



## Reserapport Piteå –An Giang March 2015

Gerd Sävenstedt

Context;

In January 2015 ICLD approved the Application; Activityplan for Ricewaste to Energy, which is a continuation of the previous project Piteå- An Giang – Sustainable Municipalities carried out between 2012-2014.

The purpose of this visit was a steering Group meeting and work group meetings in order to plan for a more detailed work plan for 2015.

The participants were the Steering group members; Peter Roslund- mayor, Brith Fäldt – Politian and chairman of the Committee for community development, Jan Dahl professor in Energy at Luleå Technical University and Gerd Sävenstedt- project leader. Besides that participated also Maria Widman, community development officer and member of the Project group.



*Maria Widman*

*Peter Roslund*

*Brith Fäldt*

*Jan Dahl*

*Travel;*

This time we chose to go by Emirates via Dubai, where we had a short overnight stop and a few hours' sleep before we took the last part of the flight to Ho Chi Minh City. I had chosen this as it was less expensive but as we had to have a hotel night I think we will go back to Thai next time, as the travel hours from Luleå to Ho Chi Min City became too many.

The same day as we arrived, also the project leader from Vietnam Mrs. Pham Xuan and the coordinator Kim Vo arrived from Sweden and Växjö, after participating in a training regarding project management. This was based on the comments from ICLD who imposed us to coordinate activities between Växjö and Piteå. The management training became the first coordinating activity. The costs for Mrs. Xuan and Ms. Vo are on the the Piteå – An Giang budget.

Already the following morning we went to Long Xuyen, a distance of roughly 200 km and 5 hours by car.

With us in the minibus was Mrs. Vo directly from the flight and Gustav Roslund, master student from Umeå, who had a MSF scholarship from SIDA and in his master theses compared traditional and modern farming. The material in his theses is all from An Giang. He will hopefully be able to participate in the next SC meeting and present the result from his studies. In the evening the People's committee hosted a dinner for all of us.



*Waiting for transport 200 km and 5 hours*

*Monday*





This day was a closing of Swedish Energy Agency's, SEA, and their second phase in An Giang. People from both Chau Thanh, different departments, the University in An Giang and Ho Chi Minh City and associations participated.

There was a presentation from SEA regarding the results of the project. There has been three parts, financial engineering where a Norwegian consultant has trained the participants to develop business ideas, capacity building of a center of excellence team, with team members both from An Giang and Ho Chi Minh and a survey of capacity and needs connected to rice waste, conducted of a Swedish consultant. This has been made in cooperation with the Center of Excellence team.

The SEA was overall satisfied with the result and especially when it came to the financial engineering part where in total 18 project ideas had been developed and a hope that a branch of the World Bank would help financing some of the projects.

Peter Roslund also presented the results of the An Giang – Piteå project.

One item on the agenda was also the lessons learned from the Swedish- An Giang cooperation



### Reflections of the day;

In all meetings since the start there has been a broad participation from different departments which also has resulted in a good understanding of the Swedish – Vietnamese cooperation.

Two different Associations; the newly founded Bio Energy Association and the Science and Technology Association were represented by their chair persons, both former employees of People's Committee and now retired. In Vietnam they retire at the age of 55. They both contribute a lot to the development work and seem to be mentors for young well trained staff in their respective area.

The NGO's are professional networks but sometimes it is hard to get people to do unpaid duties.

The working climate in all the projects has mostly been good, but that there have also been some obstacles, to deliver results in time which partly was explained by the dependency on volunteers to carry out the tasks. The survey carried out by SEA has faced some problems and a member from the Center of Excellence team said that they would work hard to deliver the remaining information before the end of March when the SEA project is closed.

It was also stressed that it is important with a political commitment for the development and now there is a lot of gained knowledge and a need for less talk and more actions.

I realized that many of the Vietnamese see the Swedish-Vietnamese cooperation as one- not three different projects and it is confusing that, even if all the cooperation is financed by SIDA the conditions we are working in are a bit different. In the ICLD projects there is much less money than it has been in the SEA- Vietnamese project which creates confusion.

SEA went to HO CHI MINH after the session where they had both discussions and study visits and both professor Jan Dahl and the associative professor Mrs. Van Ha also left, as one important item to address was to clarify a number of issues before an application to SEA regarding both research cooperation and establishment of a pilot plant for small scale electricity production, where gasification technology should be used, could be done. MEWA, the owner of the technology has also shown interest to participate in an establishment of a pilot plant in Vietnam, probably based in An Giang.



