

FINAL REPORT 2018-2023

STEERING GROUP

MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIP

The following requirements for the reporting of funds granted within the scope of a Municipal Partnership are applicable pursuant to agreement between Sida and the International Center for Local Democracy (ICLD).

General Information

Steering groups within the Municipal Partnerships which are financed with funds from Sida and arranged by ICLD must be reported on before a subsidy is paid out to the Swedish partner which has reached agreement with ICLD.

The report must follow the instructions below and the budget which has been granted and which was included in the decision.

The ICLD's overall objective is to promote the development of sustainable democracy at local and regional levels. A municipal partnership shall contribute to increased citizen influence. This can be by strengthening local governments within one or more of the following core areas:

- Equity/inclusion
- Participation
- Transparency
- Possibility to demand accountability

Read more here: <https://icld.se/static/files/new-results-framework-1-january-2016.pdf>

The ICLD Municipal Partnership Programme also contributes to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Global Goals, that aim to end all forms of poverty.

The Agenda 2030 Global Goals are universal, inclusive and indivisible. Furthermore, they recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that, amongst other things, achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls and promote human rights.

Report content

Write your answer beneath each question. If you refer to and include appendices, you must still provide your answer beneath each question.

1. Reference number and participating parties. Always refer in all correspondence to the reference number the Steering Group received from ICLD.

2017-0044

2. Coordinator - State name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address of those responsible in both countries.

Project leader Piteå	Project manager An Giang province	Coordinator
Bo Wiberg	Phạm Ngọc Xuân	Trịnh Thị Kim Vô
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3. Summary in English and Swedish – *About 15 lines on the Steering Group -- activities, results and conclusions.*

The Steering Committee is composed of politicians and officials who have an interest in the area and have extensive networks related to the area. They will closely follow the work during the time of the project. In addition to the stipulated meetings twice a year, the steering group in respective country, if necessary, will also act as a speaking partner and guidance body during the project. Some of the members in the steering group will also be involved in the project and be bridges to other stakeholders such as Universities, which are represented, in both the Vietnamese and Swedish part of the steering group.

The Steering Group are responsible for connecting with the steering group in Piteå, managing the implementation of the project's activities under the commitment with ICLD. In 2018, the parties met, once in An Giang (in March 2018) and once in Piteå (in September 2018). In December 2018, both parties also reviewed and evaluated the set objectives achieved in 2018 and planned for activities in 2019.

The Covid-19 pandemic affected some activities of the project. The An Giang – Sweden Project management Unit (PMU) and other project groups reported implementation progress and problems to the Steering Committee and the Monitoring group. Then they have met to assess the level of influence and gave solutions.

The PMU discussed with project leaders (Mr. Bo Wiberg) and steering group of Piteå. Coordinator also sent email to ICLD to ask guidance which then was translated into Vietnamese and forwarded to all project members. ICLD decided that the project could be prolonged to May 31, 2023.

As a result, the set objectives under the commitment with ICLD involved in the organization and implementation of the Steering Group were conducted in a timely manner. The effectiveness of the project was raised and extended in accordance with the objectives of the action plan.

4. Background – Briefly describe the background of the partnership (*must relate to the background text in the application*).

The partnership started with a visit from a Vietnamese delegation to Sweden in 2010 when a representative from Piteå met with them at an energy conference and presented the ongoing work carried out in this area in Piteå. The interests from both parties matched. This resulted in the project “Piteå - An Giang sustainable municipalities” (Dnr.2011-0110 + 2011)

and the project “Action plan for utilizing rice waste” (Dnr.2014-0065+0063). There was also an interest in Piteå to work in this area in a more global perspective.

To submit a new application is a result of the ongoing work due to that are more things that need to be done and we can utilize the gained experiences from these past years. From the target groups in Vietnam, it is expressed a need of having a new project in order to take further steps towards the implementation of the action plan.

5. Results

a) *Describe the extent to which the Steering Group was able to support the Project(s) in one or more of the four ICLD core areas. For example, support refers to new or developed policies/expression of will/decisions/steering documents in the international partner municipality:*

- Equity/inclusion

The implementers of Steering Monitoring committee (SC) and Monitoring committee (MC) were chosen based on their knowledge, capacity, skills, experiences, responsibilities and availability. The core group are also been part in the ongoing project and gained valuable experiences during these years. They are not discriminated against in terms of gender, religion, ethnicity, property, etc.

