

Reflections on administrative reforms in Vietnam



Foreword

The objective of the *Methods Development Unit* is to contribute to enhancing and strengthening the quality of Sida's development work. The Unit supports the line organisation in developing and applying approaches and methods, for example

- approaches for capacity development,
- transition from a project approach to a programme approach,
- introduction of a rating system,
- efforts to combat corruption,
- etc.

The Unit's main tasks include ensuring that Sida's handbook, "Sida at Work", is kept up to date and is understood by all members of staff. Thus "Sida at Work" forms the framework of the Unit's activities.

Learning processes and exchanges of experience are essential. This series of "Working Papers" is a contribution to Sida's learning. The Papers are often produced as part of Sida's work on specific methodology issues.

The views and conclusions of the Working Papers do not necessarily coincide with those of Sida.

Hopefully, the Working Papers will stimulate reflection and discussion.

This Working Paper has been developed to highlight the complexity of comprehensive administrative reform processes. Sida is frequently invited to participate in national processes of this type, and crucial issues need to be identified and analysed. This Working Paper is a contribution to Sida's experience

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1. Introduction

This working paper has been commissioned by Sida's Methods Development Unit. The Terms of Reference state that the assignment should result in an analysis based on personal impressions that sheds light in particular on the following three issues:

- the ways in which the decision-makers concerned in Vietnam have analysed and acquired an overview of the systems that shall be reformed
- the strategies for change that have been chosen and the reasons for this
- the role of the external donors.

Most of the memorandum is based on experience and reflections on what is referred to in Vietnam as the Public Administration Reform (PAR). For purposes of comparison, the reform of the legal system is also touched upon, particularly in respect of the donors' role during the last two years or so.

In order to create understanding of the climate for reform, I have chosen to take up initially some of the general conditions for work on reforms in Vietnam, and thereafter to make more specific observations in respect of the government administration. Then an analysis is made of how the work on reforms in the public administration has actually proceeded, with an attempt to characterise the strategy that has been followed. In this connection the first of the above-mentioned issues is taken up. Thereafter observations are presented on the role of the donors and their relations with the government and different parts of the public administration. Finally an attempt is made to draw conclusions on approaches and strategies for capacity building in support of the reform of the systems of organisations that constitute both the public administration and the legal system.

2. General conditions for work on reforms in Vietnam

The work on reforms in Vietnam is a product of the collapse of the Communist central planning system at the end of the 1980s. An understanding of the necessity to change the system was manifested at the party congress in 1986. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union accelerated the market economy reforms. Throughout the 1990s, economic reforms have been given highest priority and resulted in high rates of growth and poverty reduction.

The economic driving forces are strong. The Vietnamese cannot accept that they should continue to remain poorer than their neighbours in Southeast Asia for ever. This determination, coupled with the pragmatic attitude that characterises the way of working in Vietnam, will bring about the necessary changes in the public administration for further economic growth. This may sound optimistic – even deterministic – and is so. Integration into the world economy has high priority. Membership in ASEAN and the recently concluded trade agreement with the USA drives the work on reforms towards liberalisation and a market economy, as does the ambition to become a member of the WTO. This will also lead to a change in the legal system, with improvements in the rule of law in the economic sphere.

The reform of the public administration apparatus and the legal system have taken place in parallel, but have not been pursued with the same vigour, even if a number of new laws and ordinances have been approved. Nor have they resulted in a change of system of the same magnitude as the reforms of the economy and the opening up of international relations.

In all probability, the party and the government give priority to internal stability rather than a dynamic and risky process of change. However, internal stability of this type must be based to a lesser extent on the repressive exercise of power as a result of an increasingly enlightened population and the rapid integration in the world. There are no signs that Vietnam wishes to proceed in a pluralistic direction where the reform of the political system is concerned. The consensus philosophy predominates and is preferred by the majority of the dominating interests in the party, state apparatus, army and trade and industry to a competitive philosophy which is, of course, a prerequisite of a multi-party system. This means

that it is probable that a one-party state will endure in the foreseeable future, at the same time as civil rights and privileges are strengthened.

The strength of the institutionalisation of the Communist social organisation as a braking force in respect of both economic reforms and reforms of the public administration should not be underestimated. The party, the state apparatus, the so-called mass organisations, the army and state enterprises are bound together by innumerable personal relations and common “mental models” (values and analytical tools). Common interests in, and between, the established apparatuses are still strong. It is reasonable to expect strong passive resistance to change that threatens this order. As approaches are made towards concrete changes that could break up established bonds and common interests, opposition to these changes can be expected to be more active. Opposition to reform of the state enterprises is an example of this phenomenon.

Where the reform of the public administration is concerned, the following quotation reflects a broad conception among supporters of reform in Vietnam. “High level guidelines to public administration reforms appear to be lacking in terms of translation to concrete reform.” The quotation is taken from a briefing given to a Swedish delegation that visited Vietnam in September 1997. It would be made once again, unchanged, if a similar briefing were to be given today, five years later. The inability to transform general decisions or ideas on reforms into practical, feasible solutions and to actually introduce these solutions is still a major obstacle where the work on reforms is concerned.

Since many of the decisions taken are unclear in terms of content, it is not always easy to translate the decisions into practical solutions. Also, in a centralised system, people prefer to wait for further directives than take the risk of interpreting them and making an incorrect interpretation. In situations of this type, issues are pushed into the future and new consensus-seeking processes are started that can eventually (it is uncertain when) lead to a feasible solution.

But it is not just a question of ability, it also includes psychological preparedness – determination, motivation and commitment – or mentality. This diagnosis is made in the PAR Master Programme, which was approved by the government in September 2001. There it is stated that “the lingering existence of inertia and habits from the centralised, subsidised bureaucratic system which have taken deep roots in the thinking, working styles and practices of a section of cadres and civil servants, in particular those who have vested interests in this old system, will create obstacles to PAR and make it very difficult for PAR to get over the influences and constraints of the old mechanism and adapt itself to the market-based mechanism. In the meantime, we will carry out PAR with limited knowledge and experience in state management in the development of a market economy with socialist orientation.”

