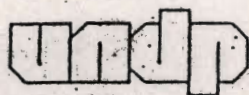


UNITED NATIONS



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UNDP/UNCHS/ Project VIE/86/020



A joint project assessment

October 1991

Development Workshop & GRET, and Erik Whist



Credits

VIE/86/020 : Assistance to Human Settlements Planning and Development in Rural Areas

Funding: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UN Executing Agency: UNCHS (Habitat) - Nairobi, Kenya

Government Implementing Agency: CERPAD (National Centre for Rural Planning and Development)

Ministry of Construction, Hanoi, Vietnam

Sub-contract : Appropriate Technology Transfer in Construction

Sub-contractor (consortium of NGO's): Development Workshop - Lauzerte, France
GRET - Paris, France

Consultant in Social Planning Techniques

Erik Whist, Scanteam International, Oslo, Norway

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One year has passed since the start of the project activities, and, for the overall VIE/86/020 Project, this time marks an important stage in the development of the programme, and even more significantly, in the development of CERPAD's capacity to undertake the tasks it is expected to address in assisting Vietnam's rural development in a rapidly changing international economic context.

Actions are now on-going in the Ninh Van Commune in Ha Nam Ninh Province, whilst in Vinh Phu Province the planning and commune selection process (with the assistance of Social Planning Consultant Erik Whist) has been completed, and two communes now identified (B2 & B3): Thang Son Commune in Than Son District, and Xuan Vien Commune in Yen Lap District. Here, those activities which take place under the guidance of the sub-contractors are now starting in these two communes, and this therefore represents the first time that an entire sequence of actions, from commune selection through to the choice of action to be undertaken, will take place in one province. The methodology handled until now in two parts - by the planning consultant for the first part, and by the sub-contract for the latter - can be seen as a complete process.

The following report outlines a number of changes that the authors feel need to take place in the way CERPAD operates, if it is to meet the challenge of helping rural development in Vietnam. Some of the changes will, by the time of reading, have already begun, but the process of adopting new working methods and a fresh working style takes time.

This report reflects our shared assessment of the present situation of the project, its achievements and future perspectives. These views were discussed extensively with Dr. Thanh, Director of CERPAD, and CERPAD staff and Mr. Bob Healy, Chief Technical Advisor, from 30 September through October, a period during which we were both carrying out our work with CERPAD. The framework for these discussions had been the objectives of the project.

The project went through an important phase, when, for the first time, the methodology of working that had been developed at CERPAD with the consultant and with the sub-contractors was being together as one single operation, in the province of Vinh Phu. Since the start of the project, CERPAD has made great developments, but particularly, in view of the changing situation and the new demands of a rapidly changing world, much remains to be done in order that CERPAD can fulfil its mandate.

2. The project objectives

The Development Objective of the project is to provide balanced growth in rural and sustainable conditions throughout Vietnam by assisting in the further development of human resources in rural areas of the country, so as to enable the rural population to enjoy the same quality of life as those who live in the towns.

The immediate objectives of the project are:

1. To improve capacity within the National Centre for Rural Planning and Development of the Ministry of Construction for Human Development, Planning in rural areas and for the sustainability of programming and funding of rural construction.

Chapter 2. Project assessment - October 1991

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3. The co-ordination of infrastructure development activities for the up-grading of living conditions in the 'three' pilot communes as models for replication of the planning process and the appropriate technology advisory service.
4. Increased knowledge transfer to staff of the MOC on current planning and technological practices related to human settlements development in rural areas.

3. Historical background.

At the time of formulation, the project envisaged an operation using, initially, two institutions, the Institute for Urban and Rural Planning (IURP) of the MOC, and the Transfer Centre for Appropriate Technology in Construction (CATTIC). Starting with work in the Group A. communes initiated in the preparation phase of the VIE/86/020 project, and thus dating from the time when the project envisaged working on a commune by commune basis, a working practice was established: IURP prepared a detailed commune level master plan, whilst taking into major consideration the technologies which CATTIC dealt with; CATTIC then implemented these technologies in the commune, as a direct action involving quite intensive site supervision. To a great extent, choice of technology was determined by CATTIC capacities, and not to a sufficient extent by commune needs and resources.

In late 1990, at the start of the VIE/96/020 Project proper, the creation of the National Centre for Rural Planning and Development (CERPAD) in 1990, (envisaged in the project document as an offshoot of IURP), created in practice an institutional relationship with CATTIC somewhat different from that foreseen in the project document, which had previously been seen as a collaborative effort between the two organizations. In effect, whilst some staff have been seconded to CERPAD from CATTIC, CATTIC has not, since the start of the main project phase, been actively involved in the VIE/96/020 project (nor with the VIE/86/020 sub-contract for whom they were the designated partners), and CERPAD has thus worked on its own, and without a clear institutional structure to support it. The practice of working with detailed master plans for each commune, followed by action implementation with the direct involvement of the CERPAD technical staff, continued.

