful.

4. DISTRICT TOWNS WSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM (COMPONENT 3)

OBJECTIVE: Developed water supply and sanitation (toilets, drainage and solid waste) services for around 100,000 people in three district towns through a community participatory planned program

Quantifiable Indicators:

- Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided to around 100,000 people.
- Project-installed water supply and sanitation facilities are in good working order and use at end of project.

4.1 Relevance

With respect to this component, one key question that has exercised the ICR team is the extent to which it was appropriate to include a district towns water supply component in a RWSS project. The basic relevance and need for improved water supply for the rapidly urbanising rural areas and small towns of the Mekong Delta is unquestionable. However, irrespective of how well this component was executed, it can be argued that it was not relevant to the Project Goal of reaching the rural poor particularly in remote rural areas. The counterpart agency is urban not rural. The poverty context is different. The methodology of community consultation is different [22]. The financial parameters of pricing systems and cost recovery are also not compatible. If these larger systems were used to inform or make a comparative assessment of physical infrastructure systems and management models for rural water supply, there could be relevance to include the component. For example, through an economic analysis (covering effectiveness and efficiency) of a rural solution based on enlarged district towns supply as compared to smaller self-contained rural schemes; which goes to the heart of sustainable systems serving a wide area and a large scattered population. However, there is no evidence to suggest this cross-learning on broader management models was a project intention. The ICR team is not altogether aware of the reasons for including this component. Neither are these fully explained or justified in the PDD. On balance, the view of the ICR team is that this component should not have been included in the project.

In particular, it is our opinion that including this component created an additional level of complexity to an already demanding and logistically difficult project. This relates to project effectiveness and efficiency – but more importantly to the relevance of the overall design. It can be strongly argued, for instance, that more resources should have been put instead into the rural sanitation promotion activities and facilities. A stronger focus on commune market and residential area sanitation and waste disposal, for instance, was more relevant to the Project Goal. The project has generally under-achieved in these latter aspects and they required more concerted attention.

Having said this, the project has introduced an approach to developing district towns water supply that is of relevance and applicability to other towns in the Mekong Delta and elsewhere in the

country. This includes linking IEC and community consultation to the preparation and design phase, combined with the Community Environmental Sanitation Activities (CESA).

4.2 Effectiveness and efficiency

Initially there were concerns about the scheduling of the works to be undertaken for the district towns, especially pre-construction. Feasibility, design and tendering process delays impacted upon efficiency to a certain extent [23]. The delay in the Vinh Thuan scheme was one of the reasons given for the one year project extension (granted in December 2004). The PDD estimated around 6 months would be required for design, which was unrealistic as GOV regulations allow a minimum of 9 months for design and in practice this was extended. Construction contracts were finally awarded for all 3 schemes in the second half of 2006. Progress since then has been good. Despite the preparation delays, the overall schedule is satisfactory for schemes of this scale [24].

The project put considerable effort into ensuring adequate resettlement and compensation (R&C) procedures were followed where necessary for both the district towns and rural schemes. While this process caused delays at some sites, in general the ICR team has the impression these issues were promptly and effectively handled. As compared to some other construction projects in Vietnam, delays caused by the R&C process were less evident in this project.

Significant achievements were made against the objectives and outputs of this component. The training provided to the Water Supply Companies (WSCs) and construction quality was noted as good and appreciated. It is questionable if all of the resources nominated for this component were necessary. In Vinh Long, the WSC had sufficient expertise to undertake the task with minimal technical support, and understands the risks in construction to address them itself (for example, deploying 5 of its own staff as site supervisors in addition to the statutory requirements). More external support was justified for the Kien Giang scheme. Certainly the training provided was appreciated. The CESA activities exceeded the indicative targets, while the overall scale of these activities was limited compared to the overall requirement for improved sanitation in the district towns. The potential benefit from IEC was also understood, but not to the extent of impacting much on the design or construction sequence.

4.3 Impact and sustainability

The 3 district towns schemes are being completed in the final Quarter of 2007. A detailed technical evaluation is planned for early 2008 focusing on ongoing facilities management. In each case, the water supply will fill a real demand. The ACR states that direct beneficiaries will be around 80,000 residents, with potential capacity in the schemes to extend services to a further 21,000 people. The WSCs are professional in their operation and understand the need for both ongoing maintenance as well as secure funding through cost recovery. Because an urban water supply has a higher economic return and better management framework, the component is therefore likely to be sustainable as a stand-alone activity. Construction under the CESA program has benefited around 41,000 people, including urban footpaths, improved drainage, public toilets, canal bridges and 12 schools receiving toilet blocks and concreted school yards. While individual CESA projects are successful and will certainly be maintained, continuation of the overall approach is less certain.

5. RURAL WSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM (COMPONENT 4)

OUTCOME: Developed RWSS services including water supply and latrine construction for households and schools, solid waste disposal and drainage facilities for rural clusters and some small-scale rural micro-activities directed to poor households, through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management.

Quantifiable Indicators:

- Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided to between 244,000 and 252,000 people;
- Community participation through the whole Project Cycle;
- Community satisfaction with infrastructure options;
- Quality of design and construction adequate to provide the desired level of service;
- Systems in place for sustainable operation, maintenance and management of infrastructure.

5.1 Relevance

5.1.1 Range of RWSS technologies

The project supported a range of technologies for improved RWS including piped systems, drilled wells and household rainwater collection and storage (Annex 4). The project has constructed 51 piped water supply schemes. These range from one comparatively large system (in Binh Dai District in Ben Tre Province that will supply up to 5,000 households in 4 communes) to smaller schemes with capacity to supply a few hundred households in a village. The number of AusAID funded schemes in each province as compared to schemes funded from other sources is quite small [25]. The household water supply includes around 21,000 water jars (mainly concrete tanks) combined in some places with guttering for rainwater catchments, plus some 232 drilled wells in Bac Lieu. In each commune, the project approach has been to construct piped water supply systems where feasible and viable in population concentration areas (for example, near to the commune headquarters) while promoting household water storage in remote areas with scattered population.

Each province suffers from a shortage of adequate quality water for human consumption, although the specific circumstances of this vary according to water source and seasonality. The project technologies have been well designed to the conditions in each locality as well as to the prevailing groundwater and/or surface water conditions in each area [26]. Any project that assists in providing improved water supply is therefore relevant. This has been enhanced by adapting the range of technologies in this way. The good balance between piped schemes and household water storage was also mentioned as a strong point of the project by several of the PCERWASS Directors. This is an obvious but nonetheless important aspect of relevance that is applicable to the NTP on RWSS.

Given the variability in water source conditions and the associated range of technologies for improved supply in each locality, the project design correctly identified the need to begin by consulting with local communities on their needs and the demand for improved water supply. According to the PDD, the Community Participation Approach (CPA) anticipated a 5-month period of preparation and mobilisation for each commune or scheme, using PRA methods, which would lead to community decisions on scheme selection and management arrangements [27]. The ICR team is supportive of this approach in principle. Its relevance needs to be assessed in terms of the appropriateness of the methods, time-scales and processes of participation that were introduced.

5.2 Effectiveness

5.2.1 Targeting

Each province targeted poorer and more remote rural communes for the RWS works. Criteria for commune and scheme selection were prepared during project preparation (including factors such as

% of poor and ethnic minority beneficiaries, incidence of water borne disease and duration of water shortages) [28]**.** As such this represented a transparent method of targeting and commune selection. Poor households have been targeted for the provision of subsidies for water jars and connection to piped water supply through the provision of free water metres. The approach taken has benefited the poor; however the long-term financial viability of piped RWS may be reduced should the users not use sufficient quantities of water to cover scheme OMM costs.

5.2.2 Construction schedule and quality

As with the towns water supply under Component 3, there were early delays in the preparation and procurement of the RWS schemes. By the Mid Term Review in March 2005, no construction contracts had been awarded. However, by the end of that year this situation changed and the 6th TAG mission in February 2006 was able to report that – "Much progress has occurred in all of the Provinces on rural water supply schemes…The most important factor is that accurate schedules have now been carried out for all the water schemes. These schedules show that all the works can be completed within the project period". This has largely proved to be the case by September 2007. All 5 provinces indicated to the ICR team that the project schemes are better in quality of construction and equipment than schemes funded by other projects and programs. Evidently, the effort put into promoting the use international standards for essential equipment has paid-off in terms of increased awareness of the sustainability benefits this will bring [29]. As far as the ICR team could assess, the effectiveness of the project in terms of the technical quality has been high.

5.2.3 Sanitation

With respect to sanitation, the project focused mainly on the construction of toilet blocks and associated facilities in schools. These have been well received. Apart from this, the scope and scale of sanitation activities falls below that originally intended. The PDD put forward a commune cost model which indicated that around 25% of the investment in each commune would be in school sanitation, commune solid waste collection systems, commune sanitation and related micro-activities [30]. It was recognized there was not a high demand amongst households for improved toilets, so the project would focus instead on improved sanitation in schools, commune centres and health clinics. The PDD saw considerable scope for improvements in solid waste handling and disposal, wastewater disposal and drainage. While the PDD recognised that waste management was not addressed by the National RWSS Strategy, it was justified that for little extra input a better outcome for the rural living environment could be obtained.

It was repeatedly mentioned in TAG reports that more resources should be devoted to this – to construct demonstration facilities and to develop a strategy for awareness raising and management of community sanitation. This was (and is) an urgent issue and it is not clear why the project did not respond to this more fully. Some indications are it was due to insufficient funds. If this was the case, then the ICR team believes that either resources should have been reallocated, or the objectives and outputs of the project should have been amended. Currently the project description gives a wrong impression of content and achievements of the project in this regard. The Schools IEC Program and sanitation facilities were effective. But the project has not been widely effective in addressing community sanitation issues either directly on the ground or in terms of mobilising the PCERWASS to pay greater attention to this as part of their regular functions.

5.2.4 Community participation methodology and process

The second major issue under this component concerns the way in which the CPA was introduced and handled. It appears the project fell into many of the common pitfalls and mistakes of a 'loosely-managed' PRA process which severely compromised both the relevance and effectiveness of this

approach. It is surprising the AMC should have allowed this to happen – since by the end of the 1990s there was ample worldwide experience available from well-documented PRA methodologies and case-studies to show how and why such pitfalls and mistakes might occur. These included:

- A lack of overall coordination and leadership of the process. Participatory processes such as this (especially those covering multiple locations) require tight management and strong direction-setting to ensure effective results are achieved.
- Lengthy consultations with slow follow-up action on the ground. This was the main concern expressed by PCERWASS – that the process took too long, with repeated community visits and meetings, which took up staff time and resources and which resulted in local communities and officials becoming "bored" with the process.
- A lack of connectivity and synchronicity between the community development, IEC and technology development inputs and expertise; with the Community Development Advisors in a position whereby they were giving advice on technical options for RWSS for which they were not qualified or experienced.
- Raising community expectations that could not be fulfilled, for instance, by discussing technical options for RWSS which were not appropriate to local water source conditions.
- Some comparatively in-experienced (foreign and national) staff working independently in the field and having to undertake quite complex participatory appraisal exercises with limited 'on-site' mentoring and support.
- Divergent approaches in methods, which posed constraints on the compilation and aggregation of data in plans at higher levels. This meant that some of the earlier work had been wasted, or that refresher exercises would were needed.
- In some cases a failure to take the counterpart agencies (i.e. PCERWASS) 'along with the process' and even counterpart staff backing-out of participating in repeated field visits.

All these issues are mentioned in various places in project reports or were mentioned to the ICR team. This was evidently a complicated and fraught situation at the beginning of the project, which appears to have had unfortunate later consequences in terms of the level of acceptance of the new approach to elicit greater community participation [31].

5.3 Efficiency

A majority of inputs under this component were for construction (100% of the GOV budget and 54% of the GOA budget), as well as 12% of the GOA budget for engineering deign, 10% for water resource studies and the balance for personnel and operating costs. The CPA work was largely costed under Components 1 and 5. Processing delays in preparation and procurement for design and construction of the RWSS works impacted upon efficiency to some extent [23]. These delays meant that most of the construction work took place during the final 2 years which limited the opportunity for the project to learn from each cycle to modify and improve subsequent schemes. Efficiency also suffered due to the number and geographic spread of communes, and the need for decision-making across all 5 provinces on the essential procedures.

Efficiency of the CPA can be assessed from a number of angles. Firstly, were all inputs proposed in the design really needed? Secondly, even if the design inputs were justified, were they provided by the best resources? Our view is that the basic methodological approach put forward in the PDD and subsequently elaborated in Version 1 of the CPA Manual (February 2002) was excessively complicated and resource consuming. The need to shorten the process and condense the methodology was recognized in subsequent revisions to the CPA manual (in 2003 and 2004). Even

so, the ICR team suggests that, from the outset, the project should rather have tailored the PRA methodology and process to the clear recognition that:

a) it was critical and essential to get the pilot communes in each province through the first investment cycle in a timely manner in order to learn from experience; and

b) the project would eventually need to work in many communes over a wide area and the depth and breadth of the methodology had to reflect this practical reality.

Efficiency can be further assessed by comparing the quality and quantity of outputs delivered with the amount of resources invested. Based on feedback obtained during the ICR mission, and given the level of discontent about the effectiveness of the approach and how it was implemented, it is clear this component was not achieving high levels of efficiency in the first 2-3 years. Efficiency can also be judged by suitability of the human resources put into this set of activities. Here again, opinion suggests that some of the community development (and engineering) TA personnel inputs were not wholly suitable for the task of conducting such community appraisal exercises (these aspects of AMC staffing are covered in the following section on Project Management).

5.4 Impact and sustainability

5.4.1 Household satisfaction and quality of water supply

Component 4 has been partly about the installation of physical systems. The number of AusAID funded schemes was comparatively low in each province, but there is common agreement that the quality of water, of construction and equipment, and the approach to OMM has been better than in other projects. The project has certainly made a positive impact in this regard. The M&E Summary Report gives some convincing evidence to support this, although limited by the few schemes completed at the time (see Annex 3). Household surveys conducted 3 months after completion of construction revealed a high proportion of households were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of water supply and value-for-money. Technical evaluations after completion also revealed that a majority of the piped schemes were functioning and delivering a satisfactory level of service.

5.4.2 Piped water supply schemes

Each province welcomed the attention given to O&M training and to developing the Pricing Plans for the piped schemes. During the ICR mission, there were mixed responses to questions posed to PCERWASS about future rates of connection. None of the schemes we visited were operating at full capacity yet (including one which was commissioned in early 2006). Generally, there was optimism that connections would steadily increase, especially with onset of each dry season. The ACR suggests that many of the piped schemes will be cash-flow positive within about 4 years after commissioning. However, many of the project schemes are in remote and poorer locations, so it is not yet clear whether this will be the case. The ICR team was also not able to assess whether the PCERWASS intentions to cross-subsidise with revenue from better performing schemes will be effective in covering financial shortfalls on less utilized schemes.

5.4.3 Household water storage

Sustainability of the household water shortage systems needs to be considered in a different way. This will only come from ongoing demand. The supply of jars by grant funding is a one-off input. Because these systems are often targeted on poorer households, this may always require a subsidy. A ‘revolving fund’ scheme may have been an alternative approach for the project. However, the AMC did raise the problem of indebtedness amongst poor households. Under the project poor households made a 10% contribution to the water tanks. But there were instances of households borrowing from friends and relatives (often at high rates of interest) in order to pay these

contributions. A higher level of household contributions, even through staggered payments on a low-interest loan, may not have been viable. Exploring this issue further may have important implications for the design of future water supply projects.

The ICR team believes the project could possibly have taken an alternative approach to the procurement, construction and delivery of the concrete water tanks. Most of these were procured from provincial or regionally operating companies. An alternative would have been to procure the tanks from local (commune based) artisans, combined with training in the construction techniques. Assuming that ongoing demand is present, this would have supported the supply-side in a way that would have increased the economic benefits to the local economy [32].

5.4.4 Integration of the approach to participation

Impact and sustainability of the CPA is more difficult to assess. By the end of the project, the viewpoint of the TAG missions was generally that an acceptable compromise had been reached on the level and methods of community consultation; and this viewpoint is echoed in many of the AMC reports [33]. The Project Implementation Model published in 2007 significantly reduces the level of consultation and participation recommended by the project for planning and implementing future schemes. Given the history behind this – it is essential to ask if this does represent an adequate and effective level and process of public engagement? On the positive side, the Model does link the consultation approach to institutional mechanisms employed under the GOV Grassroots Democracy legislation (such as establishing Community Supervision Groups). As such this represents a more integrated and potentially sustainable approach to community participation.

However, the ICR team is concerned that the revised model does not fully describe the consultation methodology nor, most critically, the level of disaggregated consultation required to respond to the needs of specific social groups and poor groups [34]. In particular, it is extraordinary that the guidelines do not specifically indicate the need to consult with women[14]. For instance, in the planning stage, it is suggested only that public meetings should be held in each village – "…with subsequent focus group discussions with different segments of population *if felt necessary* (eg. if there is a poor attendance of a particular segment of population at public meetings)" [our italics]. This appears to reduce gender affirmative action and the need to consult with specific social groups to an 'optional extra'. In all likelihood, with such wide-open guidelines, this would not be followed up. Similarly, while the guidelines suggest that the Women's Union should be involved along with other Mass Associations, no specific requirements are proposed for gender equal (or at least gender sensitive) representation on the Community Supervision Groups or other RWSS bodies.

6. PROJECT MANAGEMENT (COMPONENT 5)

OUTCOME: Project implemented as designed.

Quantifiable Indicators:

- Monitoring & evaluation system established;
- The number of women benefiting from the project is maximised;
- AMC and counterpart resources mobilised for completion of project objectives;
- Project benefits flowing to poor and/or ethnic households maximised;
- Share learning with other RWSS projects and national programs;
- Project management, reporting and coordination completed in accordance with project requirements.

[14] A word search of the manual shows that the word 'women' only occurs 2 times, once in the list of abbreviations, and both times as Women's Union.

This component covers the overall project management and coordination arrangements, resource mobilisation including AMC staffing, together with cross-cutting sub-components in M&E, lesson learning and dissemination of project experience, gender equality and poverty targeting. In the ICR assessment we also include partnership and cooperation under this heading. This section is structured differently according to subject matter headings, however, the same principle of assessing relevance, effectiveness and efficiency applies.

6.1 Management, implementation and supervision arrangements

These have to be considered in light of the need for the project to find ways coordinating strategy, plans and activities across all 5 provinces. Advisory and logistic support had to be provided to numerous field locations and RWSS schemes on the ground. It is also important to bear in mind the CLDRWSSP was one of the first bi-lateral aid projects to be managed directly by the province authorities and by PCERWASS. At the same time, the responsibilities for investment project management and ownership were being increasingly devolved to province level in line with the overall Public Administration Reform Program and budgetary reform process of the GOV.

The project operated through a Project Coordinating Committee (PCC) chaired jointly by AusAID and the Vice Chairs of the Province People's Committees on a revolving basis. Below this, five Project Management Boards (PMBs) were established within PCERWASS for day-to-day implementation of activities (plus 1 de-facto PMB under the Vinh Long Water Supply Company). GOA contributions to infrastructure were channeled through Province Trust Fund accounts managed jointly by the AMC and the PMBs. One Subsidiary Arrangement was signed between AusAID and the PPCs specifying the GOA funding and GOV counterpart funding contributions for each province. From the outset, some AMC staff were assigned to live in the provinces and work directly with PCERWASS, while others operated from the central AMC office.

In general, these represent a logical and relevant set of project management and implementation arrangements. In assessing management effectiveness and efficiency in relation to the objectives of the other Components (1 to 4) a number of questions need to be considered:

- Firstly, to what extent have these arrangements provided the required level of devolved decision-making responsibility to province level on the one hand, as well as providing an adequate level of overall coordination and guidance for the project on the other?
- Secondly, was there the need for a 'central' project coordination or management unit to enhance coordination and lesson learning across the 5 provinces?
- Thirdly, was the decision to work in 5 provinces justified in relation to the Project Goal and institutional capacity building objectives and were the implementation arrangements conducive to reaching these higher order objectives?

6.1.1 Project coordination and management bodies

Many stakeholders are of the opinion that the PCC was generally effective as a coordination body. It provided a forum for exchange of information and experience, for discussing project strategy and endorsing recommendations on key issues. The PCC was not a decision-making body (to the extent that a Project Steering Committee under a single province could be). Agreements reached at the PCC were therefore subject to follow-up decisions and approval by each province. The AMC noted that if the PPC Vice Chairs were absent from PCC meetings their deputies were not in a position to make a binding commitment on behalf of the province. This viewpoint was confirmed by one province. Several PPCs indicated to the ICR team that reaching consensus between the 5 provinces, the AMC and AusAID on some key issues was time-consuming (including concerns raised by several provinces at an early stage about the extended time taken for the CPA / IEC activities).