The established organisations face, as the quotation suggests, extensive leadership problems. Corruption and unethical behaviour is considered to be widespread and is related, for example, to low wages and other forms of remuneration, not least at the local government level. There are also complaints that fewer young, well-educated people are joining the

party and state apparatus. This is related partly to the recruitment policy that gives priority to qualities that show loyalty to the system, and partly to the alternative career paths that development in the country has created. The growing leadership problem is also related to the ageing cadre of leaders and declining numbers of younger, qualified people in the sector. In particular the administrators who were educated and entered and working life during the period 1975 to 1985 and are now in turn to take over leading posts were given training that is obsolete today. These groups probably feel threatened by rapid and extensive system changes. However, there is a strong ambition to build up a professional administrative cadre. A technocracy loyal to the party is the solution that is sought.

Does this mean that work on reforms in the public administration has stagnated? No, not at all. There is no obvious risk that the reform work in Vietnam will come to a standstill. The quotation rather reflects impatience, which is expressed in the political rhetoric. Many feel that it should be possible to make faster progress. But there is a great deal of uncertainty about the sort of state they want to have and how the political system should be reformed, and the political, economic and social consequences are unclear and possibly threatening for many people who have vested interests in the old system. This is the case, for example, when the public administration apparatus in a sector resists making a distinction between its regulatory, supervisory and manufacturing role, or resists the elimination of unnecessary permits or closing or privatising an enterprise.

The economic growth generated by farmers producing for markets, the growing number of small and medium-size private enterprises and joint ventures with foreign enterprises will create, in the long term, the foundation of power bases beside the party. The increasing degree of openness towards the outside world, and an ever increasing number of people with knowledge of other social systems will also have the same effect.

3. The public administration

Politics and the public administration

Ten years ago the traditional communist institutions were, to all intents and purposes, intact. The cautious reform process that was introduced in 1986 had not left any clear traces in the structure and functions of the public administration, even if radical economic reforms were implemented at the end of the 1980s. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the new orientation towards the West, and the introduction of a market economy made rapid institutional changes necessary. The constitution adopted in 1992 constitutes the basis of the present political organisation and public administration structure.

The formal political system is built up of elected assemblies at four levels, municipal, district, provincial and national. There is a public administration organisation at each level. The system is hierarchical: each level is subordinate to the immediately superior level. Party organisations at all levels have a decisive influence over decision-making processes. The leading role of the party is laid down in the constitution. The elected political assemblies play a subordinate role in relation to the government/public administration apparatus and the party.

The system is built up on the basis of a consensus model. There is no specific division of powers between the legislative, executive and judiciary. In other words the system is built on a foundation that differs fundamentally from our system in the West, which is based on competition between different parties and where there is a specific division of powers between public bodies.

Even if there is a movement towards a stronger role for the elected bodies – the National Assembly and the People's Councils at local and regional level – they still play a subordinate role in the real decision-making processes. The party and the state apparatus dominate and are integrated to a great extent by the requirement that senior public administration officers must be party members. There are extensive party activities at all government working places. This means that Western values, that unbiased public officials are essential for the rule of law in the exercise of public authority, are lacking in the Vietnamese system. This, in turn, makes it difficult to achieve ambitions in respect of professionalism and recruitments based on merit.

The question is whether this is not one of the core issues in future reform work. For reasons of efficiency and rule of law, the regime wishes to see a change in favour of professionalism. Probably this cannot be achieved unless professional qualifications are given decisive importance for recruitment and promotion. At the same time a change of this type could, in the long term, loosen the ties between the party and the state apparatus, and undermine the state apparatus as a power base for the party. A strengthening of the role of the elected assemblies within the framework of a one-party state could possibly replace the party's direct control of the public administration via politically correct civil servants. There are tendencies that developments are proceeding in this direction, but it can hardly be expected that political standpoints will be adopted that clarify the positions. To the extent that the regime wishes this trend to continue, it will take place in small steps and local experiments that gradually change the system over a long period of time.

Public administration structure

The public administration structure has been changed in many ways during the last ten years. However, the structures that were built up with the Soviet Union as a model still dominate. In this model the public administration was spilt up into a number of organisational units. Each central organisation had its vertical apparatus all the way down to district level and was to be self-sufficient. It should have in its organisation all the functions necessary for the sector to function properly. Thus, for example, each ministry had its own research department and its own education and training institute. The model assumed central planning with quantitative goals and standard allocations of resources which were decided upon at the highest level after closed negotiations. It was assumed that ministries and government agencies would implement these plans. The role of the ministries was not to prepare policies or to develop strategies. The model had the effect that society was divided up into a number of sectors, each with its own administrative apparatus and central control systems.

The Vietnamese system still has many features of this model. The system for resource allocation is, for example, still based on a quota philosophy, and the process of deciding upon allocations is described critically by the Vietnamese as a "begging and granting system", with considerable scope for arbitrariness. The awareness that the model does not function well in a market economy has gradually increased. In connection with the adoption of the new constitution, the number of ministries was reduced radically and was further reduced later in the 1990s by mergers. State enterprises were made more independent in relation to their ministries and new actors, for example foreign enterprises and private enterprises, entered the arena. The ministries were thus forced to change their role into drawing up and evaluating policies, producing rules and regulations, and creating appropriate conditions for other actors. In the model that is now emerging, the ministries are being based on broad, sector-wide policy areas. It is these issues that the reform work has based on during the 1990s and that are still in focus.

Accordingly, the ministries are in the course of losing part of their traditional working tasks. The transformation of their role is underway but not at the pace desired by the supporters of reform. The mentality can be characterised in the following way: the control philosophy dominates over service-mindedness; direct controls and interventionism dominate over strategic controls and measures to promote and facilitate the participation of other actors. The central public administration apparatus is still characterised by a number of organisations that report directly to the prime minister. A large number of these, 61 provinces and approximately 15 central agencies, do not have their own minister in the government and are directly subordinate to the prime minister. However, the prime minister and five deputy prime ministers constitute a form of inner cabinet with areas of responsibility that cover the entire state apparatus. This has the effect that many ministers can be likened more to heads of government agencies than ministers in the Swedish system.

The Vietnamese public administration is centralist and is characterised by an unclear division of responsibilities between ministries and central government agencies and between central bodies and provinces. This problem recurs constantly as a standard explanation for the lack of efficiency. The unclear division of responsibilities has the effect that issues are pushed upwards in the decision-making system or put on ice. The structure with a super ministry – Office of the Government – under the leadership of the prime minister also has the effect that issues are pushed upwards since all government matters are finally processed by this ministry. The so-called democratic centralism that is a fundamental principle for the party – each decision can be reviewed by a higher level – also leads to uncertainty about powers and responsibilities and also contributes to the situation in which issues are pushed upwards in the system. Personal unions between highest leadership in the state and the party safeguard the consensus-based collective leadership.