This approach was only feasible as long as:

- a) CERPAD was only dealing with a very small number of communes without a view to replicate an approach on a larger scale;
- b) the choices of technology would be in accordance with the limited range of expert skills available within the Centre.

4. New operational perspective.

At the start of VIE/86/020 sub-contract in October 1990 DW & GRET carried out an evaluation of the work carried out in the Group A. Communes. They concluded that insufficient attention had been paid to resource analysis, comparative costing analysis, and feasibility analysis of different technical options based on appropriate performance criteria. Thus whilst some decision about technologies to be applied in Group A may have been the right ones, they were scarcely supported by a thorough evaluation of the context and options. A practical skill could be demonstrated, but the method by which it had been selected could not.

Similarly, in his first mission in September 1990, the consultant in social planning techniques also carried out an evaluation of CERPAD's work in the Group A Communes. It was pointed to the fact that CERPAD has a national mandate, which may not be attained through the direct promotional involvement of CERPAD in the development of individual communes.

Two steps have been taken to address these situations.

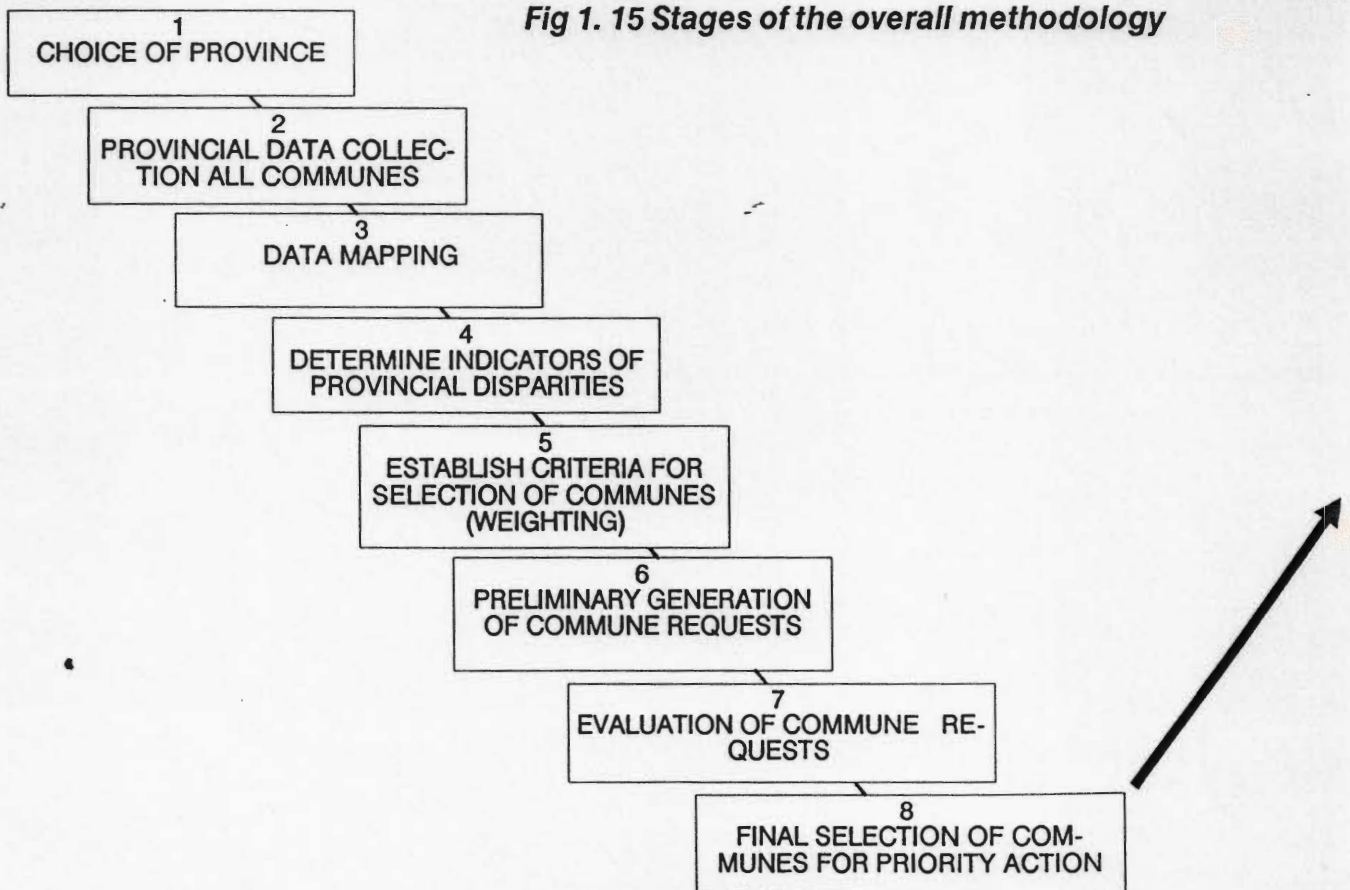
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Secondly, the sub-contractors, DW & GRET, initiated the development in CERPAD of a working method for the identification, at commune level, of needs, resources and potential solutions; and the development of methods for the subsequent transfer of selected and proven solutions to solve identified problems.

