

**THE ETHNIC MINORITIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN (EMDP)  
OF VINH LONG PROVINCE**

- **Overview:**

The “Vietnam Improved Land Governance and Database project” (VILG) aims:

- To improve the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of land administration in project areas through the improvement of land database and development, operation of the national multi-purpose land information system for better fulfillment of the needs of Government, enterprises and public.
- To provide better access to land administration services for all organisations and individuals regardless of their living places and ethnic group.

The project is implemented in the communes, LROs and branches in the districts and cities of Vinh Long. Ethnic minorities groups living in Vinh Long are also within the project scope.

According to the Statistical Yearbook, in 2014, the province's total population was 1,041,453, in which the Kinh people accounted for 97.42%. The remaining 2.58% belonged to other ethnic minorities people with the Khmer people accounting for a main proportion (2,10%) of residential communities in 13 communes, wards and townships (as stipulated by Decree No. 89 / NQ CP dated 12/28/2012 of the Government on the establishment of Binh Minh town, the number of administrative units with large ethnic minority people increased by 02 units) in Tra On, Tam Binh, Vung Liem districts and Binh Minh town with a total of 21,820 people. The Hoa people was 4,879 which made up 0.47% and other ethnic groups (Cham, Tay, Nung, Thai ...) represented 0,02% of the provincial population.

The Khmer people lived mainly in the following localities:

**Table 1: The communes with ethnic minorities communities in Vinh Long (in 2014)**

No	Name of commune	District	Number of households	Number of population	Poor households
1	Thuận An	Bình Minh town	78	320	3
2	Đông Thành	Bình Minh town	612	2.265	124
3	Đông Bình	Bình Minh town	566	2.211	90

4	Đông Thuận ward	Bình Minh town	180	722	39
5	Cái Vồn ward	Bình Minh town	59	254	4
6	Loan Mỹ	Tam Bình	1.594	5.309	148
7	Thiện Mỹ	Trà Ôn	79	311	6
8	Hựu Thành	Trà Ôn	191	577	24
9	Trà Côn	Trà Ôn	711	3.107	213
10	Tân Mỹ	Trà Ôn	1,253	4,529	423
11	Trung Hiếu	Vũng Liêm	66	298	8
12	Vũng Liêm township	Vũng Liêm	101	357	11
13	Trung Thành	Vũng Liêm	321	1409	34
	<b>Total</b>		<b>5,811</b>	<b>21,669</b>	<b>1,127</b>

(Source: statistics of wards, communes, townships)

According to the 2014 statistics, there were 5,935 Khmer households all over the province, with 21,820 people, which accounted for 2.10% of the provincial population. There are 13 communes, wards and townships where many Khmer people lived, with 5,670 households (21,669 people). There are 1,127 poor households mainly living in extremely difficult and remote areas (according to the new State standards) which accounted for 19.39% of the total number of Khmer households living in the communes with many ethnic minority people.

**Table 2:** List of villages with concentrated Khmer population

No	District	Commune	Name of hamlets/clusters
1	Bình Minh	Đông Bình	Phù Ly 2
2	Bình Minh	Đông Bình	Phù Ly 1
3	Bình Minh	Đông Thành	Đông Hoà 2
4	Bình Minh	Đông Thành	Hoá Thành 1
5	Bình Minh	Đông Thành	Hoá Thành 2
6	Bình Minh	Đông Thành	Đông Hòa
7	Bình Minh	Thuận An	Thuận Tân A
8	Bình Minh	Phường Đông Thuận	Khóm Đông Thuận
9	Bình Minh	Phường Cái Vồn	Khóm 5
10	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Tổng Hưng
11	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Sóc Rừng
12	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Kỳ Sơn
13	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Áp Giữa
14	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Cần Súc

15	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Thông Nguyên
16	Tam Bình	Loan Mỹ	Đại Thợ
17	Trà Ôn	Thiện Mỹ	Mỹ Trung
18	Trà Ôn	Hựu Thành	Vĩnh Hoà
19	Trà Ôn	Hựu Thành	Mỹ Trung
20	Trà Ôn	Hựu Thành	Trà Sơn
21	Trà Ôn	Tân Mỹ	Mỹ Phú
22	Trà Ôn	Tân Mỹ	Mỹ Bình
23	Trà Ôn	Tân Mỹ	Mỹ An
24	Trà Ôn	Tân Mỹ	Gia Kiệt
25	Trà Ôn	Tân Mỹ	Mỹ Định
26	Trà Ôn	Trà Côn	Ngãi Lộ B
27	Trà Ôn	Trà Côn	Ngãi Lộ A
28	Vũng Liêm	Thị trấn Vũng Liêm	Khu phố 2
29	Vũng Liêm	Trung Hiếu	Bình Thành
30	Vũng Liêm	Trung Thành	An Nhơn
31	Vũng Liêm	Trung Thành	Trung Trạch
32	Vũng Liêm	Trung Thành	Xuân Minh 2

In the above villages, except the Khmer people living in the town of Vung Liem and the wards of Binh Minh Town which are experiencing the urbanization process, the majority of Khmer households are living in rural areas, even in some remote areas like Loan My (Tam Binh), Tra Con and Tan My (Tra On).

The typical features of the Khmer population distribution in Mekong Delta is that they live on the dunes. However, the number of soil dunes in Vinh Long is less than in some other provinces, therefore the Khmer people often live near the rivers/canals (except some villages like Dai Tho, My Hoa, and My Binh). Their living style is different with those living in dunes. The houses are often separated by water ditches, and a garden with vegetables and some fruit trees (orange, guava, grapefruit, ...), and fish ponds.