In order to solve these problems, strong demands are being made for a clearer division of responsibilities and decentralisation of powers. However, this solution, which appears sensible and correct, does not really tally with the consensus model for decision-making that is used in practice. As described above, the decision-making process is based on seeking consensus by sounding out opinions and with negotiations between the parties concerned in which the main stakeholder does not have the power or the will to “ride roughshod” over another important stakeholder. This means that the stakeholders concerned have considerable powers to block processes of change. To change this behaviour – which has been institutionalised in the traditional structures – strong political determination is essential.

However, the picture of a centralised administration is not clear-cut. In practice, ministries, provinces and lower administrative levels have “negative” freedom of action in the sense that they can neglect to follow the central directives issues without any sanctions being taken against them from central level. To a very great extent they also find their own solutions that circumvent central policies without necessarily violating them.

Thus, for example, the new Enterprise Law was introduced several years ago. This was intended to simplify the procedure for starting enterprises by eliminating the discretionary allocation of permits in favour of a registration procedure. The general perception was that this reform was extremely successful. However, despite this, it proved to be the case that agencies that had lost the power to issue permits tried to compensate for this by extending their inspection activities. Everyone in Vietnam knows that the power to issue permits makes bribes possible. Everyone also knows that the power to make inspections also makes this possible. It takes place despite the extensive apparatus that has been built up to exercise controls of the administration and the civil servants. Part of the picture is also, naturally, that Vietnam is a poor country with few resources and a lack of expertise to implement approved policies even if the ambition exists. In this sense Vietnam is a “soft state”.

Personnel in the public administration

In relation to the service that the state has taken on to provide, it cannot be said that the administration is over-dimensioned. The ordinary public administration apparatus, excluding social services and education, has more than 200 000 civil administrators in a country of almost 80 million people. The large groups of employees in the public administration are the teachers and medical personnel, together over a million people. Where the administrators are concerned, the Vietnamese themselves estimate that a third of them are unqualified for the jobs they have. Productivity in the administration is considered to be extremely low and the level of service unacceptable. The administration faces a gigantic task of improving productivity and quality in the public administration. There is understanding of this situation and an awareness that, at the present time, the public administration constitutes an obstacle rather than a resource for further strong economic growth.

However the figure of 200 000 administrators does not provide a completely truthful picture of the organisation of the public administration. The party and organisations associated with the party have almost 70 000 employees at central, regional and district levels and, at municipal level, there are up to 250 000 persons who perform public functions (party functionaries, functionaries in mass organisations, local administrators etc) and who receive a certain amount – if a low amount – of remuneration via the government budget or from the municipality’s own revenues. The number of police and soldiers, which is also naturally an important part of the public apparatus, is not known, but is large.

4. Strategy for change in the 1990s

The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the disappearance of the model that the Vietnamese had had for the organisation of society in Vietnam. It is true that the Vietnamese never fully implemented this type of organisation. Thus, for example, the collectivisation of agriculture was never implemented in southern Vietnam and the central planning system was weak, more perhaps due to a lack of ability than to ideological misgivings. Nonetheless, all at once they were forced to think again.

Towards the end of the 1980s, economic reforms were in focus and donors such as the UNDP and Sida started to provide support for market economic reforms¹. Administration reforms came more into focus after the adoption of the new constitution. In 1993 a new wage and service system was introduced, which had the effect that remuneration was more or less fully made monetary and career paths were built up in 19 administrative sectors. New instructions for ministries, provinces and districts were also adopted. The reforms were implemented for pragmatic reasons. It was interesting to note that, where personnel were concerned, the new ideas were based on the French system. There was no overall strategy that integrated the different components of the reforms – organisation, decision-making, personnel, finance, legal system.

Acquisition of knowledge

Throughout the 1990s the Vietnamese sought new knowledge and tried to understand how a public administration functions in a market economy. The need of external expertise and of learning new approaches, methods and concepts has been, and still is, considerable and the Vietnamese have deliberately used foreign support for this purpose. Study visits and training in English have been regular features of almost all development cooperation projects. With the increase in foreign support, which now reaches almost all sectors of society, most of the leading civil servants have probably come into contact with market economy social systems. It is impossible to evaluate what this has meant for the work on reform, but it has probably been highly significant for securing the focus of the reforms. It can be stated that concepts such as “good

¹ At this point in time, Vietnam was still isolated due to its invasion of Cambodia. The UN system, Sweden and Finland did not participate in this boycott, which was led by the USA and China, and which had the effect that the World Bank, the IMF and the ADB were not present in Vietnam.

governance”, “transparency”, “rule of law” etc, which were not used or did not exist on the Vietnamese side just a few years ago, have now been incorporated into the Vietnamese vocabulary. The list could be made long. The Vietnamese have also adopted new methods that have emerged during the “new liberal” era in the western world. Therefore, for example, certain types of services are outsourced. Education and medical services have been opened up to private alternatives, and fees have been introduced for teaching and for health care. The latter is included the odd name (in our opinion as Swedes) of “socialisation”.

As in other public administrations, knowledge is built up through planning and reporting systems and through the extensive control and inspection apparatus that is at the disposal of all the ministries and the party. These instruments probably constitute an important component in the acquisition of knowledge at different levels. But the quality of the plans and reports is low and the important elements in this administrative practice probably consist of the direct exchange of information and the sounding of opinion that is made possible by the frequent use of planning meetings and conferences to disseminate information from the centre. Compared to the Vietnamese administration, the Swedish administration is based much more on written information.

The Vietnamese also seek knowledge on the outside world through a number of research institutes of their own and by financing studies abroad via the government budget. The research institutes also make their own evaluations of the work on reform commissioned by the party or the government. Most ministries and institutes have journals which publish articles on their sectors. It is difficult to assess the extent of these evaluation activities, but the development of new policies and proposals for reforms take place in their own apparatus – in the party and the public administration – and are formulated in party resolutions before details are worked out in the public administration. It is only during the last two to three years that donors have been invited to contribute actively to the formulation of overall policy documents, for example the socio-economic development plan that was adopted by the party at its latest congress one year ago. Participation in the preparations of the programme for public administration reform as well as participation in the commission on the need of legal reform are other examples. However, the influence exerted by foreign participation over the content of the reforms should not be exaggerated. In most cases government programmes are preceded by party resolutions.

