

Sida Environmental Fund in Vietnam 1999–2001

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**Department for Natural
Resources and the Environment**

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Sida Evaluation 02/07

**Department for Natural
Resources and the
Environment**

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Executive summary

The emphasis of this evaluation is on the SEF activities during 1999–2001. References are also made to the first year of SEF regarded as the pilot phase (1997–1998) when the first 6 projects were established. The total current number of projects is 80. The evaluation took place during 2,5 weeks in September 2001.

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation are to make an assessment and analysis of the mechanisms of the Fund, the achievements of the AG, and to study the structure of the Fund itself and to make recommendations for the next phase, 2002–2004. Sida has also suggested that the evaluation analyses to which extent the Fund has promoted civil society, democracy and human rights and if the Fund can be geared to further support the civil society and the development of NGOs. Indirectly, Sida is expecting that support to so called NGOs, interest groups and other independent organisations are contributing to the development of a civil society in Vietnam.

Methodology

The evaluation is assessing whether the projects supported are in line for achieving the expected results for the Fund itself, i.e.

- raised environmental awareness, knowledge, and involvement of the public through support to public campaigns, information dissemination, research and studies, community-based training courses/seminars/groups discussions;
- strengthened capacity of NGOs and local/private research and training organisations in dealing with environmental issues;
- a networking approach to grass-root people and different interest groups has been created or developed and implemented;
- models of income generation of grass-root people by applying environmental protection measures. (Terms of Reference; Appendix 5)

In cooperation with the AG office in Hanoi, six projects were selected for field visits; two projects in each of the northern, central and southern parts of the country. The criteria of selection were:

- different geographical areas and natural and social conditions such as mountainous and remote areas as well as lowlands and less remote;
- different kind of activities but with emphasis on enhancement of community participation;
- different beneficiaries including different organisations aiming at different social groups, ethnic groups, men women and children;
- projects finalised since more than a year and projects still under implementation;
- projects regarded as successful or less successful by the AG.

The evaluation is also reviewing the concept of civil society and NGOs in a Vietnamese context.

SEF activities

The SEF activities could be grouped into six main categories:

Practical activities aiming at environment protection

Such as cleaning up of the local environment, waste collection and treatment, water supply and sanitation facilities such as wells, toilets, biogas-systems, improved stoves, development of VAC (garden, fishpond, cattle sty), tree planting,

Income generating activities

Such as bee keeping, bamboo planting for leaves for export, fruit tree plantations, breeding of fish, chicken, pigs.

Activities aimed at children

Such as introduction of environmental education in schools, establishment of Green Clubs in schools and elsewhere including cleaning up, planting of trees, drawing competitions etc.

Campaigns and competitions

Broad-based campaigns are launched in connection with project starts. Posters and panels are placed in local community areas. Community groups are formed and its members act as volunteer propagandists. Competitions are established between villages for attaining the status of 'cultural village'(van hoa).

Communication and networking

Radio and TV programs in Kinh and ethnic minority languages, publication of a number of brochures and manuals of which some are in Ede and H'mong languages, publication of a book with articles written on environment in the main newspapers, production of video films, forums for discussion and exchange of experiences with government agencies, mass organisations and international organisations, cooperation with other organisations and projects, establishment of Green Volunteer Groups, international contacts in Thailand, Nepal and India.

The SEF Newsletter, issued twice per year, is distributed to the projects and project managers as well as to applicants. It contains extensive information on project activities and results including reports from project sites, workshops, forums, and study trips etc.

Capacity building and transfer of technology

Training of AG members and local project managers, training courses for local communities, study visits between the projects, development of local environment protection regulations, establishment of family based commitments in form of contracts, etc.

The beneficiaries

Most beneficiaries who are now counted in several tens of thousands including men, women and children, are living from agricultural production in rural areas sometimes remote. In these areas, many people are of different ethnic origin such as in the Northern Mountainous region, the North central, South Central and Central Highland regions. According to statistics from the SEF, 74 projects are implemented at the local level, representing over 90% of the total. The remaining 6 projects are classified as national in the sense that they are reaching a public nationwide, as for example through film videos, radio and TV programs and publications. Over 25% of the projects are oriented directly towards ethnic minority groups. The activities are not much different from those where Kinh people are taking part:

Given their grass root character, the mass organisations such as the Farmers' Union, the Women's Union and the Youth Union are self-evident receivers of support, representing over 60% of the total number of projects. Professional associations, schools and other categories cover the rest. The local communities represent over 75% of the total number of the project owners while the schools come nearly 9% and others (cities and towns) 15%.

Geographical distribution

Since 1998, the SEF expanded into 80 projects. During the years, the number approvals have risen from 6 in 1997, 13 in 1998, 16 in 1999, 20 in 2000 and to 26 in 2001. (Appendix 3). The Fund is has been working in 42 provinces including more than 300 communes and 100 districts with a relatively even distribution between regions and provinces/cities. Cities and towns represent 16% of the total. With 84% the Fund is clearly directed towards local communities at commune and village level.

Conclusions

The SEF is a very successful initiative, mobilising a great number of people from the so called grass roots, men, women and children, in many different geographical areas living under different ecological conditions, local mass organisations and local officials to district and provincial authorities as well as specialised associations and research institutes, radio and TV-journalists to raise their awareness of the values of environmental protection and resource conservation.

The evaluation concludes that the activities are highly relevant, and is reaching the intended beneficiaries. The ownership of the projects is well anchored among the mass organisations that represent the grass root people. The geographical distribution is even between the different regions in Vietnam. Generally, given the limited number of staff and budget, the management of the SEF functions well.

On civil society and Vietnamese NGOs

The concept of 'civil society' is not easily used as a generic blueprint to determine what society is 'civil' or what society is not 'civil'. This is also illustrated by the fact that it has been difficult to translate the concept into Vietnamese. The word most commonly used seems to be 'nhân sự' which literally means 'human affairs'. Vietnamese legislation during the 90s allows for an increasing participation of local people, associations and interests groups in the human affairs in form of the so called grass roots democracy.

The simplest way to determine whether there are Vietnamese NGOs or not is to refer to the current legislation. While there is no legislation (or not yet, as somebody would argue), there are no organisations in Vietnam who could *legally* call themselves NGOs. On the other hand, the mass organizations, rooted among the people, are serving as a forum for participation. Until legislation is at hand, SEF could function as bridge to prepare for a future situation.

Recommendations

On regulations and activities

- 1) It is recommended that SEF during 2002–2004 *continues with the approaches* that have been shown to be the most sustainable so far:
 - training in combination with practices;
 - establishment of revolving funds;
 - development of environmental regulations;
 - environmental education in the schools and Green Clubs/Volunteers.

- 2) It is recommended that the *SEF regulations are changed* in such a way that they correspond to the requests in the TOR. The evaluation has found the following discrepancies between the TOR and the SEF regulations:
 - a) The SEF is expected to respond to ‘needs of poor people’ (Terms of Reference, Appendix 5; 3.1.1). If this is an objective, it should be included in the SEF regulations.
 - b) The SEF should have a ‘general focus on poor and remote areas’ (Terms of Reference 3.1.4). If so, it should be stated in the regulations. These areas should be clearly defined (highlands, coastal areas, urban and semi-urban areas, inlands of the Red river and the Mekong river).
 - c) The two concepts “NGO” and “civil society” should be clearly defined and included into the regulations.
 - d) The ethnic minority groups are already targeted and this should be mentioned in the SEF regulations.
 - e) The current SEF regulations (from 1997) should be changed in accordance with the AG proposals as they are elaborated in the ‘Report on results, lessons and recommendations’, Hanoi, August 2001 (Annex II-2).
- 3) It is recommended that a *social evaluation survey* is made to analyse and give feedback to SEF on exactly who are the beneficiaries: men, women, children, and their socio-economic and ethnic background. The analysis should also give information on what the beneficiaries have learnt through the SEF projects, what is different to them in comparison with the time before the project, how do they perceive the training, information, activities etc., what could be improved and should be changed according to them, how can existing knowledge and experiences be used in the SEF projects. It is recommended that such a survey is made by participatory appraisal methods, which give accurate information during a limited time frame.
- 4) It is recommended that in parallel to a certain continued expansion, that SEF during 2002–2004 takes an initiative to *review its current 80 projects*. The aim should be to conclude if SEF should concentrate its scope rather than widen it and determine priorities when it comes to objectives, target groups and activities.
- 5) It is recommended that the SEF coordinates more closely with the *local extension system* and learn from existing experiences regarding the introduction of new species and their market value.
- 6) It is recommended that SEF sets up a *web site* and continue to expand the networking along the lines already set.
- 7) It is recommended that the beneficiary list is extended to *research institutions* that not only support local community activities but also encourage local people to become ‘grass root researchers’ by making use of this people’s traditional knowledge and experiences. The support should only be given to those institutions that have a genuine interest in working closely together with the ‘grass roots’ and give feedback to them.
- 8) It is recommended that a) a *simplified newsletter* with many pictures on activities and publications is made in Vietnamese where the beneficiaries are given a platform to present their ideas; b) the *current Newsletter* includes more articles on reflective and critical aspects of different projects.

On management

1) Local experts

Local experts working at district levels should be considered in first hand instead of more expensive urban-based experts who sometimes are less knowledgeable when it comes to local conditions and people's capacity to absorb training.

2) Selection of beneficiaries

It is recommended that participatory methods are always used before a project is deciding on the division of benefits between the local people in order to ensure that the beneficiaries get what they need.

3) Extension of project time

When adequate it should be possible to extend projects over 1 year but not longer than 3 years.

4) Writing applications

The AG and/or local experts should assist giving advice in writing applications in order to include potential beneficiaries who are not so used to this kind of activity. Inexperience in writing applications should not be a reason for exclusion from projects.

5) Writing reports

A more comprehensive list of contents with basic information details required should assist project managers who are not used to this kind of activity. A similar design of report would also make analysis and evaluation easier. Background data on socio-economic information would give the proposed activities a better context and rationale.

6) Management support to projects

'Middlemen' in the management of the projects should be avoided as much as possible. There is a risk that parts of the budgets are not reaching the beneficiaries when project managers are 'over-assisted'.

7) Revolving funds

There are great opportunities to make these funds sustainable. However, sometimes there is a need for SEF to seek technical assistance (most often the WU could support) when it comes to their long-term management.

1 Background

Since August 1997 Sida has supported local initiatives in environmental protection and resource conservation through a fund – Sida Environmental Fund (SEF). Except for aiming to raise the public awareness of and increase the contribution by grass-root people, the Government of Sweden also expects to further contribute to the ‘Doi Moi’ process, where the role and the responsibility of the local people are promoted aiming at achieving sustainable development and implementation of the Agenda 21.

While the funding of SEF is provided from the regional fund for the promotion of democracy and human rights, the aim of the Sida support, beside the concern for the environment, is also to contribute to the strengthening of the development of civil society, democracy and human rights. As all projects, the SEF should be seen in the light of the four priority areas of Sida support which are:

1. Gender equality
2. Poverty reduction
3. Sustainable development and environmental protection
4. Human rights and democracy

According to Sida ‘the SEF role should be to promote empowerment of people at grassroots level and hence, promote the civil society. The SEF also focuses on supporting the existing organisation rather than creating new organisations.’ Quotation from Sida comments to draft report.

The SEF is managed by a Vietnamese Advisory Group (AG) operating in close cooperation with the Swedish Embassy in Hanoi. The AG consists of six national experts led by a former vice minister of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment. The national experts are based in different parts of Vietnam (Hanoi, Hue, Buon Ma Thuot, Ho Chi Minh City and Can Tho), and they all have professional background and experience within the field of environment. They are assisted by a full time secretary at the AG office in Hanoi. The office in Hanoi is responsible for coordinating the activities and of financial reporting.

The first evaluation of the Fund in 1998 (after one year of pilot activities and with a total budget of 1 million SEK) concluded that the Fund was relevant and had reached its objectives to a high degree. The positive assessment led to the Swedish approval to continue the operations during the period of 1999–2001 with a total budget of 3,5 million SEK.

This second evaluation will give its recommendations to the proposed continued activities during a period of three years, 2002–2004.

The evaluation has been carried out by Mrs. Eva Lindskog, sociologist and research fellow at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, and by Mr. Vu Ngoc Long, human ecologist and research fellow at the Sub-Institute of Ecology Resources and Environmental Studies (SIERES), Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

The evaluation took place during 2,5 weeks in September 2001.

2 Objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are to make an assessment and analysis of the mechanisms of the Fund, the achievements of the AG, and to study the structure of the Fund itself. The evaluation covers the period of 1999 to 2001 which in reality is 3 years of activities. It also makes references to the first year (1997–1998) of start-up and pilot implementation.

The evaluation is built upon the previous evaluation, assessing whether the projects supported are in line for achieving the expected results for the Fund itself, i.e.

- raised environmental awareness, knowledge, and involvement of the public through support to public campaigns, information dissemination, research and studies, community-based training courses/seminars/groups discussions;
- strengthened capacity of NGOs and local/private research and training organisations in dealing with environmental issues;
- a networking approach to grass-root people and different interest groups has been created or developed and implemented;
- models of income generation of grass-root people by applying environmental protection measures. (Terms of Reference; Appendix 5)

The evaluation shall analyse whether the Fund has been satisfactory or not in regard to the objectives and expected outputs of the SEF, and provide recommendations to how it can be further improved. The evaluation will be a valuable input in the preparation for a possible new Agreement.

Furthermore, Sida has suggested that the evaluation analyses to which extent the Fund has promoted civil society, democracy and human rights and if the Fund can be geared to further support the civil society and the development of NGOs. Indirectly, Sida is expecting that support to so called NGOs, interest groups and other independent organisations are contributing to the development of a civil society in Vietnam.

However this suggests that clear definitions of the concepts of civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are at hand. It also demands an analysis of how these concepts and values are translated into the Vietnamese society. The expected agents (NGOs, interest groups and other independent organisations as well as the mass organisations*) to bring these concepts and values into practice should also be clarified within the Vietnamese context and compared with similar organisations in the region.

While this is a discussion that brings in a number of historical, cultural and political aspects making the scope far wider than is the original objective of this evaluation, for the purpose here, therefore, the discussion will be limited to the current Vietnamese context namely the policy on grass root democracy from 1998, the generally accepted encouragement to community participation and to formation of associations and interest groups. Some comments are made on so called Vietnamese NGOs.

* Women's Union, Farmers' Union, Youth Union, Union of War Veterans, Labour Union.

3 Methodology

In cooperation with the AG office in Hanoi, six projects were selected for field visits; two projects in each of the northern, central and southern parts of the country. The criteria of selection were:

- different geographical areas and natural and social conditions such as mountainous and remote areas as well as lowlands and less remote;
- different kind of activities but with emphasis on enhancement of community participation;
- different beneficiaries including different organisations aiming at different social groups, ethnic groups, men women and children;
- projects finalised since more than a year and projects still under implementation;
- projects regarded as successful or less successful by the AG.

The field visits took place in the following selected project villages and communes:

North:

- Ho Son commune, Tam Dao district, Vinh Phuc province (Womens' Union)
- 2 villages, Chien Pho commune, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province (Womens' Union)

South:

- Thanh Hoa commune, Ben Luc district, Long An province (Farmers Union)
- Da Lay commune, Da Teh district, Lam Dong province (Farmers Union)

Central:

- Van Cu village, Huong Toan commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province (private group led by the traditional village leaders)
- Hiep Hoa village, Binh Thanh commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province. (Village leader through People's Committee of the commune)

Details on the criteria chosen for the six projects and classification along these criteria are found in Appendix 2

The visits included meetings and interviews with the project managers and selected beneficiaries of the projects. The main basis for this selection was the level of income, comprising poor, average and well-off families. Most of the household interviews took place at the home of the beneficiaries who were women, men and children.

Sometimes project managers were present during the interviews. However, it was deemed that no subject was controversial or sensitive to the extent that the interviewees' answers would be seriously affected. Direct inspection of the project result was often very effective as basis for evaluation. Brief basic historical and socio-economic data were also collected in order to better understand the conditions in which the SEF is operating.

The consultants were specifically asked by Sida to concentrate on the degree of community participation in the projects. Thus time did not allow for visits and interviews with project managers responsible for activities in schools and of different professional associations. For an overview of the 80 projects during 1997 to 2001 of which 74 (1998–2001) have been developed since the last evaluation, see Appendix 3.