*It was Peter's birthday*

Tuesday



Due to these activities we changed the schedule and on Tuesday morning Britt Fäldt, Maria Widman and I went to Mrs. Kim Vo's home for a memorial of her father, who died in a traffic accident precisely one year earlier. We were honored that she wanted us to come and share her very special day. This day is most important in the Buddhist tradition, the end of the first year of grieving. The seven first weeks the family meets once a week in the home to pray for the deceased and on the actual day of death family and friends are invited for a memorial.



*Kim Vo with her mother*



When we came around half past ten a lot of people were already in her mother's home, and in the neighboring house. Also some of Kim Vo's friends came on their bikes to participate and share this special day with Miss Vo. Her home was in a typical Vietnamese village, houses almost attached to each other along the road through the village. – They are all my relatives, said Kim Vo when we went to greet her mother who had been up early to cook for all the visitors. And in a hammock, in the middle of it all was the 84 year old father of the deceased resting and participating.

All houses are fronted by a big veranda, where most of the activities take place. But what you can't see is that behind the veranda there can be many rooms for different purposes.

Of course people were curious of the strangers from a country far away. While we were sitting there eating scrims, duck in orange sauce, pork, rice and different tasty dishes some of the more brave women came to talk to us, they in Vietnamese and we in Swedish. I think that for all of us it was exciting meetings to see that we actually could understand each other- to some extent anyhow. We were also invited to two of Kim's aunties houses located just across the road and we were happy for this possibility.



*Brith together with one of Kim Vo's aunts.*



*Here is both an inside and an outside kitchen.*



### *Rice factory*

On the way back we made a stop at a middle sized rice factory. When we arrived they were loading a boat with briquettes made of rice husk. The factory was running 6 months yearly and the people working there were employed during the months the factory was running.

The production of briquettes had started quite recently. The young director confirmed that now a day no rice husk was dumped into the rivers. This situation has changed completely during the last years. The farmers also get a small amount of money for the rice husk – which they didn't when we started the previous project.

Electricity was according to the director not a problem and the costs for electricity were not too high. He was not familiar with the development plans of using rice husk for producing electricity.

Rice husk was used in the factory for the boilers and for the briquette production.



*Wednesday*



This was a day for planning of the activities for this year, which should be presented at the steering group meeting the following day.

Mr. Giang and Mr. Hai for the IC department participated as well as Mrs. Huynh, vice director for the department of Science and Technology, Mrs. Xuan project leader and Mrs. Kim Vo coordinator for the Piteå- An Giang project. From the Swedish side it was Brith Fäldt, Maria Widman and I.

### **Demonstration projects**

In order to see how rice waste could be used there is a plan in the project for 3 small demonstration projects.

Besides the work for development of the Activityplan for use of rice waste, the 3 demonstration projects were on the agenda. The purpose of these 3 programs is to see the possibilities to use by-products from rice as well as increase awareness.

The three different demonstration programs are

- Rice straw collection. Mrs.Huyens' department has ordered 7 small machines from Japan which can be used for collecting and bale rice straws. This can be used for both mushroom farming and to feed the cows. They expect to have these machines within 3 months. The costs for the machines are 196 million dong each, roughly 10.000 \$/machine
- Mushroom cultivation which can give a good income. They say without having made a market survey that there is a good market for mushrooms. There are two different kinds of mushroom which they grow today. In this business they want to engage women to a high extent. There are also ideas to dry the mushrooms.  
Mushrooms can grow on the collected rice bales and be grown both in- and out- doors.
- Rice straw to energy. Here they see the link to the pilot plant where they hope funds will be granted

In our project proposal these demonstration projects will start next year but preparations will probably be done this year. The contact person from our side will be Mr. Bo Wiberg and on the Vietnamese side Mrs. Huyen.

One issue was left; the training in Sweden scheduled for this year. When we made the plans it was in the area of Energy in collaboration with LTU but during these days at least I started to think what would contribute best to the project. It needed to be further addressed.



*Mrs Huyen is the contact person for the demonstration projects*

#### *Communication*

In the previous project a web page was formed and it should be used also in this project. A communication plan will be developed and there is some money set aside for the purpose. They have a system of internal charge for the services and I think there need to be more discussions about how it will be solved. Mr Giang, vice director at the IT department has the overall responsibility. We decided to meet after the Steering group meeting to continue the discussions.

We finalized the activity plan for 2015 to bring it to the Steering group meeting the following day for approval.



Thursday

*Steering group meeting*

*Some of those who have been to Piteå*



Six of the eight members of the Steering group participated in the room and Mrs Ha and Mr Dahl tried to participate through Skype from Hanoi but it didn't work too well.

