SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ETHNIC MINORITY POVERTY REDUCTION IN MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS

FROM PROJECTS TO POLICIES

Do Thanh Trung
Department of Local Economy and Territory

Thai Nguyen, June 2014
STATUS OF MOUNTAINOUS REGION AND ETHNIC MINORITIES 1996-2010 (1)

- Under-developed socio-economic infrastructure
- Low level of production and cultivation
- Low education level
- Slash and burn cultivation practice,
- Big gap in living standard between urban and rural and mountainous areas
- Limited planning capacity of local staff
- Constraints in planning, management, decentralization and empowerment
STATUS OF MOUNTAINOUS REGION AND ETHNIC MINORITIES 1996-2010 (2)

• Hard living conditions of ethnic people compared with Kinh group:
  – In 2010: 14.6% of total population, but almost 50% of poor households in Vietnam;
  – According to VHLSS, many aspects of living standard of ethnic minorities are much lower than majority

• Therefore, many policies/ programs targeting poverty reduction for EM
POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAM 1996-2000

• Decision 135/1998/QĐ-TTg dated 31/7/1998 on approval of Socio-economic development program for extremely poor and difficult communes in mountainous and remote areas (Program 135);
• 11 NTPs in this period (Program 773/TTg dated 21/12/1994, Programs on Education and training, Health care, HIV/AIDS, Clean water and sanitation, Employment, Culture, Children health care, Drug prevention);
• ODA projects as CBRIP, NMPRP
CONTRAINTS IN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS (1)

- Just solve immediate issues, lack of strategic planning
- Designed and implemented on funding source
- Separate programs/projects for specific objectives, no comprehensive objective
- Lack of policy framework, strategic institution for poverty reduction programs
- Mainly focus on hunger elimination, then poverty reduction, therefore lack of sustainability
CONTRAIANTS IN POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS (2)

- Not appropriate approach in designing programs
- Centralized planning, top down, slow innovation
- Lack of institutional and legal framework, while limited capacity of staff
- Limited attention in M&E
- Overlaps, institutional constraints, particularly in collaboration, linkage and integration among programs
- Wide-spread targets, scattered resources, leading to low efficiency
- Mainly designed as grants and subsidies, rather than support to escape from poverty, leading to limited motivation
- Limited participation of local people, contribution of communities in implementation, M&E
DEMAND FOR INNOVATION OF POVERTY REDUCTION PROGRAMS 2001 - 2010

• Decentralization to local authorities
• Empowerment to local people
• Innovation in planning, bottom up, participatory, community driven
• Capacity building for authorities and people
• Facilitate participation and ownership of communities
• Transparency, integrity, accountability
• Sustainable poverty reduction
PILOTTING OF POLICIES (1)

• Projects for piloting: RIDEF-UNDP, CBRIP-WB, NMPRP-WB, ... with the focus on:
  – Participation of local communities (participation of people in planning and implementation process and decision-making)
  – Decentralization to commune level (projects owned by commune people committees)
  – Capacity building, empowerment to local authorities and people
  – Ownership of local authorities and people
PILOTING OF POLICIES (2)

- Transparency, integrity, accountability
- Strategically designed
- Strengthened M&E
ACHIEVEMENTS

- Projects owned by CPC (Program 135 – Circular 666/2001/TTLT/BKH-UBDTMN-TC-XD on guideline of mechanism on investment management and infrastructure construction for communes in P135);
- Innovation in planning;
- Transparency in resource allocation (Decision 210/2006/QĐ-TTg on principles, criteria and norms for investment allocation of state budget 2007 – 2010);
- Participation of communities (Decision 80/2005/QĐ-TTG on community monitoring mechanism);
- Grass-root democracy (Ordinance 34/2007/PL-UBTVQH11 on democracy at communes and towns);
- Strategically designed programs with specified objectives of poverty reduction (Program 135, 30a…).
INSTITUTIONALIZATION

• Institutionalization of policies and mechanism based on achievements and lessons from pilot projects
• Integrating and mainstreaming achieved results and lessons into NTPs (Program 135, 134, 30A, …);
• Mobilize resources for NTPs with focus on the poor and ethnic people
• Allocating resources for implementation, avoiding wide-spreading investment
ORIENTATION 2011-2020

- Strategic orientation of poverty reduction policies and resources with strong linkage with new rural development
- Access on process in design of programs
- Lesson drawn and pilot methodology in programs to scale up to NTPs
- Institutionalization of lessons from pilot projects in sustainable NTPs
EXPECTED OUTCOMES (1)

- Community driven planning
- Sustainable agriculture production, linking groups and commodity production
- Improved infrastructure for production and trade, ownership of local people with construction, O&M
- Improved income for the poor through improved livelihood opportunities
- Innovation in production, linking farmers and the poor with markets
EXPECTED OUTCOMES (2)

• Promoting ownership, active participation in poverty reduction
• Innovation in design of program with focus on identification of target groups, packaged support or conditional support to promote their ownership
• Long enough support time frame to ensure to meet poverty reduction target
• Capacity building for local staff and people in implementation, M&E
RECOMMENDATIONS TO DONORS

• Vietnam become MIC but poverty is still big challenge, particularly for EM
• Development partners consider to support:
  – Innovation in policies and mechanism related to poverty reduction
  – Institutionalization and scale-up of good practices, lessons, experiences achieved in the past 2 decades
  – New sectors important to poverty reduction as: CC, disaster management, administration strengthening at grass-root level
THANK YOU!