5. Project work from October 1990 to October 1991.

In the period from October 1990 to October 1991 CERPAD has developed the Rural Infrastructure Planning and Implementation Methodology in accordance with the new

Fig 1. 15 Stages of the overall methodology



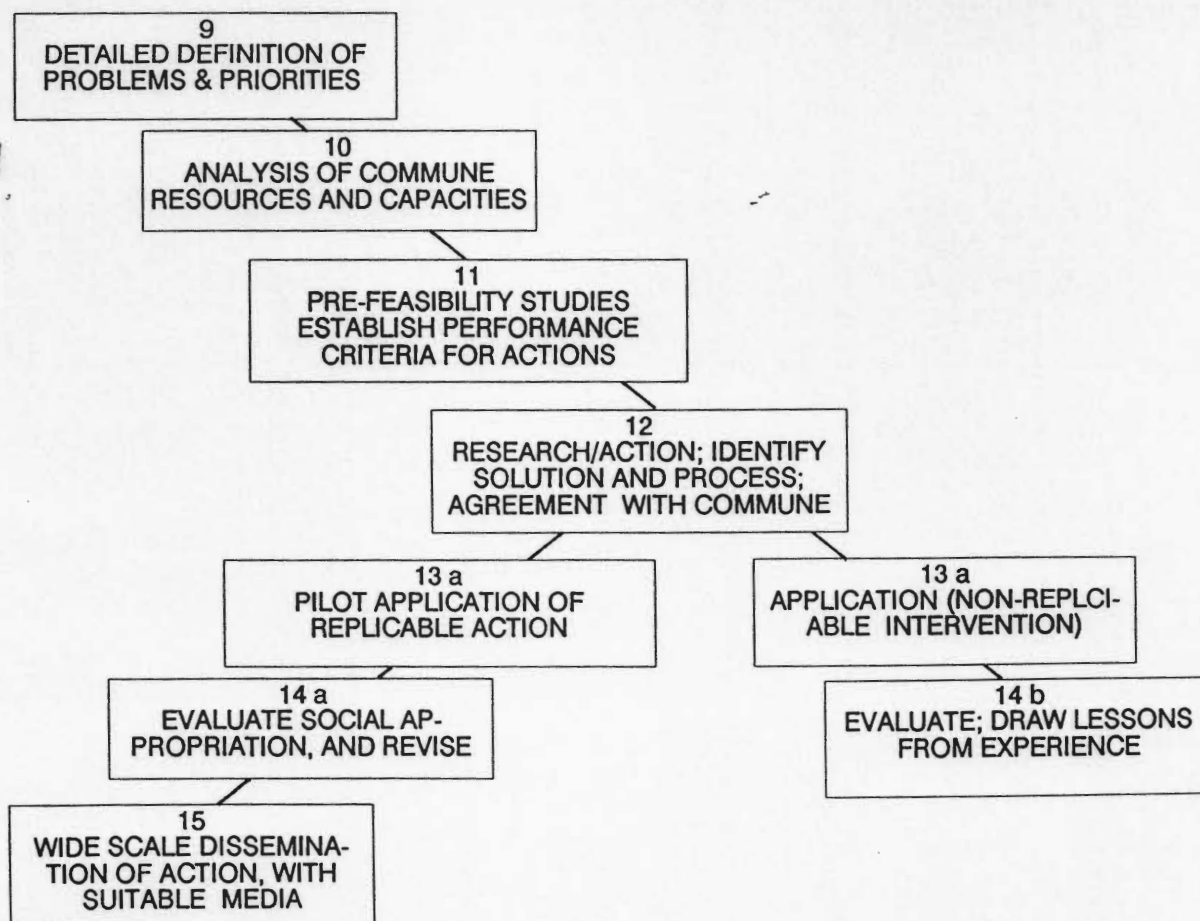
orientations explained in section 3 above. It has done so in particular through two sets of activities:

- a) Selection Process of Communes for Rural Infrastructure Planning and Implementation in Vinh Phu Province. Through this work CERPAD has developed a methodology combining database, mapping and analysis of provincial disparities with generation and analysis of commune requests. The methodology follows the steps recommended in the mission reports from the consultant in social planning techniques and is described extensively in the paper presented at the Vinh Phu Workshop in September 1991.
- b) Action in Ninh Van commune, Ha Nam Ninh Province, where CERPAD staff have started working through a process, not only of selecting and applying techniques and actions, but also one that has helped them eliminate in-appropriate actions. There have been steps towards a greater diversity in the actions that have been identified. The process has followed the stages outlined in the sub-contractor's Inception Report, November 1990.