All ideas were respected and reviewed from the very beginning as writing new proposal, building detail plans or writing reports. Information and reports of the project were sent to all project participants and uploaded on the website of the project so anyone could access and followed what have been done.

Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee members are both government officials and politicians. Therefore, they can make changes in policies or propose policy changes to the Central Government (at congress meeting).

Politicians of An Giang province decided and asked all Departments, local authorities to invite citizens in areas for getting ideas, comments for new decision on policies, strategies and planning.

Citizens are free to raise questions and require explanation from politicians and officials. All People’s Committee and Departments allocates one day to welcome citizens, answer queries and handle complaints of citizens directly (school fees of their children, land disputes, wage policies, etc). They contact with leaders of related agencies and express their point of view and that is what happening in entire political system of An Giang.

An Giang PPC (SC) also developed website that is updated news, new decisions, new political documents, working schedule of each agency/department/people’s committee so everyone can access information and know who take responsibility.

- Participation

As the top unit of An Giang, leaders of People’s committee of An Giang province (PPC) have been members of the partnership from 2012. In An Giang, they have had a big steering committee for two partnerships (Piteå and Vaxjo) including many leaders (politicians) from People’s Committee, Departments of local authorities. Head of that is top leader of

An Giang province. They met two times per year to ensure that municipal partnership program can get objectives as well as contribute into agenda 2030. In which there is specific groups in charge of Piteå and An Giang partnership.

Besides, there is core group of the project. It is monitoring committee including four members who are chosen based on specific criteria in accordance with their qualifications, professions, project management capacity, the knowledge of Vietnamese laws and regulations. These four members are the provincial chosen representatives whose work monitored by the provincial people committee of An Giang.

• *Members of the Monitoring committee (MC) in An Giang include:*

From 31/10/2018 to 15/12/2019

- Nguyễn Thanh Bình, vice chairman of People's Committee of An Giang province
- Phạm Ngọc Xuân, director of Project Management Unit (2018-2019)
- Đinh Thị Việt Huỳnh, Secretary of the Châu Thành District Party Committee (2018-2019)
- Nguyễn Thị Vân Hà, HCMC Natural resources and Environment

From 16/12/2019 to 2023

- Trần Anh Thư, vice chairman of People's Committee of An Giang province (2019-2023)
- Trần Thanh Tâm, Deputy Director of Industry and Trade Department (2019-2023)
- Nguyễn Thị Vân Hà, HCMC Natural resources and Environment
- Phan Thị Yến Nhi, Deputy Director of Science and Technology Department (2019-2020)

• *Members of the Steering committee (SC) in An Giang include:*

• From 31/10/2018 to 15/12/2019

- Nguyễn Thanh Bình, vice chairman of People's Committee of An Giang province - head of the Steering Committee in An Giang
- Võ Hùng Dũng, Deputy Director of Natural Resources and Environment Department, Deputy Chairman of An Giang – Sweden cooperation program, Deputy head of the Steering Committee in An Giang
- Đinh Thị Việt Huỳnh, Secretary of the Châu Thành District Party Committee
- Tăng Phú An, Director of Science and Technology Department
- Nguyễn Sĩ Lâm, Director of Agriculture and Rural Development Department
- Mã Lan Xuân, deputy chief of the Office of the PPC
- Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Lan, Deputy Director of Finance Department
- Võ Thị Nhiệm, Deputy Director of Department of Foreign Affairs
- Trần Thanh Tâm, Deputy Director of Industry and Trade Department
- Võ Thị Minh Kiều, Deputy Director of Department of Planning and investment
- Nguyễn Thanh Hải, Deputy Director of Information and Communication Department
- Võ Văn Thắng, Rector of An Giang University