The PMBs and management arrangements in each province also appear to have been generally effective. The ACR notes that, in practice, at the request of the PMBs the AMC became a de-facto 'central' management unit. This was a role not articulated in the PDD nor in the AMC's Scope of Services (and obviously the AMC could not formally be granted this authority). The PCERWASS Directors did not comment on this specifically to the ICR team; they did indicate that time was needed to work through all the details of project implementation procedures with the AMC [35].

The NCERWASS under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) was an active participant in the PCC and other project events. However, this central agency was not assigned a budget or formal coordination role in the original project agreements. The ACR notes that, in hindsight, the benefits of a higher level of involvement and coordinating role for MARD are recognized. However, it cannot be assumed that a central management/coordination unit under MARD (probably located in Hanoi) would have been effective. Indeed, this would likely have resulted in many other kinds of communication and coordination difficulties. In retrospect, there were no easy solutions to this issue. Adding another management 'unit' or 'level' would possibly have not been effective. At the same time, the project did experience some delays associated with the preparation and approval of cross-cutting implementation guidelines.

6.1.2 Project supervision

AusAID's project supervison covers a number of different needs, in each case being to collect sufficient information to confidently assess: accountability with respect to the use of public funds; convergence with or divergence from the country strategy; convergence with or divergence from the project design; and AMC compliance with the its contractual commitments. There is good evidence from the PCC Meetings, Annual Plans, TAG mission reports and project reviews to confirm that this project received active supervision throughout its duration and that importantly, the views on the level of supervisory need were shared with the AMC.

At the same time, it appears there was a tension between contract compliance and allowing for necessary flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances on the ground. At several stages in this report, the ICR team has suggested that a more concerted reassessment and change of approach in the early stages of implementation would have been of benefit to the effectiveness and outcomes of the project. The supervision reports of the TAG and the Mid Term Review alternate between the need to improve compliance (according to the original project design) and the sensible need to stop forcing an unworkable approach. In some instances, this appears to have resulted in contradictory messages being given. This indicates a need to distinguish between compliance monitoring and mechanisms to strategically reassess strategy and direction during the course of implementation.

6.1.3 Funding availability

Several of the PCERWASS leaders indicated that AusAID funding was made available in a timely manner. The PCERWASS in Long An Province specifically mentioned the project has enabled a predictable investment budget for the RWS schemes, which allows full completion of works, as compared to the 'incremental' budget allocations under the NTP which is a characteristic of a programmatic approach subject to annual budgeting. Delays were experienced in GOV counterpart fund allocations, especially in Project Year 1 and 2, which contributed to the overall delays in early project implementation. There were also shortfalls in the provincial fund allocations to Components 1 and 2 (the 'software' components) and to Component 5 (management). These shortfalls possibly relate to a number of factors, including: (i) understanding of obligations as set out in the SA; (ii) understanding the benefits that might accrue to the province through investment in these software activities; and (iii) provinces agreeing that components are worthwhile.

6.2 Procurement and construction management

As indicated in Sections 4 & 5, the project experienced considerable delays in preparation, procurement and construction of both the RWSS and towns water supply schemes. The ACR attributes these delays to a number of factors, including: (i) the project was implemented through around 400 contracts of different types, for some of which joint GOA, GOV and community funding added an additional layer of bureaucracy to the already complex approval systems; (ii) timeframes for the approval in the PDD were underestimated; and (iii) progress was also impeded by regular release of new and revised GOV regulations which had the effect of delaying decisions until all aspects of the new decisions were considered by each concerned province agency.

The Mid-Term Review and several TAG mission reports emphasized that this operating environment necessitated the AMC should have a good grasp and up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the GOV procedures and approval processes. These reports also suggested that in the early stages the AMC did not always appear to have this institutional understanding. The PDD also did not specifically analyze the existing GOV systems that would be used for project implementation – particularly with respect to procurement regulations and procedures. While the Risk Matrix identified 'limited institutional capacity within PCERWASS' as a potential risk, this was only defined in a general way. The project was to be managed on a decentralized basis and largely following GOV procurement procedures (but with some essential amendments to these procedures to introduce higher construction quality and supervisions standards). In view of this, the ICR team strongly believes that this should have necessitated a much more thorough analysis of the existing procurement systems and potential bottlenecks as part of project preparation.

6.3 Australian Managing Contractor

6.3.1 Team composition

The composition of the AMC team was a concern raised strongly by early TAG mission reports. In particular, it was suggested that shortfalls in engineering inputs had compromised quality. It was also indicated there was the need for more strategic and focused project wide management and coordination. A similar viewpoint was expressed to the ICR by PCERWASS in several locations. One main problem with team composition was that the TA personnel were heavily skewed towards CPA/IEC inputs as compared to WSS engineering (according to our calculation of the expatriate TA requirements proposed in the PDD this was a factor of 2:1). This relates back to the PDD and to the Outputs in the AMC's Scope of Services which were closely linked to the requirements of the PDD. The Community Development and IEC advisors were scheduled early in the project period, which meant that once these advisors were in place it was perhaps problematic for the AMC to make radical adjustments to the staff contingent immediately. In 2004 the original five provincial CD advisors positions were reduced to three; and these vacancies were subsequently filled by recruiting two additional RWSS engineers to work with the PCERWASS. Training activities were also consolidated under a full-time Capacity Building / Training Advisor.

6.3.2 Project management support

From 2004 onwards the level of project management support to the provinces was increased and the new RWSS engineers brought better quality skills to this task. As described by the AMC, better risk management strategies were introduced – "…to identify past reasons for delays and introduce changes to the project cycle to avoid repetition… and to establish a system for monitoring and control of progress to ensure that problems are resolved as soon as they arise" [36]. Combined with this, the AMC introduced a more systematic Sustainable Transfer Strategy to ensure the smooth transfer of project implementation to the counterpart agencies [37].

Steps were also taken to standardize project operating protocols and guidelines. For example, through the introduction of Standard Project Bidding Documents (in December 2004) and a Construction Management and Supervision Manual (in March 2005). This was combined with various other measures to improve efficiency of the process. All this was effective in speeding-up implementation in the latter half of the project (for instance, with the time taken for preparation and approval of the Feasibility Studies being reduced from 12 to 6 months). However, as indicated above, it does need to be questioned why attention was not given to these practical matters (such as preparing project procurement and construction manuals) at a much earlier stage.

6.4 Partnership and cooperation

The Project involved around 70 AMC staff and 200 PCERWASS and provincial staff. In this situation, it was to be expected that team building and generating effective working relations would take time. Weaknesses were observed early on in the communication and working relationships between some AMC staff and their counterparts in PCERWASS. This was reflected in later TAG reports in terms of – "Many of the original problems faced by the project have been associated with far from optimum relationships between GOA and GOV officers at all levels. When more importance was put into improving these relationships, the project went much smoother". It is not possible for the ICR team to definitively assess the early project management arrangements and relationships within the AMC or with the counterpart agencies. These issues are raised here, however, because they did form a substantial part of the reporting from early supervision visits. We have had to weigh up their significance as part of the bigger picture. Based on the evidence available, we believe that problems in 'relationships' and 'communications' did contribute to the difficulties faced by the project in introducing the 'new approach' in the early years. These problems were experienced to a higher degree than with some other projects. Moreover, this impacted on the extent to which the AMC gave adequate attention to mobilising support around adjustments to the project methodology and Subsidiary Agreement to introduce a more effective approach to implementation. It is clear that over time the AMC made an effort to resolve what was, evidently, a difficult situation. Staff of several PCERWASS also indicated to the ICR team the improved level of coordination and higher quality advice in later years.

6.5 Geographical coverage

A point made in many reports is that the large geographical area covered by the project posed constraints on coordination and communication and resulted in the TA inputs being spread too thinly – with an implied connection to effectiveness and efficiency. The physical targets for the RWSS investment program could have been achieved through a concentration of effort in fewer contiguous provinces, while increasing the number of schemes and number of beneficiaries in each. This would have also allowed easier management and implementation of the project.

With respect to the institutional capacity building objectives, it can be argued that working in fewer provinces would have enabled more concentrated lesson-learning, fuller institutional integration and scaling-up of new innovations within these provinces. Alternatively, working across the five provinces has allowed new approaches to be tested across a greater diversity of institutional contexts. Achieving a 'critical mass' in institutional change processes can theoretically be achieved either through an 'intensive' or 'extensive' approach, while it is obviously important to attain a certain 'scale of activities'. There are, therefore, justifiable arguments both for and against working in less or more provinces. On balance, the ICR team believes that the project could have obtained the same or higher level of institutional impacts by working in 3 rather than 5 provinces. This would have maintained the relevance and aggregated demonstration effect of working in different environments and institutional contexts, while at the same time allowing for a greater concentration of effort and resources, as well as more effective utilization of TA inputs.

6.6 Gender equality

In 2001 the project identified 9 entry points for gender and poverty considerations that would be applied in all project components and activities [38]. Amongst others, these entry points included: all user groups are recognised as having the right to be involved in decision-making about services that affect their well-being; and project interventions to strengthen the foundation for a gender and poverty inclusive project will be provided at institutional, community and project management levels. Specifically, these intentions are covered in Component 2 (Institutional Capacity Building) which refers to – "…the supply of poverty-focused, gender-aware, ethnically sensitive and participatory rural water and sanitation services" and Component 5 (Project Management) which indicates the need to – "maximise the number of women benefiting from the project" [39].

According to the AMC's Scope of Services, training activities were to be designed and promoted in ways that encourage a disproportionately high proportion of women and poor people. The ACR concludes that the actual proportion of trainees tended to reflect the gender balance within organizations participating in training, which were largely male dominated. In practice, according to data provided in the ACR, the overall proportion of women participating in all types of project training was around 29.5% (see Annex 5). The AMC's Scope of Services also indicated the need for sex-disaggregated data and gender indicators to be included in the M&E system. However, it appears this was not fully maintained or at least not fully reported at higher levels even if included in more detailed M&E reports and technical studies. The lack of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis is a main weakness in the otherwise excellent M&E Summary Report attached to the ACR. It was further intended that the Annual Plans should include a regular review of the gender indicators; however, there is no indication this was fulfilled.

It appears that while the project started out with a fairly clearly articulated strategy for promoting gender equality across all components and activities, attention to this tailed-off over time. In particular, as noted in Section 5.4.4, the ICR is strongly concerned that the guidelines for community consultation in the final Project Implementation Model do not specifically require consultation with women's groups in the process. Neither do they indicate the need for gender equal representation on RWSS related supervision and management bodies. Both these issues indicate the need to find ways of maintaining attention to gender equality and representation throughout the project cycle.

6.7 Monitoring and evaluation system

6.7.1 Project monitoring and reporting

The attention given to M&E and the quality of the final outputs from this work represents one of the most positive aspects of the project. The quality of the regular AMC reports has been high. With the exception of gender monitoring mentioned above, they appear to be comprehensive in the data compilation and tracking progress indicators. These reports always clearly put forward the AMC viewpoints on strengths and difficulties encountered, together with an explanation and justification for proposed changes in direction and resource allocation. The on-going re-assessment of risks also appears to have been comprehensive.

6.7.2 RWSS monitoring

The early M&E design for RWSS introduced in 2003-04 was considered too complex. This was then scaled-back to capture basic data on outputs and coverage of access to clean water and sanitation; but in doing so it lost monitoring of the quality aspects (quality of construction, quality of water supply etc.). A further re-design was therefore undertaken, and the approach that was

eventually introduced had two main components: (i) the MIS system in PCERWASS to track implementation of project activities and to monitor efficiency of implementation; and (ii) a system to evaluate the effectiveness of the project in achieving its stated objectives.

This second component assessed two main aspects of effectiveness: (i) the quality and effectiveness of the RWSS infrastructure; and (ii) changes in hygiene behaviour as a proxy measure of improved health. This included technical evaluations, household surveys and evaluation of the IEC programs. The survey was undertaken between 2005 to 2007 covering a sample of 25% of project communes (10 communes). The results of this are provided in the M&E Summary Report attached to the ACR. The ICR team considers this to be a good report which substantiates many of the conclusions reached about the quality and effectiveness of the tangible outputs of the project.

During the ICR mission, insufficient time was available to fully discuss with the PCERWASS which parts of this M&E system they intend to maintain in the future. Therefore, it is not possible for us to directly comment on sustainability. However, the project organized a workshop in July 2007 to review the M&E work, from which a number of conclusions were drawn. Firstly, there is now a wider appreciation of the value of conducting post-construction studies and feeding the results of these into future planning. Secondly, while the PCERWASS will continue to carry out evaluations of WSS projects in future, limited budgets and lower reporting requirements mean that the scope of these studies is likely to be reduced.

6.8 External communication strategy and linkages

The external communication strategy and linkages of the project were quite diverse. As indicated above, the NCERWASS was a representative on the PCC and the AMC was conscientious in maintaining this link to national level. Even though the NCERWASS was not assigned a formal role in project implementation, this line of communication has been important in ensuring that lessons and experience from the project are known about by policy-makers. The IEC materials have been made widely available through the National RWSS Partnership website. The project also convened a National Workshop of Management Models for Piped RWS Schemes in December 2006. This workshop documented and disseminated project experience more widely, as well as allowing a comparison between management models in different contexts. In addition, the AMC maintained good networking linkages with other donor and NGO projects and programs and organisations operating in the Mekong Region as well as in other parts of the country [40].

7. OVERALL QUALITY

This section summarizes overall quality of the initiative based on the foregoing analysis. It is necessary to be clear about the scope of the ICR assessment in this regard. This focuses on quality of the project as a whole. It is not intended as a specific assessment of the inputs made or management provided by any of the individual partners (AMC, GOV counterpart agencies nor AusAID). It is recognized that because this project covers 5 provinces there are many local factors and circumstances that have influenced quality. At the same time, given the partnership approach (for example, through co-management of the Province Trust Fund arrangements) it is not possible or realistic to fully separate out the roles of the different partners. Therefore, we continue to speak generically about ‘the project’ and to assess its overall performance and quality from a strategic perspective. The rating scale used in the assessment is as follows:

Definitions of Rating Scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6, above the line)
6 Very high quality
5 Good quality initiative; could have improved in some areas with minor work
4 Adequate quality initiative; could have improved with some work

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3, below the line)
3 Less than adequate quality initiative; needed improvements in core areas
2 Poor quality initiative; needed major improvements in core areas
1 Very poor quality initiative; needed a major overhaul

►1) To what degree did the initiative achieve its objectives, and how well did they contribute to higher level objectives in the program strategy?	**3**

As explained in the introductory section on methodology (Section 1.1), we understand this project needs to be assessed from two inter-related angles. Firstly, in terms of the tangible results from the delivery of improved WSS systems and services and changed behaviour and practices. Secondly, in terms of the institutional outcomes from the various capacity building elements of the project.

Components 3 and 4 have been partly to do with the installation of improved water supply systems on the ground. These investments have been highly relevant to the needs of both rural and urban communities. The range of RWS technologies has been well researched and adapted to local conditions. Despite initial delays in construction, a majority of these investments have been delivered effectively. There is widespread opinion that the quality of schemes is higher under this project as compared to those under other investment sources. The project has done much to demonstrate the importance of ensuring quality standards in construction and equipment for improved sustainability. These factors appear to be substantiated by a high initial level of customer satisfaction. Good attention has been given to developing pricing plans for the schemes and to ensuring adequate OMM training for scheme technicians. These aspects have certainly made good progress in relation to the Project Goal. If we assess the project purely in terms of the quality of these particular investments and systems – this would suggest an overall Quality Rating of 5.

At the same time, the reduced scale and scope of the sanitation activities (as compared to that intended in the project design) is a weakness. The ICR team understands that there is less demand for these activities (amongst households, local communities, local authorities and even in PCERWASS itself). Even so, community sanitation is a critical and growing environmental issue and problem in all rural areas of Viet Nam and in the Mekong Delta especially. This is precisely why more resources need to be put into awareness raising and demonstration facilities and systems. Sanitation is a sub-sector that needs to be 'driven from above' and cannot rely only on community demand and selection. In particular, the fact that little headway was made on solid waste collection and disposal in the communes in which the project worked is unfortunate. Given this end-of-project situation – this indicates an overall Quality Rating of 4 for these tangible results and benefits.

The balance of resources devoted to water supply as compared to sanitation does raise questions about the relevance of the overall project design. In particular, while the ICR team believes the district towns water supply schemes (Component 3) have been well executed, and will have considerable benefits, we believe this Component should not have been included in the project. It was not directly related to the Project Goal and including this component created an additional level of complexity to an already demanding and logistically difficult project. It can be strongly argued that more resources should have been put instead into rural sanitation.

The main difficulties faced by this project have been related to the institutional capacity building elements. These have been analysed in previous sections of the report, so only a summary is provided here. This work was focused on three main areas:

- **The integration of better designed IEC programs and capacities within the mainstream activities of the PCERWASS (Component 1)**

The quality of the IEC messages and materials produced and the methods of communication introduced by the project has been high. There is now widespread appreciation of the value and importance of linking stronger IEC activities to construction and operation of RWSS schemes. It is also evident that the PCERWASS will maintain these activities as far as possible given their funding constraints. However, the original aim of integrating the various IEC elements covering water supply, sanitation and hygiene into a replicable Implementation Model for RWSS has not been successful. This was largely due to structural and systemic constraints, particularly in cross-sector coordination and linkages between the health, education and RWSS sectors, and in programmatic and local government budgeting and resource allocation systems. The project and the AMC did make efforts to respond to this situation, but these are broader institutional issues and constraints that need to be addressed on another level. At the same time, we suggest that project resources could have been reallocated at an early stage to help facilitate these cross sector linkages.

- **The integration of enhanced methods and processes of community consultation and participation in the design, delivery and management of RWSS services (Component 4)**

The Community Participation Approach was the most problematic aspect of this project. The way in which this was initially introduced appears to have severely impacted on overall effectiveness and efficiency. As compared to the original intentions, the Project Implementation Model published in 2007 significantly reduces the level of community consultation and participation recommended by the project for planning future schemes. As assessed in Section 5.4.4, the ICR team is concerned that the revised model does not fully identify the level of disaggregated consultation required to respond to the specific needs of specific social groups, in particular rural women.

These are serious concerns. The ICR team is not convinced that even the current level of community consultation is well integrated or will be maintained. The PCERWASS in each province is a small organisation, with a large number of schemes to manage (including new investments and ongoing schemes). The level of community consultation therefore needs to be realistic according to the available human resources. The types of consultation also need to fit with the overall management models. All this has been well justified by the project. Even so, the ICR team is left with a number of awkward questions in assessing overall quality of this aspect:

- Firstly, why did the preparation of this project apparently get the design so wrong that a huge amount of time and resources were put into an approach that was going to be unsustainable, and which seemingly had such little grounding with counterpart agencies?
- Secondly, would the outcomes of the project have been different, or greater, if it had started out with the clearly stated principle of moving towards a more ‘participative approach’, but without the encumbrance of a pre-designed (and over-designed) methodology?
- Thirdly, did the project (the AMC and the project coordination mechanisms) respond quickly enough to the early indications from the province counterparts and from the TAG that the CPA was not working, and would a quicker or different response have had better outcomes?

- **Developing an overall 'investment and management model' for improved RWSS services (under Component 2).**

The Project Implementation Model published in 2007 is a comprehensive document that incorporates all the main technical guidelines introduced by the project. This will be of use to future projects and programs. Developing the model over time has been a learning process that has done much to demonstrate that specific technical, institutional and managerial approaches need to be taken to the particular conditions for RWS services in the Mekong Delta. One important outcome is that this has evidently contributed to increased awareness at national level that different approaches to scheme management need to be taken in different contexts. It is notable, however, that the Model is primarily a 'project investment model' rather than 'scheme management model'. The project had an intended outcome of 'improved competency of RWSS facilities management groups'. However, it has only gone part of the way to strengthening such on-going systems.

