

## **Farmer-Managed Irrigation Systems in Vietnam**

Before 1989, most of the irrigation systems in Vietnam were managed and funded by the state. The farmers were fully subsidized. Irrigation efficiency was not high, roughly 50 to 60 percent of the designed capacity. After 1989, when the state gave the farmers a wider right of using farmland, managerial participation of farmers in irrigation systems has also been broadened.

Participatory management of farmers is 30 percent in irrigation systems over 5,000 hectares (ha); 50 percent in systems of 500 to 1,000 ha; and 70 percent in systems under 400 ha of irrigated area.

Thanks to the farmers' management, the irrigation systems have improved in both quality and

quantity, resulting in higher irrigation efficiency and smaller investment burden for the state in irrigation systems construction, management and maintenance.

In the large-scale irrigation systems, the state assigns the farmers the management of on-field systems (with under 100 ha irrigated area).

In the medium and small-scale irrigation systems, construction works are jointly invested by the state and the farmers. Except for the pumping station being managed by the state, the whole system is under farmers' management. However, the irrigation drainage technique is mutually

agreed upon, such as pumping and opening valve operation and irrigation drainage schedule for each kind of plant. Irrigation management and organization are under farmers' control. In one production unit some educated and healthy farmers were assigned to be in charge of irrigation and drainage operation for the sake of each household. One person can take charge of 5-10 ha. Those persons are sent by the state management irrigation organizations to short-term training courses for improving their professional level and for absorbing new information on technical matters and irrigation management. They also have regular meetings with farmer households to listen to their comments.

The equipment and machinery for irrigation systems in Vietnam are still poor and backward in comparison with those in other regional countries. The irrigating farmers have to work hard without efficient systems. Irrigation systems often deteriorate quickly.

Since 1992, the Vietnamese government has focused on upgrading the existing irrigation systems and strengthening farmer management with adequate management information. We wish to learn useful experiences from neighboring countries for better application in our country.

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