- Cù Minh Trọng, Vice Chairman of People's Committee of Châu Thành district

- **From 16/12/2019 to 2023**

- Trần Anh Thư, Vice Chairman of the PPC, head of the Steering Committee in An Giang;
- Nguyễn Việt Trí, Director of Natural Resources and Environment Department, Deputy Chairman of An Giang – Sweden cooperation program, Deputy head of the Steering Committee in An Giang;
- Nguyễn Sĩ Lâm, Director of Agriculture and Rural Development Department;
- Huỳnh Công Huấn, Director of Department of Foreign Affairs;
- Phan Thị Yến Nhi, Deputy Director of Science and technology Department;
- Nguyễn Thị Ngọc Lan, Deputy Director of Finance Department;
- Trần Thanh Tâm, Deputy Director of Industry and Trade Department;
- Nguyễn Thanh Hải, Deputy Director of Information and Communication Department;
- Võ Văn Thắng, Rector of An Giang University;

- ***Members of Information and Communication group of the An Giang - Piteå partnership include:***

- Nguyễn Thanh Hải, Deputy Director of Information and Communication Department;
 - Lý Thị Thanh Tuyền, Deputy Head of Economic Division, Office of the PPC;
 - Phạm Ngọc Xuân, An Giang – Sweden Project Management unit;
 - Phạm Trung Lương, Deputy director of An Giang TV;
- The Information and Communication group was established in 2019.

- ***Members of Assistant team of the An Giang - Piteå partnership (2018 -2023):***

The Assistant team is responsible for assisting the Steering Committee, the Monitoring group and the An Giang – Sweden Project management Unit (PMU) in implementing project activities; at the same time, monitor and synthesize periodic reports on the implementation results to the Steering Committee. Specific tasks of the Assistant Team are assigned by the Steering Committee, include:

- Phạm Ngọc Xuân, An Giang – Sweden Project Management unit;
- Lý Thị Thanh Tuyền, Deputy Head of Economic Division, Office of the PPC;
- Trần Hiến Phương, Head of Environment protection agency, Natural Resources and Environment Department;
- Huỳnh Văn Thái, Head of Water resource and Climate change Division, Natural Resources and Environment Department;
- Hồ Thị Kim Anh, Deputy Head of non-income-generating administration Division, Finance Department;
- Nguyễn Ngọc Mộng Kha, Deputy Head of Science management Division, Department of Science and Technology;
- Nguyễn Văn Phúc, Deputy Head of International Division, Department of Foreign Affairs;
- Nguyễn Minh Trang, Deputy Head of Science-Technology-Environment Division, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Cao Phan Tâm Yên, Deputy Head of Industry Management Division, Department of Industry and Trade;
- Lê Kim Duyên, Deputy Head of Business Division, Department of Planning and investment;

- Trần Trường Giang, Informatics Center, Information and Communication Department;
- Đinh Việt Luân, Office of the PPC;
- Đoàn Đức Định, Head of Division of Agriculture and Rural Development of Châu Thành district;
- Nguyễn Công Kha, Biotech Center, Department of Science and Technology;
- Nguyễn Trần Thiện Khánh, An Giang University.

• **Members of Advisory Board include:**

- Nguyễn Thị Vân Hà, HCMC Natural resources and Environment (for An Giang - Piteå project);
- Nguyễn Trần Nhẫn Tánh, An Giang University (for An Giang - Vaxjo project).
- **Hồ Việt Hiệp, Chairman of An Giang Business association.**

• Members of the steering group in Piteå include:

- Brith Fäldt, Opposition leader and chairman of the group
- Anders Lundkvist, deputy mayor
- Bo Wiberg, project leader
- Åsa Wikman, head of department of Head of Environmental and health protection
- Jan Dahl, professor LTU

• Transparency

From the beginning of the partnership program project members of both sides were extremely straightforward and transparent in sharing information. Members are selected to participate and clearly assigned from the beginning via meetings and administrative documents. In An Giang, the Project Management Unit, the Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and the consulting group as well as other project members are assigned specific tasks in writing (Decision of the Provincial People's Committee). Most of the participating members have joined the project since 2012 and are all government civil servants. Implementing and ensuring transparency is also political mission and responsibility of each individual.

All information is publicly available (costs, resources, difficulties, advantages, ...). The project management Unit jointly coordinates and proposes and reports progress to project members for discussion, so that all members know about project activities and decisions.