It is evident that many of the important policy decisions and directions regarding the preferred scheme management arrangements and tariff systems etc. were already being made by the province authorities and PCERWASS in the early project period. In many respects the project was 'running on the heels' of these policy decisions. During the ICR mission, we repeatedly asked questions about whether the project had influenced thinking on rural water supply management, but the response was always circumspect. Clearly, the provinces had many investment schemes to manage in addition to the limited number under the AusAID project and they needed to assess the bigger picture. The ICR team considers that if the project had more quickly and flexibly responded to the emerging institutional needs and the diversity of options at an earlier stage, it is likely that the outcomes of the project – in terms of institutional strengthening and sustainable scheme management systems – would have been greater. In particular, this may have led to an adjustment in resource allocation in the training program to more fully and widely support PCERWASS to introduce, test and strengthen new management systems and staffing arrangements etc.

In summary, the ICR team assesses that across all 3 aspects of institutional capacity building the outcomes have been less than optimum. As will be explained below, we suggest that many of the reasons for this can be traced back to weaknesses in the original project design. This needs to be considered in an ICR evaluation which has to look at the outcome compared to the design. The project partners and supervision and coordination bodies (PCERWASS, AMC, PCC and TAG etc.) were continually aware of these issues and attempts were made to address them. However, we consider that more concerted actions could have been taken at an early stage in project implementation to change the 'structure' and 'systems' for project implementation and to concentrate activities in ways that would have addressed these issues better. This suggests a less than satisfactory outcome and overall Quality Rating of 3.

►2) How robust was the system to measure ongoing achievement of objectives and results?	**4.5**

The attention given to M&E and the quality of the outputs from this set of activities represents one of the most positive aspects of the project. A systematic effort was made to introduce improved MIS and Evaluation methods for RWSS management in cooperation with the PCERWASS. Several of the PCERWASS indicated to the ICR team that one of the main benefits of the project has been through introduction of such management information systems. Together with this, there is now a wider appreciation of the value of conducting post-construction studies and feeding the results of these into future planning. The regular AMC reporting has been high quality, with comprehensive reporting on progress. The M&E Summary Report is a useful document. This substantiates many of the conclusions reached about the quality and effectiveness of the RWSS activities. The ICR team believes that it is unusual for a project to conclude with such a clear summary documentation of

M&E results, and in this respect the project should be commended. In particular, this provides a good model for the 'depth' of evaluation studies, covering both qualitative and quantitative indicators that may be maintained by the counterpart agencies in future.

►3) How effectively was the initiative managed? To what degree did it provide good value for money?	4

As described in Section 6, the effectiveness and efficiency of early implementation of the project appears to have been constrained by a number of management related difficulties, including: (i) an imbalance in the Technical Assistance inputs between the 'hardware' and 'software' components; (ii) an imbalance between these TA inputs and the provision of more regular project management advice and support for the provinces; (iii) some delays in the preparation and ratification of cross-cutting implementation guidelines; and (iv) the sometimes extended process and time required to reach consensus across all 5 provinces on matters related to project strategy and procedures.

The Project Coordination Committee worked well as a forum for the exchange of information and for endorsing recommendations on key issues. However, the PCC was not a decision-making body and agreements reached were subject to follow-up decisions and approval by each province. It is not evident whether introduction of an additional project management or coordination 'level' or 'unit' in the GOV arrangements would have improved overall coordination or decision making processes. From mid-way through the project, the level of AMC management support to the provinces was increased, stronger management monitoring systems were introduced, plus more attention was given to developing and introducing standard implementation procedures and guidelines. These steps helped to increase effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in the scheduling and completion of the program of construction works. At the same time, overall value for money was limited by the large amount of human resources, time and energy, that were devoted to the CPA and IEC approach that proved to be not viable.

►4) How appropriate is the sustainability of the initiatives outcomes?	4

The prospects for sustainability of the rural piped water supply schemes, and of the district towns schemes, are favorable. The project has been effective in putting in place many of the required elements for this, including ensuring realistic Pricing Plans are prepared, introducing higher quality construction and equipment standards and providing OMM training etc. Because the urban water supply has a higher economic return and better management framework, the component is likely to be sustainable as a stand-alone activity. Because many of the smaller rural schemes are in remote and poor areas, their long-term viability is not fully certain. The effectiveness of the strategy of the PCERWASS to cross-subsidise between schemes still needs to be verified. Sustainability of the IEC work under PCERWASS, the Healthy School IEC Program and of the CESA activities will depend primarily on continued funding availability and commitment of the respective agencies. As indicated above, however, sustainability of the main institutional capacity building outcomes of the project is more difficult to assess, but in our view, far from certain.

►5) Was the initiative of the highest technical quality, based on sound analysis and learning?	3

It has been suggested at several points in this report that the ICR team believes many of the difficulties encountered by this project relate to the original design. To put this simply – it was 'over designed'. A detailed approach was signed up to in the PDD which had little ownership with the counterpart agencies. Many of the difficulties experienced in 'managing' the project in a broader sense can also be attributed to the detailed design. Fir instance, the PDD includes a 24-page

Log-frame that includes a very detailed set of Outputs. These Outputs are connected to a highly specified level of TA inputs and activities that are also included in the PDD. This is further reflected in the AMC's Scope of Services (which includes 28 pages of Outputs). The ICR team strongly questions whether this level of detail in design was appropriate. This may have inadvertently locked the AMC into implementing the project in a certain direction and therefore reduced flexibility to respond to new situations on the ground. This is reflected in the Objective for Component 5 which simply reads – 'the project implemented as designed'. In retrospect, the ICR team suggests that a better wording for this would have been – 'the project implemented and managed in such a way to support the introduction of sustainable RWSS management systems within the counterpart agencies'.

The project was prepared at a time of quite major changes in the institutional environment associated with the administrative and decentralization reforms of the GOV. The new National RWSS Strategy was only just coming on-line and new ideas were being introduced in water supply and sanitation. We suggest that – given this situation – a more realistic starting point would have been that it was not clear at the time which direction would be required for the development of sustainable RWSS services in the region. A more appropriate approach may have been to set-in-motion a process of joint analysis and formulation with PCERWASS and the province authorities. This could still be guided by the same principles of introducing more participative approaches, integrated IEC, combined with concentrated testing in pilot communes but avoiding a prescriptive approach. This would have enabled the project to respond better at an earlier stage to emerging institutional needs. Instead, it appears the project was encumbered by a highly elaborated approach which, as it turned out, was flawed in some key respects in the original analysis.

►6) Taking those five factors into account, what was the overall quality of the initiative?	**3.5**

8. LESSONS LEARNED

This section presents lessons from the CLDRWSSP with respect to: (a) lessons of relevance to the National Target Program (NTP) on RWSS – in light of the budget support and Technical Assistance currently being given by AusAID and other donors to the NTP; and (b) generic lessons that may be of relevance in the design and preparation of similar projects in future.

1. Firstly, with respect to the NTP, the experience of the CLDRWSSP has clearly re-highlighted many of the constraints in the RWSS sector in Viet Nam that were analysed and documented in the Joint Government-Donor review of 2005[15]. In particular, institutional constraints that exist in achieving better coordination and synergy between RWSS related services on the ground (for example, in cross-sector linkages between the health, education, water supply and social welfare agencies). We have argued that this is (at least partly) a result of the local government and programmatic budgeting systems that do not enforce or provide incentives for these linkages. Indeed, one can go so far as to say that the highly 'programmatic' nature of the budgeting systems in Viet Nam is itself part of the problem; since this tends to concentrate resources within line-agencies for specified types of investments and activities, with limited flexible funding available for networking or facilitating better operational linkages between sectors. A similar observation can be made with respect to addressing community sanitation (in the linkages needed between the water supply, environment, trade and industry and urban

[15] Stockholm Environment Institute (2005) *Final Report on the Joint GOV / Donor Review of Rural Water Supply, Sanitation and Health in Viet Nam.*

management agencies). It is not clear whether providing more direct support through the NTP will in itself resolve these underlying systemic constraints.

2. There are also many constructive lessons from this project for the NTP. In particular, it has demonstrated that different approaches to the management of rural water supply schemes, systems and services need to be taken in different institutional, environmental and social contexts. It has shown the value of ensuring budget allocations for preparation of IEC materials are made available through PCERWASS and the necessary adaptation of these IEC materials and methods to different cultural contexts. The project has developed a useful set of practical guidelines and training materials that could be more widely adopted. The M&E Summary Report is a good example of the type of evaluation study that may be conducted by other provinces under the NTP-RWSS. The project has also demonstrated the importance of higher equipment and construction quality standards in contributing to sustainability; this needs to be broadcast within the government sector and in particular amongst provincial departments.

3. Project experience has further shown the need for more applied and nuanced interpretations and approaches to community participation as well as to cost coverage and privatisation. The RWSS sector in Viet Nam – as in many other countries – is characterized by divergent ideological positions amongst donors as well as different government agencies. Whereas in the early part of the decade donors were strongly advocating 'community management' the emphasis now is more towards 'privatising management' [21]. Whereas the CLDRWWSP began with a strong emphasis on the 'community participation approach' in practice the PCERWASS were already thinking along the lines of becoming 'public utility companies'. This does indicate the need for more practical institutional development strategies that are geared to specific circumstances and which are less encumbered by ideological viewpoints.

4. While this ICR has made a somewhat critical assessment of the performance and outcomes of the CLDRWSSP, it should not be construed that this is a criticism of the 'project modality' *per se*. In fact, in a round about way, the CLDRWSSP experience has reaffirmed the importance of focused project interventions in certain situations. In particular, we suggest that this will be important in future to get-to-grips with the issues of community sanitation and waste management systems in rural areas of Viet Nam (district towns and rural communes). This is a priority set of issues, that currently falls between the mandate of many agencies, and for which new approaches need to be devised and tested on a concentrated basis. A project-type initiative designed to test such interventions in different parts of the country could be valuable in informing future implementation of the National RWSS Strategy.

5. With respect to generic lessons from the project, these mainly relate to the preparation process. As indicated above, we suggest this was an excessively complicated design, that did not create conducive conditions for the most efficient and effective use of funds according to the overall Project Goal and Objectives. Designs should be simpler and less logistically ambitious at the outset. More specifically, the detailed design of the CLDRWSSP was made prior to approval and start-up, with limitations on counterpart ownership and understanding of the project resulting from this. A better approach may have been to prepare a simpler framework design for approval, followed by a detailed joint strategizing and planning phase at the beginning of the project[16]. This would also have been more appropriate at the time for jointly identifying locally relevant directions for introducing the new National RWSS Strategy.

[16] This was, for instance, the approach adopted under the Quang Ngai Rural Development Program (RUDEP) and the North Vam Nao Water Constrol Project (NVNWCP-II) also funded by AusAID in the same period.

6. The experience of the CLDRWSSP also raises the question of how to make major adjustments to a project after it has started if it is clearly experiencing major difficulties or serious deficiencies are observed. This may involve a combination of: (i) a joint Government / donor review process, agreed to in the Subsidiary Agreement, which has the option to recommend a re-design or partial re-structuring of a project if necessary; (ii) distinguishing more clearly between compliance monitoring and mechanisms to strategically reassess strategy and direction during the course of implementation; (iii) monitoring progress according to a set of mutually agreed 'interim outcome indicators' that would track whether key institutional change processes are underway and which could be used as a focal point for discussing progress between the partners; and (iv) clarifying the role of TAG with respect to situations in which it may extend beyond advisory functions to recommend major adjustments to a project.

7. In many ways, the experience of this project in developing and introducing the M&E system and Management Information System (MIS) has followed a similar pattern to that under many other donor-funded projects. This has been characterized by:

   - The design of an ambitious and overly complex MIS / M&E system at the outset, with a large number of indicators, placing a heavy demand on project resources and counterparts, which subsequently had to be redesigned and simplified;
   - Tensions between 'external' demands for a greater focus on performance, outcome and impact reporting (as expressed through some TAG reports and the Mid Term Review) and the 'internal' demands and requirements for solid activity, input and output monitoring;
   - An initial lack of clarity between project-specific monitoring and reporting requirements and the broader task of introducing and/or strengthening sustainable monitoring functions and capacities with the counterpart agencies (in this case for RWSS monitoring).

   The ICR team believes this project navigated a fairly good way through these issues, but the necessity to redesign the MIS / M&E systems meant that their introduction was delayed until the second half of the project. There is an important lesson here for future initiatives, to start out with realistic expectations and designs for the scale and scope of MIS / M&E systems.

8. Lastly, design complexity in detail can also hide the need for basic understanding and data on how things work – regulatory and social. The analysis made at the outset of the existing governance institutions (as related to participatory processes) as well as GOV procedures and systems for project implementation was lacking. In particular, the procurement procedures for design and construction warranted fuller analysis, combined with earlier agreement on operating principles and preparation of standard implementation guidelines and manuals.

9. CONCLUSIONS

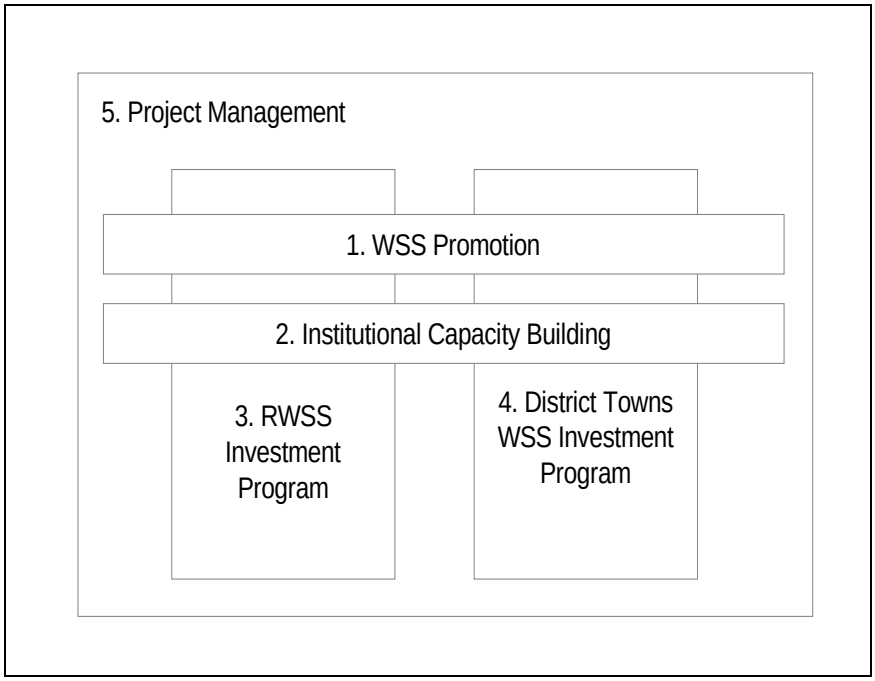
The most important options for enhancing the sustainability of the outcomes of the CLDRWSSP lie in maximising the lesson-learning linkages with the NTP. In the more immediate future, every opportunity should be taken to bring the experience of the project to the attention of NTP planners at national level and in other provinces. The five provinces now have experience working with the CLDRWSSP and with other projects and programs that few other provinces in Viet Nam have and this knowledge and expertise should continue to be promoted in national learning.

In particular, it is proposed that AusAID should prepare a set of short informative 'Briefing Notes' on key aspects of project results and experience that could be widely distributed through the RWSS Partnership and posted on the partnership website. Combined with this, opportunities should continue to be taken to present case-study experience in forthcoming national workshops.

The ICR team strongly recommends that a Post Evaluation study is conducted, perhaps in late 2008, particularly to follow-up the operational performance of the rural piped water supply schemes. The detailed Pricing Plans prepared for these schemes provide a good basis on which to measure performance and sustainability aspects. The Post Evaluation would also enable a fuller assessment to be made of the on-going scheme management arrangements. This study should not be conducted in isolation, but ideally as part of the on-going support to the NTP. Government personnel and international advisors from the NTP could be directly involved, or even take the lead, in conducting such an evaluation and the results would disseminated through the Partnership.

Annex 1. Supplementary text notes and data

[1] As described in the PDD – "…the success of the WSS Promotion and Institutional Capacity Building components are essential to the subsequent success of the investment programs. Component 1 encourages demand for the services to be provided by those programs and Component 2 gives the required skills to the institutions to provide those services to communities. Components 3 and 4 provide the investment in district town and small rural schemes. Component 5, project management, underlies the whole project":



[2] Comments on the ICR process. A number of comments and suggestions can be given by the ICR team on the evaluation process. Firstly, the mission followed an extremely tight schedule and it is questionable if enough time was given for 'reflection' along the way. This partly relates to the geographical coverage of this project and the need to visit 5 provinces and within each remotely located RWSS schemes (although this was a good way of understanding the logistic implementation difficulties faced by the project). Secondly, projects produce a large amount of documentation and it is time-consuming to read through all these to piece together the chronology and 'story-line' of the project (which is always an essential basis for understanding). It is suggested that future ACRs should include a more detailed chronology of events (the List of Key Dates is only partly useful in this regard) which would make the task of the ICR team that much easier. Thirdly, we found that neither the Focus Paper (methodology) nor the Terms of Reference for the ICR were given to some key stakeholders (including government counterparts), although PCERWASS and PPCs had been sent these documents in advance. This should be ensured so that all stakeholders are aware of the scope and purpose of the ICR.

[3] Sequential linkages between IEC and Community Development Planning steps. As described in the PDD these were as follows:

Activities/Processes	Estimated Time
• **Contract one mass organisation** per province in the first year to undertake IEC projects. • **Establish village community facilitation teams** (VCFTs) (three to four village community liaison persons from mass organisations per team) to carry out IEC activities. • **Initial community meetings** to: - understand and map the current local WSS practices and technologies, including sanitation, and water and solid waste collection, use and disposal ("Water Resource Surveys") - discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the current situation from a community perspective - record the community's WSS aspirations and plans - identify constraints to participation in the project's activities by women and poor households and develop strategies to overcome these constraints	3 weeks
• **Feasibility study** of possible WSS options by CERWASS staff, with input from CDA and local district and commune personnel	6 to 12 weeks
• **IEC** for the community about these different technological options, and including issues of sustainability, equity, economics, health, environment, gender and poverty, conducted by CDA, and selected staff and members of mass organisations	5 weeks*
• **Follow-up community meetings** facilitated by CDA with assistance from selected staff and members of mass organisations to: - decide the most appropriate WSS scheme for their community - agree on the process for community involvement in design, construction, management and operation and maintenance of their scheme - implement community involvement in design - implement community involvement in construction - implement community involvement and training in community management and operation and maintenance of their scheme - review community satisfaction with RWSS "model".	4 weeks

[4] It is assumed that a different set of IEC messages would be required to: (a) provide information to local communities on the range of viable technical options for improved water supply in their area (from which they could make an informed selection at the beginning of the project); and (b) later IEC messages focusing on improved hygiene and sanitation practices (contingent on the source of water and technical options selected).

[5] The design of the IEC program and materials was informed by the results of a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey conducted in 2003. The KAP survey results were comprehensive and detailed and were evidently of great use in helping the AMC to understand the situation on the ground and to design relevant messages.

[6] As stated in the PDD – "In general CERWSS staff…do not consider health, environmental or sustainability issues in the limited IEC they conduct. CERWSS does little real community work itself but cooperates with DOH, Vietnam Women's Union and other mass organizations to stage training courses on clean water and model latrines and the treatment of animal wastes. There is room for CERWASS to do more in this area".

[7] For instance, the Mid-Term Review in 2005 observed that – "There has been little or no involvement with the Department of Health (DOH) or Department of Education and Training (DOET) in each province, despite both departments having staff at commune level with responsibilities for IEC and hygiene education. The project needs to promote greater cooperation with DOH and DOET staff, especially at commune level, in implementing IEC activities".

[8] As indicated in the AMC's 4th Annual Plan (2005 to 2006) – "...representatives of different agencies at community level…will be mobilised to become involved in relevant behavioral change activities in a manner that does not incur any additional costs to PCERWASS or their own agency… The project will seek PPC involvement in establishing these formal links between PCERWASS and other stakeholders".

[9] M&E visits to the 118 schools over a one year period (2006 to 2007) showed: (i) an increase from 63% to 96% in the number of schools with soap readily available for hand washing; (ii) 97% of schools showed evidence of recent cleaning and maintenance of toilet blocks; (iii) a steady increase in the number of schools displaying hand-washing and toilet cleanliness posters (to around 97%); and (iv) a slight increase in the proportion of pupils with clean or almost clean hands during random inspections.

[10] The household IEC program included delivery of 112,000 leaflets covering 6 main themes to all household beneficiaries. The evaluation of household practices and knowledge also indicates positive results, including: (i) 93% of householders surveyed had no difficulty understanding the 6 key messages promulgated through the campaign; (ii) 72% of households recognized the origin of the messages and leaflets (meaning that 28% had either forgotten about it or had not been delivered the leaflets); (iii) 59% of households had a designated place for hand washing and 64% of households used different ladles for scooping treated and untreated water.