The Vietnamese strategy has been characterised by a clear distinction between the acquisition of knowledge with the aid of foreign support and practical experimentation with reforms. In the latter, development cooperation projects have played an subordinate role. Direct influence on the formulation of solutions to the problems has been weak. This can be seen as an expression of the clear Vietnamese ownership of the reforms, but is probably also an expression of the fear of losing control. Through foreign support the Vietnamese have obtained access to a “smorgasbord” (i.e. a large variety of different dishes) of new knowledge from which they have chosen the dishes that they consider suit them.

It is easy for an outsider to underestimate the time required to replace obsolete knowledge with new knowledge. The Vietnamese transition differs from that of Eastern Europe since its political system is intact and it is intended that the basic features of the system shall be preserved. In the candidate countries of Eastern Europe there is the political determination to adapt to EU's institutions. In the absence of a new "ideal model", the Vietnamese must test all new knowledge against the requirements of their own system. The normal sluggishness experienced by everyone when learning new things is thereby reinforced.

Step by step

If there is one phrase that summarises the strategy that has been followed, and is still being followed, it is "step by step". The discussion in the section above can explain this strategy. Cautious reformism under the full control of central agencies is another way of describing the model. Probably this strategy is based just as much on the practical disposition of the Vietnamese as expressed in the formula "do first then learn", as in their political need of having full control in order not to risk stability.

Small experiments in one field or another are made in a ministry or a province and are approved and monitored centrally before a decision is reached to apply the results further afield. This has been the case, for example, in respect of the so-called one-stop-shop model for handling administrative matters, delegation of decision-making powers in respect of the use of agency appropriations in the government budget, and experiments with alternative forms of organisation at local level. For external observers, information on these types of experiments has often been limited. It has not been possible to acquire in-depth information before an evaluation has been made by the apparatus.

Another phenomenon is that experiments/development work in the same area are performed in parallel, even if it is conceived as competitive and as a waste of resources, for example incompatible computer systems are developed when co-ordinated solutions should be sought. It is impossible to know for sure whether this is an expression of the inability to coordinate efforts or a result of a deliberate ambition to test different solutions before a decision is made. The phenomenon corresponds well with the step by step model and the decision-making model that pushes final decisions upwards in the hierarchy.

From administrative reforms to public administration reforms

The period up to 1999 can be regarded as a phase in which both the Vietnamese and the donors tried to find their way in unknown terrain. The Vietnamese sought new knowledge on the unknown terrain of the market economy and the donors tried to learn the terrain in Vietnam.

As early as in 1992 the UNDP had started to prepare a project in support of the Public Administration Reform (PAR), but at that time this concept was not well accepted on the Vietnamese side. It was only in 1994 that more extensive discussions started on PAR and, in practice, the UNDP project first started in that year. The project covered four main areas:

- organisational structure
- legal framework

- personnel
- financial management

The project was also intended to provide assistance for the management of the reform process. After the event it can be stated that the project lacked the acceptance and support necessary to exert an influence on the real reform work. The project served as a window to the donors, who had increased in numbers and needed orientation on the unknown reality of Vietnam. The project produced a number of proposals for minor projects at both central and provincial levels that were offered to the donors. During the period 1995 to 1999 a number of projects were started, of which most had been prepared, at least initially, in the UNDP project.

The real reform work took place within the Vietnamese administration with little influence from the donors' projects. The overall concept of Public Administration Reform, which was frequently used by the donors, was unknown to most Vietnamese. Organising reform work in practice on the basis of an unknown concept was therefore impossible and irrelevant to them. But the concept was accepted in the dialogue with the donors.

The direction of the real reform work was based on the party's directives for simplifying administrative procedures of direct importance for the citizens and enterprises, for example building regulations, registration of agricultural land, licensing and registration of business activities, and procedures for making appeals. Simplifying administrative procedures and making them efficient was regarded as the key to further reforms and to maintaining confidence in the determination and ability of the party and government. Administrative courts were established and the reform of the state personnel administration continued with the aim of obtaining comprehensive regulations based on a "civil service law".

Central management of personnel training was reorganised at the same time. Some ministries were merged in 1996, but no comprehensive structural changes were implemented during the latter part of the 1990s.

Reforms in the economic field proceeded continuously but were not perceived by outside observers – both foreigners and Vietnamese – as being part of a coherent public administration reform. Nor was the Budget Act, which was adopted in 1997 and which established a state budget system for the first time, perceived as part of the public administration reform described in the UNDP project.

These unsynchronised images of the reform work can be explained by the different needs that governed the work of the government and the donors. For the party and the government, the entire reform process (political, economic, legal and organisational aspects) was handled at the same time. Thus there was no need to divide it into a number of comprehensive components. Nor was there a clear picture of what these components consisted of. Nor did the step by step strategy, which was being followed in practice, need a coherent plan. Instead the reforms were driven in orderly forms by political improvisations. On the other hand, for the donors, which the UNDP project served in practice, there was a need of a structure and strategy in the reform work and therefore this was depicted as a coherent programme.

The institutionalised forms that were used for the reform work, and which are still being used, have the effect that the responsibility for implementing political directives is split up in accordance with the formal division of responsibility between the ministries (line organisations).

The prime minister specifies what each ministry shall do in an annual plan of action. The model does not facilitate cooperation and coordination in respect of issues that cut across sectors, but rather encourages the departmentalisation of responsibilities. Nor do the forms encourage strategic reform thinking. In addition to this, it is expected that reforms will be prepared without the allocation of any special resources in the form of finance or expertise. The capacity for actually making necessary and qualitatively acceptable preparations for reforms and putting these into practice is therefore, without exception, limited.

However, the implementation of the Enterprise Law is an example of a model that for implementation that differs from normal practices and which has clearly been successful. A steering group led the implementation, assisted by a team of independent experts who actively ensured that all old ordinances were eliminated and that new ordinances followed the intentions of the law. The ministries concerned were not given the opportunity to block implementation. The main reason for success was that the team of experts was motivated and committed, and that the team had the strong support and continuous personal commitment of the highest political leadership. Despite this successful example, the method has not yet been spread.

Criticism of the pace and results of the reform grew in 1997. The donors criticised the pace of the economic reforms and the prime minister was more emphatic in his statements to the public administration about the necessity of pressing on with the simplification of administrative procedures. However, this criticism had no apparent effect on the pace of the reforms. It can also be asked whether the criticism was justified, given the resources available and the uncertainty that prevailed, and still prevails, on the role of the state and the public administration. However, it is quite evident that no decisive system changes were implemented at the end of the 1990s, but disappointment at this is possibly more related to the expectations of the critics than to the pace of the reform work itself.