The counterpart funds of the An Giang project are allocated and strictly managed in accordance with the law. The progress and results of project activities must be summarized and reported to the Provincial People's Committee, Steering Committee, Monitoring Committee and other project members in writing according to regulations. All information of planning and detailed activities were openly discussed and build from contribution of all project participants and target groups via internal meetings.

The steering committee has practiced transparency from planning to implementing process. Project members of An Giang province have publicly announced the strengths and weaknesses of the province to discuss together when writing new project outlines. Challenges

and lessons learned are very interested and shared honestly at the monitoring group meeting, especially policies to ensure democracy and transparency in the project.

Vietnam has laws to fight corruption and promote democracy and transparency. As the leader, also the politician and the steering Committee's member, they actively disseminated the Central policies to each agency and staff. Transparency about information and changes in dialogue with citizens has been increasingly concerned. Politicians came to each commune for meeting with citizens. It is one of the duties of the delegates of the People's Council, as stipulated in the Law on Organization of the People's Council and People's Committee. The People's Council deputies through local authorities organized meetings with local citizens to collect opinions, listen to their thoughts and wishes. Doing well the meeting with citizens, promptly solving legitimate opinions, recommendations, aspirations and frustrations of them will contribute to maintaining political stability, social order and safety in the locality. At the same time, enhancing the role and position of People's Council deputies, thereby improving the performance of People's Councils at all levels. Besides, all recommendations, thoughts and aspirations of citizens were recorded by the local authorities and submitted to the Provincial People's Council at meeting sessions.

In the project, reports were synthesized by the authorities and sent to all project members, departments, provincial People's Committees and publicized to all citizens. Agencies assigned are responsible for evaluating and monitoring each other to achieve common goals

- Possibility to demand accountability

Provincial People's Committee (PPC) has signed the decision to establish groups in charge of cooperation program between An Giang and Sweden. This includes clear assignment for each individual and unit to be responsible for each project. This is an administrative document and has political effect. With the transparency of this decision, departments, state agencies and local authorities know exactly who is responsible for what during the project implementation.

The decision of establishing project participation states that the PPC is line agency the An Giang and Piteå Partnership program and has main responsibility for the project. Leaders of PPC identified responsibilities for different department and units in order to get committed objectives. The An Giang – Sweden project management unit (PMU) is main implementing agency. There were official decision regarding establish the steering committee, monitoring group, assistant group and An Giang – Sweden Project Management Unit. The PPC issued it and sent to all Departments, units of An Giang. The PMU is also a main focal point agency for collecting and review information, aggregate reports, coordinate with the project team and other agencies to develop detailed activity plans.

The Steering Committee is responsible for helping the Provincial People's Committee orientate mechanisms, policies, plans as well as direct, supervise and inspect the Departments, branches and localities to effectively implement the programs.

The personnel involved in the implementation of the projects within the An Giang and Sweden Partnership Programs are responsible for helping the Steering Committee to build a specific implementation plan for projects and propose solutions to implement projects.

In particular, the Advisory Board supports and assists the Steering Committee in connecting, implementing and proposing cooperation projects in a feasible and effective way.

The Steering Committee, the Monitoring group, the An Giang – Sweden Project management Unit (PMU), the Assistant team and other related agencies to the An Giang – Sweden Program operate under the Regulations signed by the Provincial People's Committee. All groups will be self-dissolved after completing the program timeline.

b) If possible, provide concrete examples of what took place on an organisatory level.

• In An Giang:

This project's Steering committee and Monitoring committee are mostly composed of members who have been involved since the beginning of the project. The changes in participants are due to the change in position and retirement. This is to ensure the continuity of the projects from 2012 to the present and is also the commitment and support of the leaders of An Giang province for the implementation of the project's goals.

For example: Process of adjusting activity plan of the project in An Giang

The Covid-19 pandemic affected to some activities of the project. The An Giang – Sweden Project management Unit (PMU) and other project groups reported implementation progress and problems to the Steering Committee and the Monitoring group. Then they have met to assess the level of influence and gave solutions.

The PMU discussed with project leaders (Mr. Bo Wiberg) and steering group of Piteå. Coordinator also sent email to ICLD to ask guidance which then was translated into Vietnamese and forwarded to all project members.