[11] In all provinces, the recurrent budget allocated to the PCERWASS is limited (in the order of VND 300 million in 2007). This has to cover all administrative and operational costs so resources for printing IEC materials are scarce, and the PCERWASS have to reply on funding allocated to IEC under the NTP. With respect to the Healthy Schools IEC Program, while this was positively assessed by all provinces, in only two provinces (Vinh Long and Long An) does it seem reasonably assured that DOET will expand these activities using their own funding resources. Several provinces did indicate they will continue to use the face-to-face IEC methods introduced by the project, including school festivals and competitions (Vinh Long, Long An and Kien Giang).

[12] The AMC's Annual Plan No.4 (2005 to 2006) quotes from the Joint GOV / Donor Review Summary Report that best summarises this issue:

> "The National Target Programme for RWSS is the primary tool for the GOV to achieve, and monitor progress towards the targets set out in the NRCWSSS… Whilst the NRCWSSS sets out a comprehensive vision in which attaining higher levels of RWSS coverage are balanced against enhancing community awareness, advancing long-term institutional change and developing economic and other forms of sustainability, this wider vision has not been carried through to the RWSS-NTP…For the implementation of the RWSS-NTP, the PCERWASSs may or may not choose to cooperate and collaborate with other government departments and mass organisations. In the NRCWSSS the health sector, the Women's Union and the education sector are all highlighted as key agencies that can support the RWSS-NTP. The information gained from field visits and the views expressed by a wide range of stakeholders suggests, however, that this happens only on rare occasions and most RWSS-NTP funds are spent through PCERWASS channels."

The AMC supported this analysis and presented 2 specific challenges for the CLDRWSSP:

- PCERWASS performance is not measured against Community Participation in the RWSS cycle and therefore their focus leans towards construction activities;
- PCERWASS do not feel obligated to explore linkages and share resources with external RWSS stakeholders such as DoH, DoET and community based RWSS organisations.

In response to the first challenge, the CLDRWSSP has implemented the following strategies:

- Continually refine and trial CPA and IEC activities to identify processes that are both endorsed by PCERWASS and support the goals of the NRCWSSS. A workshop scheduled for June 2005 will jointly examine lessons learnt from Community Participation to date and to reach agreement on how they may be best integrated into the PCERWASS RWSS cycle.
- Based on the outcome of the June 2005 workshop, study tours by PCERWASS staff to communities that have benefited from community participation principles may be planned.
- Establish M&E systems to ensure the mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of CPA and IEC is entrenched with PCERWASS. The M&E will follow a benchmarking approach to direct comparisons between different systems within each province.

[13] By the end of the 1990s, several other donor and NGO projects in Viet Nam were beginning to use these Grassroots Democracy principles and processes as a means to integrate and extend introduced methods of participation (such as PRA or Village Development Planning) in project design and implementation. One valuable aspect of the Grassroots Democracy legislation is that it identifies entry points and basic mechanisms for community engagement as different stages from 'planning' to 'community supervision' to 'operations' as well as identifying types of public information that should be made available to local communities on plans and budgets. It is, therefore, very well suited to the basic infrastructure 'investment cycle'.

[14] The MTR report stated that – "There is nothing in the recent sectoral or NTP reviews to suggest that the goal and objectives of the project ought to be changed. Indeed, it is likely that any changes in institutional arrangements will lead to a more conducive environment for achieving project objectives". Rather, the MTR asserted that it was – "…delays in construction to date that have largely undermined the PDD strategy of a staged "design-and-implement" approach. This will be exacerbated by changes in the management of existing water supply schemes…". It goes on to note that – "The community development process was initially slower than expected, but is now operating well within the expected time limits in the PDD. The MTR team could find no evidence that this had significantly slowed implementation of this component. Delays in the feasibility and design studies were, however, having a significant impact".

[15] For example, Vinh Long Province had constructed piped water supply schemes with UNICEF project support since 2000. UNICEF funded 13 schemes that were put under community management. As described by PCERWASS, after 1 year it was found that 10/13 schemes were in bad condition and non-operational, even though training had been provided. Communes were not able to manage the tariff revenue system to cover OMM costs, and in many cases the Commune People's Committee had themselves requested to hand the schemes over to PCERWASS.

[16] As noted in the 7th TAG mission report from March 2006 – "…The Training Plans developed since the last review are far more useful – they are specific, competency-based and measurable. Training activities are more likely proceed as planned and resulting capacity can be more systematically measured…". Training provided by the project has been comprehensive and of a practical nature, covering general planning and management topics, software systems for project

management and RWS service management, IEC and communication skills, gender awareness, environmental management, tariff pricing policies, construction supervision, scheme operations and maintenance etc.

[17] The Mid-Term Review commented that – "The current process in the project provinces of transferring management of all rural piped water schemes to PCERWASS… will raise issues that are likely to affect the project for the remainder of its duration. In particular, the changes are likely to demand new forms of capacity building for PCERWASS…". At the same time, the Mid-Term Review concluded that – "The project has supported a number of capacity building activities to date… Improvements have been made in planning…but otherwise little appears to have changed in how PCERWASS goes about its work".

[18] For example, as reported to the ICR team, from 2003 onwards the PCERWASS in Vinh Long introduced stronger incentive-based reporting and reward systems for the Operators on the piped water supply schemes. This system is more transparent in that it incorporates horizontal assessment (operators from one scheme being involved in the assessment of operators from another scheme) as well as annual review meetings to review and adjust the performance criteria (e.g. number of new household connections, number of complaints, cleanliness of the site etc).

[19] For example, the *Guidelines for Preparing, Implementing and Operating a Community-based Clean Water and Sanitation Improvement Plan* that was produced by NCERWASS, WSP and UNICEF in 2000. This contains many of the same steps for integrating community consultation and participation into the RWSS investment cycle:

Phase 1: Identification of demand	• Initiation of social promotion • Identifying community demands and priorities.
Phase 2: Project preparation and appraisal	• Setting project objectives • Promotion, preparation and training • Pre-design • Detailed design.
Phase 3: Implementation	• Selection of contractor • User contributions and other commitments • Actual implementation • Training operators / users • On-going IECD activities • Scheme tested, commissioned and put into operations.
Phase 4: Operation and maintenance	• Operations and maintenance management regulations • Scheme operated and maintained properly.
Phase 5: Monitoring and evaluation	• Setting up roles and responsibilities for M&E • Initiation of evaluation and selection of method • Data collection and analysis.

[20] For instance, in 2006 the Minister of MARD instructed NCERWASS to review current conditions of rural water supply schemes in a selection of provinces[17]. This review covered 4,500 schemes in 39 provinces, including schemes under PCERWASS, Commune People's Committee, co-operative, enterprise, private and community management. The review identifies strengths and weaknesses of the various management models and goes some was towards setting a framework for the most effective types of management system according to the overall scale and complexity of the

[17] Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation / MARD (2007) *Report on the Management and Operation of Rural Water Supply Schemes.*

schemes. However, it notes that there are still gaps in the regulatory framework for decentralization, asset ownership and management, and tariff collection systems.

[21] For example a Workshop on Privatising Management of Water Supply and Sanitation held in Da Nang City in October 2007, organized by the ADB, DFID Markets for Poor and the East Meets West Foundation. The Executive Summary from this workshop specifically mentions that it led on directly from the earlier workshop on piped scheme management organized by CLDRWSSP.

[22] A noted in the 3rd Annual Plan of the AMC – "The modified Community Participation Approach adopted for the District Towns WSS program is needed to reflect the limited technical options available to users/consumers when compared to rural communes".

[23] For both the RWSS and district towns RWS all construction procurement was undertaken locally on the basis of each province undertaking its own procurement of materials and equipment and letting of civil works. This approach was a departure from the PDD which recommended the AMC purchase key construction materials. The AMC concluded that procurement by counterparts to agreed international standards would help to establish buyer-seller communication channels and improve sustainability. Consequently, the project established standard bidding and specification templates for PCERWASS.

Delays in construction were associated with a number of factors, including: (i) the novelty of the decentralized implementation arrangements for the project and as associated with the wider devolution of investment ownership and management responsibilities to local government authorities in the GOV system; (ii) adjustments required to design and bidding documents due to the rapid inflation of construction material and labour costs in the early project period; (iii) the time required to jointly agree and develop investment and procurement procedures, in particular to introduce higher quality standards in construction materials and equipment and construction supervision; (iv) difficulties in attracting sufficient number of qualified contractors, particularly to work in the more remote rural communes; and (v) in some localities delays in the resettlement and compensation process and procedures. There was also a need for rigorous water resources investigation and proving the sustainability of the resources before investing in infrastructure, with Water Resource reports prepared for each province by hydrologists and hydro-geologists. This was time consuming as the investigation needed to a cover a full cycle of seasons.

[24] In Vinh Long Province, contracts were awarded and full construction began on the Binh Minh scheme in September 2006 and on the Tam Binh scheme in December 2006. In Kien Giang Province, the contract for the Vinh Thuan scheme was awarded in September 2006.

The Preparation and construction schedule for the Binh Minh Town water supply scheme was as follows (Source: Vinh Long Water Supply Company):

1.	Date Feasibility Study completed	27/12/2004
	Approved by PPC	01/3/2005
2.	Date Design started	28/4/2005
	Finished	24/5/2006
	Approved by WSC	09/7/2006
	Approved by PPC	None
3.	Date bidding document started	26/5/2006
	Finished	15/6/2006
	Approved by WSC	22/6/2006

	Approved by PPC	None
4.	Date tenders opened	21/7/2006
	Evaluation	14/8/2006
	Approved by WSC	25/8/2006
	Approved by PPC	30/8/2006
5.	Date works started	21/9/2006
	Completion date	31/10/2007

[25] Number of new rural piped water supply schemes in the 5 provinces from different investment sources in the period 2001 to 2007 (Source: PCERWASS reports for ICR mission):

Investment Source		Number of piped rural water supply schemes (2001 to 2007)				
		LA	BT	BL	KG	VL
1	NTP-RWSSP (PCERWASS)	553	22	15	24	
2	CDRWSSP / AusAID	24	2	12	6	7
3	Other donor / INGO projects	30	20	44	18	
4	Private Investors	996	13	4	1	
5	Cooperatives	0	5	-	1	
6	State Enterprises	-	1	-		
7	Local Communities	-	2	-	14	
		1,603	65	75	64	107

[26] The availability of uncontaminated water sources was identified as a risk in the project design. Experience showed this was the case in some localities, in particular saline encroachment and arsenic contamination. (while in those places where water quality was satisfactory there may still be a risk of future contamination). In situations where groundwater quality was inadequate, the project concentrated on installing larger rainwater shortage and/or roof catchment systems. There is a proven risk that water storage tanks can increase the risk of Dengue Fever, due to the difficulty of ensuring the tanks are maintained fully sealed. However, the alternative options for improved domestic water supply are limited in some areas. As far as the ICR team could ascertain, the project responded to this risk and it has worked with the AusAID Dengue Fever Project to develop appropriate means of minimising the spread of Dengue.

[27] As described in the PDD – “RWSS scheme delivery in rural areas will involve a process of intensive community consultation in selected communes to assess community willingness to participate/contribute (with a duration of about six months) followed by bidding and consultant selection for the feasibility study. Once the feasibility study has been completed and approved by the PPC, a detailed design with associated documentation will be prepared, land will be acquired, and bids will be sought and evaluated for procurement and construction. Construction will then commence (after a period of 12 months from the completion of the initial community consultation) and be completed and commission/tested after no more than six months. The total process for consultation, design, bidding, evaluation of tenders, and construction should take no more than 24 months for one RWSS scheme”.

[28] Criteria for RWS scheme location selection:

Indicative Scheme Selection Criteria	Range	Points
% poor households	> 20% > 15% < 20% < 15%	20 15 10
% ethnic households	> 5% > 3% < 5% < 3 %	20 15 10
Duration of present access to domestic quality water (i.e. water that is not affected by saline intrusion)	< 6 months 6 to 9 months > 9 months	20 15 10
Incidence of water related diseases	High Medium Low	20 15 10
Request from community (men and women)	Yes	20
	No	0
PPC endorsement of scheme	Yes	20
	No	0
Other factors		30

[29] As noted in the Activity Completion Report – AMC suggestions for including specified brand names for some key equipment such as pumps and pipes to ensure equipment quality were accepted by the PPCs. Following completion of schemes the PMBs accepted that higher quality equipment although more costly would result in more sustainable systems. AMC suggestions for changes in procurement procedures to give increased emphasis to quality of construction were not accepted by the PPCs as not in accordance with GOV procurement regulations. Obtaining the regulated number of bidders to work in remote communes proved difficult, and AMC suggestions to work through direct appointment of contractors was not accepted. Evidently, it took a lot of effort to convince some agencies of the need to introduce higher quality standards. It was noted in the 6th TAG mission report that while on the surface, it would seem that this is a relatively simple matter, and the principles are straight forward, it was a major discussion point in all provinces.

[30] Commune cost model for rural water supply and sanitation, as proposed in the PDD:

Commune Cost Model			**A$/head**	**Scheme Cost Estimates**		
Commune population		20,000		**Materials (GOA)**	**Const. (GOV)**	**Total**
Existing population with access to domestic water	30%	6,000				
Target project-end coverage	80%	16,000				
Population project to serve		**10,000**				
Piped schemes	25%	2,500	40	40,000	60,000	100,000
Non-piped schemes	75%	7,500	12	27,000	63,000	90,000
Schools – water & toilets		7,500	3	11,250	11,250	22,500
Commune solid waste		1,500	3	900	3,600	4,500
Commune sanitation		1,800	10	3,600	14,400	18,000
Commune micro-activities			Lump Sum	1,500	13,500	15,000
Totals				**82,750**	**152,250**	**250,000**

[31] The Mid Term Review (from 2005) put forward some strong viewpoints on this matter. The MTR Report states that – "It was the linkage of community development and infrastructure which the project design intended to be a strength of the AusAID approach. However, poor coordination and management mean that the approach is now perceived by some stakeholders in a negative light. That impression is certainly embedded among PCERWASS staff, and indeed is also present among some members of the AMC team… In some provinces, PCERWASS Directors stated baldly that they would not continue the project's approach after project completion. The community development activities have been seen as an end in themselves, rather than the means to building a demand-responsive and sustainable poverty reduction intervention".

[32] For example, this is the approach of International Development Enterprises (IDE) in linking 'suppliers' and 'consumers' in RWSS, which can lead to more sustainable service supply systems for these simpler technologies. Elsewhere, the AusAID funded North Vam Nao Water Control Project II (in An Giang Province) has shown that a similar approach can be taken to the delivery of household sanitation facilities. Under this project, water-sealed toilets are subsidized for poor households through a 'revolving fund' mechanism, while at the same time the project has trained local community based artisans in the construction techniques.

[33] As noted in the 6th TAG mission report – "The AMC has been working in the field for over four years, during which time the CPA has evolved to a point where community participation is accepted as appropriate and effective in the development of RWSS". The 7th TAG mission report also indicated that – "The project has moved towards institutionalising a RWSS strategy with community involvement…in line with the major principles and objectives of the National Strategy and the NTP". The AMC put forward similar viewpoints in the 4th Annual Plan (2005 to 2006) – "The Community Development Advisors were initially primarily responsible for implementation of this process; however, it is increasingly being managed and implemented by PCERWASS themselves. At various points, workshops have been held… to discuss lessons learnt and refine the process to ensure that after the phase out of the CLDRWSSP, the agencies are left with a process that is effective and sustainable within the context of the resources available to them".

[34] As described in Foreword to the Project Implementation Model for RWSS (2007):

"…when engaging a community, it needs to be very clear whether the focus is on community development or on an external agency with a fixed mandate seeking to improve its service provision and customer satisfaction. If the focus is on community development, then activities need to concentrate, *inter alia*, on community mobilization, on encouraging community participation in decision-making etc. If the emphasis is to be on the organisation engaging of communities before embarking on action in those communities, then the focus should be on members of the organization understanding and identifying:

- the points in the performance of the organisations mandate where communities can be meaningfully engaged;
- the levels of community engagement which can be realistically stimulated at these different points, and
- the likelihood that engaging the community will enhance the agency's capacity to meet its mandate. For example, when the constraints arising from both the institutional and physical environment are taken into account, only very limited community involvement may be feasible with respect to *decision-making* regarding the choice of what water system is to be constructed; however, a community consultative process may be very effective during the organization's initial decision-making and design stage in the construction cycle.

[35] These observations could suggest there was the need for a central project 'coordination' unit on the GOV side (while obviously maintaining the principle of decentralized province ownership of the investment activities). Such a unit, for example, could have had the authority to more formally issue guidelines on cross-cutting matters such as M&E arrangements, procurement procedures and so forth. The PCC did not have the scope to cover all these detailed matters. It was left to the AMC to mobilise the PMBs and PCERWASS to get Province decisions on essential matters along the way. The capacity of the AMC itself to provide this type of on-going project management support to the PMBs was initially limited. This was only resolved half way through with personnel changes within the AMC and the recruitment of RWS engineers with stronger project management skills.

[36] As documented in Annual Plan No.4 (2005 to 2006):

Identify reasons for past delays and introduce changes to the cycle to avoid repetition:

- Feasibility Studies and Designs are no longer translated into English, a step that delayed FS and designs by up to 6 months in the past. The consultant is now only required to prepare a "summary sheet" at each endorsement stage of the design process. The AMC international staff reviews these summaries for overall compliance with project criteria while a detailed review is carried out at 2 separate levels (Implemented July 2004).
- Transition from community consultation stages to feasibility and design stages has been streamlined and past delays of several months between step 4 and step 5 in the Model are no longer experienced (implemented September 2004).
- Feasibility study and design consultants who have consistently under performed in terms of quality and timeliness have been gradually replaced by more experienced consultants.
- Designs for school toilets have been standardised and shared amongst some provinces to reduce design and approval times (implemented September 2004).

Identify potential future risks to schedules and introduce measures to mitigate those risks:

- In December 2004 the Project implemented the "Standard CLDRWSS Project Bidding Documents" through a series of workshops and feedback sessions. These documents cover

Tendering Guidelines, Conditions of Contract and Technical Specifications etc. The standardised documentation will reduce document preparation and approval times, while exposing counterparts to a range of more sophisticated contract management practices. It was agreed at PCC meeting #8 that the PMBs directors would meet to develop a paper that summarises all the suggested changes, including the preferred process for disbursing processing contractor payments. It was agreed that this paper would be submitted to the AMC by Friday July 22nd so that an agreed document can be issued as a project guideline. It is expected that this document will be refined as implementation proceeds.

- In March 2005 the Project implemented the "Construction Management and Supervision Manual" for component 4 through a workshop and feedback approach. The Manual details clear and simple procedures and lines of communication to be followed during the RWSS construction phase to minimise potential miscommunication and delays and to ensure quality of construction works. It is also expected that this document will be refined as the implementation process proceeds. A similar manual will be prepared and finalized by December 2005 to ensure schedule and quality of construction works under component 3.
- The RWSS construction contracts are now Procurement and Construction contracts rather than separate supply and construct contracts as per the PDD. This change will reduce delays associated with coordinating 44 supply contracts managed by AMC with 44 civil construction contracts managed by counterparts. The AMC and PCERWASS have developed technical specifications to international standards for key materials (i.e. mechanical & electrical, pipes and valves), which will be supplied by contractors. This approach is seen as more sustainable and was endorsed by the PCC in December 2004.
- Wherever possible and appropriate, the AMC has adopted Vietnamese procedures for contract management and quality control to reduce delays and risks associated with introducing new procedures.