But the criticism from the donors also referred to the lack of a strategy and context for the reform work. The donors had a reasonable overview of projects financed by development cooperation funds but knew very little about what the government was doing itself. The development cooperation projects were spread out over areas, provinces and ministries and it was not possible to identify a rational and coherent approach.

There was also more criticism of the development cooperation projects from the Vietnamese side since the Vietnamese had difficulties in seeing clear results of their own efforts and the donor-financed projects.

The need of seeing a context between different reform areas, of creating a holistic approach and a strategy for the reform of the public administration also started to be recognised and articulated by the Vietnamese.

Towards the end of 1998, the prime minister established a steering group for public administration reform. This group included the prime minister

as chairman, the minister for the organisation and personnel ministry, the minister of justice, the minister in the Office of the Government, and the head of the personnel administration institute. A former deputy prime minister was appointed as the executive member. From this representation it can be seen that financial management, i.e. the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Finance, had been excluded or, more likely, had never been regarded a part of the public administration reform. As interpreted by the Vietnamese, the public administration reform included personnel and organisational issues, including personnel education and training, and institutional (legal) and administrative issues.

The aim of the steering group was to press on with the reform work being done by the ministries and the provinces in accordance with the directives issued by the prime minister each year in the government's work programme. Another reason for establishing the steering group was probably also the need of starting preparations for the forthcoming party congress in 2001.

With this new organisation for the overall management of the public administration reform, the self-assumed role of the UNDP, a role also accepted by most of the other donors, as the lead donor in the public administration field became indistinct. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) made various attempts to take the initiative in respect of strategic system-changing reforms but failed. (Among other things the ADB submitted a report written by a consultant it had engaged, which argued powerfully against the one-party system. This had the result that the dialogue between ADB and the government was broken off.) In the spring of 1999 the UNDP tried to get the government to request support for the steering group's secretariat, but this was rejected with the reason that it was up to the government to draw up strategic guidelines for further reform work. The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that, at this point in time, the Vietnamese leadership considered that the role of development cooperation should be to assist in the implementation of the reforms that the Vietnamese had prepared and decided on themselves, and not to participate in the actual formulation of the reforms.

The Vietnamese attitude towards support for the steering group's secretariat changed in the summer of 1999. In discussions with the UNDP, the secretariat requested the support of experts/consultants and financial support to make a comprehensive evaluation of the public administration reforms during the 1990s, with a focus on the latter part that coincided with the ongoing party congress period, 1996–2001.

One can only speculate on the reasons for this. Probably there was a need of financial support to allow Vietnamese expertise to be engaged and to hold seminars and conferences. The secretariat probably felt the need of obtaining support in the planning of the evaluation and of obtaining the points of view of international experts on reports that were to be produced. Probably there were fewer expectations of direct participation in the evaluation work itself.

The UNDP saw this as an opportunity to enter the reform process once again at the overall level and it quickly mobilised resources – its own and those of other donors (including Sida). Initially, the UNDP probably ex-

pected a stronger role for international experts than was ultimately the case. One reason for this was that the consultant engaged by the UNDP considered that the Vietnamese themselves should do the evaluation work and that international expertise should assist but not be involved to such an extent that the final product was a consultant's product. If that was the case, the final product would not be taken seriously by the Vietnamese.

In addition to a comprehensive final report, the evaluation resulted in interim reports that took up institutional issues/the legal system, organisation of the public administration, personnel issues and financial management. The last mentioned field, which had not been regarded previously as a field that was part of the public administration reform, had been included as a result of discussions during the planning phase. Thereby the Ministry of Finance became a new stakeholder in the public administration reform. However, this did not result in the Ministry of Finance becoming a member of the steering group.

The result of the work and the working model that was used was appreciated by the Vietnamese. The donors were more critical to the quality of the work and the lack of clarity in the conclusions presented. However, there was no doubt about providing further support for a second phase that had the aim of devising a strategy for public administration reforms for the coming ten-year period after the party congress in 2001.

This work was started in the autumn of 2000 and was organised in the same way – in Vietnamese working groups under the leadership of the steering group's secretariat and with the participation of international consultants. The result was the PAR Master Programme that was approved by the government in September 2001. The programme can also be seen as the government's response to the directions given at the party congress in the spring of 2001.

The programme includes general guidelines for the reform work in the four main areas: institutions, organisation, personnel and financial management. In addition to these guidelines, which shall provide guidance for all public bodies at all levels, seven national reform programmes are identified for which the ministries responsible are given.

Compared to the earlier situation, the strength of the programme is that, for the first time, there is a coherent agenda for the focus of the reforms in the public administration, including financial management, which emphasises improved efficiency, openness and service-mindedness, while the role of the state is to be changed and more scope given to other actors in the economy. The linkages between the different areas for reform have been made clearer and easier to understand, even if the borderlines to other areas of reform such as the political system, the economic system and the legal system are still fluid. But, in essence, the programme contains no completely new aspects compared to the often detailed standpoints and objectives adopted in the party resolutions.

The main weakness of the government's programme is its concentration on what should be reformed while questions of when, how and with what resources the reforms will be made are dealt with in a very brief and formal way. During the work on the evaluation and the strategy, both

the international consultants and the donors tried to emphasise these issues, but the visible results in the formal document are weak and follow the standard practice used in this type of government document. But the background material does not take up these issues either, despite the fact that the Vietnamese expressed a need of obtaining a “roadmap” to follow in the reform work. Among the Vietnamese experts there was a reluctance, or lack of ability, to understand the importance of analysing matters relating to implementation during the preparations. Possibly this can be related to the fact that they did not feel that they had a mandate for this type of discussion. First a decision must be made on “what”, then can a discussion be held on “when” and “how”.

A further explanation can be that answers to questions concerning when, how and needs of resources necessitate a precise specification of the content of a principal standpoint that the system has difficulties in handling analytically during a planning phase. The administrative culture is based on directives coming from above, even in matters relating to details. If there are no directives of this type, the consensus model applies, i.e. the detailed solutions are drawn up by the responsible line organisation in harmony with the party’s bodies and other stakeholders at various levels in more or less closed negotiations. In other words it is a type of trial and error process that rather has the aim of reaching agreement than finding an optimal solution.