The consultants have also assessed project reports from the AG, the Local Management Groups and from project managers as well as the financial reports and transactions. The evaluation has also included the regular Newsletter published twice a year, numerous information booklets, books on practical advice and training in environmental protection, contracts on commitments of nature conservation, reports from training workshops and seminars for project managers etc.

The evaluation is also reviewing the concept of civil society and NGOs in a Vietnamese context. This analysis and discussion are mainly based upon the consultants' knowledge and experiences and upon interviews with project responsible managers at different levels as well as on a paper written by Dr. Bach Tan Sinh.

Finally, meetings were held with the members of the AG in Hanoi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City as well as with staff of the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi.

4 The Sida environmental fund 1997–2001

The cooperation between Vietnam and Sweden within the field of environmental protection and resource management started in 1984. Since then Sida has financed important policy documents such as the National Conservation Strategy of Vietnam (1985) and the Vietnam National Action Plan on Environment and Sustainable Development 1991 – 2000 together with UNDP. Sida has also funded a number of projects in building the capacity for environmental management, forestry and mountain rural development, management of marine and coastal environment.

At the same time, the number of initiatives in the field of nature conservation and sustainable development has rapidly been increased. Many of those initiatives come from individual researchers, research/training institutes, grass-root people and local authorities, who often are those who have less access to the limited government budget or to foreign assistance. Together with this fact, it has also been stated that the efficiency of funding small local initiatives would be higher if an assistance could be set aside directly to the beneficiaries. In order to respond to this demand Sida decided in 1997 to create an independent fund, the Sida Environmental Fund, SEF, to promote local initiatives in environmental protection and resource conservation.

The objectives are to promote public awareness of and contribution by grass-root people to environmental protection and resource conservation and strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local institutions working with environmental issues.

The target groups are NGOs and other interest groups as well as local institutions such as commune authorities, schools, cooperatives.

4.1 Evaluation in 1998

After one year of pilot implementation, the then 6 SEF projects were evaluated and found to be highly relevant, with useful activities at local community levels, reaching the targeted beneficiaries in remote and poor areas, and with a fair geographical distribution. The main activities included training courses for farmers in handling of solid waste, managing a VAC-system (garden, pond and cattle sty), setting up biogas stoves, training for teachers on environmental education in schools, establishment of Green Youth Clubs, support to income generating activities such as fruit tree and forest tree planting, fish breeding in rice fields, pig, chicken and duck breeding etc.

While the funds are limited to USD 10,000 per project (although the 6 projects never exceeded USD 6,000 each) the local people were encouraged to set up revolving funds in order to spread the impact of the activities to a wider range of beneficiaries.

The evaluation concluded that the first steps of the SEF were encouraging and recommended Sida to continue to support the activities with some suggested improvements. (The Sida Environmental Fund in Vietnam; Evaluation after one year of implementation, October 1998).

However, the evaluation considered it difficult for SEF to live up to the second objective of encouraging the formation of NGOs and other independent interest groups and organisations. The first problem was the definition of an NGO. The evaluation found that if defined as an organisation non-funded and not controlled by the government, state or party, there were at that time very few NGOs in Vietnam and none participating in the SEF. It concluded that given the current situation in Vietnam where the mass organisations are capable to handle these kinds of projects and fulfil the objectives, the importance of creation of new NGOs as specific target groups for the Fund should be downplayed.

The evaluation also discussed the concept of “civil society”. It argued that if “civil society” is an objective, it should be defined and included into the regulations of SEF (Appendix 1). As the concept of “civil society”, it continued, is only an indirect expectation of the SEF activities it could as well be omitted, while still encouraging bottom-up approaches and community ownership to environmental protection and resource management. This latter task was considered challenging enough and the mass organisations sufficiently competent to deal with the main issue. (Evaluation, October 1998).

Sections 4.4 and 4.5 draw heavily upon the “Report on Results, Lessons and Recommendation” compiled by the SEF in August 2001.

4.2 Activities

The SEF activities, all labelled environmental awareness raising, could be grouped into six main categories:

- *Practical activities aiming at environment protection*

Such as cleaning up of the local environment, waste collection and treatment, water supply and sanitation facilities such as wells, toilets, biogas-systems, improved stoves, development of VAC (garden, fishpond, cattle sty), tree planting,

- *Income generating activities*

Such as bee keeping, bamboo planting for leaves for export, fruit tree plantations, breeding of fish, chicken, pigs.

- *Activities aimed at children*

Such as introduction of environmental education in schools, establishment of Green Clubs in schools and elsewhere including cleaning up, planting of trees, drawing competitions etc.

- *Campaigns and competitions*

Broad-based campaigns are launched in connection with project starts. Posters and panels are placed in local community areas. Community groups are formed and its members act as volunteer propagandists. Competitions are established between villages for attaining the status of ‘cultural village’ (van hoa).

- *Communication and networking*

Radio and TV programs in Kinh and ethnic minority languages, publication of a number of brochures and manuals of which some are in Ede and H’mong languages, publication of a book with articles writing on environment in the main newspapers, production of video films, forums for discussion and exchange of experiences with government agencies, mass organisations and international organisations, cooperation with other organisations and projects, establishment of Green Volunteer Groups, international contacts in Thailand, Nepal and India.

The SEF Newsletter, issued twice per year, is distributed to the projects and project managers as well as to applicants. It contains extensive information on project activities and result including reports from project sites, workshops, forums, and study trips etc.

- *Capacity building and transfer of technology*

Training of AG members and local project managers, training courses for local communities, study visits between the projects, development of local environment protection regulations, establishment of family based commitments in form of contracts, etc.

Awareness raising, communication and education are activities included in almost all projects, where funding amounts to 25–35% of the total budget of each project. Research has not been a priority and so far there are no particular activities that combine research with support to the local communities.

In order both to spread the benefits to a larger group and to encourage continuation after the formal end of a project, the SEF has supported projects to set up revolving funds. Other ways of disseminating the impact of the activities both in time and space have been the development of local environment protection regulations, environmental education in schools, Green Clubs, and other activities. These are also examples of innovations that have been copied in other parts of the country.

Some projects have been expanded with additional funds but so far only projects dealing with environmental education and campaigns in schools such as in Thanh Hoa and Thua Thien Hue provinces.

There are projects that have been able to attract additional funding from other donors after initial convincing result such as in A Luoi in Thua Thien Hue province with NAV, (school programs), in Tam Binh in Vinh Long province with funds from the German government (biogas and fish breeding in rice fields), and in Go Cong town in Tien Giang province where an Australian organisation assisted as an expansion of the project (waste collection).

The study trips to Thailand, Nepal and India resulted in a number of ideas and recommendations that were considered useful for SEF such as creation of a web-site, extend project to 2–3 years, especially those related to forestry and watersheds, extend activities to urban and coastal areas, establish cooperation with partner organisations for exchange and mutual learning from workshops and training courses, develop further relations with NGOs and community associations, seek financial cooperation with other funds, expand support to research institutions.

4.3 Beneficiaries

Most beneficiaries who are now counted in several tens of thousands including men, women and children, are living from agricultural production in rural areas sometimes remote. In these areas, many people are of different ethnic origin such as in the Northern Mountainous region, the North central, South Central and Central Highland regions. According to statistics from the SEF, 74 projects are implemented at the local level, representing over 90% of the total. The remaining 6 projects are classified as national in the sense that they are reaching a public nation wide, as for example through film videos, radio and TV programs and publications.

There are no detailed statistics of the number of the beneficiaries according to profession, gender, age, ethnic background, and social strata. However, given that most projects are implemented in the local rural communities and that most people in these communities are living from agricultural production in some form including forestry and fishery, it is evident that most people are farmers.

While the Women's Union are managing almost 30% of the projects, the women are also direct beneficiaries in other projects as soon as these projects deal with sanitation campaigns, biogas establishment, improved stoves, clean water wells, new toilets etc. When projects turn into revolving funds, it is often managed by the local Women's Union.

The children are an important category in environment awareness raising. Thousands of school children have taken part in clean-up and tree planting activities and environment education in their schools. They are also highly represented in the Green Volunteers Groups. Especially in Thua Thien Hue province their activities have spread broadly now involving 47 Groups with nearly 600 members. The pupils are equally both girls and boys. Except for the 7 projects that are directly working with school and their pupils, the Departments of Education and Training in three districts also contribute to disseminate curricula on environment education and specific campaigns.

Over 25% of the projects are oriented directly towards ethnic minority groups. The activities are not much different from those where Kinh people are taking part:

- health education and strengthening environmental awareness for women, (Dak Lak),
- improving ethnic Thais' knowledge about environmental hygiene (Son La), raising awareness of the San Diu population in conservation and environmental protection of sloping areas in the Tam Dao mountainous region, (Vinh Phuc),
- raising environmental awareness and development of environmental protection activities among the youth (Kon Tum),
- building eco-models for development of production of Khmer ethnic communities (Soc Trang),
- raising awareness on environmental protection and sanitation, and forest protection in watershed areas (Ha Giang),

are just some typical examples of activities.

However, the general level of educational background is generally lower than that of the Kinh because many other ethnic groups do not speak or read Vietnamese. Some efforts have been made to write booklets on basic sanitation and environmental knowledge in Ede and H'mong languages. Also, 46 journalists of 11 different ethnic origins were trained for broadcasting in their languages on environmental issues. It resulted in 26 programs for the radio stations in Dak Lak, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Son La, Lai Chau and Ha Giang.

4.4 Project ownership

There are so far 6 categories of organisations and ownerships of projects, according to the classification made by the SEF, see table below.

Table 1. Implementing units

Organisation	Number of projects
Farmers' Union	16
Women's Union	22
Youth Union	12
Professional association	10
Schools	7
Other category	13
Total	80

Source: Report on Results, Lessons and Recommendations, SEF, Hanoi, August 2001.

Given their grass root character, the mass organisations such as the Farmers' Union, the Women's Union and the Youth Union are self-evident receivers of support, representing over 60% of the total number of projects. Professional associations, schools and other categories cover the rest.

In relation to the Unions, the professional associations (hoi) are relatively new phenomena. Emerged from a need to make use of locally inherited and accumulated knowledge and experience, the government issued a Decree 35/CP in 1992 allowing individual scientists and researchers, sometimes retired from the government system, to set up associations to encourage further development within science and technology.

The associations given support by the Fund are:

- The Centre for Technology Development and Nature Resource Survey
- Khanh Hoa Centre of Science Research for Women and Children
- Vietnam Forestry Science and Technology Association
- Hanoi Association of Scientific and Technical Information
- VACVINA (garden association) in Ha Nam, Vinh Phuc and Quang Binh
- Animal Veterinary Association
- Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and Environment
- Vietnam Association of journalists

Each unit has been managing one project so far. Examples of activities are a painting competition on environment awareness among school children in Hanoi, models for environmentally sustainable life at household level in remote areas, training courses on natural conservation and sustainable development for commune representatives in the buffer zone of Ba Be National Park, developing husbandry for income generation,

film documentation of good experiences in environmental protection and long-term nature resource conservation, and publication of a book collecting some 60 articles from diverse newspapers. For the full list see Appendix 3.

The nomination 'other category' include the Voice of Vietnam (2), the Fatherland Front (1), the District Department of Education and Training (3), local communication teams (1) and village leaders appointed by the community (5) for different activities.

One organisation is here classified as an NGO (For a discussion on the definition of NGO, see Chapter 7): The Institute of Ecological Economy, also called Eco-Eco. The latter worked with an extension of the Ba Vi Eco-village in Ha Tay province by arranging training courses for local officials and heads of households. Other activities included awareness raising and communicating skills and experiences within villages. The traditional village leaders in Van Cu, outside Hue, has organised all rice noodle producers to take of the environment in different ways. For more information, see field visit section below.

The local communities represent over 75% of the total number of the project owners while the schools come nearly 9% and others (cities and towns) 15%.

4.5 Geographical distribution

Since 1998, the SEF has been running for another 3 years and has expanded into 80 projects out of 355 applications. During the years, the number approvals have risen from 6 in 1997, 13 in 1998, 16 in 1999, 20 in 2000 and to 26 in 2001. (Appendix 3). The total budget during the period of 1999 to 2001 is SEK 4,5 million. So far, the Fund is has been working in 42 provinces including more than 300 communes and 100 districts with a relatively even distribution between regions and provinces/cities.

Table 2. Location of projects

Location	Province/city	Number of projects
Northern mountainous region	7	12
Red river delta	7	10
North central	6	20
South central	8	11
Central highlands	4	8
Mekong delta	10	13
Total	42	80

Source: as in Table 1.

Each province would have from one to four projects. Only in Thua Thien Hue there are 8 projects. Among the cities there are one in Hanoi and two in Hai Phong. There is one project in each of 10 towns or urban areas. Cities and towns represent 16% of the total. With 84% the Fund is clearly directed towards local communities at commune and village level.

5 Field visits to six projects

The consultant visited six projects based upon the criteria described under 3. A condensed overview following selected criteria including an evaluation made by the AG can be found in Appendix 2. This chapter will give a short presentation of each project.

5.1 Ho Son commune, Tam Dao district, Vinh Phuc province (SEF 2/99)

The Ho Son commune is situated in the buffer zone of Tam Dao National Park in the so called mid-lands of northern Vietnam, some 70 kms northwest of Hanoi. Among the 17 communes in the district, Ho Son is regarded as the next last in level of income. The main reason is that the commune has limited areas for rice cultivation. Another is that the commune lost over 50% of its land area when the Tam Dao National Park was established some ten years ago. While the Kinh communities are in majority, the San Diu ethnic group is indigenous in the area since long. The project leader, Mrs. Lang Thi Leo, is San Diu, and vice chairwoman of the Women's Union (WU) in the commune.

The project activities include campaigning (training, meetings, local radio transmissions) for a clean environment in the commune such as collecting empty bottles from insecticides and used plastic bags. Cement pig sties have contributed to a clean environment as well. The training where 60 households (women and men) from three villages took part and the establishment of environmental clubs changed the awareness totally, according to the project leader. In order to spread the activities further, the WU has set up a revolving fund where at first 32 women took part. In 2001, another 40 women continue to take loans. 70% of the borrowers are San Diu.

So called VACR models are tried out on the hills where the R is short for *rung* (forest). In the Ho Son case this means that the eucalyptus trees on the hills will be exchanged for fruit trees plantations. The eucalyptus trees were planted as a source a raw material for the Bai Bang paper mill. However, the local people consider it destructive for the environment as they are considered to empty the area from water. Fruit trees are regarded as better for the environment and for the local economy as well. In the future the WU wishes to develop biogas stoves that are estimated to cost about 150,000 to 200,000 VND.

In summary, the project has been well received and the WU is confident that the activities will continue thanks to the well-working revolving fund. Interviews with households also confirmed this statement. However, not all lessons of the training courses were easy to absorb and sometimes too general to fit into the reality of Ho Son. Also, the integrated pest management (IPM) techniques were not always well adapted for the local people to put into practice.

5.2 Chien Po commune, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province (SEF 4/00)

The characteristics of Chien Po commune and the Hoang Su Phi district in the extreme north of Vietnam bordering China, are the high mountains and steep slopes where flat land can only be found deep down in the valleys in small sections along the rivers and streams. Most cultivation (mainly rice) therefore takes place on terraces that are sometimes only some decimetres in width. For an outsider the landscape is breath taking and very beautiful, but for the local communities it is a challenge to create acceptable living conditions for everybody when it takes up to a day to walk from one village to other. Some villages cannot be reached at all during the rainy season.

Traditionally, the majority of the local people belong to other communities than that of Kinh. In Chien Po commune most people are Nung and H'mong and there are no Kinh at all. The commune

with some 500 households, consists of 8 villages and two of them, Chien Pho Thuong and Chien Po Ha, were selected to be the first to take part in the project. The former village has 40 H'mong households and the latter 61 Nung households. Except for rice cultivation, the farmers also plant maize, beans and cassava on the terraces. The commune is also responsible for the protection of 2,300 ha of forest of which 830 ha belong to the two villages visited. Nearly 70% of this forest has been allocated to the households by the local forest enterprise.