After internal discussion/meetings in An Giang and Piteå, they set up online Steering group meetings in June and December to finalize information and give common decisions. Secretary of the meetings remarked all main information and prepared minutes in both Vietnamese and in English which sent to all participants to review before getting them signed by Chairwoman of the meetings (Brith Fäldt). The final step is main task of the An Giang – Sweden Project management Unit. They must submit an official letter to the PPC to ask for approval on prolonging timeline and revised activity plan of the project. After receiving the official letter listed full of information what and why, Ms. Lý Thị Thanh Tuyền, Deputy Head of Economic Division, Office of the PPC - members of Assistant team of the An Giang-Sweden programs should report to Mr. Trần Anh Thư, vice chairman of People's Committee of An Giang province for decision. The decision will be issued by the PPC and sent to all groups in An Giang – Sweden partnership programs, Department, local authorities and related agencies to know and support for implementation.

- Example of making a decision to add more content in the project plan in An Giang

The project teams from both sides discussed the progress of the information dissemination workshop in the last year of the project. They realized it was better to have video clips and evaluation reports for the whole collaborative process instead of just disseminating information for the current project. After this discussion results will be sent to SG members of both sides (through the SG meeting) for consideration and final decision. Based on the general agreement of SG, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment of An Giang

province sent an official letter to the People's Committee of An Giang province with the goal of allowing additional contents to be added to the project to get more funding for implementation. After obtaining the written permission of the Provincial People's Committee, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and the Department of Finance will discuss and determine the funding to be allocated to the PMU.

- Example of changing members in SC or MC:

The individuals participating in the SG and MC are assigned a written Decision - approved by the People's Committee of An Giang province. Therefore, when there are members of the executive committee, the supervisory board changes positions that are no longer relevant to manage the project or they retire. The members will discuss to each other to propose suitable new members, ensuring that this new member also has an understanding of the project as well as a commitment to support the project. Based on this proposal, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment of An Giang province (and PMU) sent a document to the Provincial People's Committee to sign a new decision to adjust the participants.

- In Piteã:

c) Estimate the extent to which you believe the partnership has contributed to increased awareness of one or more of the ICLD core areas within the international partner organisation. 0 corresponds to unchanged awareness and 5 to high awareness.

- Equity/inclusion - 3
- Participation - 4
- Transparency - 3
- Possibility to demand accountability - 3

Where possible, provide examples that can describe the above, for example the development of values, newly established codes, policies etc.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, businesses and people faced many difficulties in production and trading. The economy of An Giang province in particular and Vietnam in general was also affected. Women, small business and small farmers in rural areas were concerned by project staff. They were reminded by farmers about a proposal to adjust the models of using straw. Instead of continuing to support the model of collecting straw by machine, the project should help people implement program of making organic fertilizers from the waste of growing mushrooms. It was a good suggestion because both increasing the value chain of by-products and helping people increase their income locally. Therefore, the PMU reported to members of the steering committee and got approved by the PPC. Coordinator continued to work with Department of Finance to reallocate the project budget according to the revised new activity plan. Detailed plan for implementation was discussed with local authorities and technical teams. An official notification listed all information of each program (objectives, contents, support materials), timing, criteria, etc were sent to all districts and towns in An Giang province for inviting suitable participants. After that, it was the stage of synthesizing the list, meeting the registrants and organizing knowledge training, handing over supporting materials from the project to the people. The Steering Committee and the

project members have the right to monitor the activities and can visit farmers for checking whenever they want to. Training classes, technical documents are shared publicly on the media. The results of the programs, difficulties and recommendations of the people on how to implement the models effective were acknowledged by the implementers for improving better in the new project.

Through above example, members of the steering committee and the monitoring group have listened to opinions of the people from the local level. Thereby, the role and capacity of the people are increasingly enhanced and contributed into turning waste into green products. In other hand, responsibilities of implementers and stakeholders are clarified information and transparency brought participants' confidence and trust. The good results continued to spread to other localities and benefited many people.

d) Were there any unexpected results that arose from the Steering Group's work? If so, which?

No

e) Describe how the Steering Group has worked to guarantee the integration of gender equality, environmental and human rights into each project.