Through these two pilot activities, CERPAD has acquired experience and technical know how for the application of a complete methodology. This methodology now clearly consists of two phases as shown in figure 1.

Recommendation 1:

It is very important that the Rural Infrastructure Planning and Implementation Methodology is applied as whole and in the sequence shown in figure 1. If this is not adhered to, the project will not have achieved its immediate objectives.



6. An expanding programme

Since the end of 1990 CERPAD has seen an expansion in its activities. Work on the three original group A Communes (excluding Do Son) has continued. To implement new operational approaches with the start of the main VIE/86/020 Project and the associated sub-contract, work was proposed in three more communes (Group B), two in Vinh Phu and one in Ha Nam Ninh province. There are now strong indications that work on additional communes in Vinh Phu will be requested in 1992, and that major actions will be launched in Quang Nam Da Nang province. This situation represents a major challenge to CERPAD and will require CERPAD to review its entire work modality. It reinforces the fact that the 'direct involvement' approach is not sustainable on a large scale operation: CERPAD has to delegate.

Recommendation 2:

Training and development of provincial and district counterparts now becomes a major objective for the Centre. These local counterparts, working in the communes, will in turn be supported by CERPAD technical assistance and advice.

7. Future perspectives for CERPAD

As a consequence of the shifts in the mode of operation of CERPAD and the increasing work load, CERPAD will have to undergo some major changes both regarding the definition of its tasks as well as the institutional structure and the organization of its staff.

7.1. Overall methodology

CERPAD is now gaining increasing experience in the use of a methodology which includes a complete cycle from planning through to implementation. As it is repeated, this process will become easier and faster. Familiarity with the process must also lead to a confident ability to explain each step accurately to their counterparts in the rural areas.

7.2. Selection of communes

With the increased availability of good statistical data in Vietnam, the selection process should become more streamlined. CERPAD will not have to undertake extensive data collection activities since they will be able to make full use of the recent census data.

7.3. Focus on correct action identification in communes

Although CERPAD is gaining experience in following a structured analysis and feasibility process, there is nevertheless still an apparent bias towards applying familiar technical options. In order for CERPAD to assume its role as a national Centre providing an Advisory Service, it must be able to take the broadest view possible when identifying possible actions through a step by step process. Action should be seen to include management, organization and finance aspects as much as it might include technology. In addition, at the identification stage, the Centre should not feel itself limited or constrained by its own in-house technical expertise.

Recommendation 3:

The emphasis should be placed on developing CERPAD's comprehensive capability to identify the right action to solve a problem, and to reject those that are not appropriate to a given situation.

7.4. From direct implementation to training and institution building

CERPAD is now shifting from being a practical implementation organization to become an institution dedicated to developing provincial and district skills, and through them, commune level skills aimed at developing rural infrastructure, productive capacity and living conditions. Training becomes a key activity, whether through on-the-job training or formal training through workshops in Hanoi or in the provinces. The technical dossiers, which are developing out of the practical experience of work in the communes, now serve as the basis of technical guidance for action on the ground and as the substance of training material. As such these dossiers must become an example to be followed in terms of standards for technical precision and clarity of communication.

Recommendation 4:

CERPAD should make a major effort to strengthen its training capacity and to develop a high quality of training support material. A major effort should be made to develop technical dossiers etc. in such a way that they may be used as training material.

7.5. From limited technical knowledge to a broad technical advisory service

Through its work CERPAD has acquired considerable technical knowledge in the fields they have been working. In the future CERPAD should therefore be able to give technical advice on related subjects. However, it must also follow that CERPAD will not necessarily have in-house technical expertise to resolve all identified problems. CERPAD will instead need to have the ability and means to draw on the skills and resources of other institutions available in Vietnam and failing that, abroad. As such, a key 'transfer' role for CERPAD, and for those that it trains, is to correctly identify an action, and then find the right resource person able to provide the required assistance.

Recommendation 5:

Technology identification, whether by District counterparts or by CERPAD, must not be limited by the practical technical expertise available within CERPAD. CERPAD has to increase its general knowledge of what skills and techniques are available or are developing in Vietnam.

7.6. Balancing the professional strength of CERPAD.

Whilst in the past CERPAD has had a strong planning and technology bias, it has been weak in other sectors.

CERPAD needs to develop its capacity to provide guidance about financial management, whether at commune level, or higher up in managing the funding of rural development operations.

CERPAD also needs to develop its capability in the field of communication and media development, both to transmit information to the target population, and to clearly inform national and provincial decision makers and donors about the role it plays in rural development.

CERPAD is already developing a capacity to provide resource analysis services, and, at present, particularly for water quality analysis and for soil analysis. These represent services which can be provided to districts on demand, as well as providing support to the resource analysis phase of work in a commune.

Recommendation 6:

CERPAD needs to complement its present staff profile with additional skills.