The project is headed by Mrs. Sin Thi Seo, chair woman of the WU in the commune. She herself is of the Nung community. About half of the households in the two villages (47) took part in the training and the activities that followed. A particular trait is none of the participants can read Vietnamese so all training has used the method of 'learning by doing' (*noi va lam*). Lectures have been translated from Kinh to H'mong and Nung languages.

An advantage of conducting the training on the spot has been that women were able to take part. In reality, it is mainly the women who have constructed the water wells, toilets and sties. While traditionally, women would not go to meetings (training courses), learning by doing gave them the chance to take part. Some water tanks also assisted in easier access to clean water. Some environmental education took place in the local school where children study grade 2 to 5. The project leader wishes to extend the project and include tree planting. Some IPM methods have been tried out. So far, there has not been any attempt to set up a revolving fund.

Expecting that the commune would not be able to handle the project on their own, the district authorities have assisted in different ways, among them the vice chairwoman of the WU. This assistance has been expensive, withdrawing funds from the original budget (USD 5,000).

Given the constraints of the special terrain and that district expectations on the commune to handle the project have been limited, the project manager and the commune leadership are rightly proud of the project outcome and wish to expand the activities. No revolving fund is yet considered by the district, although this would be helpful for the continued activities.

5.3 Thanh Hoa commune, Ben Luc district, Long An province (SEF 14/99)

As in many places in the Mekong delta, you have to go by *ghe*, (a boat that is 4 to 5 meters long and narrow with place just enough for people to sit in a row), to reach the Thanh Hoa commune. There are more waterways (rivers and canals) criss-crossing the delta than roads. All people in the commune are Kinh and many came down from Hai Hung province in the north after the end of the war. Among the 14 communes in the district, Thanh Hoa is among the two poorest. Most people are living from sugar cane and pine apple plantations as rice cannot be grown on this alum soil. It is common that children stop going to school (already from 2nd or 3rd grade) to take part in the work on the sugar plantations. Together with men and women, they work as hired labour on other farmers' land. Some farmers would have up to 10 ha of land. An environmental problem affecting the water quality is the dregs discharged by the sugar cane factory that is placed at the big river Vam Co Dang running from Tay Ninh in the west to the sea in the east.

The chairman of the Farmers' Union (FU) in the commune, Mr. Phan Van Nhuan, is project leader. All together 300 persons (men and women) took in the general training on environment while 20 households were targeted for project inputs. The project included mobilisation of school children and environmental education in the schools, plantation of sugar cane (some of the few plants that can grow on alum soil; besides there is a sugar cane factory just in the neighbourhood), VAC models and biogas stoves systems.

The project was considered successful until the big flood in November 2000 destroyed most of its result. Today the 6 VAC models do not exist anymore. Out of the 12 households that entered into sugar cane plantation, 8 households could maintain their activities. At the time, a green volunteer club was established but has stopped working as consequence of the storm. Up to 600 trees planted by the club were destroyed discouraging further activities. 2 biogas systems are in operation. To set up a biogas stove and related machinery costs 850,000 VND. At the time, three panels were set up to mobilise people for environmental protection. Today only one of them remains, as children are said to have destroyed the other two.

At the time a revolving fund of 30 million VND was set up for the 20 households to start the activities. Each household borrowed 1,5 million VND. Today nobody has yet paid back. However, the commune leadership hopes to re-activate the fund and the intention is to ask the AG for permission to hand it over to the FU. They wish to expand the VAC models (garden with sugar plants, lemon, pomelo, beans; fish pond and pig sty) and the biogas systems. The advantages of the biogas, according to one of the owners, are mainly that they limit the dependency of fuel wood, they are clean and free from bad smell. He was chosen to take part in the project as he knew the technology of pig breeding as well as of setting up the biogas system. Another farmer pointed out that with water pumps, the effect of the flood could have been avoided.

The current project leadership is aware that the effect of the project is limited due to the flood in November 2000, but it hopes that the re-activation of the revolving fund will assist in expanding the activities to many other households (of the about 1000) in the commune.

5.4 Thuan Loc village, Da Lay commune, Da Teh district, Lam dong province (SEF 15/00)

The Da Lay commune is in the midlands of southern Vietnam, just at the south-eastern end of the Central Highlands. The commune is part of the buffer zone of the Cat Tien National Park which means restrictions on using the forest products inside the Park. Among the 9 villages in Da Lay commune, Thuan Loc is considered to be the poorest one. It is also located close to the National Park, where the Dong Nai river constitutes a natural border.

People live mainly from cultivation of rice, cashew nuts, mulberries, sugar cane and coffee and from daily labour on other people's land. All the 84 households in Thuan Loc village are originally from Hue from they came in 1978 to set up what was then called a 'new economic zone'. None of them were farmers at that time.

The project manager is Mr. Ngo Van Sy, who is also the chairman of the Farmers' Union. Except for training where all the 84 household representatives have taken part, the project has supported in planting 4 ha of cashew nut trees (20 trees per family) and 4 ha of mulberry trees (600 trees per family) that serve as food for silkworms. 20 improved stoves have been produced, 10 toilets and 6 water wells have been built.

In some way all the 84 households have been enjoying the product result. For example the water wells were placed in such a way that 70% of the households got access to the water. The style of the toilets were improved by the participants themselves (from the 2 hole system to one hole system) and another 30 improved stoves have been made outside the project at a cost of 220,000 VND per stove. The project has taken the initiative to establish environmental regulations for the village and the commune.

The project manager and the other seven leaders of the commune are proud of the project result and they emphasize the participatory approach they took to the project. By this they mean to say that all

the 84 households have been enjoying the outcome of the project. Constraints to project as well as to the general living conditions are what they called the low awareness caused by low educational level, and difficulties in developing a sustainable living for the people. One main factor is the lack of an irrigation system. Also, every year the village and the commune suffer from flooding when the Dong Nai river is raising (rains and the following opening of the Da Nhim dam upstream).

Although all the 84 households have been part of the project, the selection of households for each project investment, seems to have been made at random as one kind of lottery. This resulted in a situation where poor families were supplied with mulberry trees without proper preparation. Some others got toilets of good quality, while they would have preferred support to investments to increase their income.

The selection process is obviously something that should be looked into when the activities continue to expand through the revolving fund. Also, before introducing new species (such as mulberry trees) it is important to coordinate with extension advice and to investigate the market situation.

5.5 Van Cu village, Huong Toan commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province (SEF 11/00)

Some fifteen kilometres outside Hue, in the middle of a flat landscape dominated by rice fields, Van Cu with its 300 households stands out as a special village. With its numerous old Buddhist pagodas and shrines seemingly not in proportion to the size of the village, it can be expected that this is a village rich in traditions. And so it is. Except for the rice cultivation, many families live from the production of rice noodles (*bun*) and this they have done in several hundred years.

This is the kind of occupational specialisation in Kinh villages that is also found in the north of Vietnam. There are six original kinships to which all the inhabitants today are related. While this long tradition is inherited from father to son, the authority is clearly exercised by the men in decision-making at household level and in meetings. However, this is balanced by the fact that the women are responsible for the finances something that give her a certain power and influence.

Another special feature is that the project management is consisting of the traditional village leaders and the old, respected and knowledgeable men of the village. It is one of the few projects within SEF that is run by a group of individuals. However, there are also connections to the mass organisations by the fact that the vice project manager is chairman of the Farmers' Union.

The project is run by the 'elder man' Mr. Nguyen Van Vinh. At a meeting he and his producer colleagues are informing about their activities. The main reason for setting up the project was to improve the sanitation of the production. Except for the training, it started with building trenches in cement for taking care of the dung of the pigs (10 households) at a cost of 100,000 VND each. Some more 40 households will do the same through the revolving fund that was set up. Another measure has been to build five toilets in cement and septic tanks rather than the older 2 hole system. 4 bio gas systems have been set up. There was also a need to take care of the waste water from the noodle production.

The project management points out that the first to enjoy the project were the more well-off as the poor do not have the conditions yet. They will possibly get help thanks to the revolving fund. The project is highly visible in the village through the local radio transmissions, the dissemination of environmental regulations and the following commitments to obey them. So far, 65 households have taken part more or less in the project. It is expected that the revolving fund will assist in spreading the project effects in wider circles.

Even that the activities will continue without support from the SEF in the future, a follow-up and evaluation done by the SEF itself could possibly use Van Cu as a case for ways of traditional leaders (Kinh and other ethnic groups) to set up projects for environmental awareness and protection. Also, experiences from Van Cu could be used to analyse how project activities may be disseminated (or not) from the more well-off to the poorer strata of the population.

5.6 Hiep Hoa village, Binh Thanh commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province (SEF 8/01)

Although Hiep Hoa village is situated in the same district as Van Cu, its natural and social conditions are completely different. In order to reach the village from Hue, travellers have to go some twenty kilometres north-west, then cross the Huong river by a ferry and continue another twenty kilometres on a simple road leading into a forested area. The 84 households currently living in the village moved here in 1975 from Hue as part of the so called 'new economic zone' policy. The idea was to open up the forest (*khai hoang*) for agricultural production. However, agriculture became forestry and forestry mining. At that time this was a mere measure of immediate survival and not much attention was put to nature and environmental protection. Conditions were though so hard that 1/3 of the resettlers left after some time. Today, the Hiep Hoa village is regarded as the poorest among the 8 villages of the commune.

Today the forest is managed by a forest enterprise and most of the commune area, or 70%, is covered by natural or planted forest. Only the 32 households of the Ko Tu ethnic group has been allocated forest land for management. The other 52 Kinh households are expected to live from agriculture only. However, in reality, during 10 months of year (during the remaining 2 months, heavy rains make it impossible to enter the forest), most of them live directly from harvesting wood, especially precious wood, such as ironwood. As expressed by the commune chairwoman: the goal is to reduce these 10 months to 7 months.....

The overall aim of the project is to reduce the dependency on the forest by creating alternative income sources. While the project is not finalised yet, it is too early to give any final assessment of its outcome. So far, 48 households representatives have taken part in training courses, most of them are women (80%). The main reason is not so much the character of the project support but rather that the men are busy in the forest. The courses have included general awareness of environmental protection and in forest areas in particular, and techniques on fruit tree plantation and pig and chicken breeding. According to the project manager, Mr. Tran Kiem Thuan, head of village, experiences show that it is important that the theory is described in a way that people can understand, and that practice takes place out in the field. If not, people will not be able to remember what they learn.

The project is aiming at reaching 64 households with the current budget, but only 24 have enjoyed direct support until now (September 2001). The support consists of cement for construction of pig sties, supply of pigs (in total 48 piglets), chickens (500) and fruit tree seedlings (1,300).

A supporting group initiated by DOSTE in Hue, has assisted in setting up 'action groups for forest protection'. The aim is to train the local people in awareness of protecting watershed areas by managing the forest in a sustainable way. It is too early to evaluate any impact of these groups.

The commune leadership hopes that the project will be further developed to other villages through a revolving fund.

6 Conclusions

The SEF is a very successful initiative, mobilising a great number of people from the so called grass roots, men, women and children, in many different geographical areas living under different ecological conditions, local mass organisations and local officials to district and provincial authorities as well as specialised associations and research institutes, radio and TV-journalists to raise their awareness of the values of environmental protection and resource conservation.

Making use of relatively small amounts of funds (up to USD 6.000) with innovative methods, striking result has been obtained. It has not been possible to measure in exact terms the impact of the SEF activities, but it is a strong impression that relative to the limited investments, a great deal of new awareness and interest in environmental protection has been gained. Also, thanks to many devoted individuals, the SEF is becoming a well know actor in the environmental circles of Vietnam.

The encouraging results have been possible thanks to the Vietnamese system of grass root mass organisations and dedicated local leadership rather than anything else. This is contrary to the expectation that the SEF should stimulate the formation of new volunteer organisations similar to what is generally called NGOs in other countries. So far, no organisation in Vietnam could officially call itself an NGO for the simple reason that there is not yet any Government law on NGOs.

Until such a decision is made, the SEF merits to continue another 3 years as it so clearly fulfils its main and important task of mobilising local people. After all, there are individual initiatives and group formations, that are not directly or indirectly supported by the government system through personal alliances or through funds. One example is the traditional village leaders in Van Cu outside Hue. But these groups are still very few generally, (most of them work with research and development and are called Associations, consisting very often of senior or retired scientists from present or earlier state employment) and particularly within the environmental protection area.

6.1 Relevance

Referring the two general objectives

- promote public awareness of and contribution by grass-root people to environmental protection and resource conservation
- strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local institutions working with environmental issues,

the SEF activities are highly relevant. As shown above, SEF cannot be blamed for not having achieved the second objective as required. However, if the definition of an NGO is made in a generous way, there are a number of associations and “institutes” (most of them urban based) managed as units outside the Government system. Some of them were formed as a direct result of SEF (Noodle producers in Van Cu; Environmental protection activists in Hue).

Thanks to the wide scope (in type and space) of activities and campaigning to make SEF known as well as due to a number of innovations (environmental education in schools, green youth clubs, green volunteers, local environmental protection regulations, producing bamboo leaves for cake packages, forest protection action groups) there are reasons to believe there will a ‘SEF factor’ in the future.

This is to say that the SEF, as one integrated unit with large effects of diffusion, is filling a gap between government regular activities and donor support (multi-lateral, bi-lateral and international NGOs) on

environmental issues and sustainable development. While policies on environmental concerns are in place, the government system has not always the financial and enforcing means as well as training capacity to reach the local communities, especially the remote and thus often poor communities. Donor support is limited and by definition cannot establish projects over a large geographical area. Also, it is not always well coordinated with many different approaches and methodologies to development.

6.2 Type of Activities

The SEF has succeeded in developing a great number of activities with local variations. It has reached remote areas where socio-economic conditions are hard and where environment concern is not always the first priority. Ethnic minority groups are present to a great degree. Given their special conditions such as a generally harsh environment and limited access to health and education facilities, they have still reached impressive result such as in Hoang Su Phi. Men, women and children are actively taking part in the activities which are not always 'served' or 'coming from above'. Many initiatives come from them such as in Dai Thang outside Hai Phong.

The activities have proven *very suitable to the current socio-economic and cultural conditions of the local communities*. Except for direct improved environment, activities have also supported increased income through trees and fruit trees plantations, breeding of fish, chicken and pigs. While the management system allows for transparency and discussions, activities start only when all people involved understand and agree to a certain initiative. This approach has proven sensible to local variations, needs and demands and is feasible and applicable to all communes.

The fact that many projects have resulted in the establishment of revolving funds, to the expansion of the environmental education in schools, to the spreading of local environmental protection regulations are examples that show that *basis are put in place for a sustainable development*. The SEF approach has also inspired to make *innovations* that have later spread to projects outside the SEF. While most activities belong to the categories of improved income, continued self-managed activities and inspiring ground for innovations, there are strong reasons to believe that the activities are sustainable in the long term.

The *transfer of technology and knowledge* is mainly made through training courses for and at local communities. In addition, a large number of booklets and manuals have been produced including instruction material in Ede and H'mong ethnic languages. Local experts at central, provincial or district levels (government officials, representatives for mass organisations or different research associations and institutes) are often engaged as lecturers and instructors. There are examples that the lectures are too theoretical and sometimes not relevant for the participants such as in Ho Son, Tam Dao.

When measuring the outcome of these training courses as practical result in the field, many courses seem to have had the expected impact. However, it has been difficult to understand (from 6 field visits and background documentation) more exactly what the beneficiaries actually have learned. There are no evaluations where the participants are given opportunities to can assess what parts they find easy to absorb and apply or not, what parts they think are missing and what others that not necessary. It is also not clear to what extent indigenous knowledge has been used and developed in the training courses and in the training material.

Other training activities such as the two workshops for project managers, as well as provision of skills to journalists in environmental reporting have largely attained its objectives. Many project managers who come from villages and communes have shown their ability to manage their projects, sometimes in hard terrain and poor economic conditions, such as in Hoang Su Phi. The radio programs in different ethnic languages were much appreciated. TV programmes and articles in the main Vietnamese newspapers have also contributed to put attention to environmental issues.