In An Giang there are 12 members in the SC and 4 members in the MC. Each member of SG and MC is a civil servant and also a leader representing their agency participating in the project. Women's participation in leadership is encouraged. The project prioritized inviting female officials from departments to participate in different groups in the project.

Women participation	(2018-2019)	2020 – 2023
Steering Committee	5/12	3/7
Monitoring Committee	3/4	2/4

The SC has had two formal meetings yearly, one in each country. However, this year they had distant meeting due to the Covid-19 pandemic. There were in Sweden only formal members have participated in the meetings but in Vietnam there have been many more participants who also have contributed to internalizing and acceptance of the project.

In An Giang, the objectives of the project are in line with Vietnam Comprehensive Poverty reduction and Growth strategy. It means that results of the project contributed into provincial achievement for poverty reduction, especially in rural and remote areas.

Through supporting models of rice straw utilization in rural areas and information sharing and capacity building workshops, farmers have stopped burning paddy straws which caused environmental pollution. Youngsters, women farmers and enterprises have encouraged to attend trainings, workshops, fieldtrips. People in rice communities now have earned more money from utilizing straw programs of the project. It helps them afford their children school fees and living life. It is not uncommon to see straw rolling machines in paddy fields and a lot of new models are implementing at other districts. In addition, SG and MC always remind

the project team about gender equality criteria in all project activities (models, trainings, workshops, study exchanges, etc).

6. Support, quality assurance and management of the partnership

a) Describe the internal anchoring process. Who in the municipalities has been involved, how has knowledge of the partnership been spread, who has made decisions in regards to the partnership, what parts of the municipality are involved in the partnership?

To implement the project, An Giang province has mobilized leaders of the Provincial People's Committee, leaders of departments, universities, local authorities as well as civil servants at all levels to participate in the project. They have Steering committee, Monitoring committee, project management team, working group, communication team and team of consultants. This is a great resource and contributes greatly to the success of the project. In which, there is a Monitoring committee with expertise in project management cooperation between An Giang and Piteå. The four members of the monitoring committee in An Giang are the representatives from Provincial People's Committee, Department and University with at least 50% is women.

Every year, the SG and MC discussed to develop plans, agendas, and objectives to be achieved under the commitment via meetings, emails, phone. SC and MC members receive monthly project progress reports from the project team. From there, they can evaluate the project's goals and make adjustments (if necessary) to ensure the most effective implementation of the activity plans.

Except for project meetings, SG and MC members also regularly check and manage project-related tasks assigned to their agencies by the Provincial People's Committee. At these meetings, members of SG and MC also informed the results and progress of the project to their staffs.

For example, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development will update information on the situation of rice straw use in the districts, especially in Chau Thanh district - where the project's models are being implemented. The Department of Finance must also manage the disbursement of funds for project activities.

The information of the project is publicized in the local media:

- Project members also write news articles about project events and post them on their Department's websites
- An Giang Newspaper
- An Giang Radio and Television Station, Chau Thanh District Radio and Television Station
- Project's own website (and <http://angiangpitea.com>; www.angiang-sweden.com)
- Youtube Channel (An Giang – Sweden Project Management Unit)
- Facebook channel (An Giang – Pitea Partnership programme)
- Leaflets and brochure (introducing overview information about the project, leaflets on the value of rice by-products and bananas, the value of rice, technical documents on how to

implement models of rice straw utilization, propaganda leaflets about the results of contest results of students' creative ideas from straw)

In addition, information about the project has been disseminated within the municipality by meetings with politicians and civil servants in Piteå. Also the public has been informed via our website in Piteå. <https://www.Piteå.se/Invanare/Kommun-politik/Internationellt/ovriga-samarbeten/Vietnam/projekt-2018-2020/> and An Giang <http://angiangpitea.com>

b) *Describe how the Steering Group has worked to monitor the Project(s)' quality and progression.*

This process is almost the same since 2018 except that meetings in 2020 -21 was carried out on-line via Teams.

SG and MC manage project objectives through monthly reports from PMU as well as meetings.