Besides the SC members, 18 others from different departments participated as well as representatives from An Giangs Radio-TV station and An Giang news. When people introduced themselves I became a bit confused, they were all members of Steering groups and Monitoring groups and it struck me that maybe it was in this context I had heard some complaints that it was always the same people who travelled to Piteå. It was clarified who belonged to the SC of the Piteå-An Giang project.

Even if the PPC has once approved this application there is a tradition that all project proposals are sent to different Ministries for comments and then the PPC once again has to approve this project. This process is expected to be finished during the month of May- but it seems to be more of a formal procedure and will not affect the objectives. There might be some minor changes but it is not anticipated any problems and we can run according to the plans.

Even here the training was discussed and should be further discussed with Mrs. Ha and Mr. Dahl when at a meeting in HCMC a couple of days later.

We had proposed that the next SC meeting should be in Piteå in September but as the Vietnamese part of the SC plans go to Stockholm for a meeting/seminar at SEA we moved the next meeting to May 21-24, where at least one day should be set aside for the work with an outline for the activity plan linked to the previous project. They will arrive to Piteå on the evening of May 20 or early morning on the 21, and the actual SC meeting will be on the 22. A first videoconference meeting for the activity plan, where Maria Widman is our contact person, will be on April 21 at Grans.

There are minutes from the meeting.



*Peter was interviewed by a journalist from TV*

#### *Communication plan*

After lunch the workgroup met again to talk about a communication plan. The different channels used are TV, web-page, radio, newspapers, brochures and MEGA phones. They considered TV to be the most effective channel. They already use television where they buy time 3-5 minute's spots, for which they pay 5- 10 million dong, 250- 500 \$. At the countryside Mega phones are used and they can have up to 15 minutes information at one time.

We discussed the relation between different target groups and channels and even if they know that web access is not very high they normally use it, as they have the possibilities and it is worthwhile anyhow.

A communication plan started to be formed but and when we meet at the next SC meeting in May it should be an outline and also decided who will do what.

#### *Bio energy association*

In the late afternoon I met with the chair person for the Bio Energy association consisting of more than 100 members, farmers, rice factory owners, university people and People from different departments.

They have just finished a project where they have constructed around 1300 household small biogas plants where they use manure and human waste. This was in cooperation with the Dutch government but was not finished. They wanted to continue in the area. The price for such a small plant was around 500 \$ where 1/3 was paid from the project and the rest from the owner. They said the need was great, both to find constructions less bulky and find financing. They also had plans for drying mushrooms but needed further funding's.

In the evening we had a nice farewell party at Xuans house



*Xuan with her husband and Mr. Hiep and his wife*





*Friday*



A travelling day to Ho Chi Minh where we also had a few hours to go to town, feel the atmosphere, do some shopping and having a cup of coffee. Mr. Dahl joined us and there was time for reflections from his days in Ho Chi Minh and to prepare a bit for the meeting on Saturday morning with Mrs. Ha. The two professors had two skype meetings with Professor Björn Kjellström who is writing the proposal to SEA and there were still things which needed to be clarified.

Mr. Dahl had had good days and they had been able to do a lot of preparation and straightening question marks and taking more steps for the application which will be submitted. They had also met with Mr. Nang, earlier SC member and one of the driving forces in the previous project, who is now director for the second largest export company of rice in the world. He still has a strong commitment to An Giang and he would like to see a pilot plant based there. All they met stressed the importance of more action and less talk. MEWA has also shown interest to participate in the development and enable the MEWA technology to be used for a small scale production of energy based on rice husk.

*Saturday*

In the morning hours we had a meeting with Mrs. Ha. The main issue was to discuss the training in Sweden. We considered the possibilities of having it in Vietnam instead of in Sweden, but according to Mrs Ha it was not a good idea. There was an idea of merging resources from their project and this project but we realized that it would be hard as we have to do this training during this year. In the

end we decided that we would go back home and see what could we offer that would benefit the project and the development.

### *Coming home*

Now we are home and we met the other day; Mr. Jan Dahl from LTU, Bo Wiberg from the county council, Maria Widman and I from the Municipality. The conclusion we made was that Mr Wiberg, expert in farming, and hopefully Maria can go to Vietnam and participate when they have training in the area of straw collection and that the one- week training would be in energy.

The theme for the training will be Rice-waste to energy, from a small scale perspective. Mr. Dahl will talk to Professor Björn Kjellström and Associative Professor Kentaro Umeki to see if they can be lecturers during the training.

If we have it week 44 we can accommodate the participants at Grans where there is also are venues for training.

We are now preparing for the SC meeting in May. The car is booked, the hostel, a room for SC meeting and hopefully soon the tickets.