Establish a system for Monitoring and Control of progress to ensure that problems are resolved as soon as they arise:

- Responsibility for scheduling activities on the critical path (using MS Project) was formally transferred to counterparts in December 2004. Monthly updates are now submitted to RWSS Engineers on 15th of each month for review and action as necessary. Any delays or problems with meeting the predicted implementation schedules or any faults in logic of the schedules are discussed and resolved at either the monthly PIT or as necessary based on weekly progress reports (see below).
- Monthly Project Implementation Team (PIT) meetings are held between PCERWASS and AMC to review schedules and co-ordinate engineering, IEC, community development and training activities. This meeting provides the opportunity to plan in detail the upcoming activities, to co-ordinate resources and ensure integration of activities. For example, the April '05 PIT meeting in Ben Tre identified a small technical design fault. Rather than revise the designs and resubmit them for approval, the issue will be resolved using IEC resources and community input. The meetings are minuted and endorsed by AMC and PMB. PIT meetings were implemented during the 4th quarter of 2004.
- The AMC's PPO Engineers prepare a weekly report summarising progress and status in each commune, and highlighting whether scheduled activities have slipped behind schedule. This report is submitted each Monday morning to the RWSS Engineer for action as necessary. This initiative was implemented in September 2004.
- The Project has commenced regular higher-level co-ordination meetings with stakeholders to manage progress. These meeting will be attended by PPC, DARD, DoF DoC, DPI, DoH,

DOET, pCERWASS or WSC and the AMC. The meetings include a report from pCERWASS to all attending stakeholders on implementation activities and schedules. The first meeting was held in Long An on 15th April 2005, with inaugural meetings in 4 other provinces scheduled for May and early June 2005.

[37] Sustainable Transfer Strategy, as documented in Annual Plan No.4 (2005 to 2006):

The STS is a key initiative introduced by the AMC to ensure the smooth transfer of project implementation to the appropriate stake holders. The strategy involves identifying the current shortfall in skills, knowledge or resources necessary for the counterparts to assume responsibility for managing and implementing the project; working with them to strengthen and consolidate the essential capacities required; and then shifting the focus of support to maintenance and monitoring levels. This process is represented by three decreasing levels of support from project advisers:

- **Level 1:** Total involvement of the Adviser and the counterpart in all functions of the project **.**
- **Level 2:** Partial involvement in each of the components depending on the capacity to perform in each function. This enables the Adviser to concentrate on those areas in need of greater development or support while enabling and encouraging counterparts to assume greater involvement where skills and confidence are most advanced.
- **Level 3:** Limited involvement in most functions while concentrating on policy, management and strategic capacity to facilitate greater agency involvement and responsibility for all functions.

[38] The Gender and Poverty Strategy developed for the Project highlights the important aspects of incorporating gender and poverty in to RWSS projects. These include:

- The specific social, cultural, environmental and economic context for project intervention must be understood at the outset and inform such intervention;
- All user groups are recognised as having the right to be involved in decision-making about services that affect their well-being;
- Project interventions to strengthen the foundation for a gender and poverty inclusive project will be provided at institutional, community and project management levels;
- All interventions for a gender and poverty-inclusive approach will be in line with GOV strategy for poor and gender equity; and
- A balance is to be maintained between outputs and process, so that the project is not driven by construction goals alone

In using a gender and poverty-inclusive approach to deliver effectively sustained and effectively used services, CLDRWSSP aims to:

- Create both a capacity and a receptiveness on the part of the water and sanitation agencies, to work in effective partnerships with all user groups in the planning, design, construction and operation and maintenance of each WSS service;
- Create “social readiness” among user groups, which would include training and capacity building within the community so they can take an active and responsible role in decisions about design, construction and maintenance of their WSS services;
- Maximise the adoption of the most appropriate technologies for different user groups, taking into account economic and sustainability considerations; and

- Maximise the adoption of healthy and environmentally sound, water and sanitation-related behaviour among all user groups.

[39] In 2007 AusAID conducted a review of the gender focus of project documentation. This review showed that while the gender analysis in the PDD was not detailed, gender aspects were generally well elaborated and integrated in the implementation guidelines, qualitative and quantitative indicators under the M&E system, terms of reference, training manuals and reporting requirements of the AMC etc.

[40] According to project reports, the AMC team has undertaken meetings with other organisations to maintain its professional network in related sectors. Team members met to broaden their knowledge and understanding of water related organisations experience that has been gained in community development work in Viet Nam to date:

- NGO Resource Centre, Ha Noi
- Population and Development International
- Canadian Centre for International Studies & Cooperation
- Viet Nam Institute for Water Resources Research
- Action Aid
- International Development Enterprises
- CARE
- Doctors of the World
- Australian Foundation for the Peoples of Asia and the Pacific
- CIDSE
- Oxfam GB
- Norwegian Missionary Alliance
- Viet Nam Water and Sewerage Association
- Plan Vietnam
- Hanoi Urban College of Construction.

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Annex 2. Project Log-frame: outputs and achievements against verifiable indicators

Source: Activity Completion Report (August 2007)

NARRATIVE SUMMARY	REVISED VERIFIABLE INDICATORS [18]	ACHIEVEMENTS [19] [20] (NOTE – Evaluation data below not final. Additional evaluations still to be completed)
PROJECT GOAL: To reduce poverty and improve overall living standards and health of between 384,000 and 400,000[21] rural poor living in the Cuu Long Delta by assisting them gain sustained access to improved water and sanitation services.	Between 384,000 and 400,000 people receiving sustained access to improved water supply and sanitation services.	• Approximately 390,000 people in 45 communes across 5 provinces have directly benefited from sustained access to improved water supply and/or sanitation (WSS) services through the construction of 51 piped water schemes, 21,000 household water storages and/or roof guttering, 132 school toilets blocks, 232 drilled household wells, 150 household toilets, 18km of concreted village access paths, 8.5km improved drainage, 14 concreted school yards, and other minor construction activities. • The Community Participation Approach (CPA) ensured communication channels between community and institutional stakeholders were established and effective throughout the Project Implementation cycle. • IEC campaigns targeting infrastructure beneficiaries have focused on improved health and hygiene practices with respect to water supply and sanitation. • Sustained stakeholder focus on design/construction quality and training for ongoing OMM [22] has promoted sustainability of WSS services. Post construction evaluations indicate both a high level of community satisfaction and a low level of maintenance issues. [2] • Adoption by DOET of the CLDRWSSP's "Healthy School" IEC campaign's and materials has the potential to reach a further 1,146,000 students in 1,700 non-project schools across the 5 Provinces.
	The rural poor to be disproportionate beneficiaries of improved RWSS services.	• The Project targeted poorest of the communes across the 5 Provinces. • "Book Poor" [23] were given first choice in receiving household storage tanks, handpumps and toilets. Evaluations carried out post construction for these items confirm that the "Book Poor" households were disproportionate beneficiaries by a ratio of 1.5 for household tanks and 4.5 for hand-pumps[24]. • Cost of Connections to Piped water supply schemes were reduced for poor households by in including the cost of water meters in the construction cost, rather than the householder's connection cost. This effectively halved to connection fee for poor households to around 250,000VND (slight variations between provinces) • Sustained advocacy on the importance of targeting poorest households for WSS solutions increased awareness of this issue among institutional and community stakeholders.

[18] Indicators revised in 6 Month Report September 2006, and further revised following discussions with TAG/AusAID
[19] For details of evaluations, see below. Also see the Project M&E Summary Report, (appendix to ACR), or detailed M&E reports which have been stored by AMC.
[20] Evaluation Data preliminary based in information available April 2007. Figures will change slightly in final ACR report
[21] Original PDD stated 500,000 beneficiaries however number reduced to between 384,000 and 400,000 in Change Frame AP #4.
[22] OMM = Operation, Maintenance and Management
[23] Book poor is a GoV terminology to denote the poorest households in each community.
[24] Ratio = % Book poor who were Project beneficiaries divided by % book poor within the general community.

Component 1: WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROMOTION Outcome: Improved hygiene behaviour in project rural communities (including district towns) and increased demand for water supply and sanitation services.	Research Undertaken and documented to assist in understanding hygiene behaviour in rural communities to guide Project implementation.	• 1 x Knowledge Attitude & Practice (KAP) Survey/Study (Carried out in two communes in each province (2003) • 1 x Report on Financial & Institutional Capacity of pCERWASS's (2003) • 2 x Health Impact Reports completed (2005 and 2006) • 2 x Gender and Poverty Analysis reports completed (2004 and 2005) • 5 x Water Resources Studies – one for each province (2002) • Community Surveys as part of CPA in each commune (throughout Project) • Alum Flocculation & Changes in Pesticide Concentration & Microbial Water Quality of Channel Feed Water Stored in Jars, Vinh Long (2004) Notes: 1. National CERWASS RWSS IEC Strategy was not developed in time for implementation on CLDRWSS Project, nor was it suitable for use on the CLDRWSSP as originally planned in the PDD. 2. The CPA showed that there was already a high demand for improved water in Project communes. Subsequent research further showed that in general, the decision to participate was based on affordability and perceptions of likely customer service (for piped schemes). IEC campaigns were therefore not considered to be likely to much impact on demand, and therefore focused on hygiene behavioural change.
	Design and delivery of IEC Programs by RWSS institutions.	IEC Program developed which focused on 3 main areas – 1. Healthy School IEC Program focusing on student hygiene practices developed with DOET. Delivered to 118 schools, with ongoing implementation by pCERWASS and DOET after Project completion. A total of 30,000 bars of soap distributes to schools (soap donated through corporate sponsorship by Unilever) 2. Improving Household health & hygiene and Householder improved understanding of RWSS infrastructure. A total of 915 Community based Communicators and pCERWASS staff trained in "Face to face" IEC techniques. Total of 120,000 leaflets covering 6 main themes delivered during "Face to Face" IEC campaigns to all household beneficiaries. 3. Healthy Household Pilot IEC Program in Ben Tre focusing on RTI and personal hygiene trailed in 150 households.
	Improved hygiene behaviour in schools.	Evaluation of Healthy School IEC Program near the end of the 4 visit campaign showed that: 1. 96% schools had soap readily available for handwashing, an increase on 63% at the start of the IEC campaign 2. 97% of schools showed evidence of recent cleaning and maintenance of the toilet blocks 3. Assessment of handwashing effectiveness using "white towel" method showed 33% of students had clean or almost clean hands during random inspections, demonstrating a slight improvement on earlier inspections. For details of these and other indicators see M&E Reports
	Improved household hygiene practices and understanding of RWSS infrastructure with regard to water and sanitation	Evaluation of HH practices and knowledge through HH surveys after the IEC campaign showed that: 1. 93% of householders surveyed had no difficulty understanding the 6 key messages promulgated through the Face to face IEC campaign. 2. 59% of households have a designated place for handwashing and 64% of households use different ladles for scooping treated and untreated water. 3. Only 37% HH covered tanks to prevent mosquito entry. The realities in the rural areas suggest that prevention of mosquito breeding through covers is not a viable option. (see AusAID Funded Dengue Control Project active in 3 of 5 CLDRWSSP provinces) Note - Project structure proved ineffective in securing DoH involvement in the health and hygiene campaigns.

Component 2: INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING OUTCOME: RWSS institutions/ organisations equipped with appropriate skills and develop the processes and structures required for effective and transparent RWSS program delivery and reporting.	Documented a Project Model for RWSS implementation, incorporating community engagement, IEC activities, training and M&E developed and regularly reviewed	Model completed and reviewed by AusAID. See the "Project Implementation Model For Investors In The Rwss Sector In The Mekong Delta" (CLDRWSSP – 2007).
	Developed set of planning procedures and guidelines for RWSS Program planning and implementation.	In addition to the Implementation Model mentioned above, the following key documents were developed: • Training Manual • Pricing Plan Manual for Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes • Water Quality Guidelines • Construction Supervision Manual • Construction Material Specifications and Construction Standard Contract Specifications • M&E Manual • Environmental Management Guidelines. • Poverty/Ethnic & Gender Guidelines Checklist • Project Quality Plan • Project Management, Monitoring and Reporting templates • Project Funds Disbursement Guidelines • Arsenic Management Guidelines Where appropriate, above planning tools have been incorporated into the "RWSS Implementation Model".
	Improved provincial tariff structuring/setting processes.	• Development of Project Tariff Pricing Policy and Guidelines for Tariff Calculation. • Each pCERWASS submit a Pricing Policy for each Project piped scheme showing the costs expected to be covered by tariffs, and the funding source for any shortfall including asset replacement costs. • Ben Tre Province is using the Pricing Guidelines for tariff calculation on non project schemes • Post construction Evaluation of piped schemes revealed an evaluation score of 3.3 out of 4 for Financial Management Note: PPC' s in each Province often "fix" tariffs for all Rural schemes at a rate that only covers O&M. Therefore the only flexibility open to pCERWASS is usually to establish agreements with PPC for subsidies for future asset replacement/major repair costs.
	Improved Competency of RWSS facilities management groups.	• Development of a Capacity Building Framework for enhancing Rural Piped Scheme management. This approach covers the full range of management themes including O&M, financial management, training and user participation. As a result of this process, it became clear that the piped water supply schemes supported by the Project will be owned and managed by a GoV entity, i.e. either pCERWASS or the CPC. This represents a departure from the intent of the PDD. The Project also hosted a national review workshop on management models in HCMC on 8th December 2006. Positive Post project evaluation for piped schemes details summarised under component 4, or M&E reports. • School toilet OMM systems established through O&M plans and IEC programs. • Household jars and handpumps are responsibility of individual Households who received training and IEC • Improved competency supported by approximately Training Needs Analysis and approximately 246 Training activities, 39 workshops and 20 Study Tours, for around 2000 separate individuals, with a focus on "Training of Trainers" approach. See Training Report for details. • Enhanced Reporting, Information Management and Project Management skills such as record keeping, benchmarking internationally recognised indicators, Project scheduling, and record keeping.

<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="2">Component 3: DISTRICT TOWNS WSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM
Objective: Developed water supply and sanitation (toilets, drainage and solid waste) services for around 100,000 people in three district towns through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management</td>
<td>Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided to around 100,000 people.</td>
<td>Improved water and sanitation services in 3 District Towns and surrounding villages for 120,000 people. Headwork's on the 3 piped schemes have the potential to extend services to a further 21,000 people once reticulation is extended by the scheme managers.

Breakdown is as follows:

<table>
<tr><th>District Town Name</th><th>Beneficiaries 2007</th><th>Beneficiaries 2012</th></tr>
<tr><td>Tam Binh
(Vinh Long Province)</td><td>13,750</td><td>16,750</td></tr>
<tr><td>Binh Minh
(Vinh Long Province)</td><td>57,750</td><td>85,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Vinh Thuan
(Kien Giang Province)</td><td>12,000</td><td>15,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>CESA in 3 communes of same name**</td><td>41,000</td><td>41,000</td></tr>
<tr><td>Totals s</td><td>124,500</td><td>157,750</td></tr>
</table>

Construction under the Community Environmental & Sanitation Activities Program (CESA) comprised the construction of 18km of footpaths, 8.5km improved drainage, 15 public toilets,14 concreted school yards, 2 canal bridges, 2 incinerators, 1 lighting projects. In addition, the "Healthy School" IEC program was implemented for all 12 school receiving toilet blocks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project-installed water supply and sanitation facilities are in good working order and use at end of project.</td>
<td>The piped water supply in the 3 district towns will not be completed until September 2007; therefore a detailed evaluation has not taken place. A technical evaluation will be carried out in January 2007 which will focus on construction and ongoing facilities management. The result of this evaluation will be the subject of a separate report for each town.

The Evaluation of the CESA Activities 3 months after construction completion by both Project and community representatives indicate excellent results in terms of design, construction, sustainability and appropriateness. Evaluation against these key indicators produced a score of 93%. No construction defects were identified, however minor problems with design were identified (footpath width and handwashing facilities at toilets) See the CESA M&E report for details.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<tr>
<td rowspan="4">Component 4: RWSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM
Objective: Developed RWSS services including water supply and latrine construction for households and schools, solid waste disposal and drainage facilities for rural clusters and some small-scale rural micro-activities directed to poor households, for around 244,000 to 252,000 people [25] through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management.</td>
<td>Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided to between 244,000 and 252,000 people.</td>
<td>The final total number of beneficiaries under Component 4 is estimated at 210,750 people, within 42 communes across 5 Provinces. The beneficiary numbers are broken down as follows (assumes 5 people per household where applicable):
<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Number Units</th><th>Number Beneficiaries</th><th>Comment</th></tr>
<tr><td>Piped Schemes</td><td>51</td><td>105,000</td><td>householders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pipe scheme extensions</td><td></td><td>12,500</td><td>householders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Household tanks &/or rainwater guttering</td><td>21,000</td><td>74,000</td><td>householders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Drilled Household Wells</td><td>232</td><td>3,500</td><td>householders</td></tr>
<tr><td>Public Toilets either new toilets or improved (Schools, CPCs, CHCs)</td><td>116</td><td>28,000</td><td>Students and/or Staff</td></tr>
<tr><td>Household Toilets</td><td>150</td><td>750</td><td>householders</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Total</td><td>223,750</td><td>people</td></tr>
</table>
</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Participation through the whole Project Cycle</td>
<td>• Community Consultation established in the whole project cycle from planning through to OMM. See document “Project Implementation Model for Investors in the RWSS Sector in the Mekong Delta” (CLDRWSSP – 2007).
• Parameters for scheme selection were “Needs Based” with community consultation, rather than “Demand Responsive”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community satisfaction with infrastructure options</td>
<td>Household surveys conducted approximately 3 months after the completion of construction reveal the following:
1. Piped schemes:- 77% household satisfied or very satisfied with the water quantity; 83% satisfied or very satisfied with the water quality (colour, taste, smell) and 81% satisfied or very satisfied with value for money
2. Household storage tanks/jars:- 91% satisfied or very satisfied with value for money
3. Household wells:- 100 % satisfied or very satisfied with the value for money
For details of these and other indicators see M&E Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of design and construction adequate to provide the desired level of service</td>
<td>The project focused on ensuring key materials such as pumps and pipes were to international standard, and also focused on supervision and rectification of construction defects. A Technical Evaluation of construction carried out approximately 3 months after completion revealed the following:
1. All Piped schemes were functioning, and delivering a satisfactory level of service
• Piped schemes operated on average 21 hours per day and on average 28 days per month. No major breakdowns recorded and the only regular supply interruptions were due to either power failure or installing house connections</td>
</tr>
</table>

[25] Beneficiaries revised down from 400,000 people in AP#4.

		• 100% of households had adequate water pressure, even at extremities of the schemes • The average Unaccounted for Water (UFW) was 18 %. A World Bank Study26 suggests a best practice target for developing countries of less than 23%. 2. Approximately 95% of Household Storage tanks, were operational 3. All school toilets were operational however theft of handwashing taps is proving a challenge for school Principals. Design flaws in the earlier toilets were rectified.
	Systems in place for Sustainable Operation, Maintenance and Management of infrastructure	1. Piped schemes. The Project developed a process of consultation to develop a Capacity Building Framework to strengthen the capacity of piped scheme managers. Capacity Building included FM, tariff setting, customer service, Benchmarking, operator training, Water Loss Control and Financial Management. An evaluation of the schemes approximately 3 months after completion revealed: • Evaluation of OM&M criteria revealed a score 16.8 out of a possible 20, with community managed schemes scoring the lowest. • Evaluation of Water Quality monitoring only 2.3 out of 3 and indications are that continued WQ monitoring will not meet international standards. • Evaluation of Financial sustainability produced a score of 3.3 out of a possible 4. • 92% of households were satisfied with the service delivery • 68% of households have connected to scheme after 3 months – a high connection rate by pCERWASS standards 2. Household Tanks and Wells. All beneficiary households received information and/or training on maintenance 3. Evaluation of OM&M in School Toilets produced a score of 2.9 out of 4. All schools developed a O&M plan for toilet maintenance however not all schools were following the plan, particularly with regard to daily cleaning.

[26] A Scorecard for Water Utilities in Developing Countries - April 2002

Component 5: PROJECT MANAGEMENT Objective: Project implemented as designed.	Monitoring & Evaluation system established	A Monitoring and Evaluation systems set up under the Project comprised the following elements: • Technical and OMM evaluation approximately 3 months after construction completion. Carried out in 25% of communes • Household survey and spot checks carried out approximately 3 months after construction completion. Carried out in 12.5% of communes • Evaluation of HH IEC and leaflet effectiveness. Evaluation led to redesign of some aspects of the approach • Healthy School IEC Program evaluation, comprising of spot checks on hand cleanliness and spot checks on child behaviour and maintenance of toilets • Benchmarking for piped scheme management. Principle were introduced to pCERWASS's who have continued to use this valuable management tool. • A "Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices" or KAP study carried out at the beginning of the Project identified high risk WES-related behaviour and guide subsequent IEC programs A Management Information System or MIS was developed during 2005, to assist pCERWASS's with Project Management.
	The number of women benefiting from the project is maximised.	1. Gender Guidelines were established for the Project in the 2001, and incorporated into Project activities such as the CPA methodology, training and fieldwork. 2. In four provinces, on average about 50% of participants in the initial extensive CPA process was women (somewhat less in the fifth province). There was some variation in the participation of women in this process at the commune level, their participation rate ranging from 23 – 68%. Nonetheless, numbers were always sufficient to ensure that their voice was heard. 3. Women have also been involved in the implementation of IEC activities, although depsite all efforst, they usually represent less than 50% of site committee / communicators trained in any one location. 4. In other training courses the participation rate of women averaged at 29% which is generally reflecting the gender composition of the respective workforces. 5. Provision of improved water supplies and sanitation automatically benefits all members of the household, males and females alike.
	AMC and counterpart resources mobilised for completion of Project objectives.	AMC and Counterpart resources have been mobilised for implementation of Project Objectives.
	Project benefits flowing to poor and/or ethnic households maximised	• Project pro-poor initiatives are summarised under the "Goal" achievements. • Project Gender and Poverty guidelines establish in 2001 were incorporated into the planning process • The rationale for project's strategy to target sites with a high proportion of poor and ethnic households and for giving first option for non-piped water facilities to the poor was well understood. • Some pCERWASS Directors have also been proactive in getting support from the Bank of Social Policy for commune loans to cover access to water, although this approach has not been demonstrated at this stage. • The CLDRWSSP was not designed to engage with and influence policy makers at national and provincial levels to support development of pro-poor policies and support mechanisms. Its counterparts were pCERWASS which have little power to influence organisational and policy factors that support or constrain pro-poor approaches.