The leader of SG and MC - Mr. Nguyen Thanh Binh and later Mr. Tran Anh Thu is also the leader of the Provincial People's Committee - the agency that manages and is responsible for implementing the project's commitment to the project partners and sponsors. The participation and support of SG and MC is the highest guarantee for the determination in the cooperation program. Therefore, when SG members make a decision related to the project, it means that it is a decision from the government agency of An Giang province. Subsequent administrative procedures are a way of legalization. The involvement of government leaders in SG and MC helped the project to be closely managed throughout the implementation process. Changes in the project plan whether big or small are quickly resolved, problems are also handled promptly to achieve the project goals.

For example, the old project website's domain (angiang-sweden.com) expired in 2020. However, PMU proposed a website to publish project information. Therefore, SG allowed to add budget for new website (angiangpitea.com).

The leader of An Giang -Sweden Project Management Unit, a member of the Steering Group, mainly responsible for the activities of the project, regularly informs the entire project implementation progress to other members in the Steering Group. Report all problems (if any) to other members to find timely solutions and to deal with problems effectively.

c) *Describe how the Steering Group has worked to ensure the partnership has been mutual and based on equal participation. Remember that it is possible that the partners have gained from the partnership in different ways.*

The top leadership of An Giang provincial government, directly participates in project management, as the leader of SG and MC. From there, SG has the right to direct relevant agencies and individuals to the project's activities to ensure the project achieves the best possible results. Compliance with commitments creates trust between two partners An Giang and Piteå. on the contrary, the support and participation of the leaders of An Giang province is rooted in the close friendship since the beginning of the cooperation program. This is a reciprocal process and creates a friendship, trust and joy in the execution of the project. The project members not only see the project as a mandatory task but also consider it a favourite thing when meeting and discussing with Piteå friends. Especially during the Covid-19

epidemic, project members were very worried about each other's health and missed each other when they could not hold the annual meetings. During the process of contact and work, there was cultural exchange and sharing of views in different fields such as society, environment, education and even family life.

The seriousness, transparency and democracy of Pitea has helped create the working style and decision-making of An Giang province. Steering group members are not subject to barriers in leadership positions in the government system. The members can meet in person, at meeting, contact via email, or phone call. Similar situation with both partners.

When Mr. Peter Roslund- the former mayor of Pitea invited the An Giang delegation to watch the football match, everyone lined up and had to stand because there was no seat due to being late. They did not have any priority for leaders/politicians. It is an expression of justice and democracy in life. Or equality and democracy in the way of exchange and decision-making in the SG of Piteå. At that time, the project members of An Giang side were very surprised but felt it should be like that.

According to project coordinator from An Giang's side, she thinks that mutuality is what we can learn and support to each other. Piteå has supported An Giang and vice versa. In An Giang, each SC member and project members also gained benefits from the partnership. All above that, she learnt that we are successful since we feel secure that both partners trust and being trusted by members of the partnership. We are equal in discussion and always feel free to give comments for contribution, and are approximately equal in our energy for staying in the project together. There are some major areas of mutuality that we learnt over the years; partnership and friendship is to succeed and grow; love, benefit, trust and support.

An Giang's side have learnt a lot of good things from the SC and MC members in Piteå's side. We are like a big family. We always look forward to seeing each other and working together. During meetings and discussions, we had new ideas to develop not only the project's activities but also to have motivation and inspiration to test new models in An Giang to improve value business incubation model.

Leaders of People's committee in provincial levels, district levels have been enhanced capacity on agricultural wastes and bio energy from rice by-products. Voices of roles of women, especially women famers have been be paid attention to. Technicians had chance to enhance new knowledge and experience from experts of Piteå.