Recruiting local experts from central institutions in Hanoi, Hue and Ho Chi Minh City is suitable when the projects are within a reasonable geographical distance. To avoid unnecessary high costs, it is often sufficient to get such experts from the local district.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is mainly aimed for the delta areas in Vietnam where over-investment in chemical materials is a risk to the environment and to the quality of the crops as well. In the uplands where such investments in agriculture are generally 'cleaner' (thanks to the use of traditional and natural material), the introduction of IPM methods is not so relevant as for example in Hoang Su Phi and Ho Son, Tam Dao.

Many activities have led to *increased income* (tree planting, pig and chicken breeding etc). This is sometimes done by introducing new species to local people (fruit trees, mulberry trees etc). However, there is a need to coordinate with *extension advice* and knowledge about the local *market situation*, obviously in order to avoid production failures and losses due to unstable prices.

Measured in terms of result of the activities on the ground, and the strong engagement by the local communities, it is no doubt that the training and transfer of knowledge have led to *raised capacity* among both the local people and its leadership.

The communication and flow of information within SEF has developed with the increasing number of projects over the years. The community capacity to promote and provide information, and to develop basic skills in environmental communication has been raised. This is confirmed by among things by the impressive activities of the green volunteers and those in Thua Thien Hue in particular. A number of publications, and the production of posters and panels, calendars and leaflets have been inspired by the increased knowledge and exchange of experiences. Particular attention should be put to the booklets of poems on the values of protecting the environment written and collected by the Elders' Club in Me Linh, Vinh Phuc province. 64 poems illustrate the emotions and understanding of the elderly people after working with environment and protection of health.

The bi-lingual Newsletter, issued twice per year, also contributes to exchange information and viewpoints between mainly the AG and the project managers. The Newsletter seems to be an effective channel between the different units in SEF. However, so far, most articles and reports are from the AG and some selected project managers. There are not yet any comments given directly from the participating members of the communities. Also, very few reports since 1998, have dealt with follow up on projects and only one has been directly self-critical (project 1/99 in the issue of 2/2000).

An evident proof of *networking* has been the two-day Forum that was organised in Hanoi on November 2000. A number of government agencies, mass organisations, international NGOs and representatives of different donors took part in the discussions on issues relevant for the SEF. It was considered very useful and SEF was asked to organize such Forums on a regular basis. Networking outside SEF is also further encouraged by the fact that some SEF projects have been expanded by the assistance from other donors. Furthermore, the study trips abroad have created a basis for continued international networking and mutual learning. All these activities have given promising result and are a good basis for further development during the next phase 2002–2004. However, according to its own evaluation (page 27 in Newsletter 1/2001), SEF 'has not yet managed to create an effective information exchange network or a regular participatory platform'. In relation to the networking result so far, it is rather quite impressive considering the limited number of staff and budget of the SEF.

As mentioned above *research* has not been a priority. Virtually no activity is directly related to research. SEF seems to have been discouraged from research as such and in order to concentrate on local communities. However, it would be a mistake to believe that research somehow is opposite to 'grass root

activities'. One of the recommendations from the study trip to Thailand and Nepal asked the SEF to 'support research institutions.....that are carrying out research for supporting local conservation initiatives.' Thus the beneficiary list was extended to 'research institutionsthat has specific local community activities'. This combination of research and grass root activities seems to be a feasible and useful way for SEF to go. There could even be an opportunity to encourage local people not only to apply the results of the research but also become 'grass root researchers' in making use of their own traditional knowledge.

6.3 Beneficiaries

There is no doubt that the SEF has reached the main beneficiary, that is the so called grass root people. The activities are well anchored among the local communities, from individuals, to households, to local government leadership and mass organisations at village and commune levels.

While SEF is not a 'poverty alleviation project' there are expectations that it should respond to the 'needs of poor people' (Terms of Reference, Appendix 5; 3.1.1). It is worth pointing out that this category of people is not mentioned specifically in the SEF regulations (Appendix 1). In the Terms of Reference it is also said that the Fund has a 'general focus on poor and remote areas' (3.1.4), however there is no correspondence to such a focus in the SEF regulations. In practice, though, the SEF is targeting both poor people and remote areas, which is often overlapping each other.

There is no socio-economic analysis done of the beneficiaries, making it hard to set figures on the rate of *well-off*, *average*, and *poor* among them. However, a strong impression is that most people are found within the range of average and poor. In many cases, initiatives start among the average income households and through the revolving funds they are spread to the poorer strata. Sometimes well-off people copy the activities but without being given funds to carry them out.

SEF has not been asked to do specific *gender* analysis and to target women (or men) in particular. However, through the type of activities (breeding of chickens and pigs, introduction of improved stoves and biogas-systems, supply of clean water, new toilets and sties for the cattle) many women are 'automatically' involved. Many women also take part in training courses and activities related to a certain project. In fact, the Women's Union is the most frequent project owner (22 projects out of 80; the Farmers Union coming second with 16 projects). When revolving funds are developed the Women's Union are usually the unit who will take charge as the Union generally has proven itself greatly capable to make them work. It is more common that men are project managers (except when Women's Union is in charge) and mobilised for a number of functions and activities in the projects.

Ethnic minority groups are also not specifically targeted. However working in 'poor and remote areas' means that the ethnic minorities are in focus. Remote areas are also very often synonymous with the highlands in the northern and central parts of Vietnam, at least this is where most ethnic minorities have been living since long. So far 21 (out of 80) projects have been directly aimed to these areas.

Although basic education nowadays is available also in the remote areas, many people cannot easily understand Vietnamese and less so in written. At the same time books, manuals and other publications are increasingly printed in different ethnic minority languages. SEF has made a notable contribution in publishing two short instruction books on sanitation and environmental protection in Ede and H'mong languages. However, it is not yet clear how these manuals have been received and to what extent people can enjoy reading in their own languages. The initiative to produce a number of radio programs on environment concerns in local languages seems to be much appreciated.

Expectations of the abilities of the ethnic minority groups seem to be low when the AG in its summing-up report (Report on Results, Lessons and Recommendation, page 8, SEF, Hanoi, August 2001) is pointing out that one constraint is that 'local people are not yet capable to be project managers due to their limited knowledge' (page 8 on ethnic minorities). Fortunately, this is not always correct, as in the case of Chien Pho in Hoang Su Phi where the project leader, a woman, is very capable. Besides, there are also Kinh project managers that are not living up to the demands. (Example from 1/99 evaluated by the AG; Newsletter 2/2000, page 19). Furthermore, traditional knowledge and experiences of ethnic minority groups are a value that should be more looked into and exploited in the SEF activities. This contribution could assist in creating project managers with different kinds of background. In turn, this would enrich the SEF activities further.

Children and especially school children are highly visible in the SEF activities. Perhaps this is one of the most successful activities of the whole SEF. Hundreds of young people have been engaged not only through the environmental education in their schools but also through a number of practical activities. Thua Thien Hue province stands out as being not only the pioneers in the whole country but has also developed the activities widely within the area. Notable is the contributions by the Green Volunteers Club who actively took part in the cleaning up after the big flood in the Hue area in November 1999.

In short, the intended beneficiaries are reached. However, there could be more done to enhance the *contribution of ethnic minority groups*. Also, there is a need to review the *selection process* of the beneficiaries. In Da Lay (Lam Dong) the households were selected according to a kind of balloting system which seems democratic but which did not regard the needs and demands of each household. This led to a situation where poor households got a toilet of good quality whereas they would have preferred support to increased income.

6.4 Project Ownership

The organisations who are managing the grass root people in different activities outside the government system (Peoples Councils and Peoples Committees at city, province, district and commune/ward levels, with group representatives at village and quarter levels), are the mass organisations such as Women's Union, Farmers Union, Youth Union, Elderly Association, War Veteran Association etc (under the umbrella of the Fatherland Front).

Being membership based, these organisations are reaching out to people, down to the so called grass roots. These organisations are, as the government, represented at all levels, down to sections of village and quarters (hamlets and groups). Because the three Unions (Women, Farmer and Youth) since 50 years and more, have developed forceful and influential social and income generating activities at the grass root level, it is not surprising that these Unions are well represented in the SEF, managing 50 out of the 80 projects.

The Unions have proven themselves very capable in managing the SEF projects. Especially in the remote ethnic minority areas, it is hard to see how any other group could possibly work both nationally and very locally, in many villages being identical with the grass roots.

A more recent formation is the so called associations which specialise in research and technology, often living from consultancy services. Many of them are working with environmentally related issues. As for the SEF, the 10 associations of this category are relevant as they have assisted raising capacity and disseminate information at the grass root level. The schools are evidently highly capable of mobilising the pupils and managing a number of activities including large campaigns and competitions.

Other organisations working for the SEF so far are the government institutions such as the Voice of Vietnam, and District Education Departments. Village leaders have been managing projects in their capacity as individuals not representing any Union or other organisation, such as in Van Cu, outside Hue. However, most often they are members of a Union even if they do not work on behalf of it for the SEF.

The project ownership is thus well based in the Vietnamese system. However, the SEF is also expected to 'strengthen the capacity of NGOs'. The problem with the concept NGO is that, so far, there are no Vietnamese NGOs if the criteria are that legislation should be at hand. Defined as non-funded and non-controlled by the government or the party there are a number of organisations who call themselves NGOs, possibly to attract funding from foreign donors. Up to now, among the 80 projects, there is no group that could be called an NGO by this latter definition either. However, in awaiting legislation, it is possible though that SEF could contribute to preparing the ground for future Vietnamese NGOs or volunteer organisations. (Further discussion about the NGO concept in Chapter 7).

6.5 Geographical Distribution

The selected projects are well spread over the country with a certain bias towards remote and poor areas in the uplands. As pointed out earlier, 'remote' and 'poor' are not criteria that are spelled out in the current SEF regulations. This is something that the SEF has been asked to prioritise. However, it should be pointed out that there are 'remote' areas also in the coastal areas. And poverty is certainly found everywhere in the country, including the urban areas. Perhaps, it is time to re-define priority areas and be more specific in the SEF regulations what these areas are.

6.6 Management of the Fund

The management of the Fund is well functioning. The time from application, to approval and receipt of cash takes in average two to three months and is not perceived as a problem by any of the partners. The money is sent through the bank directly to the project managers. However, there is a need for extra support in writing applications.

Reporting back from the project to AG is sometimes not done in time. But this is mainly due to unfamiliarity with this kind activity. In fact, a large number of follow up reports sent back to the AG are of quite good quality with sufficient information on activities and use of funds. However, a more systematic structure of the reports would assist analysis and evaluation of the status of the projects.

The Local Project Management Groups

The project managers and the members of the local management groups are most often working as leaders of the different mass organisations (Women's Union, Farmers Union, Youth Union, War Veterans, VACVINA etc). They are also based in the local political leadership as members of the People's Councils and People's Committee at the commune level. Others are representatives from district authorities (often in connection with the school programs) and from different scientific and research associations.

The project managers and their staff are greatly motivated and hardworking. They have close contact with the beneficiaries and know them all especially in the case of the mass organisations and local political leadership at commune and village levels. They also have open links to the local party and government circles or they are members themselves. So far, this has proven to be an advantage for the SEF in that it increases effectiveness of both activities and costs.

It has been proven difficult to live up to the conditions of writing acceptable applications, especially among the ethnic minority groups. In some places this has led to 'assistance' from district authorities to un-proportionally high costs. The money has been withdrawn from the project budget something should be avoided as much as possible.

Even though SEF has been encouraged by Sida to attract other interest groups, this has proven to be difficult. If grass root participation is a criteria for the SEF there are up to now no other capable grass root leaders than the mass organisations.

The Advisory Group

At present, the AG consists of one chairman, 5 members of which 3 are men and two are women. (See Appendix 1, Annex E, for the list of names). The members of the AG are experienced and highly qualified to be responsible for the SEF. They keep a good track of the projects and are well informed about their performance and outcome. They are giving an active support and guidance to the projects. In some cases, as in Hue, the AG has taken a number of initiatives and encouraged individuals and groups to apply for the SEF.

However, with the growing number of projects, members express concern about the limited budget for their follow up and monitoring of projects. We agree with the AG proposals on increased number of AG members, one additional position for an accountant working part time and increased fees for the members of the AG. The AG proposals are elaborated in the 'Report on results, lessons and recommendations', Hanoi, August 2001 (Annex II-2).

Cost-effectiveness

In principle, each project could withdraw up to USD 10,000. However, most projects have used some 5,000–6,000 USD each. Experiences show that as a first step this amount of money is sufficient considering that many projects are a kind of test cases. It also encourages projects to start 'small'. After all, projects should be allowed to fail and starting in a small scale would mean no major damage but hopefully lessons learned.

The costs and use of fund have been found adequate in relation to the rich and varied outcome of the activities. All payments are found to be in line with the regulations of the Fund.

All financial reports and receipts have been found correct. The AG in Hanoi is doing an impressive job in controlling and follow-up on these reports and receipts. In particular as the working load has increased radically while the manning and the fees and allowances have remained the same.

7 Civil society and Vietnamese NGOs

This chapter draws partly upon a discussion paper by Dr. Bach Tan Sinh, the National Institute for Science and Technology Policy and Strategy Studies in Hanoi: ‘Civil Society and NGOs in Vietnam: Some Initial Thoughts on Developments and Obstacles’, presented at the Meeting with the Delegation of the Swedish Parliamentary Commission on Swedish Policy for Global Development to Vietnam 26/2–3/3/2002, Hanoi, March 2, 2001.

When the paper is quoted, references made in the original text are omitted for an easier reading. Direct quotations from the paper are marked in italics.

The concept of civil society and NGOs

The concept of ‘civil society’ is not easily used as a generic blueprint to determine what society is ‘civil’ or what society is not ‘civil’. This is also illustrated by the fact that it has been difficult to translate the concept into Vietnamese. The word most commonly used seems to be ‘nhan su’ which literally means ‘human affairs’.

As the Dr Sinh’s paper clearly elaborates, *“there is no single, static definition of civil society. The term has a long and continually evolving, if not contestable, conceptual history.”*

Early formulations defined civil society as *“that arena of social engagement which exists above the individual yet below the state”* and *“a complex network of economic, social, and cultural practices based on friendship, family, the market, and voluntary affiliation”*.

Later formulations *“introduced a three-part model that differentiates civil society from both the state and the economy”*. Thus society was classified into *“three sectors – government, business and civil society.”*

Dr Sinh would argue that it is *“the dynamic interaction between three sectors that shapes the development of the country. Depending on the political and institutional set-up in each Third World country, the extent to which NGOs can play role in promoting civil society varies with six major ways: (1) development of their communities and promote social change; (2) nurture sustainable development and viable civil societies; (3) promote political rights and civil liberties; (4) focus on bottom-up democratization; (5) influence other voluntary organisations; and (6) promote relationship between the for-profit and independent or non-profit sectors of civil society.”*

According to Dr Sinh with *“the concept of civil society and NGOs described above once can say that a civil society has to a certain extent been already established in the past (in Vietnam). The difference between the civil society in the past and today lies in the degree of its participation and capacity to influence developments.”*

Policy framework in Vietnam

During the 90s a number of decrees announce a basis for a higher degree of civil participation in the ‘human affairs’ in Vietnam. The most important among them are probably Decree no 29 from 1998 on Grass roots Democracy at the commune. Further, the Decree no 35 (1992) on Some Measures to Encourage Scientific and Technological Activities, allows individuals to establish their own science and technology organisations, the Decree 177 (1999) concerning social and charity funds and the Law on Science and Technology (June, 2000). (For a more detailed overview, see Appendix 4, which is an extract from Dr Sinh’s paper, quoted above).

While the current framework is promising, it does not yet include a sufficient ground for the development of Vietnamese NGOs. This consultant could not get it verified, but there are indications that a legislation is under preparation.

Examples of an emerging civil society in Vietnam

Dr Sinh presents examples of the set up of voluntary organisations such as water user groups, as well as of organised complaints by local resident communities enforcing business to improve the quality of environment next to their living area.

In an interview with Dr Le Quy An, chairman of the SEF, for this SEF evaluation, on the civil society concept and its meaning in Vietnam, he would quote similar examples of ‘grass roots democracy’ (quy che dan chu o co so): such as from the construction of the Ho Chi Minh road and the hydropower dam in Son La where local people and institutions have been contributing in reducing the negative effects of these major infrastructure projects by having an impact on changing their design.

Other examples of an emerging civil society in Vietnam would be the so called associations (hoi) that represent intellectual actors such as journalist, historians and scientists. Dr Sinh is giving examples from critical articles in the newspapers and media on the environmental impacts of coal mining in Quang Ninh.