	Share learning with other RWSS projects and national programs.	Sharing of experiences with other RWSS projects and stakeholders included: • 20 Study tours to share experience with other organisations (14 national study tours, and 6 international study tours)) • Experiences have been shared with CARE, AFAP, the Water and Sanitation NGO Network in Hanoi and other AusAID Projects. • All School Program materials have been provided to the National pCERWASS. • Project IEC material is available through the UNICEF / CERWASS Internet website called 'Water and Environmental Sanitation IEC `Library" www.cerwass.org.vn/wesieclib • National RWSS Workshops have been held to share learning on: IEC Materials, RWS Management Models, and on general lessons learned. • A quarterly Newsletter issued since December 2005.
	Project management, reporting and meeting coordination completed in accordance with project requirements.	Project implementation works required around 300 separate contracts (Feasibility, design, geotechnical investigations, hydrological investigations, communicator contracts etc). In addition the following regular meetings and reports were completed. • PCC Meetings. • PSC Meetings • Quarterly Reports • Six Monthly Reports • Annual Plans • Activity Completion Report • Post Reports

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Annex 3. Final cost summary

GOA Expenditure by Component (AUD)							
Component	**Bac Lieu**	**Ben Tre**	**Kein Giang**	**Long An**	**Vinh Long**	**TOTAL**	**SA**
1	490872	490872	490872	490872	490872	2,454,360	2,374,000
2	1164018	1164018	1164018	1164018	1164018	5,820,090	5,614,000
3			1,148,931		2,466,771	3,615,703	3,301,300
4	1894256	1894256	1894256	1894256	1894256	9,471,280	9,048,000
5	968173	968173	968173	968173	968173	4,840,865	4,639,000
						26,202,298	**24,976,300**
Includes Project Management Fees and Operating Overheads							

GOA Break Down by Activity (AUD)

Community Development				1,958,740		7.5%
Project Management and Operating Costs				10,602,916		40.5%
Procurement				7,202,088		27%
Training				6,438,557		25%
				26,202,300		100%

GOA Break Down of Expenditure (AUD) by Component

Component		AUD	Component Total	% of Component
1	IEC and Community Development and Operating Costs	1,958,740		79.81%
	Procurement	248,227		10.11%
	Training	247,394	2,454,361	10.08%
2	Training Operating Costs	5,745,853		98.72%
	Procurement	74,688		1.28%
	Training Procurement	-	5,820,541	0%
3	Project Management and Operating Costs	1,718,783		47.54%
	Construction	1,748,029		48.35%
	Training	148,437	3,615,248	4.11%
4	Project Management and Operating Costs	4,265,577		45.04%
	Construction	5,027,581		53.08%
	Training	178,124	9,471,282	1.88%
5	Project Management and Operating Costs	4,622,997		95.50%
	Procurement	99,122		2.05%
	Training	118,749	4,840,868	2.45%
Note:	**Component 5 includes 8 vehicles.**		**26,202,300**	

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Annex 4. Summary of construction works and beneficiaries

	Number of Items	Estimated No. HH	Estimated No. Beneficiaries*
Training (Component 2)			
Formal Training Activities****	305		**2,000**
CESA Activities (Component 3)			
Footpath (km)	18.2	-	
Drainage (km)	8.5	-	
Toilets (No.)	15	-	
Yards (No.)	14	-	
Incinerator (No.)	2	-	
Lighting (No.)	1	-	
Bridges (No.)	2	-	
			41,108
3 District Towns (Component 3)			
Tam Binh Piped Water Supply	1	2,750	13.750
Binh Minh Piped Water Supply	1	11,550	55,750
Vinh Thuan Piped Water Supply	1	2,400	12,000
Sub Total Component 3			**124,608**
RWSS (Component 4)**			
Piped Schemes	51	20,989	104,945
Pipe scheme extensions		2,500	12,500
Household tanks &/or rainwater guttering	20,913	14,766	73,830
Drilled Wells	232	673	3,365
Public Toilets either new toilets or improved with water supply (School, CPC, CHC)	115	-	28,094
Household Toilets	150	150	750
Sub Total Component 4			**223,84**
TOTAL Estimated Number Beneficiaries			**389,200**
IEC Only Beneficiaries (Non Construction)			
School IEC Program (Component 1)			
Non Project Schools***	1,835.00		**1,146,000**

* Assumes 5 people per household where applicable 5 people / HH

** Construction Program incorporates IEC Program at HH and School level

** Estimated Number staff & students where DOET in 5 Provinces have replicated the Project School IEC Program in non Project school sites

**** Training Representatives from organisations such as pCERWASS, Private Enterprise, Community Members, school teachers. Beneficiary numbers do not double count participants who attended more than 1 training course

Annex 5. Summary of training courses and outputs

Training courses:

Module	Location	Provider
Planning Skills Course	Vinh Long	AITCV
Reporting skills Course	Long An	AITCV
Video Camera Operation	Ho Chi Minh City	HTV - Ho Chi Minh
Programming Microsoft Access 2002	Hanoi	CLDRWSSP
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	Vinh Long	AITCV
Project M& E Indicators Training	Can Tho	CLDRWSSP
Human Resource Management Training	Vinh Long	Tan Duc (TD & T)
Powerful Interpersonal Skills	Ho Chi Minh City	Tan Duc (TD & T)
Organisational Assessment & Development	Hanoi	CLDRWSSP
Competition on Clean Water and Sanination for project communes	Vinh Long	pCERWASS - IEC Trainers
Competition on Clean Water and Sanitation for project communes	Kien Giang	pCERWASS - IEC Trainers
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Vinh Long Town	CLDRWSSP
Microsoft Publisher & Photoshop # 2	Ho Chi Minh City	Tan Duc (TD & T)
In-service Training on June 2004	Kien Giang	CLDRWSSP
CESA Skills Orientation to BM & TB for Vinh Thuan	Binh Minh Town	CLDRWSSP
Training Needs Analyse Course	Vinh Long	AITCV
CESA Skills for Vinh Thuan	Vinh Thuan Town	SDRC
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	Hanoi	AITCV
Lead Auditor course	Ho Chi Minh City	
Translation skills #3	Hanoi	AITCV
Administration skills	Ho Chi Minh City	VUSTA
RWSSTOT	Hanoi	MOC-Higher Level Const. School No2
Window 2003	Ho Chi Minh City	Tan Duc (TD & T)
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	Ho Chi Minh City	SDRC
Seminar of Finance & Accountant	Ho Chi Minh City	
Microsoft Power Point (Basic)	Ho Chi Minh City	Tan Duc (TD & T)
English Language - Bac Lieu	Bac Lieu	Truong Van An
Translators - High Intermediate/Advanced	Hanoi	AITCV
English Language - Vinh Long	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Pedagogical College
English Language - Long An	Long An	Language & Informatics Centre (LA)
Group Work and Team Building	Ho Chi Minh City	SDRC
In-service Training, LA, September 03	Long An	CLDRWSSP
English Language - Ben Tre	Ben Tre	Permanent Educ. Centre (BT)
Presentation Skills Course	Vinh Long Town	SMEDEC
Translators - High Intermediate/Advanced	Hanoi	AITCV
Management for Sustainability in RWSS	Other	DANIDA
In - Service Program - November 03	Long An	CLDRWSSP
Project Monitoring & Evaluation	Vinh Long	CLDRWSSP
In- service Program December 2003 - Long An	Long An	CLDRWSSP

Participatory Training	Ho Chi Minh City	SDRC
Facilitation Skills	Ho Chi Minh City	SMEDEC
In service Training February 2004	Long An	CLDRWSSP
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Bac Lieu	CLDRWSSP
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Ben Tre	CLDRWSSP
Microsoft Publisher and Photoshop	Ho Chi Minh City	Tan Duc (TD & T)
CESA Training	Vinh Long	SDRC
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Kien Giang	CLDRWSSP
Management of Training and Development Course	Vinh Long	AITCV
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Long An	CLDRWSSP
English Language - Kien Giang	Kien Giang	Foreign Language Centre -KG
Environmental Monitoring & Audit	Vinh Long	CLDRWSSP
Resettlement & Compensation Training	Long An	CLDRWSSP
Resettlement & Compensation Training	Ben Tre Town	CLDRWSSP
Resettlement & Compensation Training	Vinh Long Town	CLDRWSSP
Resettlement & Compensation Training	Kien Giang	CLDRWSSP
Resettlement & Compensation Training	Bac Lieu Town	CLDRWSSP
Office Administration	Hanoi	AITCV
Training of Trainers	Vinh Long	SMEDEC
CESA Training for Vinh Thuan District	Kien Giang	CLDRWSSP
Project Management #1	Can Tho	AITCV
English Language - Bac Lieu	Bac Lieu	Truong Van An
English Language - Vinh Long	Vinh Long	Vinh Long Pedagogical College
English Language - Long An	Long An	Language & Informatics Centre (LA)
English Language - Ben Tre	Ben Tre	Permanent Educ. Centre (BT)
Field Team Evaluation - LA	Long An	CLDRWSSP
RWSS Management WS No 1	Can Tho	CLDRWSSP
English Language - Kien Giang	Kien Giang	DoET-Vinh Long
RWSS Management WS No 2	Can Tho	CLDRWSSP
GOV Finance Trust Fund Operation	Ho Chi Minh City	CLDRWSSP

Type of training:

			Types				Study tour	
No.	**Description**	**Total**	**IEC**	**Tech**	**Operator**	**Others**	**Vietnam**	**Overseas**
1	Training Activities	246	129	30	18	69		
2	Workshops	85	39	13		33		
3	Study Tour	20					14	6
Subtotal		**351**	**168**	**43**	**18**	**102**	**14**	**6**

Breakdown of participants:

Participant Type	Total	Sex	
		Male	Female
AusAID	4	4	0
CLDRWSSP	85	52	33
Commune	879	608	271
Consultant	15	13	2
CPC	105	89	16
DARD	19	15	4
DoC	5	4	1
DoET	143	114	29
DoF	23	20	3
DoH	5	5	0
DOLISA	2	2	0
DOSTE	2	2	0
DPC	42	32	10
DPI	13	13	0
FU	10	9	1
MARD	5	5	0
MoF	5	1	4
MPI	1	1	0
N CWS	12	6	6
NGO	18	12	6
Obs	6	6	0
Other	91	68	23
pCERWASS	308	252	56
PPC	25	24	1
PWU	33	2	31
Treasury	9	7	2
WSC	38	22	16
WU_Commune	62	0	62
WU_D	12	2	10
Youth Union	20	18	2
Subtotal	**1,997**	**1,408**	**589**

Annex 6. Main steps in the Project Implementation Model

Step 1 **Project Planning**	1.1 Determine scope of Project, if this has not already been agreed as part of bilateral or other agreement. 1.2 Review relevant existing GoV Master Plans relating to water and sanitation provision in the region. 1.3 Discuss with CPC the membership of a core Community Supervision Committee (as per GoV regulations) and set up Committee to act as initial liaison group. 1.4 If proposed RWSS solution involves other GoV entities such as DOET, establish communication channels with these Departments at Provincial, District and Commune level Comment – for example if school toilets are proposed, DOET should ideally be the organisation responsible for implementing the Project, including IEC Programs for improved health and hygiene. 1.5 Identify and document technical options for improving RWSS. 1.6 Inform communes about the proposed option and any viable alternatives, and seek comments / feedback. 1.7 If necessary, adjust Scope of Work on basis of community consultation. 1.8 Engage community to assess existing demand and potential for increasing demand for proposed RWSS solution and to assess health promotion activities. 1.9 Determine financial viability of each scheme given existing / possible increased demand (Note: Full financial analysis completed as part of the Design Phase). 1.10 Discuss with community and other stakeholders arrangements for ongoing OMM of completed scheme. 1.11 Prepare Scope of Work for consultants to design the proposed systems. 1.12 Notify Preventative Health Centre (PHC – under DoH) of proposed construction plan and suggest that they involve communes in starting activities to maximize health benefits. 1.13 Establish framework for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project, and identify Capacity Building requirements for ongoing OMM of the infrastructure.
Step 2 **Project Design**	2.1 Meet with GoV approval agencies at PPC level for guidance on requirements for quick approval of designs and cost estimates. 2.2 Prepare and award Contract for Design of RWSS facilities. 2.3 Inform community of proposed design and seek feedback. opportunity for expression of any concerns 2.4 Establish Resettlement and Compensation requirements for proposed project (if any). 2.5 Establish mechanisms to ensure that poor households and other vulnerable groups are not excluded from access to improved WSS.
Step 3 **Tendering**	3.1 Tender construction contract in accordance with Decree 111/2006/NĐ-CP dated 29 Sept 06 for GoV regulations on managing the Tender process for construction contracts. 3.2 Ensure investor provides a letter to the community informing residents of successful tendered and when construction will start.
Step 4 **Construction**	**STEP 4.1 Pre-Construction:** 4.1.1 Have an initial meeting with Investors, Contractor, Construction Supervisor, and representative/s from Community Supervision Committee to establish lines of communication between all stakeholders, roles/responsibilities of each party, and agreement on monthly meetings during construction. 4.1.2 Encourage CPC to revitalise Community Supervision Committee (as per GoV regulations) and expand its role to incorporate coordination of communication flow to and from community members during construction. 4.1.3 If households are contributing to costs, decide on options regarding payment procedure (e.g. timing, by installments, etc). 4.1.4 Engage Community Supervision (or Communication Group if separate entity) Committee in planning for flow of communication throughout construction phase.

	4.1.5 Engage Community Supervision Committee (or Communication Group if separate entity) to ensure a process whereby individual residents can raise concerns during construction is in place and known to all. 4.1.6 Conduct training in the skills required to plan and implement a communication campaign (see, Appendix 10 Guidelines for Training of IEC Communicators). 4.1.7 Ensure engineers & IEC staff in implementing agency are committed to work together to supply required information in a timely manner. 4.1.8 Notify Department of Education and Training (DOET) of any school WSS construction and request that they ask commune schools to hold WES health-related activities. 4.1.9 Notify Preventative Health Centre (PHC) of impending construction and request that they ask Commune Health Stations to intensify activities to maximize health benefits of improved access to water. **Step 4.2 Start of Construction:** 4.2.1 Carry out construction in accordance with GoV regulations (Decree 209/2004/ND-CP dated 16/12/2004 on "Quality Management of Construction Works") and Donor requirements (if applicable). 4.2.2 Facilitate, mentor and monitor communication activities of Community Supervision Committee (or Communication Group, if separate entity). 4.2.3 Organize signing of household agreements and collection of contributions (where applicable). **Step 4.3 During construction:** 4.3.1 Establish monthly meetings as a forum for Investor(s), Contractor, Construction Supervisor, and Community Supervision Committee Representatives to discuss the Project. 4.3.2 Continue to facilitate, mentor and monitor implementation of communication strategies, particularly a process for residents to express any concerns during construction. 4.3.3 Contract and train piped scheme water supply operators (if required). **Step 4.4 Commissioning:** 4.4.1 Defects Inspection involving Investor, Supervisor Contractor and representatives of Community Supervision Group. 4.4.2 Carry out water quality testing (for water supplies where applicable). 4.4.3 Handover / opening ceremony.
Step 5 **OMM and evaluation**	5.1 Engage community to review or establish a procedure that ensures everyone in commune understands communication channels for raising concerns or complaints post construction. 5.2 Engage community and scheme managers to ensure that ongoing customer service communication channels are established (usually applicable to piped water supply schemes). 5.3 Check that a process for ongoing training of Operators is implemented (where applicable). 5.4 Ensure a Follow-up Evaluation takes place (minimum 3 Months after commissioning, but before end of Defects Liability Period). 5.5 Conduct an inspection 1 month before the end of Defects Liability Period for construction. Usually Defect Liability Periods are 12 months duration so evaluation should occur at 11 months.

Annex 7. List of main project documents

REF.	DATE	TITLE
KEY CLDRWSSP OUTPUTS		
TEG0407	Aug-07	A Project Implementation Model For Investors in the RWSS Sector in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam
TEG0105	Sep-05	Pricing Plan Manual Rural Piped Water Supply Schemes
M&E0107	Aug-07	Monitoring & Evaluation Summary Report
CRE0107	Jul-07	Project Completion Report
OPM0105	Dec-05	Capacity Building Framework for Sustainable Management of Rural Piped Water Schemes
TRA0506	Dec-06	National Workshop on Piped Water Supply Management Models for Rural Communities in Vietnam - Proceding Summary
IEC0107	Jan-07	Strategy for Implementing a Healthy School IEC Program Strategy
IEC0103	Nov-03	Report on KAP Survey Results in Project Communes of Long An, Ben Tre, Vinh Long, Bac Lieu and Kien Giang
CRE0207	Dec-07	District Towns Completion Report
PROJECT REPORTS (Project Implementation Guidelines, Project Research and Other Internal reports)		
CES0104	Jun-04	Community Environmental Sanitation Activities in District Towns
CES0204	Jul-04	Report on 5 pilot CESA's in Tam Binh and Binh Minh Districts
CES0303	2003	Community Survey Report Binh Minh, Tam Binh & Vinh Thuan District town in Vinh Long & Kien Giang Provinces
CPA0104	Jun-04	Community Participation Approach - version 3
CPA0403	Jul-03	Project Commune Selection Process & Outcome
ENV0104	Apr-04	Solid Waste and Drainage: Option Paper
ENV0304	May-04	Alum Flocculation and Changes in Pesticide Concentration and Microbial Water Quality of Channel Feed Water Stored in Jars in Vinh Long Province, VietNam
FIN0104	May-04	Financial/Tariff analysis
FIN0203	Jun-03	Financial Analysis
FIN0105	Sep-05	Financial Analysis and Tariff setting
IEC0203	2003	IEC Communication Study in 5 project provinces
IEC0304	Apr-04	Project Strategy for Information, Education and Communication(IEC)
M&E0104	Jul-04	Monitoring and Evaluation Manual
OPM0104	Jun-04	Sustainable Transfer Strategy
OPM0201	Aug-04	A Strategic Approach to Gender and Poverty
OPM0302	Feb-02	Environmental Management Guidelines
OPM0404	Jul-04	RWSS Engineering Documents
PES0104	Apr-04	Visit to Bao Thanh Commune Ben Tre Province
PES0204	May-04	Visit to Hon Ngang Island Kien Giang Province

STA0105	Mar-05	Consultant Report on Poverty and Gender Specialist
TRA0104	Jan-04	Training Procedures Manual
TRA0304	Sep-04	RWSS for The Poor Workshop: Sharing experiences and exploring solutions
TRA0405	May-05	Vietnamese Study Tour on Water Tariffs
TEG0104	Jun-04	Water Quality Parameters
TEG0204	2004	Prioritising Access to Domestic Drinking Water Supply
TEG0205	Sep-05	Construction Management & Supervision Manual
WRI0204	May-04	Report on Sand Dune Groundwater in Bao Thanh Commune
OPM0101	Dec-01	Project Inception Report
OPM0201	Dec-01	Project Quality Manual
OPM0306	Sep-06	Revised Project Quality Manual
RAC	na	R and C Reports - one for each Commune and for each District Town.
PP	na	Pricing Plans - one for each piped scheme
M&E 0305	Jun-06	STS Reviews for each Province (5 reports)
M&E 0305	Dec-06	STS Reviews for each Province (5 reports)
M&E 0107	na	M&E Reports 10 Technical Evaluation Reports and 5 Household Survey Reports
TEG0305	Dec-06	Project Funds Disbursement Procedures Manual
CPA0606	Apr-06	Community Based Strategy Development by Le Thai Bich Ngoc
FIN0106	Jan-06	Financial Impact on Poor Households - SDRC
WR10102	Dec-02	Water Resources Assessment Report
PLANNING and PROGRESS REPORTS FOR AUSAID		
APP0202	Nov-02	Annual Plan Financial Year 2002-2003 No.1
APP0303	Jul-03	Annual Plan Financial Year 2003-2004 No.2
APP0104	Apr-04	Annual Plan Financial Year 2004-2005 No.3
APP0406	May-05	Annual Plan Financial Year 2005-2006 No.4
APP0506	Mar-06	Annual Plan Financial Year 2006-2007 No.5
APP0607	Mar-07	Annual Plan Financial Year 2007-2008 No 6
SMR0106	Oct-06	Six monthly Report - No 5
SMR0105	Oct-05	Six monthly Report - No 4
SMR0104	Oct-04	Six monthly Report - No 3
SMR0103	Oct-03	Six monthly Report - No 2
SMR0102	Oct-02	Six monthly Report - No 1
QPR		Quarterly Reports and SMTs

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Annex 8. ICR Terms of Reference

Cuu Long Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project
Independent Completion Report
10-18 September 2007
TERMS OF REFERENCE

BACKGROUND

The Cuu Long Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Project aims to improve access to and utilisation of a safe, sustainable and continuous water supply, and improve hygiene behaviour and environmental sanitation conditions for up to 400,000 people living in selected small towns and rural communes in five provinces of the Cuu Long Delta (Ben Tre, Vinh Long, Long An, Kien Giang and Bac Lieu) region of southern Viet Nam. The Project will also develop the capacity of institutions responsible for delivering rural water supply and sanitation services. A further aim of the project is to develop a replicable and sustainable model for providing rural water and sanitation services. The model should also include promoting strong community participation, including that of women, in planning and operating facilities in rural areas.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Improve community based planning, management, participation and maintenance of rural water supply and sanitation facilities;
- Maximise health and socio-economic impacts of new and existing rural water supply and sanitation facilities;
- Develop the capacity and ability of institutions/organisations responsible for delivering rural water supply and sanitation services; and
- Develop and implement appropriate and sustainable water supply and sanitation services for poor and rural communities/villages and district towns.