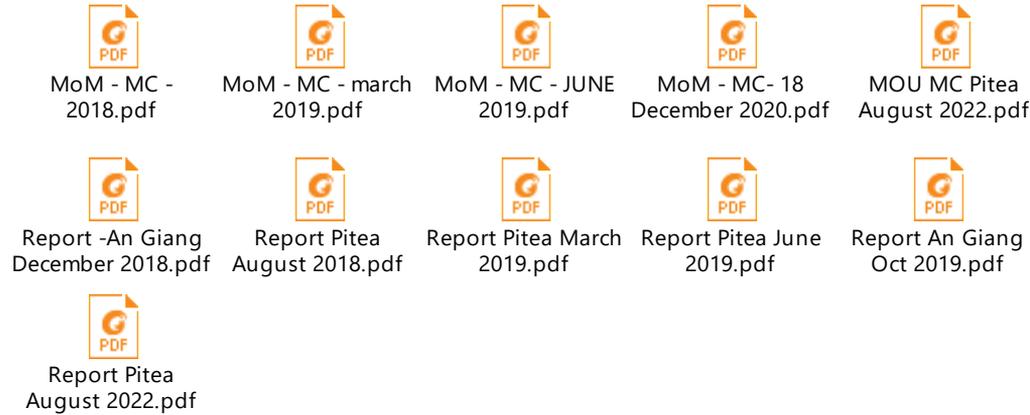
Whenever we had problems in implementation of activities, we informed steering group members in An Giang and in Piteå. They never criticize but just finding out the cause and giving the best solution.

An Giang and Piteå have different political system but we have learnt from each other good strategies and planning. Steering group members approved strategy plan as well as action plan of turning rice wastes into energy for An Giang province to 2030. It is important political decision to turn An Giang into green rice communities in Mekong Delta. And that is result of mutual partnership.

7. The Steering Group – Describe the Steering Group's work - how many meetings, who participated, what has been discussed, and so forth. Please attach notes from these

meetings.

Read the attached minutes of meetings:



- Online meeting in June, item 2 in the report
- Online meeting in December, item 3 in the report

8. Risk analysis

a) Did any of the stated risks arise? How were they managed?

In the process of implementing the project, the only risk was the replacement of members in the Steering Committee and Monitoring Committee in An Giang. However, these new participants actively supported the project and were assigned an official role by the Provincial People's Committee.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused the project's activities to be postponed, so the project's time had to be extended. This causes the cost of salary payment for the Project Management Board (2021-2023). SG and MC members expressed their support and maintenance of the project as well as supporting the procedure for the Provincial People's Committee to sign a decision to extend the implementation time as well as provide additional funding.

9. Economic report - In relation to the budget as granted and the activities as carried out - report both the budget as granted and the actual outcome of the various items, respectively. Use the budget you have been granted, and fill in the outcome in the allotted template.

Verifications are not to be sent to ICLD, but are to be available in the Swedish organisation's accounts for any later audit. **Costs are to be reported using the ICLD template provided and signed by the head of finance or equivalent.**

- The costs must be reported exclusive of VAT.
- Costs of salaries and wages must be reported in the following way: Hourly rate=monthly salary/165+ PO-supplement (national insurance contributions). Use the designated ICLD form template for reporting of costs of salaries and wages.

Is still under audit and will be submitted separately

10. Payment - State into which bank account the funds are to be deposited.

The project does not pay additional salary to the members of SG and MC for their participation in the project. They get their salary from their offices.

11. International partner financial/resource contribution - State what resources - personnel, collateral costs such as offices, interpreters, transportation, room and board, etc. the international partner has contributed during the project.

In An Giang, An Giang people's committee yearly provided budget for An Giang – Sweden Project management unit to implement all activities of the project, including items related to the project and the steering group. It means the budget was not separately used. Therefore, there is not have separate budget for steering group in An Giang.

12. The international partner's approval of the final narrative report and the economic report – The international partner's project manager, by signing this report, approve of both the final **narrative** and **economic** report, submitted to the ICLD by the Swedish partner.

See attached approval

13. Contact with ICLD – How have you experienced contact with ICLD? Is there anything that you think could be improved or perhaps something that was especially valuable?

We have had much appreciated contact concerning our discussion about ICLD core areas which is presented in item 5b in this report.

14. Other

Is there anything else you would like to submit, such as information about additional funders or if you have plans for continued/extended cooperation?

If so, do you have any idea on potential areas of cooperation (other projects) or a time perspective? Do you plan to submit any new application during the coming year?

We have submitted an application and got approval for a project, *Expansion of the cooperation between Piteå and An Giang, 2019-0037*.

The full report is to be submitted by post to ICLD, Box 1125, 621 22 Visby.

In addition, the summary and the budget should be sent digitally to partner-ship@icld.se. Please note that the summary should be written in both English and Swedish and submitted in a format that text can be copied from, such as .doc.