7.7. Changes in organizational structure of CERPAD

As indicated above in section 3, CERPAD's structure has involved two somewhat distinct elements, the planners and the technicians. In line with a new method of operation, the institutional structure of CERPAD now needs to have at its core a team of planners working in close cooperation with an 'action identification team', both well skilled in training. This core element needs to be supported by the technical, financial and communication expertise indicated above. Within the new framework an effort needs to be made to ensure that each person understand his/her role and its relationship to the overall structure.

Recommendation 7:

CERPAD needs to clearly establish and 'action identification team', and to designate the role of each staff member within the new structure.

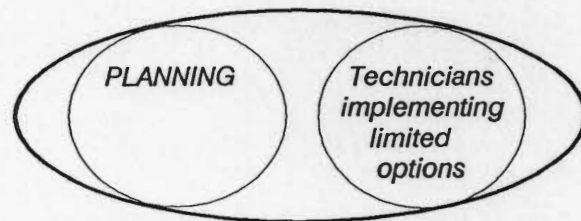
7.8. Requirements for strengthening of CERPAD staff

To achieve the above targets considerable time will have to be dedicated to developing and applying training skills. The process is slow, involving, as it must, 'on the job' training. This will inevitably be the most demanding challenge for both technical assistance and CERPAD staff.

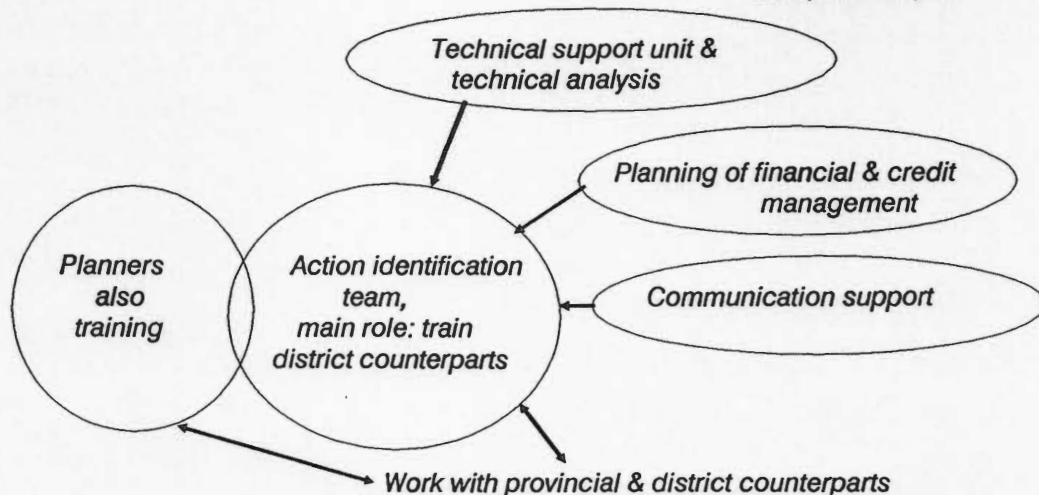
Recommendation 8:

CERPAD staff must recognize that the Centre can only fulfil its mandate by delegating tasks through the people it trains and that this requires patience.