Another explanation can be that issues concerning when, how and needs of resources assume that these elements have been fully negotiated between the different stakeholders before commitments are entered into. To enter into commitments up for a long period of time is also risky in a negotiation/consensus culture where there is uncertainty about future power relationships that can affect negotiation strength. Institutional continuity in respect of promises and undertakings is weak in a system where it is individuals and groups who negotiate, not institutions.

However, the identification of national programmes was an innovation as a method of attacking administration problems. Earlier, policy documents in the area had been even more comprehensive. The governing effects had therefore been small. On both the Vietnamese side and among the donors there were high hopes that the programme would contribute to gathering strength for implementation purposes and to attracting foreign support in varying degrees. The programmes were dealt with very briefly in the formal government decision. It was intended that they should be further developed into detailed, cost-estimated action programmes in the autumn of 2001 and then approved by the government in December that year. The responsibility for this rested with the ministry that had been given the task of implementing each programme, which coincided with the formal division of responsibilities between the ministries. Since most of the programmes concern at least two ministries, cooperation between the ministries concerned was assumed in the formulation of the action programmes.

Work on drawing up the national action programmes was started by the ministries responsible in September 2001. A major conference with the donors was held at the end of September 2001. The preparations ap-

peared to be proceeding at a rapid pace. However, the quality of the programme documents produced was low. The ministries responsible did not utilise the support that the donors were prepared to give and it was difficult to establish the forms of cooperation between ministries that had been assumed. The programmes have still not been completed and been approved by the government, and without consequences for the ministries responsible, as far as is known.

In parallel with the ministries' work on the national action programmes, the secretariat requested the assistance of UNDP for drawing up a project to support the steering group's secretariat in the implementation of the PAR Master Programme. One of the issues that the international consultants had taken up as a key issue was the need of central resources to monitor, follow-up and support the implementation of the national programmes and the reform guidelines that applied to the entire public administration. The donors were also anxious to see a capacity of this type built up. It was natural to see the steering group's secretariat as the capacity that should be strengthened. Preparations proceeded along this line. The goals and content of the project were worked out in detail. The relatively modest cost that was estimated for the first year was later increased considerably by UNDP which had the effect that the secretariat was given a very strong position and would have comparatively large resources at its disposal.

The preparations on these lines met with opposition. There are probably two main reasons for this opposition. In the Vietnamese public administration it is common to have steering groups and secretariats of this type. However, they lack formal authority. Their resources are provided by the ministries represented in the groups in the form of part-time experts and the work is led by the ministry that has been given responsibility for the policy area. The model that was proposed in this particular case would have had the effect that the secretariat would have the status of an authority. Therefore, the leading ministry would lose its authority over the secretariat. In combination with the relatively large resources that the secretariat would have at its disposal, a pronounced shift in power would take place, to the disadvantage of the ministry concerned. The problem was solved in the beginning of 2002 with the effect that the old order was maintained and that the support for the central management of the reform work would be channelled via a project that was subordinate to the ministry.

The delays have naturally created uncertainty among the donors in respect of the government's determination to vigorously pursue the work of reforming the public administration. As far as can be seen, the PAR Master programme, which has now existed for a year, has not yet exerted a practical influence on the reform work.

5. The donors' role in the process

During the last ten years, development cooperation has become an increasingly important element in the work on reforms. From having been an isolated country at the end of the 1980s, boycotted by many other countries, Vietnam now has all the major actors in the international development cooperation field in the country. However, there is little dependence on foreign support, in the economic sense, and the donors have not been able, nor had any reason, to impose conditions of the type that have arisen in connection with structural adjustment programmes in other poor countries.

The foreign support has nevertheless played, and is still playing, an important, possibly decisive role in building up the new knowledge needed to drive the reform work. Foreign support has gradually entered an increasing number of social sectors. The number of areas that are regarded as sensitive and where foreigners shall not have access has been reduced. But areas such as political forms of control, leadership and organisation issues are still sensitive areas for in-depth interventions by projects financed by foreign support.

There is little provision of information and transparency in the Vietnamese system (which is reinforced by the language problem). This is a result of the communist tradition of limited contacts with outsiders/foreigners, the understanding that information is power, and the bureaucratic principle that a person shall only have the information needed for his/her limited working duties. This makes it difficult for the donors and technical assistance personnel to learn about the system and makes it difficult or impossible to implement high-level interventions of a problem-solving character.

The institutional landscape is only partly visible to the donors due to the actions taken by the Vietnamese, and since the donors tend to wear blinkers where the party and its bodies at different levels are concerned. The identities of the real stakeholders, who deal with different questions in practice, independently of the formal structure, are therefore wrapped in mystery. This, in turn, puts the donors' ambition of conducting a "policy dialogue" in an interesting light. In a number of cases when it has been assumed that a dialogue of this type was being conducted, it was probably being conducted with the wrong persons and institutions, while the "real policy persons" do not emerge.

The donors have adjusted to this situation in various ways. During the initial period of support for capacity development, the donors had little knowledge. Only Sweden, Finland and UNDP had had a long presence in the country. But the change in the focus of support towards creating possibilities for the Vietnamese to learn about the market economy and other social systems had the effect that these donors also started to embark upon unknown terrain. It was possible for donors with little knowledge of the system to use the “smorgasbord” model that had been established as the main model for developing knowledge. This also suited the Vietnamese need of exercising control over the knowledge they acquired and the solutions they selected. It also suited the increasingly stronger understanding among the donors that the ownership on the part of the recipient was a prerequisite for success.

However, as their knowledge of the system grew, the donors’ failure to obtain an overview and their inability to see the strategic context of their many projects became a source of frustration. The donors have a legitimate need of being able to place their support in a context and to clearly see the objectives of their support. The widespread use of LFA is an expression of this need. However, the method has its limitations in the reality of Vietnam, particularly in areas where visions of the future are unclear, which is very much the case in both the public administration field and the legal field. The Vietnamese method, characterised by cautious reformism and by “doing and learning”, does not require clear visions or goals. Instead a large amount of flexibility in the practical work is needed. The gap between approved project documents and reality is therefore often considerable. However, the donors appear to accept this in practice, which can be explained by the fact that they understand and accept the Vietnamese working model or that they are unable or do not have the capacity to conduct an objective dialogue.