For a further development of citizen participation in the ‘human affairs’ in Vietnam, it is easy to agree with Dr Sinh who argues that there are two main obstacles: lack of information on laws, policies and plans and tools to exercise the ‘grass roots democracy’. On the other hand there are good examples of an improved information flow (examples quoted by Dr An above) and the Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) are increasingly used not only by foreign NGOs but also by government institutions at different levels including research institutes as well as by the associations (hoi) and other more or less independent so called Vietnamese NGOs (see below).

On one hand it is a matter of degree and steps in economic development. Better educated, informed and organised citizens are more likely to be able to put forward their interests and demands and get them carried out. On the other hand, some Vietnamese intellectuals such as Dr Le Quy An, would also add that the understanding of civil society should be seen as rooted in cultural and political traditions. Thus, different countries have different approaches to this concept. For Vietnam, with its government, communist party and mass organisations all represented down to the grass root level striving in the same direction, there would then be no major contradictions between the ‘three sectors’: government, business and civil society. According to Dr An, the Vietnamese civil society consists of the mass organisations (Women’s Union etc.) and other interest groups such as the gardeners organisations and the associations (hoi) of scientists and journalists. This is because they have grown out from history and proven to be genuinely representing the grass roots’ interests.

Vietnamese NGOs

Depending on the definition, some people would argue that there are already organisations in Vietnam that functionally are working as NGOs. If understood as non-funded and officially non-controlled by the government and/or the party there are organisations, in particular working with environmental and social research and consultancy, but also interest groups such the Van Cu noodle producers group and water user groups who could be called NGOs.

However, some of these NGOs are still affiliated in different ways to the government as they are chaired by current or retired state employees. This is often the case when an organisation of research-

ers is set up to work more independently from the state organisation. In reality they rather work as consultancy groups earning income directly from different (often foreign supported) development projects. An example in the SEF is the Eco-Eco group who calls itself an NGO. It would be more proper to label this group (and other groups in Vietnam working in a similar way) as a consultancy 'firm'. The classification falls however into a 'grey zone' in the absence of legislation.

The simplest way to determine whether there are Vietnamese NGOs or not is to refer to the current legislation. While there is no legislation (or not yet, as somebody would argue), there are no organisations in Vietnam who could legally call themselves NGOs.

Another discussion has been whether the Vietnamese mass organisations are a kind of NGOs. Most western observers would argue that these organisations are too closely politically connected to the communist party which in turn leads the government and all the government institutions. Thereby the mass organisations do not qualify as NGOs and are not independent actors in the civil society. However, looking at the Swedish example of trade unions (The Labour Federation was always closely related and partly financed by the Social Democratic Party) and so called study organisations (ABF, Studieförbundet, Medborgarskolan were traditionally affiliated to the Social Democratic Party, the Center Party and the Moderates) these relationships do not differ much from that of the Vietnam case. And these trade unions and study organisations are definitely non governmental and regarded as part of the Swedish civil society.

For many Vietnamese debaters this discussion is not so relevant. First of all the 'human affairs' are taken care of by the government, the party and the mass organisations (and even by the business circles) and they are all aiming at the good for the people. Secondly, the mass organisations are regarded as genuinely democratic as they are working down at the grass roots level, in close contact with the people and for the people's interest. In this way, there are no major contradictions between the three sectors: government, business and civil society. Also, according to this view, it is not so significant whether the mass organisations are NGOs or not. More important is that they are considered to contribute to the grass roots democracy. And as they are not government, nor business, they are part of the civil society. The same would be due for the interest groups and the associations.

8 Recommendations

Based upon the evaluation of six projects in the field, discussions with members of the AG, reading of the written production of the SEF and the evaluation of 1998, the consultant has arrived at the following recommendations:

SEF now and in the future

Under current conditions, the SEF has shown that it fills a function of its own and should not be replaced, absorbed by or transferred to other organisations. Rather, the discussion should start whether SEF itself could be transformed into a volunteer organisation (or NGO) in the future. However, this has to await a suitable legislation. As for the moment the best alternative for SEF during 2002–2004 is to continue to develop along the lines already set with some modifications as proposed below.

It is recommended that SEF continues with the approaches that have been shown to be the most sustainable so far:

- *training in combination with practices;*
- *establishment of revolving funds;*
- *development of environmental regulations;*
- *environmental education in the schools and Green Clubs/Volunteers.*

Amendments of the SEF regulations

The current SEF regulations are from 1997 and there is a need for some amendments to reflect the activities on the ground and to assist the AG in the management of the expanded SEF.

The expectations for this evaluation as they are expressed in the Terms of Reference do not always correspond to the objectives outlined in the SEF regulations. This concerns especially *the objectives and the target groups*. Therefore these two categories should be much more specific:

The SEF is expected to respond to ‘needs of poor people’ (Terms of Reference, Appendix 5; 3.1.1). *If this is an objective, it is recommended to be included in the SEF regulations.*

The SEF should have a ‘general focus on poor and remote areas’ (Terms of Reference 3.1.4). If so, it is recommended that this focus is stated in the regulations.

These areas should be clearly defined. So far they have been synonymous with the highlands. However, there are obviously also poor people in urban and semi-urban areas and places along the coast, and areas in the inlands of the Red river and the Mekong river are also remote in terms of access to infrastructure.

The SEF should promote ‘civil society, democracy and human rights’ (Terms of Reference 3.2.5).

In the regulations it is said that one of the objectives is to ‘strengthen the capacity of NGOs and local institutions working with environmental issues’ (SEF regulations; Appendix 1) indicating that “NGOs” without any specific definition are directly related to the promotion as above.

It is recommended that the two concepts “NGO” and “civil society” are clearly defined and included into the regulations.

Regarding *the practical management of the SEF*, there is a need to increase the number of the AG staff and raise the fees and allowances due to a largely increased workload since 1997.

Thus *it is recommended that the regulations are changed in accordance with the AG proposals* on increased number of AG members (total number 7), one additional position for an accountant working part time and increased fees for the members of the AG.

Also, in view of the expansion of SEF and to simplify the management, there is a need to change the current administrative procedures along the lines suggested by the AG: advances from Sida to SEF should be paid on an annual basis. Also the MOSTE has agreed to open a bank account under a separate seal for the SEF. This very much welcomed as it will make the administration easier for both Sida and SEF.

Experiences have shown that a maximum of USD 6,000 is a suitable for a project duration of one year. However, there should be a readiness to support and/or extend projects to three years with an amount not exceeding USD 10,000.

Generally, *this evaluation supports all amendments to the administrative procedures as suggested by the AG.*

(The AG proposals are elaborated in the 'Report on results, lessons and recommendations', Hanoi, August 2001 (Annex II-2).

Ethnic minorities as target groups

Ethnic minority groups are not specifically targeted in the SEF regulations. However as the SEF is expected to work in 'poor and remote areas' by the current practical definition, it means that in reality the ethnic minorities are in focus.

While the ethnic minority groups are targeted already, it is recommended that this is included in the SEF regulations. This focus will assist the AG and the project managers in exploring the rich source of experience and knowledge in cultivation and protection of nature resources inherited among the different ethnic communities. It would encourage the formation of project managers with different background and enrich the overall activities of the SEF. This suggests that it is recognised that there is a two-way communication between the 'target groups' and the project management.

Many encouraging activities have been taken within the SEF when it comes to publications of written material and radio and TV messages in local ethnic minority languages. However, it is not clear how this information have been received. And what viewpoints the readers and listeners/spectators might have to improve the material.

It is recommended that a survey is made to find out a) what indigenous knowledge could be used for the SEF purposes and b) the impact of the information and training material in local languages on the beneficiaries. This survey could be a part of the social survey proposed below.

Review the scope of SEF

With the current trend, the SEF will continue to expand its number of projects. Even if the management will be reinforced as proposed above, it is questionable if the SEF will be able to maintain its present quality.

There is a need for a discussion on whether SEF should continue to widen in form of another 20 projects per year or deepen its activities in existing projects. Another idea is to limit the scope in the

announcements in order to focus the SEF on some selected activities only. Perhaps such a discussion could take place in form of another Forum.

Therefore, in order to prepare for the activities beyond 2004, it is recommended that in parallel to a certain continued expansion, that also SEF during 2002–2004 takes an initiative to review its current 80 projects. The aim should be to conclude if SEF should concentrate its scope rather than widen it and define priorities in particular when it comes to objectives and target groups.

Recommendation: review the current 80 projects aiming at a certain concentration and focus (objectives, target groups, activities, areas of different natural conditions such as rural/urban and highland/coast land) of the current scope. Such a (internal) review could include a Forum in order to get inputs from outside SEF.

Social survey

In the Newsletter 1/2000 it was mentioned that there were plans for a social survey and evaluation. However, this survey has not taken place yet.

Such a survey on the social (including gender), economic and ethnic composition of the beneficiaries would be helpful in understanding the concrete impact of the SEF and should give an input to the future orientation from a social point of view. Specifically, the survey should analyse and give feedback to SEF on exactly who are the beneficiaries: men, women, children, and their socio-economic and ethnic background. The analysis should also give information on what the beneficiaries have learnt through the SEF projects, what is different to them in comparison with the time before the project, how do they perceive the training, information, activities etc., what could be improved and should be changed according to them, how can existing knowledge and experiences be used in the SEF projects.

Methods of analysis are preferably participatory (PRA approach) in order to include views and proposals of the beneficiaries. The survey should also give proposals on how the SEF could make use of the PRA approach in its own management and evaluation work.

It is recommended that the social survey and evaluation will be made during the beginning of the next phase (2002–2004) and funded by means outside the AG budget.

Follow-up on training

As a result of a growing workload, the AG has had limited opportunities to follow up on the activities so far. While there seems to be a general need for closer follow-ups in order to learn from its own experiences, the SEF should start with an evaluation of its training activities as these play a central role. The evaluation should include a review of training material and lectures and give recommendations on how to follow up and measure the understanding of the participants. A two-way learning process should also be look into where participants actively contribute to the teaching material and development of new knowledge.

It is recommended that this follow up on the impact of the training activities is made as an internal review by the AG or as part of the social survey proposed above.

Extension and market

Income generating activities are a promising part of the SEF as it gives room for a combination of environmental awareness raising and improved income of the beneficiaries. However, introducing new

species (animals and plants) need more careful preparation in form of extension advice and information about the local market situation.

It is recommended that the SEF coordinates more closely with the local extension system (often at district level) and learn from their experiences regarding new species and their market value.

Networking

The SEF has developed a well working network so far. As proposed by the SEF itself, the establishment of a web site is a good idea. This could assist in establishing links for mutual learning both inside and outside Vietnam.

It is recommended that SEF sets up a web sites and continues to expand its networking along the lines already set up.

Research

Research has not been a priority but useful lessons were drawn from the study trips abroad such as developing support to research institutions that support local environmental protection initiatives.

It is recommended that the beneficiary list is extended to research institutions that not only support local community activities but also encourage local people to become 'grass root researchers' by making use of this people's traditional knowledge and experiences. The support should only be given to those institutions that have a genuine interest in working closely together with the 'grass roots' and give feedback to them.

The Newsletter

The Newsletter is informative for SEF project managers, and interested readers outside the SEF. It is not so readable (although it is bi-lingual) for the beneficiaries of the project. Also, even in its present form there are few articles that deal with follow-ups and evaluations of the project. Only one article has been critical (on 1/99; issue 2/200).

It is recommended that a) a simplified newsletter with many pictures on activities and publications is made only in Vietnamese where the beneficiaries are given a platform to present their ideas; b) the current Newsletter includes more articles on reflective and critical aspects of different projects.

On management

Finally, some recommendations are given that deal with certain technical aspects of the management (no priority order).

1) Local experts

Local experts working at district levels should be considered in first hand instead of more expensive urban-based experts who sometimes are less knowledgeable when it comes to local conditions and people's capacity to absorb training.

2) Selection of beneficiaries

It is recommended that participatory methods are always used before a project is deciding on the division of benefits between the local people in order to ensure that the beneficiaries get what they need.

3) Extension of project time

When adequate it should be possible to extend projects over 1 year but not longer than 3 years.

4) Writing applications

The AG and/or local experts should assist in writing applications in order to include potential beneficiaries who are not so used to this kind of activity. Inexperience in writing applications should not be a reason for exclusion from projects.

5) Writing reports

A more comprehensive list of contents with basic information details required should assist project managers who are not used to this kind of activity. A similar design of report would also make analysis and evaluation easier. Background data on socio-economic information would give the proposed activities a better context and rationale.

6) Management support to projects

‘Middlemen’ in the management of the projects should be avoided as much as possible. There is a risk that parts of the budgets are not reaching the beneficiaries when project managers are ‘over-assisted’.

7) Revolving funds

There are great opportunities to make these funds sustainable. However, sometimes there is a need for SEF to seek technical assistance (most often the WU could support) when it comes to their long-term management.

Appendix 1

The Sida Environmental Fund

Background

Since 1984 Vietnam and Sweden are cooperating in the field of environmental protection and resource management. In 1985 a Draft of the National Conservation Strategy of Vietnam was published with financial support from Sida. Furthermore, in 1990 Sida funded, together with UNDP, a project on development of the Vietnam National Action Plan on Environment and Sustainable Development, 1991–2000. Sida has also funded a number of projects in building the capacity for environmental management, forestry and mountain rural development, management of marine and coastal environment.

Nevertheless, the number of initiatives in the field of nature conservation and sustainable development has rapidly been increased. Many of those initiatives come from individual researchers, NGOs, research/training institutes, grass-root people and local authorities, those have less access to the limited government budget or to foreign assistance. It has also been stated that the efficiency of funding small local initiatives would be higher if an assistance could be directed to its beneficiaries.

In order to respond to this demand it is proposed to set up an independent fund (hereinafter referred as Sida Environmental Fund) to promotion of local initiatives in environmental protection and resource conservation.

Objectives

- To promote public awareness of and contribution by grass-root people to environmental protection and resource conservation.
- To strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local institutions working with environmental issues.

The target groups

- NGOs and other interest groups
- Local institutions such as commune authorities, schools, cooperatives.

Structure and activities of the Fund

The fund will be managed by Sida with assistance of a Vietnamese Advisory Group (AG). The AG should be led by an independent person who has been retired or does not work for any government organization. For the first pilot year, the maximum number of AG members should be five. The number of the AG members may be increased depending on the size of the Fund in future. The AG should consist of personalities, preferable young, both men and women of different background and responsibility related to the environment and representing different geographical areas of Vietnam.

Draft regulations of the Sida Environmental Fund are enclosed:

Activities to be supported are listed in Annex A

Regulations of the AG is in Annex B

Criteria to apply for funds is in Annex C

Application form is in Annex D

A list of AG members is in Annex E

Long-term expected results

- An advisory group to assist Sida in identifying the needs of support and sorting out the applications is to be well functioning.
- Raised environmental awareness, knowledge, and involvement of the public through supports to public campaigns, information dissemination, research and studies, community-based training courses/seminars/group discussions.
- Strengthened capacity of NGOs and local/private research and training organizations in dealing with environmental issues.
- A networking approaching to grass-root people and different interest groups is to be developed and implemented.
- Good models of income generation for grass-root people by applying environmental protection measures.

Input

Sida, for the first pilot year, will contribute a maximum amount of 0,5 MSEK for the activities of the Fund. The decision for support from the Fund will be made by Sida.

Follow-up and monitoring

The AG will carry out monitoring and follow-up of the activities of projects and report to the Environmental Programme Officer at the Embassy of Sweden in Hanoi. Every six month a newsletter, prepared by the AG, on the implementation of the AG itself and of the projects will be distributed to all the recipients and and relevant agencies.

Sida will send a representative, together with the AG to visit the project sites at any time or when necessary.

Evaluation of the Fund activities will be carried out by a consultant assigned by Sida when necessary.

After the first pilot year, an assessment of the result of the support will be carried out. Depending on the assessment, a decision to allocate funds for the following years will be made.