CERPAD - Previous organigramme

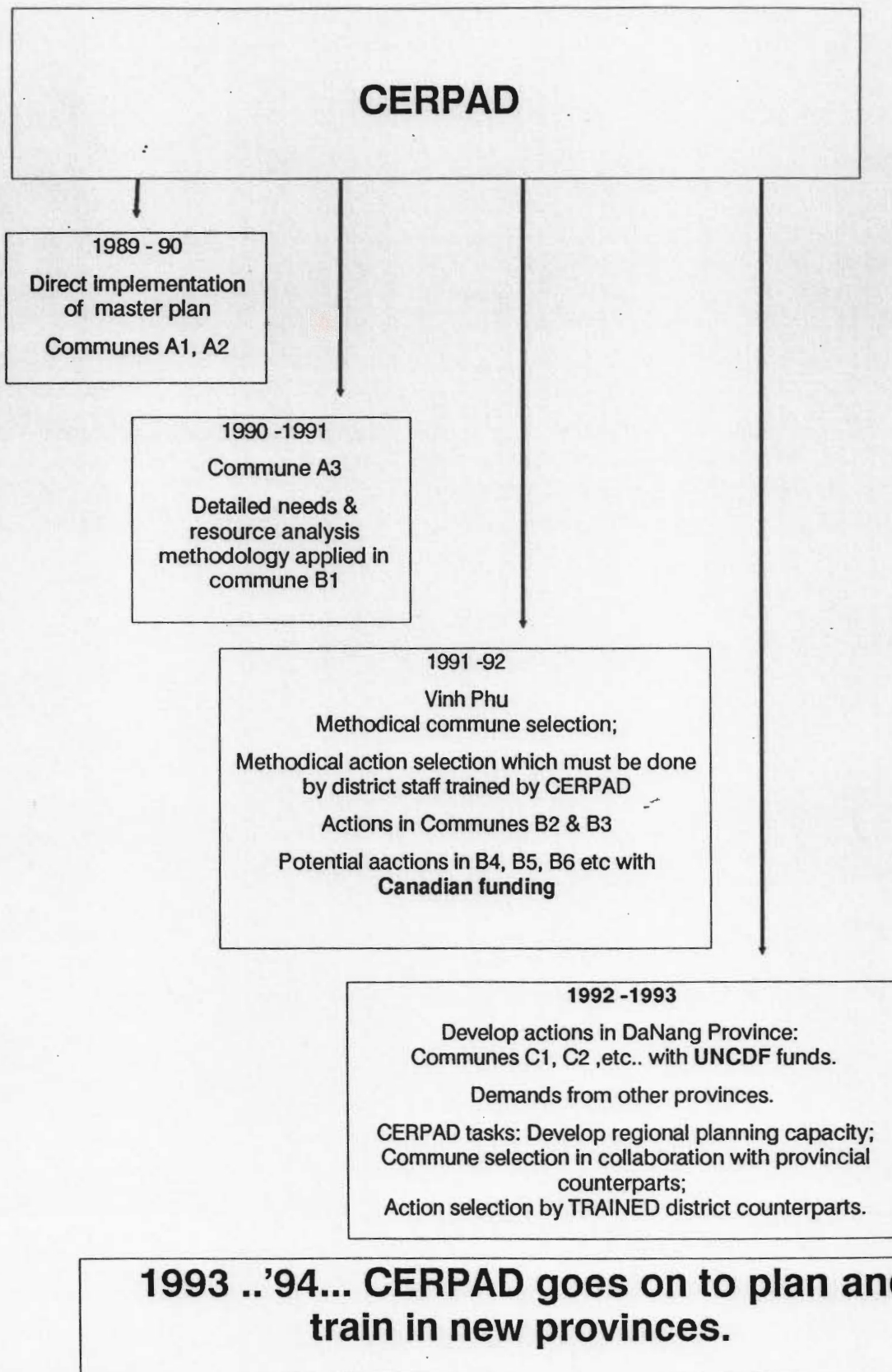


IBM; CATTIC; ??



CERPAD - revised organigramme to meet new tasks

*CERPAD - development of actions: 1989 to 1992
from direct implementation to training counterparts*

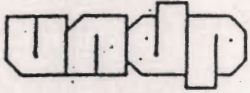


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Two steps have been taken to address these situations.

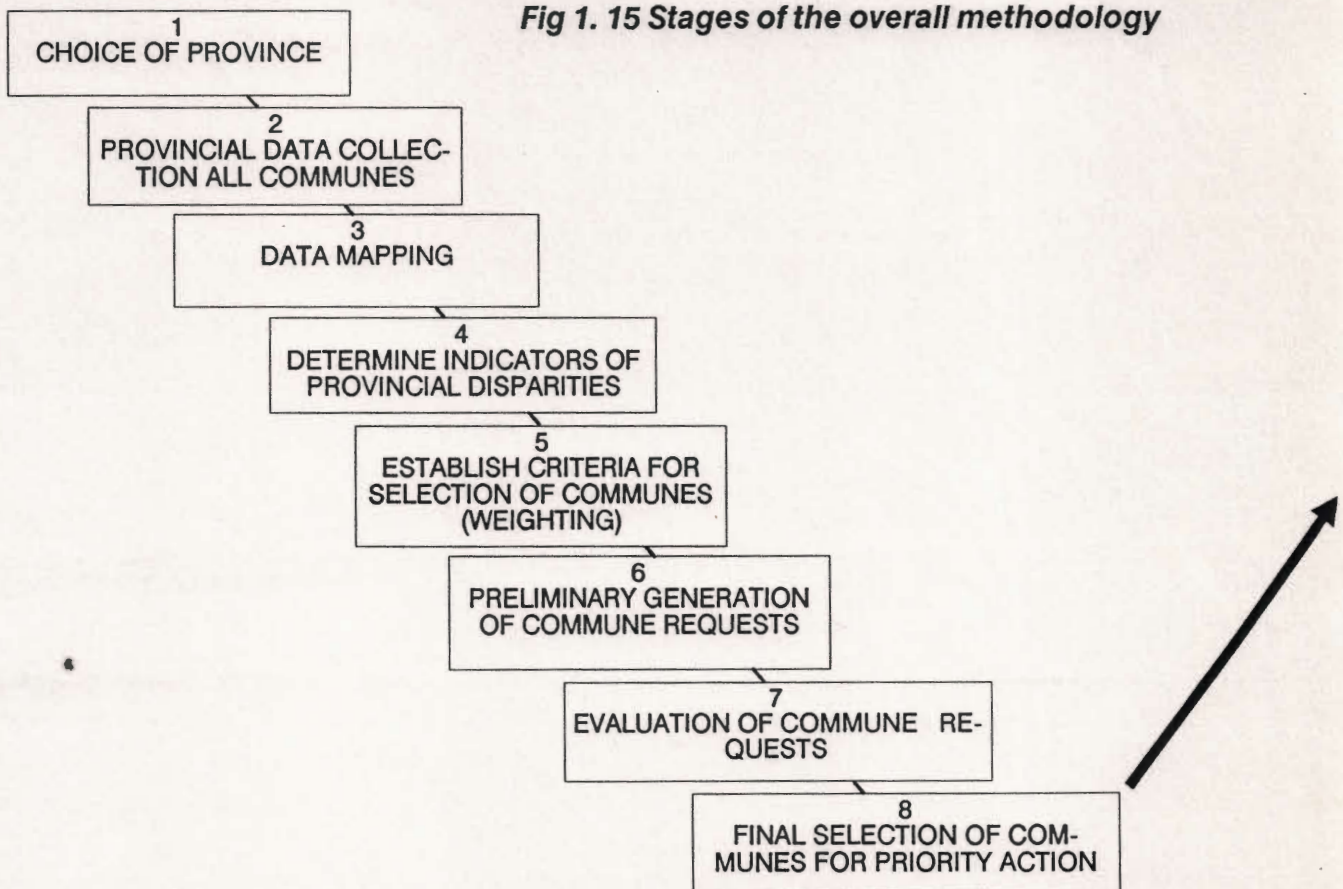
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Fig 1. 15 Stages of the overall methodology