This project supports the Government of Vietnam (GOV)'s National Strategy on RWSS, which has a demand response emphasis. The project enjoys good cooperation with National Center for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (CERWASS) and other major donors - DANIDA and the UNICEF.

The estimated total project cost is up to AUD 40.8 million, with the GOV expected to contribute AUD 15.8 million and Australia (GOA) AUD 25 million. A 12 month (through to 1 January 2008) no-cost extension of the project was approved in March 2006. Coffey International Pty is the Australian Managing Contractor (AMC).

The progress of the Cuu Long Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Project was reviewed by an Engineering Technical Advisory Group (TAG) mission in October 2006. The most important TAG recommendation was that AusAID should consider an increase in construction advisor (engineering) inputs and an extension of time for completion of the construction program, to ensure project quality and sustainability. In response to the TAG recommendation, project extension duration of 3 months and additional expenditure of AUD 500,000 was approved by AusAID in February 2007.

The Project has been scheduled to complete in September 2007 (closure of project office and final GOV/GOA project coordination committee meeting). However, work will continue at a number of project sites through to 31 January 2008 with follow-up support from October 2007 – January 2008 provided by the AMC Ha Noi Office. This follow-up support includes site inspection, as-built design review and installation of key materials.

An overview of the project achievements, as presented in the draft CR, is summarised below:

- Approximately 352,000 people in 45 communes across 5 provinces have directly benefited from sustained access to improved water supply and sanitation services through the construction of 51 piped water supplies, 21,000 household water storages and/or roof guttering, 118 school toilets blocks, 232

drilled household wells, and 150 household toilets, 18km of footpaths, 8.5km improved drainage, 14 concreted school yards, and other minor construction activities.

- The Community Participation Approach (CPA) ensured communication channels between community and institutional stakeholders were established and effective throughout the Project Implementation cycle.
- Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns targeting infrastructure beneficiaries have focused on improved health and hygiene practices with respect to water supply and sanitation.
- Sustained stakeholder focus on design/construction quality and training for ongoing Operation and Maintenance (OMM) has promoted sustainability of WSS services. Post construction evaluations indicate both a high level of community satisfaction and a low level of maintenance issues.
- Adoption by Department of Education and Training (DOET) of the Cuu Long RWSS Project's "Healthy School" IEC campaign's and materials has been implemented in 118 schools and has the potential to reach a further 1,146,000 students in 1,700 non-project schools across the 5 Provinces.
- Project Capacity building was effective with RWSS institutions/ organisations now being equipped with the appropriate skills for effective transparent RWSS program delivery. In particular, a Project focus on managing water loss (also know as Non Revenue Water or NRW) and tariff setting for full cost recovery for piped schemes has strengthened Provincial Centre for Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (pCERWASS) capacity across all their key areas of operations.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of the Cuu Long Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project Independent Completion Report (ICR) are two-fold:

a. To report on the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Cuu Long Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project, with particular reference to lessons learnt from this intervention, and
b. To make recommendations on viable options for enhancing the sustainability of the project outcomes.

SCOPE OF SERVICES

The ICR team will be provided with the relevant project documents prior to the commencement of the in-country mission and receive an in-country briefing on arrival in Ho Chi Minh City from the AusAID Ho Chi Minh City. The Team will:

- Review and assess selected project reports and other necessary records/ information available to validate the performance data presented in the project Completion Report (CR), eventually producing an Appraisal Note on the AMC-drafted CR setting out clearly any revisions or additional work to be undertaken by the AMC.
- Prior to the in-country mission, produce a Focus Paper for the mission covering the approach to undertake the ICR, an outline of program for site visit, a summary of issues and major points for consideration.
- Meet with the Cuu Long RWSS Project Australian Team Leader (ATL) in-country. The ATL will provide a detailed briefing on project implementation including achievements and lessons learnt. The discussion should focus on the issues outlined in the Focus Paper and agreed with AusAID.
- Conduct field visits of project sites and meet with appropriate counterpart officials and project stakeholders to discuss project implementation issues, benefits, strengths and weaknesses.
- Present at a mission debrief with AusAID and the Project team in Ho Chi Minh City, including preparation of a Note of Findings.
- Produce an ICR in accordance with the Guidelines. The "Preparing Completion Reports for AusAID – Interim Guidelines" document attached to this TOR provides specific requirements and guidance on the actual content, methodology and format of the ICR for the Team.

Team composition

The ICR team will comprise:

- Team leader (Edwin Shanks);
- Institutional specialist (Peter Shea);
- Representative from the Infrastructure Thematic Group, AusAID

Team Leader

The team leader will undertake the following services:

- Take overall responsibility for the mission and represent the ICR team where necessary;
- Review background documentation in relation to the proposed project;
- In consultation with the ICR team, assign background research, data gathering, consultation, analytical and report writing tasks to individual team members;
- Oversee and contribute to the development of the ICR mission methodology in consultation with the ICR team;
- Oversee and contribute to the production of the pre-mobilisation Focus Paper, an end-of-mission Note of Findings, Appraisal Note on the ACR, draft ICR and final ICR which incorporates feedback from AusAID and other parties;
- Lead in the presentation of the mission debrief to AusAID;
- Ensure high quality and timely production of reports and briefings consistent with AusAID requirements;
- Receive a briefing on commencement of the mission from the AusAID Vietnam Post; and
- Undertake a field mission from 10 to 18 September 2007 to inform the content of the ICR;

Institutional specialist

The Institutional specialist will undertake the following services:

- Review background documentation in relation to the proposed project;
- Contribute to pre-mobilisation discussions, develop the ICR methodology and produce the Focus Paper, based on consultations with the Team Leader;
- Produce an end-of-mission Note of Findings, incorporating contributions from team members;
- Produce an Appraisal Note on the draft ACR;
- Produce a draft ICR and a final ICR which incorporates feedback from AusAID and other parties;
- Contribute to the presentation of the mission debrief to AusAID;
- Produce high quality and timely reports and briefings consistent with AusAID requirements;
- Receive a briefing on commencement of the mission from the AusAID Vietnam Post; and
- Undertake a field mission from 10 to 18 September 2007 to inform the content of the ICR;

Representative from the AusAID Infrastructure Thematic Group

The AusAID Infrastructure Thematic Group representative will:

- Provide advice to the team on AusAID's policy and requirements for production of the ICR;
- Contribute to development of the methodology, Focus Note, end-of-mission Note of Findings, Appraisal Note on the ACR, draft ICR and final ICR;
- Provide advice on the appropriateness of the ICR and its consistency with AusAID requirements;
- Participate in a field mission from 10 to 18 September 2007 to inform the content of the ICR.

DURATION AND PHASING

The Cuu Long RWSS Project mission will take place in-country from 10th September to 18th September 2007. A detailed schedule of meetings will be prepared by the AusAID Activity Manager in consultation with the Team and made available to the Team before the mission commences. Proposed approximate timing for the mission is:

- 3 days travel time;
- 3 days of desk literature review prior to mission;
- 3 days for the Team Leader and 2 days for the Institutional Specialist to prepare the Focus Paper and the Appraisal Note on the CR;
- 9 days of in-country activities, and
- 5 days for Team Leader and 3 days for the Institutional Specialist for production of the ICR.

TEAM SPECIFICATION

The Cuu Long RWSS ICR Team will be comprised of two consultants and one AusAID staff.

a. The Team Leader (TL), Mr Edwin Shanks: responsible for directing, coordinating and managing the assignment, including the submission of the ICR to AusAID. The TL has experience working on program design, management and assessment of rural development and poverty reduction programs, especially from the perspectives of organizational and institutional development of rural services and community-based organizations involved in rural service provision. He also has extensive practical and methodological experience with Participatory Rural Appraisal and public opinion surveys in a wide range of development sectors and issues. He is particularly responsible for the institutional development impact assessment and analysis of institutional change processes and service delivery.

b. The second team member, Mr Peter Shea: experienced in international development and project management with particularly knowledge and management experience across a range of professional sectors, such as engineering, public health and governance. He will have a particular focus on cost analysis and economic impact analysis.

c. The third team member, Mr Gerard Cheong: working in the Infrastructure Thematic and Environment Groups, AusAID Canberra. His areas of responsibility include the sub-sectoral areas of water, environment and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). His main area of responsibility has been in providing advice to program managers on water and environment programs. Mr Gerard will provide AusAID input to the ICR on water policy issues and is familiar with the ICR process and quality at implementation requirements.

The AusAID Activity Manager (Mr Nguyen Van Hue) will accompany the ICR team, as necessary, to facilitate any issues that arise.

The Cuu Long RWSS ICR team members will be responsible for:

- Finalising all international travel;
- Liaison with AusAID Ho Chi Minh City Post (Mr Nguyen Van Hue) for preparation/ finalisation of the work program and meetings schedule prior to the mission;
- Initial planning and review of relevant documentation as listed at (7) below;
- Coordination among team member on specific tasks during the mission, managed by the team leader; and
- Cooperating with AusAID to present and discuss the mission's Aide Memoire.

7. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The ICR team will produce the following reports according to the timeframe specified:

a. Collated comments on the draft Activity Completion Report
b. A Focus Paper for the mission covering the approach to undertake the ICR, an outline of program for site visit, a summary of issues and major points for consideration.
c. An aide memoire at the completion of the mission prior to departure from Ho Chi Minh City, and

d. An ICR in the format outlined in Attachment **A.**

The ICR should be based on 'Preparing completion reports for AusAID – Guidelines' (Attachment A). It should be no more than 25 pages long plus annexes. The ICR should be a stand-alone document that can be read by an outsider without ready access to the Project Completion Report. The ICR's target audience is the community of professionals implementing Australian aid, all of whom need credible, independent advice on the results of past efforts. This community includes such stakeholders as AusAID staff and management, counterpart governments, contractors, multilateral organisations, other donors, NGOs and universities. Accordingly, ICRs are published electronically.

The submission of draft ICR should be within three weeks of the Team's debriefing. The final ICR report should be submitted within 5 working days upon receiving feedback from AusAID

The TL will have the principal responsibility of preparing and submitting the reports as required with consultation and contribution of other team member.

These documents should be sent electronically. The draft reports will be marked as draft and will have the revision date on the cover. Hardcopy report will be made available to AusAID upon request. AusAID will have ownership of all reports.

Annex 9. ICR Focus paper and methodology

1. Methodological approach and strategic issues

Contextual analysis

The CLDRWSSP was designed and has been implemented in the context of on-going rapid changes and developments in the Mekong Region that cover a complex mixture of economic, social, environmental and institutional factors.

Amongst others, these include: (i) continuing growth (and restructuring) of the agrarian economy focused on commercial production for domestic and export markets; (ii) limitations on the extent to which agriculture based livelihoods and incomes can continue to contribute to poverty reduction due to a squeeze on basic productive assets for the poorest sections of society; iii) widespread 'rural industrialization' of the heavily populated delta provinces – with emerging environmental challenges and problems associated with increased use of agro-chemicals, water quality, waste disposal etc.; (iv) increasingly diverse and competing demands on both land and water resources; (v) increasing demand for water and sanitation services amongst the general public as urbanization increases and standards of living rise; (vi) on-going decentralization of State Management functions to the provincial authorities under the PAR Program, delegation of the responsibilities for investment project management to the local authorities, combined with government commitments to enhance participation of local communities under the Grassroots Democracy legislation; and (vi) increasing private sector activity in public service provision which requires improved regulatory systems to be introduced and enforced.

Given this highly dynamic project context – one essential focus of the ICR will be to assess how successfully the project has responded and adapted to these wider 'challenges' and 'opportunities' over the life of the project. This is to assess the 'bigger picture' in which the project has been operating and the influence of this on the project implementation strategy and outcomes. This is particularly in terms of:

- The extent to which the analysis made as part of project preparation and design was superseded by changing circumstances and priorities that necessitated changes in the project approach and implementation strategy;
- The efficacy of the project M&E system, how lessons were learned and extracted from early implementation experience, and acted upon in following plans and implementation;
- How successfully the project has adapted and applied the 'models' for RWSS that are appropriate to these changing institutional, economic, social and environmental contexts;
- Adaptation of the project implementation arrangements and mechanisms, and scheme management arrangements, to the on-going administrative reform and decentralization policies and objectives of the GOV and local authorities;
- The integration and coordination between project components (hardware and software components) and the scheduling and delivery of project inputs and resources to achieve the intended outputs and outcomes of the project.

Stakeholder assessment:

As with all RWSS projects – the CLDRWSSP has involved many stakeholder groups including: (i) the province, district and commune authorities; (ii) the water supply and sanitation, agriculture and rural development, education, health and construction sector departments; (iii) local communities and different social / beneficiary groups; and (iv) private sector construction companies etc. The

introduction of new water supply systems, management arrangements and pricing policies results in new types of interaction and relationships between service providers and various clients / user-groups. The strongly competing demands on land and water resources in the Mekong Delta mean that, almost inevitably, there will be 'winners' and some 'losers' to development interventions.

A second methodological focus of the ICR will, therefore, be to carefully triangulate between the viewpoints of these different stakeholder groups on project performance and outcomes. To achieve this, the ICR will focus on a set of 'key issues' and 'lines of questioning' followed in meetings with these different stakeholders (see Section 3). In particular, to assess:

- The extent to which the project has successfully targeted and delivered benefits to the intended beneficiaries, including both women and men, and poor households;
- The relevance and effectiveness of the community development aspects, the community participatory programs and the IEC materials on health and hygiene messages;
- The management of the project to identify the extent to which Vietnamese stakeholders, including both local government agencies and communities, have owned and participated in the institutional strengthening process;
- The degree of convergence of opinion between different stakeholder groups on the extent to which the project has successfully addressed and delivered it intended outcomes.

Institutional change assessment

The institutional capacity building objectives and components are pivotal to the CLDRWSSP design. These include: (a) capacity building of the concerned provincial institutions / organizations and of community based organizations in the planning, implementation and management of RWSS; and (ii) the intention that CLDRWSSP should contribute to and align with the principles of the National RWSS Strategy and the targets of the National Target Program in RWSS (Phase I 2001-2005) and the NTP II (2006-2010). In practice it was found that the strategic approaches set out in the National RWSS Strategy (as well as in the Project Design Document) were not fully relevant to the specific institutional and social / environmental management context in the Mekong Region, particularly with respect to the nature of community participation at different stages in the infrastructure 'cycle'. Most importantly, the approach of 'community based management' of piped water supply schemes was found to be not appropriate. The project has instead moved towards a model of scheme ownership and management by local authorities and technical agencies together with community representation and consultation. This has necessitated a certain re-prioritization and adjustment of the institutional capacity building objectives and activities of the project.

As well as reviewing the validity of these changes in strategic direction, the ICR will examine a number of specific questions related to the contribution and alignment with the National RWSS Strategy and NTPs:

- In what ways did the RWSS Strategy and NTP influence the design and subsequent implementation of the CLDRWSSP?
- The nature of the interaction between the provinces / project and the NPCERWASS on policy and implementation aspects?
- How effectively have the important lessons from the project, and alternative models for scheme management developed by the project, been documented and shared with NPCERWASS and other stakeholders involved in the NTP?
- To what extent have these lessons / models been validated or taken-on-board beyond the provincial level, for instance, as reflected in the design of NTP II (2006-2010)?
- Is there evidence to demonstrate that the project's approach was a more effective way to approach to community participation, system planning and management?
- What are the implications for sustainability of the piped water supply schemes (community managed vis-à-vis agency managed schemes)?

2. Component specific questions and issues

Component 1: WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROMOTION

Outcome: Improved hygiene behaviour in project rural communities (including district towns) and increased demand for water supply and sanitation services.

Topic / issue	Questions
Design and delivery of IEC Programs by RWSS institutions…	• *The project strategy was based on firstly raising awareness on demand, then improving community consultation. These activities were intended to precede sub-project implementation. In practice it was found there was already strong demand for improved water supply, which meant the focus of IEC activities changed from basic mobilization of demand to focus on hygiene behavioral change….* • Why was this misfit in strategic approach not detected during the design stage? What was the impact on the project implementation process / schedule? • *The project approach was initially based on training Community Based Communicators and face-to-face IEC techniques, but this was later recognized to be unsustainable…* • What alternative IEC strategies have been subsequently proposed and introduced by the project and will they prove to be as effective? • *The National CERWASS RWSS IEC Strategy was not developed in time for project implementation, nor was it suitable for use on the CLDRWSSP as originally planned in the PDD"…* • Has the project had the opportunity or ability to influence the IEC strategy and content of the NTP RWSS II? • Is there evidence that the project IEC approach and materials will be further used in RWSS NTP II in the provinces or elsewhere?
Improved hygiene behaviour in schools.	• What evidence is there that DOET will extend the Healthy School IEC Program to other schools in the province? • Will province resources be made available for this?
Improved household hygiene practices and understanding of RWSS infrastructure with regard to water and sanitation	• How effective have the IEC materials / messages on health and hygiene been in terms of awareness raising and behavior change? • What data are available to support the assumptions and conclusions given in the ACR on the health and hygiene impacts of the project? • The sustainability of the IEC programs with respect to their cost and human resources required for implementation? • How crucial are these tools in maintaining awareness, and what strategies are in place to maintain awareness without the project funding for IEC materials / programs?