Annex A

Activities for possible support from the Sida Environmental Fund

- Building capacity and supporting constitution of organizations, both NGOs and local institutions to improve the general environmental knowledge and skill in working with grass-root people in the field of environmental protection and resource management.
- Stimulating local initiatives and pilot small-sized projects of studies and research related to priority environmental issues, with emphasis on public participation and application of simple environmentally friendly technology and promotion of traditional ecological knowledge.
- Development of campaign and mass-media programs to raise environmental awareness.
- Creating networks and facilitating conditions for exchanging experiences among different interest groups and local institutions on specific issues relating to environmental monitoring and detecting violation of environmental laws and regulations, clean-up activities, comments to environmental policies and plans etc.
- Information dissemination through publication and nation-wide distribution of documents, books, brochures, leaflets, newsletters, manuals and handbooks on community-bases work.

Annex B

Regulations of the Advisory Group (AG)

Responsibilities of the AG

- To identify and specify priority environmental issues and activities related to the purpose of the Fund.
- To stimulate local initiatives, invite applicants and market the Fund.
- To study and evaluate the applications, send the short list to Sida with recommendations for decision.
- To monitor projects and report to Sida.

Organization of the AG

The AG consists of a Chairperson and maximum 4 members, representing geographical balance. Preferably two members are younger than 45-year old. The AG will be assisted by a qualified administrative officer. The administrative officer. The administrator will assist the Chairperson in inviting and receiving applications, acting as a contact person with Sida staff and applicants.

Chairperson of the AG

The appointment of the Chairperson is subject to approval by Sida. The Chairperson shall be independent from the Government and have the following tasks:

- To propose and discuss with Sida to form the AG to be approved by Sida.
- To propose and discuss with members of the AG and Sida an evaluation procedure for selecting projects to be supported by the Fund.
- To call on and chair regular and ad hoc meetings. Work closely with members to prepare the agenda for each meeting.
- To direct the administrative work with assistance of the administrative officer
- To undertake follow-up work with assistance of the administrative officer
- To undertake follow-up work or assign a representative to carry out the spot check.
- To undertake responsibility for the Newsletter of the AG (in English and Vietnamese) every 6 months.

Members of the AG

When receiving an application, each member should study it carefully against and evaluation criteria and give their own opinion on whether the request should be supported or not. They should discuss with the Chairperson before or during the nearest meeting. They should be responsible for the accuracy and impartiality of their evaluation reports.

Each member should follow and assess the work of the Fund and possibly write short reports in the Newsletter.

Members of the AG should be active in searching organisations and individuals to stimulate applications, local experts to help applicants in formulating project concept and writing proposals.

Members of the AG should be open for discussion and available for contacts, especially in guiding local people in the project formulation and implementation process.

Members of the AG should not apply for a project on behalf of their own organization

The Administrative Officer

Under the direction of the Chairperson, carried out decisions of the AG and responsible for financial and administrative work.

Observer

Representing Sida, the Observer will take part in AG meetings

Allowances

Instead of salary, the members of the AG (except for the Administrative Officer) are given a monthly allowance to enable them to devote time and effort to their tasks.

Working procedure

- General meeting take place quarterly (not including ad hoc meetings). The meetings are convened by the Chairperson. The Chairperson can invite one or several AG members to participate in specific meetings.
- Invitation for application should be sent twice a year.
- Between meeting, each member of the AG studies applications and make proposals. After discussion with the Chairperson, each member will report at the general meetings.
- Submission of proposals to be decided by Sida should be at least one month ahead of approval.
- Each member should be impartial, concern themselves with the general situation of the environment in Vietnam and the relations between different fields and aspects related to the environment and socio-economic development. The members should contribute as much their own expertise but should not only represent the interest of their own field, office or organization.
- The utilization of the Fund by the recipients should be followed up and monitored regularly.

Financial procedure

- Payment for monthly expenditure and travel expenses will be transferred quarterly to the office of AG in advance.
- The costs for office equipment will be accounted from the advance payment according to the receipts.
- Payment for the implementation of projects will be transferred to the project's implementing agency, which is accountable (e.g. local authorities, licensed NGOs or local institutions). The payment will be processed by the AG in three installments:
 - 30% in advance
 - 50% after the first progress report or primary assessment by the AG
 - 20% after the accomplishment of projects.
- The Swedish Embassy will transfer funds for project implementation to the AG twice a year.
- The first disbursement is an advance according to a payment request from the AG. The payment request should not be more than 50% of the funding amount, which has been approved by Sida for projects. The second disbursement will be made after receiving progress and financial reports, prepared by the AG for all projects together.
- Sida has the right to audit the use of the funding when necessary.

Reporting procedure

The AG will submit to the Embassy minutes of each meeting. Progress and financial report on the implementation of all on-going projects should be prepared by the AG and submitted to the Embassy after conducting primary assessment of the projects. Final report of each project should be submitted by the AG to the Embassy not later than one month after the completion of the project.

Newsletter

The Newsletter should be issued every six months on the activities of the Fund. It should be around 15 pages and in two languages, English and Vietnamese.

The Newsletter is to be submitted to Sida and distributed to members of the AG and all the recipients, as well as to potential applicants and appropriate organizations.

Annex C

Criteria to apply for the support from the Sida Environmental Fund

Only projects that can fulfill the Sida general policy in Development Cooperation and be compatible with the overall objectives of the Fund are eligible for consideration.

Admitted are the forms of the utilization of funds that can facilitate research and studies, training, workshops or seminars on environmental issues and on improvement of public environmental awareness and community-based working skills of local officials, networking communication and publication of extension documents etc.

Projects must be small-scale and short-term, must have a direct positive effect on the environment and reflect local needs and priorities. The Fund does not concern itself with large-scale, national or long-term projects and programs. The maximum duration is 12 months.

The Fund is directed to local environment-oriented organizations. The amount of support to each project should not exceed 10.000USD and does not include equipment expenditure.

Priority should be given to innovative and catalytic projects, but neglected (due to lack of time and/or funding) by line ministries, provinces, or the Government environmental management agencies (i.e. far off or small areas, ethnic minorities). The projects should also represent geographical balance.

Except special cases, the Fund does not support certain fields of activities, which are too much specialized or requiring long-term investigation or taken charge by the Government bodies or under Agreements with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (e.g. credit scheme, investment, business, religion, large-scale projects such as development of health care centers or sport activities).

Applicants (local institutions, NGOs) have to fill in the Vietnamese version of the attached application form and submit in 3 copies in Vietnamese to the AG Office for project evaluation. Those applications, which are proposed to Sida for funding decision, should be translated into English and submitted to Sida in 3 copies.

Annex D

Application for support

1. Applicant of Agency

Name of Agency

Address

Bank account number

Description of Agency

Personnel capacity

Financial capacity (e.g. annual budget provided by the Government, annual revenue, annual turnover etc).

Manager of the Agency (name, address, background)

2. Co-implementing agencies

Name(s)

Address

Description of agencies

Personnel capacity

3. Description of project

Title

Background and justification

Target group and other external factors

Relevance to the environment and sustainable development

Location

4. Objectives

Objectives

Activities

Result to be achieved

5. Time schedule

Activity

Period

1.

2.

6. Indicative budget

Component activity	Cost estimate
1.	
2...	
Total	
Applicant's contribution (actual and/or in-kind)	

Money
Labour
Existing facilities
Land

Amount applied for	
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7. Expected result:

Immediate results
Long-term results

8. Expected follow-up

(description of the activities that will ensure continuation after completion of the project).

Annex E

List of the AG members/September 2001

Chairman:

Mr. Le Quy An, Prof., Retired, Former Vice-Minister of MOSTE, Chairman of the Vietnam Association for Conservation of Nature and the Environment (VACNE),
Transport/Environment. Policy/Institutional Development
Address: 70 Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi
Tel: 04-822 2562
Fax: 04-822 3041

Members:

1. *Ms. Tran Thi Lanh*, Founder of Center for Research and Assistance for Ethnic Women (TEW), and Center for Human and Ecological Study Highland (CHESH)
Biology/Human Ecology/Ethnic Minorities
Address: CHESH, A 4 Ngoc Khanh village, Ngoc Khanh, Hanoi
Tel: 04-771 5690/831 7926
Fax: 04-771 5691

2. *Mr. Vo Dinh Thanh*, Hue, DOSTE, Hue sub-org of VACNE,
Forestry
Address: DOSTE of Thua Thien –Hue, Hue City
Tel: 054-845 093
Fax: 054-845 089

3. *Mr. Tran Vo Hung Son*, Head of Environmental Economics Unit, Dean of Economic Faculty (HCMC College of Economics)
Agriculture/Environmental Economics
Address: National University at HCMC, 1 bis Hoang Dieu, Phu Nhuan Dist., HCMC
Tel: 08-844 8222/845 712
Fax: 08-845 3897

4. *Mr. YDec H'Dok (Y Tec)*, Vice-chairman of Dak Lak Fatherland Front, Member of Presidium of the Youth Union, Member of Dak Lak People's Council

Economy

Address: Dak Lak Fatherland Front, 2 Quang Trung, Buon Me Thuot

Tel: 050-854 1000

Fax:

5. *Ms. Vo Thi Lang*, Lecturer of Environmental Economics, Faculty of Economics-Business Administration, Can Tho University

Agriculture

Address: Can Tho University, Campus 1, 30/4, Can Tho

Tel: 071-838 831/838 481

Fax: 071-839 168

Administration:

Ms. Bui Thanh Thuy, SEF, AG administrator

Address: 70 Tran Hung Dao, Hanoi

Tel: 04-822 562/862 4141

Fax: 04-822 3041

Appendix 2

Overview of the 6 projects visited

Location	Ho Son commune, Tam Dao district, Vinh Phuc province	2 villages, Chien Pho commune, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang province	Thanh Hoa commune, Ben Luc district, Long An province	Thuan Loc village, Da Lay commune, Da Teh district, Lam Dong province	Van Cu village, Huong Toan commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province	Hiep Hoa village, Binh Thanh commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province
Criteria						
Geographical area	North	North	South	South	Central	Central
Natural conditions	Midlands, close to mountains and protected forest	Highlands, mountainous areas, protected forest and watersheds	Lowlands, Mekong delta water ways and canals	Midlands, buffer zone of the Cat Tien National Park	Lowlands, outside Hue	Midlands, close to mountains and protected forest
Social conditions*	San Diu ethnic group; 30% poor, 70% average; most people under 50 years are literate	Nung and H'Mong ethnic group; most people are poor; low literacy rate	Kinh ethnic group; settled from Hai Hung in the North in 1977 as new economic zone; 15% poor, 70% average, 15% well-off; high literacy rate	Kinh ethnic group; settled from Hue in 1978 as new economic zone; most people are poor; literacy rate relatively high	Kinh ethnic group; traditional production of rice noodles since 300 years; 20% poor, 50% average and 30% well-off; high literacy rate	Kinh ethnic group; settled from Hue in 1975 as new economic zone; most people are poor; high literacy rate
Degree of remoteness**	Average	High	Average	Average	Low	High
Main objective	Raising awareness on conservation and environmental protection in slope areas	Raising awareness on environmental protection and sanitation, forest protection in watershed areas	Raising awareness on environmental protection and strengthening of knowledge about sanitation	Raising awareness on environmental protection and improving the living standard in the buffer zone	Establish clean production through experience sharing and improvement of production activities	Development of models for sustainable development in areas bordering natural forest
Main activities	- training - waste collection - cement pig sties - environmental clubs - environmental education in the school - VACR model on sloping hills	- training - environmental education in the school - cement pig sties - cement water tanks - waste collection - cultivation model on sloping mountains	- training - environmental education in the school - VAC - biogas stoves - sugar cane plantation	- training - cement for wells and toilets - improved stoves - cashew nuts seeds - mulberry plant seedlings - environmental regulations in commune	- training - cement pig sties - cement toilets - biogas stoves - environmental regulations in commune	- training - cement pig sties - supply of pigs - supply of chickens - fruit tree seedlings

Type of organisation	Women's Union at commune	Women's Union at commune	Farmers' Union at commune	Farmers' Union at commune	Private group of noodle producers managed by traditional village leaders	Head of village through the People's Committee of the commune
Beneficiaries	San Diu women and men, children	Nung and H'mong women, men and children	Kinh women, men and children	Kinh women and men	Kinh women and men	Kinh women and men
Number of households involved	60 households	47 households	20 households	84 households = 100% of the village	65 households	64 households
Duration of project	Finalised in April 2000	Finalised in August 2000	Finalised at the end of 1999	Finalised in March 2000	Finalised in August 2001	Project started in May 2001
Continued activities	Revolving fund to continue activities and for fruit trees plantation	Continue activities	Revolving fund to continue activities	Revolving fund to continue activities	Revolving fund to continue activities	Revolving fund to continue activities after the end of project
Evaluation by the AG***	Fair	Less good	Less good; most results devastated by the flood in 2000	Good	Good	Good so far

* poor: income <VND 80.000 per person/month; rich: income <VND 150.000 per person/month (official criteria)

** high: <3 hours by foot from district; average: >3 hours; low: close to district centre or town/city (unofficial criteria)

*** good: 100% of expectations or more; fair: 70% of expectations; less good: <70% of expectations

Appendix 3

List of projects Supported by SEF (1997–2001)

Projects (1997)

Project code	Applicant	Project site	Project title	Budget request
SEF/1/97	Dao Thi Quang Chairperson of Women's Union of Ninh Binh town	Le Dai Hanh St., Thanh Binh Sub-district, Ninh Binh town, Ninh Binh province	Raising women awareness of environmental hygiene and experimenting on application of the model for waste collection and classification to recycle	VND 75,250,000
SEF/2/97	Pham Ngoc Chau Head Master of Dak Lak Youth Vocational School	Dak Lak Youth Vocational School, Buon Ma Thuot city, Dak Lak province	Introducing environmental education into training and development program of Dak Lak Youth Vocational School	USD 6,000
SEF/3/97	Nguyen Van Mui Head of Quang Son hamlet	Quang Son & Quang Dien hamlet, Son Thuy Commune, A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue province	Raising environmental protection awareness of and contribution by grass-root people in Son Thuy commune, A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue Province	73,505,000
SEF/4/97	Pham Van Nghia Chairperson of Farmers Union of Dai Thang commune	Dai Thang Commune, Tien Lang District, Hai Phong province	Raising awareness of environmental hygiene closely linking with the public health and economic growth of rural community	VND 66,010,000
SEF/5/97	Tran Viet Minh Chairperson of People's Committee of Nghia Phu commune	Nghia Phu commune, Tu Nghia District, Quang Ngai province	Organizing public communication to promote Nghia Phu people's environmental protection movement	Cancelled
SEF/6/97	Phan Van Dung Vice-Chairperson of Farmer's Union	Tan Phu commune, Tam Binh District, Vinh Long province	Developing sustainable agricultural production model and protecting the environment	VND 70,000,000
SEF/7/97	Nguyen Long leader of Communication Team	Thoi Binh town, Thoi Binh District, Ca mau province	Building and implementing public environmental communication education for environmental protection.	USD 6,000

Projects (1998)