The frustration at the failure to obtain an overview has been alleviated somewhat through the initiatives for strategic thinking taken by the government, which have been expressed in the programme for poverty reduction, the public administration reform, and now in the extensive analysis made of needs of reform in the legal field. The extensive analytical work that the World Bank is now doing in the field of Public Finance Management is a new example of attempts to establish a coordinated strategy in an important area for reform. However, the impression is that this work is largely being driven and managed by the World Bank, and the outcome will show if the Vietnamese are prepared to conform with a co-ordinated analysis made by a donor or whether they will neutralise the analysis in various ways through their practical actions in order to continue to remain undisturbed in the driving seat.

In the spring of 2002, the explicit policy of not borrowing for PAR was changed. Highest levels in the government requested loans from the ADB to finance two of the most “sensitive” national programmes. One can only speculate on the reasons for this. Possibly this indicates recognition of the fact that they lack resources for implementation and that PAR (and plans in general) will not receive an impetus unless substantial resources are provided. Discussions on the terms of possible loans have not yet been finalised, but it is possible to see once again the above-men-

tioned problems of rivalry/cooperation between the main Vietnamese institutions involved, the reluctance to enter into commitments in respect of far too concrete time schedules and results, and the uncertainty about the degree of conditionality, i.e. the level of donor involvement in the management and implementation of the reform process that can be accepted.

Even if the donors' strategic overview of important reform areas has improved considerably during the last few years, this has not yet made a lasting impression on the methods for channelling support. Project support to individual ministries and individual units in these ministries still predominates. Special project units handle the support by the side of the ordinary departments and it is common that project personnel – Vietnamese and international – have separate offices which makes the everyday exchange of experience difficult.

The strategic analyses that have been made of the public administration and legal sectors have led to the issue of concrete coordination of the donors' contributions becoming increasingly important to deal with. But neither the donors nor the recipients appear to be ready to tackle this problem. However, the donors appear to be more prepared than the recipients, even if there are numerous examples of competition between the donors, particularly where projects that lie near strategic power centres in the Vietnamese public administration are concerned. The aspiration to play a leading role is most evident where the banks (World Bank and Asian Development bank) and the UNDP are concerned. The donors' experience of coordination and their aspirations to find new models for partnership make likely that they will promote greater coordination.

However, it is more difficult for the Vietnamese side to find coordinatory models for handling foreign support. The coordination exercised by the Ministry of Planning focuses on the examination of project proposals and the follow up of individual projects, but does not intervene in the implementation of projects. As soon as a project is approved, the entire responsibility is passed on to the implementing organisation. The Vietnamese practice is that lateral cooperation ² over organisational borders is not sought. In this respect the bureaucratic organisation model is still intact to a great degree.

The coordinatory efforts being made in the public administration and legal fields can be seen as the first small steps towards finding lateral ways of working between Vietnamese organisations with joint funding from several donors. But the real test of whether these methods have gained a foothold will be when reforms shall be formulated in detail and implemented in practice. Foreign support provides resources that the recipient would otherwise not have at its disposal and, in a poor environment, foreign support is often the resource that creates freedom of action. The incentive to retain control over these resources in an organisation is strong and rather invites the departmentalisation of responsibilities than lateral exchange and cooperation. It is not improbable that the arrival of overall reform strategies and the donors' growing interest in partnership solu-

¹ Between organisations/units/individuals at the same level in the hierarchy.

tions, both in respect of funding and practical implementation of reforms, will lead to stronger competition between the Vietnamese agencies concerned.

Experience from Vietnam is possibly unusual in relation to many other countries. The ambition to retain the political system, its basic institutions and social organisation and, at the same time, to develop a market economy, to integrate Vietnam into the world economy, and to introduce the rule of law and right of ownership appears impossible. However, it explains the cautious reform strategy that has been selected. There is no model for what the Vietnamese wish to create and therefore they must test their way forwards carefully.

The EU candidate countries can serve as a comparison. They are also undergoing a process of transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. But they have the EU's institutions as their norms in their reform work. The goal is clear. Their imminent membership also constitutes a strong incentive for the political level to press on with the reforms. In all likelihood this considerably facilitates the possibility of implementing planned reforms in a synchronised manner.

The organisational model that steers the donors is based on rationality and impersonality. Therefore the donors have difficulties in seeing how organisation dynamics function in the Vietnamese system. The Vietnamese appear to regard their own system as a dynamic, permanently ongoing negotiation between different stakeholders in which linear time is of little value. Time schedules are neither binding nor even relevant. Instead it is a case of reaching agreement. Success is manifested in "consensus units" rather than in goals for results based on a linear axle. The probability of achieving success in the work on reforms therefore increases if there is an energetic champion for the reform in question who has the ability to manoeuvre patiently in the negotiation process and to win the support of "consensus units". For the donors this means that success is probable if cooperation can be established with a champion of this type. But the difficulty for the donors is naturally to find a champion of this type. Therefore, in an environment such as that in Vietnam, it is necessary for the donors to establish long-term relations in order to be able to conduct a rational and constructive dialogue on the basis of their own knowledge and experience.

It is therefore not easy to pursue programmes of foreign support in the Vietnamese environment. The donors' position is often divided. On the one hand strong economic growth is applauded and on the other strong frustration is expressed that is based on dissatisfaction with the pace and results in the projects that are pursued. The frustration can possibly be explained by the fact that the process of social transition is ongoing continuously and consists of a multitude of incremental changes that are difficult to observe and to put a value on. The project's role in this process of social transition is therefore apparently non-existent or minimal. The Vietnamese are also not very good at providing information and blowing their own trumpets for the work on changes that is being pursued.

The donors' criticism or frustration can also be explained by the fact that they have difficulties in accepting that they can seldom influence the reform agenda, time schedule and pace of the reform work. The policy dialogue longed for by the donors can scarcely be pursued with anyone else than with technocrats in the public administration and not with the decision-making circles. There are no places for donors in the consensus networks in the Vietnamese system and a donor that wishes to play the part of a privileged adviser is merely deceiving himself.

But if one accepts the limitations that Vietnamese ownership of the reforms entails, there is still a great deal that the donors can contribute. Advocates of reform need support in the form of "policy ammunition" and toolboxes for their work with change. There is a need to build up critical masses of old individuals with new knowledge and new individuals with new knowledge. The smörgåsbord still needs to be prepared for the institutions that have not yet been exposed to relevant knowledge. The donors can also maintain "pressure" to shift the direction of the reforms. In a long-term perspective even a small shift is significant. By participating in many areas, foreign support can supply thoughts and ideas, proposals and comments, and finance activities that strengthen movements in the right direction.