Component 2: **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING**

Outcome: RWSS institutions / organisations equipped with appropriate skills and develop the processes and structures required for effective and transparent RWSS program delivery and reporting

Topic / issue	Questions
'Project Implementation Model for Investors in RWSS in the Mekong Delta'…	• The Project Implementation Model (Manual?) consolidates the planning and implementation approach. This incorporates ("where appropriate") other procedures and guidelines produced by the project on various aspects (gender, water quality, environment, construction supervision etc.) – What have been the trade-offs in developing this consolidated Model in terms of which elements have been retained and which have been dropped? • Will the Project Implementation Model be used on new RWSS schemes planned and implemented by PCERWASS in each province in the future? • Does PCERWASS have the necessary resources (both budgetary and human) to adopt all elements of the model, or only some? • To what extent have project lessons in this regard, and key elements of the Project Implementation Model, been reflected in the strategic approach and design of NTP II (2006-2010)?
In addition, a set of planning procedures and implementation guidelines produced…	• Which of these are considered to be most relevant and which have not been relevant or useful from the province perspective? • Are they being used, by whom, where? • Which will be maintained by PCERWASS as part of their regular planning and implementation procedures beyond the project?
Improved provincial tariff structuring/setting processes...	• What is the status of introducing the province Tariff Pricing Policies for CLDRWSSP piped water supply schemes? • What are the differences (if any) between the pricing policies for project schemes and other schemes from different investment sources in the province? • Are the cost assumptions on the required tariff levels for O&M / financial sustainability valid? • In practice, what is the differential between (a) actual required costs (b) the pricing policies and (c) received tariff? • The tariff pricing systems cover O&M costs only – is there evidence to confirm that PCERWASS will be able to obtain adequate state budget resources for asset replacement / major repairs in future?
Improved competency of RWSS facilities management groups…	• Under the revised project model, 'community based management' of the piped water supply schemes has been changed to 'state ownership / management' – is this change in strategic approach valid with respect to (a) the required level / type of technical service support for scheme O&M, and (b) the institutional management arrangements? • Is the revised project model an improvement on the pre-project models in the provinces with respect to the sustainability of the water supply systems? • Under the project model – who is directly responsible for technical maintenance and day-to-day management of the schemes, what capacity building support have they been provided with, and what are the terms and conditions of their employment? • Are the technical resources and inputs for sustainable O&M more

	likely to be available under the revised model as compared to community based management? • Does PCERWASS have sufficient staff resources / recurrent budget to follow-up operational schemes over time?
Comparative project performance…	• What have been the main 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' of the CLDRWSSP as compared to other donor and NGO supported projects and programs working in the province? • For example, as compared to the RWSS component of the World Bank financed Mekong Water Resources Development Project in Vinh Long, Kien Giang & Bac Lieu? • In overall terms, what added-value has the project brought to the management and implementation capacity of the RWSS agencies in the province?

Component 3: DISTRICT TOWNS WSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Objective: Developed water supply and sanitation (toilets, drainage and solid waste) services for around 100,000 people in three district towns through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management

Topic / issue	**Key questions**
Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided to around 100,000 people…	• The target for the number of beneficiaries of the Towns WSS and CESA will be exceeded by the end of the project and beyond – what proportion of the total household population in the serviced area does this represent? • How has the project targeted the needs of the poorest category urban residents to provide access to affordable WSS services? • Are there particular social groups / locational groups not covered by the schemes, and if so, what are their circumstances and what has been done to address this?
"…community participatory planned program of works…"	• How was community participation in planning the Towns WSS program undertaken (public information and consultation process)? • To what extent were service arrangements / levels determined pre-project, or was flexibility built into the design process? • In what ways did community consultation influence the design or management arrangements? • Was the province / project able to accommodate these community viewpoints? (Vinh Long was considered to be more participatory that other provinces – for what reasons and what lessons can be drawn from this?) • What was / is the basis of negotiations on service management arrangements? Are these arrangements agreed / accepted by the local community and user-groups?
Project-installed water supply and sanitation facilities are in good working order and use at end of project…	• How were decisions made on the balance of investments between water supply and sanitation respectively? What were the sanitation elements and were they noteworthy? • Are the conclusions drawn from the Evaluation of the CESA Activities valid and based on sound M&E data with respect to quality, appropriateness and sustainability? • What factors are likely to influence beneficiary viewpoints on quality, appropriateness, affordability and sustainability of the Town WSS services (note: an evaluation has yet to be undertaken)?

Institutional development for sustainable facilities management…	• What are the proposed on-going management arrangements for the schemes and service financing arrangements (these are not well enough explained in the available documentation)? • Have adequate regulatory mechanisms been put in place by the Province / District Township authorities for scheme management and service arrangements? • In what ways has the capacity of the Water Supply Companies been enhanced with respect to the development and management of water supply services?

Component 4: RWSS INVESTMENT PROGRAM

Objective: Developed RWSS services including water supply and latrine construction for households and schools, solid waste disposal and drainage facilities for rural clusters and some small-scale rural micro-activities directed to poor households, for around 244,000 to 252,000 people through a community participatory planned program of works and institutional development for sustainable facilities management.

Topic / issue	**Questions**
Improved Water and Sanitation Services provided…	• The target for the number of beneficiaries of the RWSS has been revised down from 400,000 people in the design document to an expected 210,000 people (in the ACR) – what were the reasons for this reduction of almost 50% of expected beneficiaries? • What proportion of the total number of households / population in the project communes does this represent (currently or projected)? • The project has targeted the poorest rural communes for the RWSS component, and has made efforts to ensure affordable access for the poorest households – what overall proportion of poor households does this represent? • Are there particular social groups / locational groups not covered by the schemes, and if so, what are their circumstances and what has been done to address this? • How were decisions made on the balance of investments between water supply and sanitation infrastructure respectively? • How effectively has the project addressed the sanitation sub-component – in the context of broader waste disposal / water quality issues in the rural communes?
Community Participation through the whole Project Cycle…	• How has the shift from “demand responsive” to “needs based” community consultation influenced the participatory planning process and selection of schemes in practice? • Are there substantive differences in approach here that are of relevance to other projects and programs? • Is there evidence to suggest that the expressed ‘demands’ or ‘needs’ for improved RWSS services have changed as a result of the project? • For example, has the community participatory approach changed the choice of future schemes (i.e. are the plans for 2008-2009 schemes any different from either those in the earlier project period or do they resemble those)? • Do the new plans for schemes post-project, under PCERWASS, allow for increased awareness and participatory planning? • What human and budgetary resources does PCERWASS have to maintain the level community participation approach introduced by the project in the future?

Community satisfaction with infrastructure options…	• Are the conclusions drawn from the Households surveys (conducted for schemes completed so far) valid and based on sound M&E data with respect to household satisfaction and value-for-money? • Is it expected that similar levels of satisfaction will be obtained for other schemes nearing completion?

Component 5: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Objective: Project implemented as designed (with outcomes of effective evaluation baselines; gender equity in participation, maximizing pro-poor; shared learning, project reporting and meeting).

Topic / issue	**Questions**
MIS / M&E system design, utilization and sustainability…	• Was the MIS / M&E system primarily designed, regarded and used as: (i) a CLDRWSSP project management tool; (ii) an output / outcome monitoring tool; or (iii) to introduce a manageable and affordable M&E system for PCERWASS to maintain? • Was there discrepancy between these short-term and longer-term objectives of M&E, and if so, how has this been addressed? • To what extent has the project introduced internationally recognised 'best practice' in MIS / M&E systems and indicators for RWSS? • How effectively has capacity been built within PCERWASS and other concerned agencies to operate and make use of these MIS / M&E systems and data outputs for analysis and reporting? • To what extent will these systems be taken over and maintained by PCERWASS after project completion?
Management and implementation arrangements…	• To what extent have the project management and implementation arrangements been conducive to Vietnamese stakeholders to own and participate in the institutional strengthening process? • From the perspective of the province authorities, PCERWASS, the AMC and AusAID respectively – what have been the main 'management problems' and 'administrative difficulties' in implementing the project? To what extent are such problems and difficulties associated with the specific project design and implementation arrangements or symptomatic of institutional constraints in the government systems? How have these problems and difficulties been resolved? • What recommendations can the provinces give to AusAID on the design and implementation of future AusAID projects in Vietnam? • How effective has the policy discussion, technical and administrative back-stopping and support provided by AusAID been in terms of the timeliness and effectiveness of this support?
Fund flow and financial management arrangements…	• Have the fund flow arrangements (for both GOA & GOV counterpart funds) been conducive to achieving timely delivery of the intended project outputs, and the quality of project outcomes?
AMC management and technical assistance inputs…	• Was the geographical coverage of the project (5 provinces in distant locations) manageable for the AMC in terms of being able to provide timely and adequate support to all localities? • What factors have influenced the recruitment, deployment and maintenance of both national and international TA personnel? • How are the TA personnel inputs provided by the AMC rated by the counterpart agencies in terms of their quality and effectiveness?

3. Discussion topics for meetings with the PPCs

During these meetings, it is proposed to focus on 5 questions. These can be used as a starting point for more detailed discussion and questions as time allows...

1. Based on the experience of the CLDRWSSP – what 'lessons' and 'models' have been developed that are of relevance and direct applicability to the GOV National Target Program on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation? From the province perspective – what have been the 'most successful' and 'least successful' components of the CLDRWSSP and what are the reasons for this?

2. What have been the main 'strengths' and 'weaknesses' of the CLDRWSSP as compared to other donor and NGO supported projects and programs working in the province? *(For example, as compared to the RWSS component of the World Bank financed Mekong Water Resources Development Project in Vinh Long, Kien Giang & Bac Lieu).*

3. From the Province perspective – what have been the main 'management problems' and 'administrative difficulties' in implementing the project? How have these problems and difficulties been resolved?

4. What recommendations can be given by the PPC to AusAID on the design and implementation of future AusAID projects in Viet Nam? This is with respect to: (i) project financing and implementation arrangements; (ii) appropriate Technical Assistance inputs including advisors; and (iii) interventions in the water supply and sanitation sector?

5. What is the current status of introducing the province Tariff Pricing Policy for CLDRWSSP piped water supply schemes? What are the differences (if any) between the pricing policy for project schemes and other schemes from different investment sources in the province?

Annex 10. Itinerary and list of persons met

Monday, Sep 10th, 2007.

Meeting with AMC.

Ray Miles	Team Leader	AMC
Vince Keogh	Senior Engineer	AMC

Field trip: Binh Hoa Ba Commune, Duc Hue District, Long An

Nguyen Thi Xuan Huong	Director	PCERWASS
Giap Hoang Quan	Technician	PCERWASS
Dao Van Dung	Vice Chair	Binh Thanh commune
Nguyen Van Phuoc	Head	Village 1 / Station
Vo Van Duc	Land owner	Village 1
Nguyen Thi Gai	Householder	Village 1
Hoang Minh Phuong	Householder	Village 1
Nguyen Van Phu	Head	Hoa Thanh secondary school

Tuesday, Sep 11th, 2007.

Meeting with Long An PCERWASS

Nguyen Thi Xuan Huong	Director	PCERWASS
Giap Hoang Quan	Technician	PCERWASS
Truong Thi Thu Ha	Vice Director	DOET
Dang Thi Thuy	Vice Manager	Project Board, Women's Union
Vo Van Thanh	Vice Director	DOC
Ngo Van Hoang	Director	Medical Preventative Center, DOH
Phan Thi Nguyet	Manager	Division of Social Assistance, DOLISA

Meeting with Long An PPC

Nguyen Thanh Nguyen	Vice Chair	Long An PPC
Dang Van Sang	Vice Director	Long An DPI
Dang Van Nhanh	Expert	Long An PPC
Pham Thi Xuan Ngoc	Officer	PPC Web Site office

Meeting with Ben Tre PPC

Nguyen Quoc Bao	Vice Chair	Ben Tre An PPC
Tran Cong Danh	Vice Director	Ben Tre DPI
Nguyen Duy Hai Minh	Expert	Economic Division, DPI

Meeting with Ben Tre PCERWASS

Nguyen Van Ngan	Director	PCERWASS
Pham Trung Tinh	ViceDirector	PCERWASS
Phan Thanh Vuong	Admin Manager	PCERWASS
Nguyen Thi Da	Accounting Manager	PCERWASS
Huynh Thi Sang	Vice Chair	Provincial W.U.
Le Vinh Sang	Representative	DOET
Nguyen Ba Trac	Manager	DOC
Ngu Van Hua	Vice Director	DOLISA

Wednesday, Sep 12th, 2007.

Field trip: Thanh Phu Dong Scheme, Ben Tre Province

Huynh Van Khoa	Vice Chair	Thanh Phu Dong CPC
Pham Van Dien	Head of station	
Huynh Minh	Technician	
Tran Quoc Dat	Nurse	Commune Health Centre

Thursday, Sep 13th, 2007.

Meeting with Bac Lieu PPC

Pham Hoang Be	Vice Chair	Bac Lieu PPC
Pham Thanh Hien	Vice Director	Bac Lieu DPI
Le Hong Binh	Director	PCERWASS

Meeting at PCERWASS

Le Hong Binh	Director	PCERWASS
Le Tan Khanh	Vice Director	PCERWASS
Nguyen Hong Hai	Planning Manager	PCERWASS
Nguyen Van Neo	Technical Manager	PCERWASS
Le Van Tan	Planning V Manager	PCERWASS
Le Thi Nga	Chie Acountant	PCERWASS
Do Son Dong	Salary Manager	DOLISA
Nguyen Thanh Binh	Vice Chief Officer	DOH
Nguyen T. Phuong Thao	Expert	DOC
Ma Thi Hong Xuan	V Admin Manager	DOET

Field trip: Ninh Quoi A Commune, Bac Lieu

Quach Van Bia	Head	Water treatment plant
Le Van Lac	Rector	Primary school
Tran Thi Lan	Head	Health Station
Huynh An Khang	Householder	

Friday, Sep 14th, 2007.

Meeting with Vinh Long PPC

Truong Van Sau	Vice Chair	Vinh Long PPC
Pham Thanh Khon	Vice Director	Vinh Long DPI
Nguyen Van Con	Expert	PPC
Hong Minh Kim	Expert	PPC

Meeting at PCERWASS

Truong Thi Song	Director	PCERWASS
Vo Anh Duy	Vice Director	PCERWASS
Doan Ngoc Thien	Vice Director	WSC
Do Phuong Binh	Director	WSC
Luu Thanh Cong	Vice Director	DOET
Nguyen Van Chau	Technical Manager	DOC
Tran Minh Trung	Technician	WSC
Ly Thi Kiep	Member	Provincial W.U.
Tran Minh Duc	Manager	Planning Division DOH

Lu Quang Ngoi	Vice Director	DOLISA

Field trip: Thuan Thoi Commune and Binh Minh Town, Vinh Long

Pham Van Hau	Vice Chair	Thuan Thoi CPC
Tran Van On	Technician	Thuan Thoi scheme
Nguyen Van Quyet	Head	Secondary school

Saturday, Sep 15th, 2007.

Meeting with AMC and AusAID

Ray Miles	Team Leader	AMC
Vince Keogh	Senior Engineer	AMC
Alan Trip	RWSS Engineer	AMC
Nguyen Van Hue	Activity Manager	AusAID

Monday, Sep 17th, 2007.

Meeting with Kien Giang PCERWASS

Dao Thanh Hoa	Director	PCERWASS
Phan Quoc Dang	Technician	PCERWASS
Tu Thanh Phong	Admin Manager	PCERWASS
Pham Van Han	IEC officer	PCERWASS
Dao Thanh Hoa	Director	PCERWASS
Nguyen Quoc Hung	Vice Director	DOLISA
Nguyen Ho Thong	Manager	Social Assistance Division, DOLISA
Lam Hung Bi	Director	Center for Health, Labour & Environment, DOH
Luong Ut Nhi	Member	Provincial W.U.
Nguyen Van Mot	Expert	DOC

Field trip in Kien Giang

Nguyen Hoang Phuong	Head	Hoa Chanh WS Scheme
Nguyen Van Dung	Site Manager	AGRINCO
Nguyen Van Thiep	Head	Vinh Thuan WS Scheme
Truong Van Luong	Technician	Vinh Thuan WS Scheme

Meeting with Kien Giang PPC

Le Huu Hung	Vice Chair	PPC
Le Minh Trung	Expert	PPC
Dao Thanh Hoa	Director	PCERWASS
Dang Vu Luc	Expert	Technical Div. PCERWASS
Trang Ngoc Anh	Engineer	Technical Dev. PCERWASS

Tuesday, Sep 18th, 2007.

Meeting with NCERWASS

Le Van Can	Director	NCERWASS

Annex 12. Comments on the Activity Completion Report

The ACR presents a fairly comprehensive summary of project outputs and results. The M&E Summary Report and Activity Log-frame also provide detailed and useful data for supporting and understanding the results as described in the main text. In a broader sense, however, we find that the ACR does not tell the whole story. Both the weaknesses and difficulties, as well as some of the achievements of the project, are down-played or hidden. There are many useful lessons from this project but these are not fully documented. In this Annex we identify topics and sections of the analysis we think are missing or which could be strengthened:

Effectiveness

- Community Participation Approach (Section 2.1) – the analysis given to the CPA in this and other sections of the ACR is limited. Simply stating that the CPA 'ensured communication channels between community and institutional stakeholders were established and maintained throughout the implementation cycle' is inadequate. Given the centrality of the CPA to the project design and the major issues surrounding its implementation, this topic does require more attention. In particular, it would be valuable to have the AMC's insights on both the early difficulties with the CPA and on the type and level of participation reflected in the final Model.

- IEC programs (Section 2.1) – all that is mentioned here is that IEC campaigns were carried out. It would be good to have a fuller description of the good results and achievements made and of the strengths and weaknesses of these programs.

- Focus on the rural poor (Section 2.1) – it would perhaps be more useful to divide this analysis between piped schemes and water storage, the relevance and benefits of each to poor groups.

- Sanitation – very little mention is given to the sanitation activities or issues anywhere in the ACR. This is one of the hidden elements. More analysis needs to be given as to what was and was not achieved in the sanitation work and the reasons for this.

- Capacity building – on the one hand the ACR states that 'project capacity building was effective with RWSS institutions now being equipped with appropriate skills for effective and transparent RWSS program delivery' (in Section 2.1) while the effectiveness and impact of the institutional capacity building is later questioned (in Section 2.2). It is suggested that more analysis should be given of the 'outcomes' of all the training conducted. Which were the most successful and less successful training elements? In what ways has training influenced work practices? What are the options for sustainability of the training methods and contents?

- Reasons for delays (Section 2.2) – This section lists reasons for delays which are all related to GOV systems and regulations. It would be valuable to understand how the AMC helped to address and overcome these constraints. It would also be useful to reflect on project design, coordination and logistic aspects that may also have contributed to delays.

- Sourcing and management of technical assistance (Section 2.3.3) – this section states that the selected TA team provided a high level of understanding of the background and operation of the project and there were good working relationships. This was disputed by the early TAG missions and by some counterpart agencies. It would be useful to have a more frank assessment of staffing issues from the AMC together with the steps that were taken to resolve these issues.

- Management and coordination arrangements (Section 2.3.5 to 2.3.7) – a number of weaknesses in these arrangements are identified in this section. This could be concluded with a summary of how project coordination could have been better arranged. This would be useful for similar projects covering multiple provinces in future.

Efficiency

- It is noted that a cost-benefit analysis was not undertaken as part of the design (Section 3.1). It is understood that the feasibility studies prepared by each province did an economic analysis at the project outset. It may be relevant to quote from these studies and the justifications put forward for the provincial and GOV approval of the project.

- Value for Money (Section 3.2) – this section only covers aspects relating to construction expenditures (construction cost inflation, pre-construction activities…). It is suggested that a broader assessment should be made of overall value-for-money. A large proportion of project resources was devoted to TA and software activities and this should be factored into the assessment. This section concludes that 'there is a widely held belief amongst partner agencies that the project exceeded expectations and the formal requirements of the project as laid out in the PDD'. This is a sweeping statement that requires examples and substantiation.

Impact and Sustainability

- Institutional impacts and sustainability – while these issues are touched on in different sections of the report (notably under Section 6 on Lessons Learned), it would be valuable to have a clear consolidated discussion and statement on the institutional outcomes (from the AMC and counterpart agency perspective). Little mention is given to the overall 'management models' for RWSS services. In what ways has the project influenced or strengthened these? What is the trajectory of institutional change in the 5 provinces and to what extent has the project helped to put in place appropriate organizational models for the future?

- Poverty reduction (Section 4.1.1) – the connections made in this section between an increased level of participation (through the CPA) and better poverty targeting and poverty reduction are not clearly expressed. Are the poor better off or not? Did this process help? Are they paying less for an essential commodity? Are they getting more of that commodity?

Relevance

- Project objectives (Section 5.2) – we suggest this section needs to be strengthened. All that is mentioned here is the basic relevance of the project objectives. This should be extended to a broader assessment of the original design and ongoing relevance of the strategy and approach that was adopted to work towards fulfilling these objectives.

Lastly, on a general note, there are many places in the report where the AMC is citing 'constraints' and 'weaknesses' in the government system and procedures and coordination mechanisms etc. This gives a generally negative tone to the report. It is also important to know how these were addressed – which successfully and which less so. A self-evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the AMC's own performance would contribute to this understanding. At the same time, the project has made some good achievements and these also need to be more strongly articulated.