Project code	Applicant	Project site	Project title	Budget request
SEF/1/98	The Green Volunteer Team of Thuy tan commune, Huong thuy district, Thua thien Hue province	Group 1,2 Hoa phong hamlet, Thuy tan commune, Huong thuy district, Thua thien Hue province	Raising environmental awareness and developing clean water for Thuy tan commune, Huong thuy district, Thua thien Hue province	USD 2,531
SEF/2/98	Women's Union of Giong trom district, Ben tre province	2 communes: Chau binh, My thanh, Giong trom district, Ben tre district	Improving the community perception on environmental protection activities and technically supporting to build a model water supply and discharge treatment at My thanh and Chau binh commune of Giong trom district	USD 6,000
SEF/3/98	Youth's Union of Cu MGar, Quang phu town, Dak lak province	Cu MGar, Quang phu, Dak Lak	Instructing environment and organizing protective activities of environment in the youth and pioneers of Quang phu townlet, Cu Mgar District, Daklak province.	USD 4,500
SEF/4/98	The Centre for Technology Development and Natural Resource Survey	In Hanoi and 500 Primary schools in district	Environmental Awareness Raising among General School Pupils through Environmental Paintings by children.	USD 3,576
SEF/5/98	Nam hung Primary School, Hung tien commune, Nam dan district, Nghe an province	Nam Hung Primary School, Hung tien commune, Nam dan district, Nghe an province	Through learning at University and school, the goal is to enhance realization and understanding of protection of environment for people and pupils in Nam hung, Nam Dan, Nghe an.	USD 1,500
SEF/6/98	Nguyen Thai Anh, Master of Trang son Secondary School, Do luong district, Nghe an province	Trang son Secondary School Trang son commune, Do luong district, Nghe an province	Protecting biodiversity to develop sustainably gardens in order to raise the living condition of Trang son farmers at Trang son commune	USD 5,000
SEF/7/98	Women's Union of Van canh district, Binh dinh	Canh Hoa commune, Van canh district, Binh dinh province	To establish collaborators propagandizing women's health protection.	USD 2,500
SEF/8/98	Women's Organization of Muong chanh commune, Mai son district, Son la province	Nong Ten hamlet, Muong chanh commune, Mai son district, Son la province	Improving ethnic Thais' knowledge about environmental hygiene to reorganize their life in the direction of constructing a model of new culture household and community in Nong ten hamlet, Muong chanh commune, Mai son district of project.	USD 3,000
SEF/9/98	Women's Union of Go cong town, Tien giang province	Quarter 3, Ward 1 and Quarter 5, Ward 2, Go cong town, Tien giang province	Project for the improvement of the sense of environment for women test of collection and garbage discharged by daily activities	USD 6,000
SEF/10/98	Youth's Union of Yen Quang commune, Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province	Yen Ninh village, Yen Quang commune, Nho Quan district, Ninh Binh province	Establishing self management environmental village, of by integrating of increasing awareness of environmental protection and applying economic energy cookers and appropriate production in order to gain both economic and environmental value in buffer zone of Cuc phuong national Park.	USD 4,500

SEF/11/98	Nguyen Huy Chien, Quang xuong I Secondary school, Thanh hoa province	Quang xuong I Secondary school, Thanh hoa cityQuang xuong III Secondary school Sam son town, Thanh hoa province	Building youth environmental club in Quang xuong Secondary Schools in, Thanh hoa	USD 2,500
SEF/12/98	Union of Gardener of Bo de commune, Binh luc district, Nam ha province	2 hamlets:Binh trung and Van ap, Bo de commune, Binh luc district, Nam ha province	Integrate environmental protection awareness into agricultural production for sustainable	USD 4,500
SEF/13/98	The Institute of Ecological Economy	Ky son district of Hoa binh and Ba vi district of Ha tay	Training course for local officials and representative of householders involve for the Extension of Ba vi eco-village, Ha tay province	USD 4,439

Projects (1999)

Project code	Applicant	Project site	Project title	Budget approved
SEF/1/99	Ta Huu Hong, Chairman of Farmer's Union of Viet doan Commune, Tien son District, Bac ninh Province	Viet doan Commune, Tien son District, Bac ninh Province	Raising awareness and education on environmental protection combined with building afforestation model of land erosion prevention, land reclama- tion and environmental scenery conservation	5,726 USD
SEF/2/99	Lang Thi Leo, Vice- chairwomen of Woman's Union of Ho son Commune, Tam Dao District, Vinh phuc Province	Ho son Commune, Tam Dao District, Vinh phuc Province	Contributing to raising awareness of the San Dziu population on conserva- tion and environmental protection in slope areas in the Tam dao mountain- ous region, Vinh phuc Province	4,400 USD
SEF/3/99	Phung Thi Tuyet Principle of Cuu Long Pre-School, Cuu Long Agro-Enterprise - Luong son District- Hoa binh Province	Cuu Long Pre- School, Cuu Long Agro-Enterprise - Luong son District- Hoa binh Province	Establishing demonstration Eco-model at the Pre-School to improve effective- ness of children care and education, and raising the public awareness on the environment	4,000 USD
SEF/4/99	Hoang Hoe, Chairman of Vietnam Forestry Science and Technol- ogy Association	Ba Be District, Bac Kan Province Training courses on natural conservation and sustainable develop- ment for communal	representative of Ba Be District, Bac Kan Province	5,500 USD
SEF/5/99	Le Mia. Head of Department of Education of A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue Province	22 Schools of A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue Province	Proposal for finishing environmental curriculum in schools of A Luoi District, Thua Thien Hue Province(Expanding model of environmental education in Primary School of Son thuy Commune, SEF/3/97)	5,833 USD
SEF/6/99	Huynh Huu Thiet, Chairman of Youth's Union of Dong phu District, Binh phuoc Province	Dong xoai Town, Binh phuoc Province	Setting up a model of intervention and propaganda – Education on environ- mental sanitation	5,000 USD

SEF/7/99	Nay H'Gieng Chairwoman of Woman's Union of Buon don District, Dak lak Province	Tul Village, Eawel Commune, Buon don District -Dak lak Province	Health education, strengthening environmental awareness for women of Eawel commune and building demonstration model of environmental hygiene in Tul Village Eawel commune Buon don District, Dak lak Province	4,569 USD
SEF/8/99	Pham Nhu Tu, Chairman of Youth Union's of Dak to District, Kon tum Province	Dak rao village, Po ko commune, Dak to District, Kon tum Province	Strengthening environmental awareness and development of environmental protection activities among youth people in Dak rao village, Po ko commune Dak to District, Kon tum Province	4,635 USD
SEF/9/99	Pham Van Hai, Head of Department of Education of Quang xuong District, Thanh hoa Province	Secondary Schools of Quang xuong District, Thanh hoa Province	Expanding model of SEF/11/98 and developing public communication on environmental protection linking with the preservation of cultural characteristic in Quang xuong District, Thanh hoa Provinces	5,000 USD
SEF/10/99	Dinh Thi Chinh, Chairwoman of Woman's Union of Hoa thanh Commune, Minh hoa District, Quang binh Province	Hoa thanh Commune, Minh hoa District, Quang binh Province	Raising awareness for communal and hamlet representatives through building pilot models in using and managing the natural resource and protecting environment in Hoa thanh Commune, Minh hoa District, Quang binh Province	5,000 USD
SEF/11/99	Nguyen Van Dung, Vice-Principle of Secondary School of Lam trach commune, Bo trach District, Quang binh Province	Secondary School of Lam trach commune, Bo trach District, Quang binh Province	Contributing to raising awareness on the natural resource management and living environmental protection for teachers and pupils in Secondary School of Lam trach commune, Bo trach District, Quang binh Province	2,500 USD
SEF/12/99	Bui Vinh Hien, Leader of Groups for Development Green Volunteer Teams in Thua Thien Hue	Remote regions of Thua Thien Hue	Raising capacity in community-based working skills and establishing a Network of Green Volunteers remote regions of Thua Thien Hue	5,000 USD
SEF/13/99	Vo Vinh Long, Chairman of Youth's Union of Phan rang Town, Thap cham District, Ninh thuan Province	My hai commune, Phan rang Town, Thap cham District, Ninh thuan Province	Raising awareness of environmental communication capacity for Youth's Union of Phan rang Town, Thap cham and applying activities to raise community awareness on environmental protection in a pilot commune	3,000 USD
SEF/14/99	To Dong Hai, Chairman of Farmer's Union of Thanh hoa, Commune, My xuyen District, Long an Province	Thanh hoa, Commune, My xuyen District, Long an Province	Raising awareness of environmental protection and making compulsory on environmental hygiene knowledge in Thanh hoa, Commune, My xuyen District, Long an Province	6,000 USD
SEF/15/99	Tang Hoa Yen, Chairman of Farmer's Union of Tham don Commune, My xuyen District, Soc trang Province	Tam don Commune, My xuyen District, Soc trang Province	Building Eco-models for developing production of Khmer ethnic community in Tam don Commune, My xuyen District, Soc trang Province	4,000 USD
SEF/16/99	Nguyen Cam Binh, Vice-chairman of Hanoi Association of Scientific and Technical Information	The national-wide	The farmer by the models for developing production and protecting environment	4,000 USD

Projects (2000)

Project code	Applicant	Project site	Project title	Budget approved (USD)
SEF/1/2000	Hoang Minh Nguyet, Head of International Relations Department, The Voice of Vietnam	Dak Lak Province	Strengthening radio environmental communication skills on environment protection in Ede language	4,820
SEF/2/2000	Pham Thu Tha, Chair of the Women Union in Xuan Dam commune, Cat Hai District, Hai Phong City	Xuan Dam commune, Cat Hai District, Hai Phong City.	Supporting people's awareness and capacity building for implementing environmental sanitation; organizing activities to improve public health and the economy at Xuan Dam commune, Cat Hai District, Hai Phong City.	5,000
SEF/3/2000	Pham Tuan Hung, Chair of the Farmer Union in Yen Phu Commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang Province	Yen Phu Commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang Province	Raising people's awareness and common knowledge, combining with afforestation for preventing erosion, preserving clean environmental landscape at Yen Phu commune, Ham Yen district, Tuyen Quang Province	4,040
SEF/4/2000	Sin Thi Seo, Chairwoman of the Women Union in Chien Pho commune, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang Province	2 hamlets of Chien Pho commune, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang Province	Raising inhabitants' awareness on environmental protection and sanitation, forest protection in watershed areas at Chien Pho commune's, Hoang Su Phi district, Ha Giang Province	5,000
SEF/5/2000	Chau Van Ly, Director of Farmer assistance Centre, An Giang Province	Tri Ton district, An Giang Province	Improving propagative capacity on environmental protection and performance of "green- clean-beautiful" environment in Tri Ton district, An Giang Province	5,000
SEF/6/2000	Nguyen Xuan Dong, Head of Sub-Department of Education and Training of Nam Dan District, Nghe An Province	Nam Dan District	Raising awareness and building capacity of local inhabitants on environmental protection through the district education system.	5,400
SEF/7/2000	Nguyen Thi Lai, Vice-chairwoman of Women Union in Binh Kien commune, Tuy Hoa town, Phu Yen Province	Ninh Tinh hamlet, Binh Kien commune, Tuy Hoa town, Phu Yen Province	Environmental awareness raising and treatment of animal husbandry wastes at Ninh Tinh hamlet, Binh Kien commune, Tuy Hoa town, Phu Yen Province	4,400
SEF/8/2000	Le Hoai Trung, Vice-chairman of Farmer Union in Bac Binh district, Binh Thuan Province	2 communes of Bac Binh district, Binh Thuan Province	Strengthening environmental awareness and pollution reduction through extension campaign to stop using early pesticide spraying during the first 40 days after sowing in Bac Binh district, Binh Thuan Province in season 2000	5,400
SEF/9/2000	Hoang Minh Nguyet, International Relations Department, Voice of Vietnam	Son La	Enhancement of skills on environmental communication in H'Mong language	4,520

SEF/10/ 2000	Nguyen Tai Nguyen, Professional Section, Vietnam Association of Journalists	Nationwide	Publication of a collection of good articles about community participation in environmental protection	4,000
SEF/11/ 2000	Nguyen Huu Vung, Head of village of Van Cu Village, Huong Toan Com- mune	Van Cu village, Huong Toan commune, Huong Tra district, Thua Thien Hue province	Towards clean production through experience sharing and environment improvement activities in rice vermicelli production in traditional village Van Cu, Huong Toan commune, Huong Tra, Thua Thien Hue.	4,610
SEF/12/ 2000	Tran Thi Mien Chairwoman of Women's Union of Quang Dien District	4 settlement areas of Quang Dien district, Thua Thien Hue province	Changing local people's perception and behaviors towards environmental hygiene and natural resource conser- vation, and creating clean water sources in flood-prone low areas along Tam Giang lagoon, Quang Dien district, Thua Thien Hue province	5,868
SEF/13/ 2000	Ngo Quang Trung, Chair of the Youth Union of Mang Yang District	2 villages of KDang commune, Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province	Raising environmental awareness and organization of environmental protec- tion activities for youth in Bla and Treck villages in Kdang commune, Mang Yang district, Gia Lai province	5,130
SEF/14/ 2000	Le Ngoc Van, Chair of Youth Union of Kon Tum town	Lam Tung village, Yachim commune, Kon Tum town, Kon Tum province	Raising awareness and building capacity to carry out environmental protection activities for youth, and regreening bare hills in Lam Tung village, Yachim commune, Kon Tum town, Kon Tum Province.	4,500
SEF/15/ 2000	Ngo Van Sy, Chair of Peasants' Union of Da Lay Commune	Da Lay commune, Da Te commune, Lam Dong province	Raising awareness about environmental protection through improvement of living standards of local people in the buffer zone of Nam Cat Tien National Park, Thuan Loc village, Da Lay commune, Da Te district, Lam Dong province	5,260
SEF/16/ 2000	Tran Xuan Tue, Chair of Peasants' Union of Nhon Hai Commune	Nhon Hai commune, Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan	Raising awareness on environmental protection and development of models in Nhon Hai commune, Ninh Hai district, Ninh Thuan province.	5,000
SEF/17/ 2000	Nguyen Huu Phuoc, Chair of Peasants' Union of My Loc Commune	My Loc commune, Tam Binh district, Vinh Long province	Raising awareness about environmental protection and improving living stand- ards of local people through the implementation appropriate models in My Loc commune, Tam Binh district, Vinh Long province	5,000
SEF/18/ 2000	Dao Cong Tam, Chair of Peasants' Union of Bac Lieu Province	Vinh Trach village, Bac Lieu town, Bac Lieu province	Development of clean vegetable production models to contribute to ensuring food security and protection of rural environment	4,200
SEF/19/ 2000	Tran Thi Hong Nghia, Chair of Women's Union of Tra Vinh Town	4 wards of Tra Vinh town	Raising environmental awareness amongst women and testing domestic waste collection and classification	6,000
SEF/20/ 2000	Movie Sub-association on environmental subjects, Vietnam Association for Con- servation of Nature and Environment	Yen Quang commune, Nho Quan, Ninh Binh; Ho Son commune, Tam Duong, Vinh Phuc	Communicating good experiences on environmental protection and long-term natural resource conservation in 2 communes (Yen Quang commune, Nho Quan, Ninh Binh and Ho Son commune, Tam Duong, Vinh Phuc)	3,512

Projects (2001)

Project code	Applicant	Project site	Project title	Budget approved (USD)
SEF/1/2001	Nguyen Van Vu, Chairman of Elderly Club; Gardeners' Sub-association in Tam Dong	Van Loi village, Tam Dong commune, Me Linh, Vinh Phuc	Protection of the environment in combination with protection of the health	2,000
SEF/2/2001	Nguyen Thi Tam, Chairwoman of Women's Association of Bao Thanh commune	Bao Thanh commune, Phu Ninh, Phu Tho	Contribution to enhancing awareness and capacity to protect the environment by integrated efforts through training courses, creation of communicators' networks, environmental protection activities, development of small models in Bao Thanh commune	4,000
SEF/3/2001	Hoang Van Thuong, Chairman of the Peasants' Association of Ngan Dang Vai commune	Ngan Dang Vai commune, Hoang Su Phi, Ha Giang	Raising awareness, popularization of knowledge on environmental protection and reforestation to prevent erosion	4,500
SEF/4/2001	Do Thi Cham, Chairwoman of Women's Association of Bat Xat district	Tong Sanh commune, Bat Xat, Lao Cai	Health care and environmental protection for women of Tong Sanh commune	4,500
SEF/5/2001	Ma A Vang, Chairman of the Peasants' Association of Sa Pa commune	Ma Tra and Suoi Ho hamlets, Sa Pa commune, Sa Pa, Lao Cai	Contribution to improving living conditions, enhancement of awareness and popularization of knowledge on environmental protection, watershed protection in combination with reforestation to prevent erosion and soil improvement for H'Mong people.	4,000
SEF/6/2001	Hoang Thi Hop, Chairwoman of Women's Association of Da Thong commune	Da Thong commune, Thong Nong, Cao Bang	Enhancement of understanding and capacity to manage natural resources for ethnic people of Da Thong commune.	4,500
SEF/7/2001	Dang Dinh Loi, Member of Youth Association of Son Thinh commune	Son Thinh, Huong Son, Ha Tinh	Raising environmental awareness, creation of cultural life and development of sustainable household-based agricultural economy for local people in Son Thinh mountainous commune.	5,000
SEF/8/2001	Tran Kiem Thuan, Head of Hiep Hoa village	Hiep Hoa village, Binh Thanh commune, Huong Tra, Thua Thien Hue	Assistance in developing a model of sustainable development for communities in Hiep Hoa village bordering the natural forest.	4,500
SEF/9/2001	Duong Ba Cuong, Chairman of the Animal Veterinary Association of Gio My commune	Gio My commune, Gio Linh, Quang Tri	Raising awareness, popularizing knowledge on environmental protection, planting trees to prevent sand movements, restoring mixed gardens and developing husbandry in order to generate income and improve living conditions of households in the Central coastal areas.	5,000