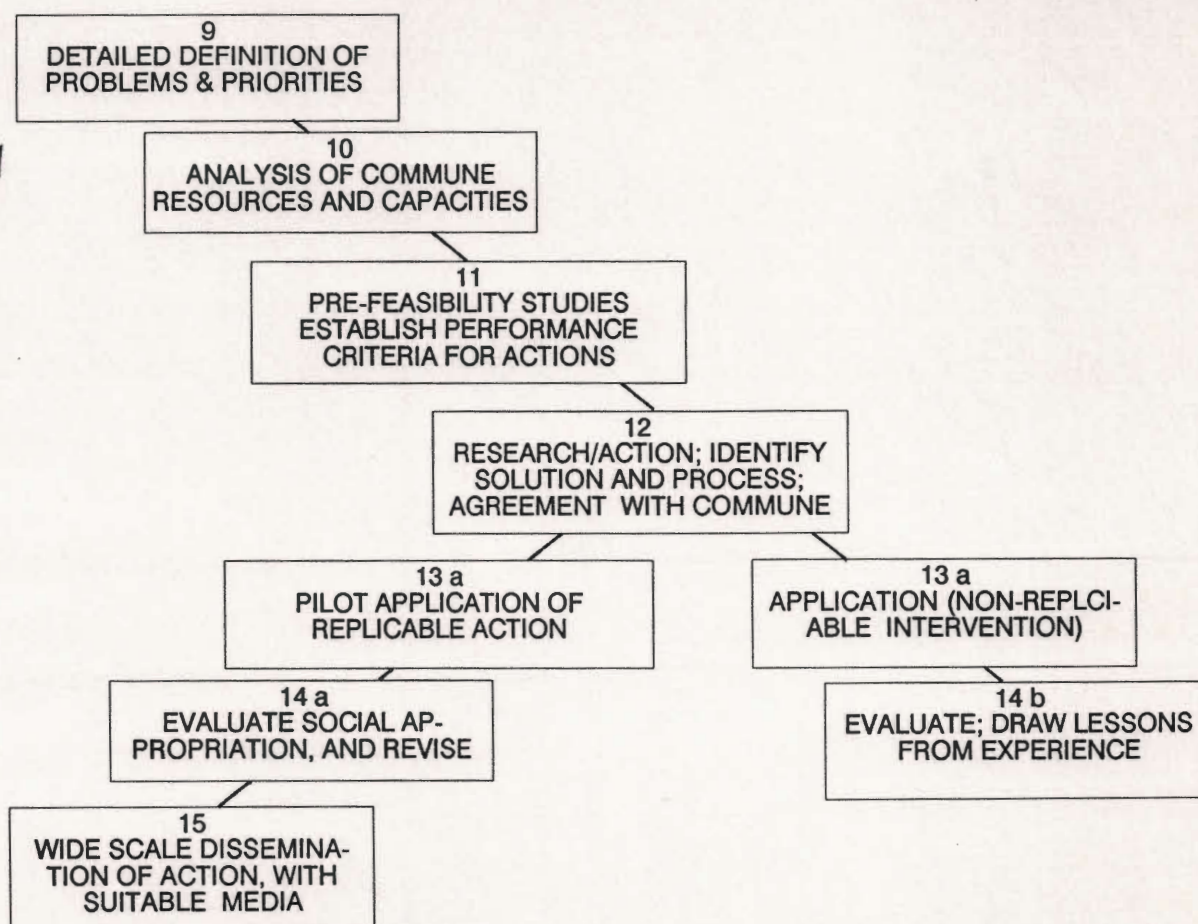
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7.7. Changes in organizational structure of CERPAD

As indicated above in section 3, CERPAD's structure has involved two somewhat distinct elements, the planners and the technicians. In line with a new method of operation, the institutional structure of CERPAD now needs to have at its core a team of planners working in close cooperation with an 'action identification team', both well skilled in training. This core element needs to be supported by the technical, financial and communication expertise indicated above. Within the new framework an effort needs to be made to ensure that each person understand his/her role and its relationship to the overall structure.