6. Foreign support and development of systems of organisations

The “reform of systems of organisations” often refers to implicit organisations that can be identified and where it is possible to work in order to develop and change the different organisations and the divisions of roles, interaction and relations between the organisations. These organisations are usually public sector organisations – but also other actors that have an important role in the system can be included.

The system can never be totally screened off from the society around it. This can be expressed in the way that, in this respect, society always imposes restrictions for possible reforms of systems in the society. When the ideas for reforms clearly transgress these restrictions, the reforms become dependent on social change and therefore more unpredictable.

The perspective chosen determines how a certain system of organisations is defined in public activities. If an administrative perspective is selected, different points of departure can be used to define a system of organisations, for example on the basis of the organisation’s place in the hierarchy or on the basis of a sector in society. If a legal perspective is selected, a system of organisations can be defined with its point of departure in the role different organisations have in the chain of justice. The perspective adopted is therefore of decisive importance for the organisations covered by the system. Comprehensive reform programmes that have been drawn up with their point of departure in several different perspectives therefore, of necessity, overlap each other, since all public sector activities are linked through common rules and funding systems. This easily leads to uncertainty about the system of organisations it is that shall be reformed, how sub-programmes relate to each other and how they shall be managed and implemented. In Vietnam these uncertainties are evident in respect of the public administration reform in relation to, above all, the reform of state financial management and reforms of the legal system, as well as in relation to political and economic reforms.

Analysis of systems of organisations can help to identify important relationships, i.e. administrative processes that link together components (organisations) in the system and can reveal where the weak links are to be found. On the other hand, if the analysis has its point of departure in administrative processes, it is possible to identify organisations that participate in these processes and their importance can be valued in relation to the benefit that the processes are intended to produce.

The concept “systems of organisations” leads us to think in structures, as for example, the different organisations forming the chain of justice in the legal system. The formal structures that organisations are an expression of represent the division of work that is considered appropriate at a certain point in time. Changes to structures of this type therefore assume that sufficiently influential circles change their perception in respect of appropriateness. These perceptions can be influenced by rational analysis but they are also influenced by the networks that link together individuals and interest groups in different organisations. However, these relations are difficult to identify and analyse and it is difficult to put a value on their importance for the course of the reforms in different stages. In Vietnam these networks play an important role in respect of what is done and what is not done.

Accordingly, an analysis at the level of systems of organisations can contribute to understanding and knowledge but does not provide an answer to all questions on the possibility to implement reforms that ideally should be answered in order to implement a planned and controlled reform process. The value of the “abstract” systems analysis is limited by the difficulties in capturing the actions of all significant actors in the system, at the same time as it is these actors that have to take action for reforms to be implemented.

Ambitions to reform a “system” in a reasonably planned and controllable way are dependent on the ability to delimit the system, in a meaningful way, from the community so that the community does not set the limits for the success of the reform. In cases where this is not possible, the task consists in practice of reforming the community – though by focusing the inputs on parts of it – or on certain systems in the community. In these situations, reform strategies and ways of working should be adapted to the understanding that it is the whole community that needs to be gradually changed. No individual actor or group of actors can be in control of a process of social change. Typically, social changes are very much a highly unpredictable result of conflicts, consensus and interplay between all significant forces in the society. An appropriate direction can be sought, but the process cannot be controlled or planned in a meaningful way with any precision.

The possibilities of reforming systems of organisations are affected by a number of factors:

- the number of organisations involved
- the number of the types of organisations involved
- the difficulties in identifying the relevant organisations
- the complexity in the relations between the organisations concerned,
- the strength and complexity of the organisations’ interaction with the general public and their employees
- the dependence of the system, or those parts of it one wants to reform, on culture, mentality and traditions.

The greater the impact of these factors, the more difficult it is to delimit the system from the community and the more difficult it is to plan and control a process of change.

Vietnam is an example in which all the above-mentioned factors contribute to making the reform process less predictable and plannable.

Is there any purpose in having the ambition to reform systems of organisations when society creates specific restrictions for the reform process?

Yes, but strategies and inputs need to be adapted to this understanding, for example by

- identifying tendencies and trends
- supporting internal forces that want the “right” type of change
- identifying obstacles, and possibly refraining from the impossible projects
- choosing a “Vietnamese strategy” – taking small steps; showing, with the aid of good examples, that change is possible and favourable
- identifying strategic areas that can give dissemination effects or contribute to changing culture and mentality.

The conclusion of this line of argument is that reform plans that cover large systems of organisations can hardly be formulated in any other way than in overall indications of the direction they should take. It is not possible to answer questions on when, how and with what resources, other than in very general terms. The level, systems of organisations, in Sida’s model for capacity development can serve as an object for analysis but, in most cases, it can rarely serve as an object for planning reforms of the entire system. The exceptions are primarily narrowly defined systems of organisations where reform ambitions are limited to more technical/administrative change.

Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADHOC	Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
AHRC	The Asian Human Rights Commission
BAC	Bar Association of Cambodian
BONGO	Business-Owned Non-Governmental Organisation
CAR	Council for Administrative Reform
CC	Commune Council
CCC	Cooperation Committee of Cambodia
CDP	Cambodian Defenders Project
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CG	Consultative Group
CICP	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIHR	Cambodia Institute for Human Rights
CLEC	Community Legal Education Centre
COHCHR	Cambodian Office of the High Commission for Human Rights
CoM	Council of Ministers
COMFREL	The Committee for Free and Fair Elections in Cambodia
CPP	Cambodia People's Party
CS	Civil Society
CSD	Centre for Social Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DCS	Development Cooperation Section
DESA	Division for Democratic Governance (Sida)
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DONGO	Donor-Owned Non-Governmental Organisation
EC	European Commission
FTUWKC	Free Trade Union of Workers of the Kingdom of Cambodia
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Governance Action Plan
GONGO	Government-Owned Non-Governmental Organisation
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation

ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMMF	Indochina Media Memorial Foundation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KAF	Konrad Adenauer Foundation
KID	Khmer Institute of Democracy
KWVC	Khmer Women's Voice of Cambodia
KYA	Khmer Youth Association
LAC	Legal Aid of Cambodia
Licadho	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights
L&J	Legal and Judicial
MoC	Ministry of Commerce
MoEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoWVA	Ministry of Women and Veteran Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SAT	Sida Advisory Team
SEAPA	Southeast Asian Press Alliance
SEKA	Department for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian Assistance
Sida	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
TAF	The Asia Foundation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
Unicef	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	Women for Prosperity
WTO	World Trade Organisation

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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