SEF/10/ 2001	Vo Thi Kim Cam, Tien Loc Primary School	Tien Loc Primary School, Tien Phuoc, Quang Nam	Raising awareness and capacity on environmental protection for teachers, pupils and local people in Tien Loc commune.	4,000
SEF/11/ 2001	Huynh Kim Tuan, Chairman of Youth Association of Duc Minh commune	Duc Minh commune, Mo Duc, Quang Ngai	Strengthening capacity for youth volunteers in Duc Minh commune in communication for involving local community in environmental protection.	3,600
SEF/12/ 2001	Tran Huu The, Vice- chairman of Phu Yen Citizens' Group	Tuy Hoa town, residential areas along Ba river, the fishing village of ward 6	Establishment and development of volunteers to act for the environment in Phu Yen province.	2,500
SEF/13/ 2001	Vi Van Long, Homeland Front Committee of CueBur commune	CueBur commune, Buon Ma Thuot hamlet, Dak Lak	Raising community awareness about environmental hygiene, and organiza- tion and development of sustainable husbandry models in Cue Bur com- mune.	4,925
SEF/14/ 2001	Huynh Thi Chi, Chairwoman of Women's Association of Vinh Long town	Vinh Long town, Vinh Long province	Raising environmental awareness and implementation of some pilot clean water and environmental hygiene facilities for poor women in the two villages in Vinh Long town.	5,000
SEF/15/ 2001	Tran Ngoc Lien, Chairman of Peas- ants' Association of Dong Xuan com- mune	Dong Xuan commune, Soc Son district, Hanoi	Raising awareness and knowledge about village environmental protection through cleaning ponds for fish farming, improving mixed trees gardens as well as the soil and growing short-term crops to make the village clean and enhance living standards of poor households of Dong Xuan commune.	2,500
SEF/16/ 2001	Tong Thi Quyet, member of Women's Association of Doan Hung district	Doan Hung town, Phu Tho	Protection of the ecological environ- ment through waste collection and treatment activities in Doan Hung town.	2,000
SEF/17/ 2001	Nong Van Linh, Chairman of Peas- ants' Association of Phong Nam com- mune	Phong Nam com- mune, Trung Khanh, Cao Bang	Raising awareness and popularization of knowledge on environmental protection in combination with fruit trees planting, tree planting on the mountain and soil improvement to conserve the environ- mental landscapes.	2,500
SEF/18/ 2001	Thao Thi Hoa, Vice Chair of Women's Association of Simacai district	Simacai commune, Simacai district, Lao Cai	Raising environmental awareness and contribution to improving living condi- tions in Simacai commune.	4,500
SEF/19/ 2001	Bui Thi Duong, Chairwoman of Women's Union of Hai Thanh commune	Hai Thanh commune, Tinh Gia, Thanh Hoa	Raising environmental awareness among women and organization of activities towards improving environ- mental conditions for the community of Hai Thanh commune.	3,500
SEF/20/ 2001	Hoang Van Nam, Head of Village 3 of Dong Son commune	Dong Son commune, Do Luong, Nghe An	Development and implementation of Local Environmental Protection Rules with active participation of citizen's groups and local people.	1,500

SEF/21/ 2001	Le Xuan Thu, Chair- man of Gardeners' Association of Xuan Trach commune	Xuan Trach commune, Bo Trach, Quang Binh	Raising awareness about natural resources management and environ- mental protection among members of the Gardeners' Association of Xuan Trach commune.	3,500
SEF/22/ 2001	Tran Quoc Vinh, Thuan Hoa village, Huong Phong commune	Thuan Hoa village, Huong Phong com- mune, Huong Tra, Thua Thien Hue	Strengthening community capacity in conservation and sustainable manage- ment of mangroves in Ru Cha, Thuan Hoa village, Huong Phong commune.	5,000
SEF/23/ 2001	Nguyen Khoa Dieu Huong, Khanh Hoa Center of Scientific Research for Women and Children	Lien Sang & Khanh Nam communes, Khanh Vinh district, Khanh Hoa	Raising awareness and development of environmentally sustainable life and work models for households of Khanh Vinh mountainous district.	5,000
SEF/24/ 2001	Le Van minh, Chair- man of Peasants' Association of Van Thanh commune	Dam Mon village, Van Thanh commune, Van Ninh, Khanh Hoa	Provision of technical and material support as well as educational advice to enhance awareness about environ- mental protection among local people on Hon Gom peninsular of Dam Mon village, Van Thanh commune.	6,000
SEF/25/ 2001	Truong Dinh Tam, Vice Chair of Peasants' Associa- tion of Long Thanh commune	Long Thanh com- mune, Vinh Loi district, Bac Lieu	Development of husbandry waste treatment models to protect the environment and make use of treated wastes for growing fruit trees and crops as well as raising fish.	4,500
SEF/26/ 2001	Pham Thi Nghiep, Vice Chair of Wom- en's Association of Vinh Trinh commune	Vinh Trinh commune, Thot Not, Can Tho	Raising awareness about environmental protection among local people and development of Local Environmental Protection Rules.	3,500

Appendix 4

Policy Framework in Vietnam on Grass root Democracy

This short overview is an extract from Dr Bich Tan Sinh's paper:

The principle "people know, people discuss, people execute and people supervise" which has been repeatedly mentioned in documents and policies of the Vietnam's Communist Party (CP) reflects the wish of the Government to encourage every social organisation and citizen participating in formulating, implementing and monitoring policies. This principle has been realised through the Directive 30/CT issued by the Central Committee of the Vietnam's CP on Grassroots Democracy.

In order to implement the Directive of the Central Committee of the Vietnam's CP, the Government has passed a number of decrees concerning grassroots democracy, e.g. Grassroots Democracy at the Commune (Decree 29/1998/ND-CP issued May 11, 1998), at Grassroots Democracy at agencies (Decree 71/1998/ND-CP dated September 8, 1998) and Grassroots Democracy at state owned enterprises (Decree 07/1999/ND-CP issued February 13, 1999). In those decrees, the Grassroots Democracy Decree at Commune has been considered the legal basis for strengthening the participation of local communities at the local level. The article 4 of the Decree requested local government be responsible for providing information concerning policies, laws, long-term and annual socio-economic development plans of the communes, land-use plans and annual draft budget. Besides the rights to be informed, the Decree also stipulated the rights of citizen to be involved in discussing and deciding the level of their contribution, in establishing local committees monitoring construction projects contributed by citizen, and in assessing activities of People's Committee and People's Council of the communes. The Decree differentiates four levels of participation of citizen: sharing information, providing comments, participating in decision-making and monitoring.

To facilitate the participation of citizen towards devolving decision-making power to local government, the Government recognised the need to strengthening partnerships with other organisations working for the benefits and needs of the people, by continuing to encourage and support the work of mass organisations. The Government also recognized the need to put in place a legal and policy framework for associations and domestic NGOs, for example issuance of the Decree 35/CP in 1992 on Some Measures to Encourage Scientific and Technological Activities, which allows individuals establish their own science and technology organisations, Decree 177/CP in 1999 concerning social and charity funds, and the recent Law on Science and Technology in 2000.

The policy and institutional framework mentioned above provides a basis for development of a civil society in Vietnam. There are a number of forms of communities set up voluntarily by people at the grassroots level to manage natural resources and development for a sustainable livelihood.

Appendix 5

Draft Terms of Reference for evaluation of the Sida Environmental Fund 1999–2001

1. Background

Sida decided in August 1997 to set up an independent fund - Sida Environmental Fund (SEF) for promotion of local initiatives in environmental protection and resource conservation. Through the support from the SEF, the Government of Sweden expects to further contribute to the “Doi moi” process, where the role and the responsibility of local people are promoted to achieve sustainable development and to implement the Agenda 21.

Two general objectives which were agreed when the Fund was established are:

- to promote public awareness of and contribution by grass-root people to environmental protection and resource conservation
- to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local institutions working with environmental issues.

The funding of SEF is provided from the regional fund for the promotion of democracy and human rights of Sida. An aim of Sida’s support to the Fund, is that it shall also contribute to strengthening of the development of the civil society, democracy and human rights.

SEF has been managed by a Vietnamese Advisory Group (AG) which operates in close co-operation with the Embassy. The AG consists of five national experts recruited from different parts of Vietnam. All have professional background and experience in the field of environment. An AG-office for co-ordination of SEF activities and financial reporting of the project has been set up in Hanoi. The AG is led by a former Vice-minister of Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment and has engaged a full-time secretary for its administrative functions.

The AG carries out the monitoring and financial follow-up on the projects adopted for implementation. The role of the Embassy is to formally approve the projects for implementation, as well as having the overall responsibility for financial management of SEF.

The first evaluation of the Fund in 1998 concluded that the Fund was relevant and had reached its objectives to a high degree. The positive assessment led to the Swedish approval of continuation of the Fund in 1999 and further for 2000 and 2001 with the total budget of 3,500,000 SEK.

2. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation of the Fund are to make an assessment and analysis of the mechanisms of the Fund, the achievements of the AG, and to study the structure of the Fund itself. Depending on the result of the evaluation, the decision to possibly allocate funds for a new agreement on SEF will be made.

The evaluation should build on the previous evaluation and assess whether the projects supported are in line for achieving the expected results for the fund itself, i.e.

- raised environmental awareness, knowledge and involvement of the public through support to public campaigns, information dissemination, research and studies, community-based training courses/seminars/group discussions;

- strengthened capacity of NGOs and local/private research and training organisations in dealing with environmental issues;
- a networking approach to grass-root people and different interest groups has been created or developed, and implemented,
- models of income generation of grass-root people by applying environmental protection measures.

The evaluation shall analyse whether the Fund has been satisfactory or not in regard to the objectives and expected outputs of the SEF, and provide recommendations on how it can be further improved. The evaluation will be a valuable input in the preparation for a possible new Agreement.

3. Issues to be covered in the evaluation

3.1. Analyse the relevance of the projects carried out with support from the Fund

- 3.1.1. Have these types of support responded to the needs of the local poor people to achieve sustainable development?
- 3.1.2. Is the selection of the recipients appropriate? Should there be any adjustments/changes regarding target recipients?
- 3.1.3. Map out what types of activities (in general terms, e.g. training, research, campaign, income generating models...) that has received support.
- 3.1.4. Are the geographical locations of the activities in accordance with the Fund's general focus on poor and remote areas?
- 3.1.5. Are the members of the mass organisations at grass root level capable enough to implement and manage the support?
- 3.1.6. Did the Fund meet the long-term expectations after 4 years implementation (1997-2001)?
- 3.1.7. What is the need and relevance of the Fund in relation to other donor supported initiatives in remote rural area?

3.2 Analyse the impact of the projects and the Fund

- 3.2.1. To what extent have been reached the expressed objectives of the Fund? The objectives are to promote public awareness of and contribution by grass-root people to environmental protection and resource conservation and to strengthen the capacity of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local institutions working with environmental issues.
- 3.2.2. To what extent has the Fund supported the transfer of technology and knowledge?
- 3.2.3. To what extent has the Fund promoted local communities to achieve sustainable development and to implement the Agenda 21?
- 3.2.4. Examine whether funds have been located to increase the flow of information regarding environmental awareness
- 3.2.5. How far has the Fund promoted civil society, democracy and human rights?
- 3.2.6. Can the Fund be geared to further support the "civil society" and the development of NGOs?
- 3.2.7. To what extent has the Fund supported to organisations/institutions and created networks for exchanging views among different interest groups related to environmental protection?
- 3.2.8. To what extent has the Fund led to increased networking on community participation in environmental protection in Vietnam and in the region?

3.3. The Functioning of the Advisory Group (AG)

3.3.1. Examine the capacity, efficiency, and working regulations of AG

3.3.2. Should there be any adjustment/change/improvement regarding the Fund's regulation, organisational set up, administration/monitoring procedures to fulfil the mandate?

3.3.3. Are the division of responsibilities between the AG and the Embassy appropriate?

3.3.4. Has the Newsletters proved to be useful and efficient in disseminating information and knowledge and lessons learnt? Should there be any adjustment/improvement regarding the form, content and distribution of the Newsletter?

3.3.5. Have the other means for dissemination of information used by the Fund proved to be useful and efficient in disseminating information and knowledge and lessons learnt? Are there other means for dissemination of information that should be considered?

3.3.6. How has networking and information activities been carried out and what improvements can be made?

3.4. The implementation/monitoring/financial management/cost effectiveness of the Fund

3.4.1 How many projects have been implemented in accordance with the time- schedule?

3.4.2. Analyse the efficiency of the financial management of the Fund.

3.4.3. Analyse if the utilisation of the grants in accordance with the approved activities/budgets.

3.4.4. To what extent have the recommendations from the last evaluation and the financial review been taken into consideration?

3.4.5. To what extent has the Fund dealt with the risks such as possible interference from local authorities or beneficiaries only among those in power and possible misuse of project funds?

4. Present recommendations related to the findings on the above issues

Based on the above analysis , the evaluation team shall present findings, analysis, conclusions, and recommendations on:

4.1. To what extent have the overall and specific objectives been achieved?

4.2 What effects for the target groups professional and individual can be traced?

4.3. To what extent is there any sustainability of the activities carried out- have there been any own initiatives?

4.4. Examine whether Sida should continue the support in its present form or consider giving support in other ways and by other means.

4.5. If the project should continue, should there be any adjustment/improvement regarding beneficiaries/kind of project/administration/procedure/activities/way of support in the future?

4.6. Discuss the material used and the extent to which the possible lack of data and other knowledge about constraints in the data and methodology might affect the results.

5. Methodology and implementation

5.1. Methodology

In order to carry out the abovementioned assessments, the consultants should:

- Assess reports from the AG and the projects and other related documents such as overall Vietnamese policies

- Hold meetings with the AG members and staff at the Embassy of Sweden
- Make field visits to South, Central and North Vietnam and during these field visits meet with the project leaders, interview individual beneficiaries, project participants and organisation/institution of the Fund
- It is suggested that a minimum of two projects in each area are examined in depth.
- It is suggested that the study makes a review of the concept "civil society" and NGOs in Vietnam in order to analyse if the recipient receivers of the Fund correspond to the criteria for contributing to the development of a civil society.

5.2. The evaluation team and time schedule

The evaluation should be managed by two persons, one International as team leader and one qualified national consultant. The team shall have the following qualifications:

- Extensive competence and knowledge of policies and methods of promoting public awareness on environmental protection and natural resources conservation
- Knowledge and extensive experience of working with NGOs and mass organisations at local level
- Experience and knowledge in the area of civil society, human right and democracy
- Experience from evaluations studies, and be familiar with Vietnamese social economic and environmental issues
- International consultant must have documented skill in evaluation method.
- The evaluation will be carried out during September 2001. The time needed is estimated to be 2,5 weeks for the national consultant and 3 weeks for the international consultant, including report writing.

The team leader shall have the main responsibility to compile the final report

Contracts with international consultant and national consultant will be signed with the Embassy of Sweden.

The evaluation shall start with a preparatory meeting with the Embassy of Sweden, and thereafter with the Chairman of the AG. The team might be requested to present report to the AG quarterly meeting or SEF workshop latter.

The evaluation is carried out upon request of the Embassy of Sweden and the team reports to the Embassy. The role of AG is to facilitate the evaluation in all aspects by providing written and oral documentation and also organising meetings and field visits. The AG will have the main responsibility in preparing the programme and practical arrangements but in close consultation with the Embassy

6. Reporting

The evaluation shall be undertaken in close co-operation with Sida and the SEF AG and concerned organisations/institutions in Vietnam.

A main report with findings, conclusions and recommendations from the field studies and the desk studies is to be prepared. The report shall be written in English with summary in Vietnamese (in both paper and on diskette, on Word). A draft report shall be submitted to the Embassy in Hanoi for comments in two weeks after the mission is completed.

The final report shall be submitted to Sida not later than 31 October 2001.

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