Recommendation 7:

CERPAD needs to clearly establish and 'action identification team', and to designate the role of each staff member within the new structure.

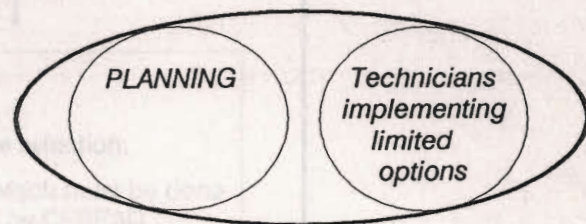
7.8. Requirements for strengthening of CERPAD staff

To achieve the above targets considerable time will have to be dedicated to developing and applying training skills. The process is slow, involving, as it must, 'on the job' training. This will inevitably be the most demanding challenge for both technical assistance and CERPAD staff.

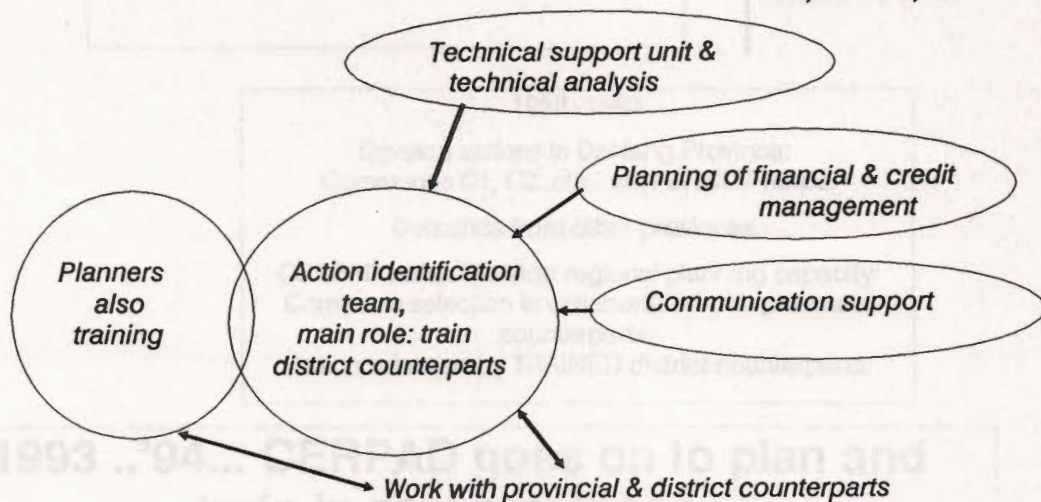
Recommendation 8:

CERPAD staff must recognize that the Centre can only fulfil its mandate by delegating tasks through the people it trains and that this requires patience.

CERPAD - Previous organigramme



IBM; CATTIC; ??



CERPAD - revised organigramme to meet new tasks

1. Preface

This report is an extract from the Sub-Contract 3rd Interim Report. It is also a joint summary of the project VIE/86/020 written by John Norton, (on behalf of Development Workshop and GRET), by Erik Whist, consultant in Social Planning Techniques.

One year has passed since the start of the project activities, and, for the overall VIE/86/020 Project, this time marks an important stage in the development of the programme, and even more significantly, in the development of CERPAD's capacity to undertake the tasks it is expected to address in assisting Vietnam's rural development in a rapidly changing international economic context.

Actions are now on-going in the Ninh Van Commune in Ha Nam Ninh Province, whilst in Vinh Phu Province the planning and commune selection process (with the assistance of Social Planning Consultant Erik Whist) has been completed, and two communes now identified (B2 & B3): Thang Son Commune in Than Son District, and Xuan Vien Commune in Yen Lap District. Here, those activities which take place under the guidance of the sub-contractors are now starting in these two communes, and this therefore represents the first time that an entire sequence of actions, from commune selection through to the choice of action to be undertaken, will take place in one province. The methodology handled until now in two parts - by the planning consultant for the first part, and by the sub-contract for the latter - can be seen as a complete process.

The following report outlines a number of changes that the authors feel need to take place in the way CERPAD operates, if it is to meet the challenge of helping rural development in Vietnam. Some of the changes will, by the time of reading, have already begun, but the process of adopting new working methods and a fresh working style takes time.