*The Khmer people in the province live mainly on traditional farming; the landless poor families earn their living by working as wage earners in agriculture.* During the past years, many factors such as the improved economy and society, cultural life, together with many State policies and external support have changed many farming practices in agricultural production, and few households have shifted from agriculture to manufacturing and business.

Due to the influence of Buddhism, the traditional social organization of the Khmer people in Vinh Long and in the Mekong Delta is closely connected with temples. The connection exists clearly in the way people celebrate religious ceremonies, community service, traditional ceremonies at temples and

customary daily food offerings to the monks. The Khmer people consider the temple the center of community activities.

Besides spiritual purpose, the temple is also known as the "stage" to organize many cultural activities and traditional festivals of the Khmer people which take place every year. At the same time, this is also where the children are offered traditional education and the Khmer language. Therefore, many social campaigns, policies and laws advocacy activities are organized at the temples as the first place. This relationship connects the people with the community closely, not only in economic, family or social relations, but also in the spiritual relation.

There are 5,935 Khmer households in the province. The number of households having land is 5,529 with the total land use area of 2,878.82 ha (4,850 m<sup>2</sup>/household in average). In this total area, the area for agricultural purposes is 2,768.78 ha (4,665 m<sup>2</sup>/households in average) and the area for aquaculture is 1.35 hectares (2.27 m<sup>2</sup>/household in average). The total area of non-agricultural land of the Khmer households is 110.04 ha (185.41 m<sup>2</sup>/household in average), of which residential land area is 109.18 ha (183.96 m<sup>2</sup>/household in average), cemetery land is 0,82 ha and other non-agricultural land area is 0.04 ha. Although the Khmer livelihood remains difficult, the average agricultural land area of the Khmer households is higher than that of the province (4,665 m<sup>2</sup> / household compared with 4,228.62 m<sup>2</sup>/household).

After VLAP implementation, the total land area managed and used by the Khmer people is 2,878.82 ha divided in 13,626 parcels for 5,529 households. Up to now, LURC has been renewed for 10,080 parcels which accounts for 74% of the total parcels. The LURCs have been granted for the total area of 2,201.04 ha which accounts for 76.45% of the total area used by the Khmer people. The remaining cases are due to their LURCs mortgaged in commercial banks in the province or subject to additional documents required.

Land of the Khmer people in Vinh Long is entirely used by households and individuals. Even though there is no land for community use, pagodas are built in nearly all villages where the Khmer people live as a majority of the Khmer people are Buddhists. Again, for the Khmer, the temple is not just a religious center but also a place for community activities. Most temples in these villages have been granted LURCs. Regarding the situation of land disputes, since the end of the VLAP project, there have been almost no land disputes in the Khmer communities. The reason is that in the project implementation process, the local authorities already communicated with the public in general and the ethnic minorities in particular about the boundary demarcation before conducting the survey; therefore, disputes were settled through mediation.

In Vinh Long, because the Khmer community is located together with the Kinh community, there is no big problem in communication. Most Khmer people can understand and speak Vietnamese rather well. In particular, the middle-aged and young Khmer people can read and understand Vietnamese very well, except for the old people.

Overall, in terms of language, there is almost no obstacle in the process of accessing and discussing the State policies with the Khmer people in Vinh Long province. The practical VLAP implementation shows that the implementation of land use rights for the Khmer people is not affected by the customary laws of ethnic minorities communities.

The VLAP implementation shows that even there is no language barrier in communication, the awareness of the Khmer on land policies remains limited, especially women's participation and interest in land issues is very limited; partly because their economic life is still difficult, they just focus on livelihood and housework and partly because they claim that land management is men's work which leads to the fact that most of LURCs previously granted only bear the husband's name. In order for women and other citizens to understand their rights and benefits if their names appear in granted LURCs beside their husbands' names, during the VLAP implementation, the public awareness raising group organized many meetings to strengthen the exchange, guidance, explanation and provision of information on land policies for women and other citizens. This has contributed to a change in the perception of the Khmer on land policies. However, as the awareness on laws is still limited, it is very important to conduct continuous dissemination on land policies for ethnic minorities upon VLAP closure in Vinh Long.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION OF EMDP**

The objective of VILG is to develop and implement the national multi-purpose land information system on the basis of the system architecture, nationally unified system management software and complete national land database (including cadastral data, land use planning data, land price data, statistics and inventories) for the purpose of land management, public services delivery and land information sharing with relevant departments (tax, notary, planning, construction and urban management,...) and with citizens and businesses. Another objective is to support the strengthening of the land use management and to ensure the uniform implementation of the Land Law 2013 at all levels, focusing on improving the public land services delivery through the modernization of LROs from improved processes and service standards to equipment and staff training; improved effectiveness of the public awareness

raising; and to establish systems to monitor and evaluate the land use management.

The consultations were conducted with representatives of provincial departments, organizations and ethnic minorities people in Vinh Long. Most of the participants in the consultation, after hearing about the VILG project, expressed their strong support to the project and expected the project to be implemented soon to enable them to obtain necessary land information in a convenient manner.

The key objective of the EMDP is to set up the plan for continuous interaction between project staff and ethnic minorities in the districts during the project implementation. The frequent exchange will ensure the strengthened understanding of the project and enhance the public confidence in the land management system.

This exchange will foster the appropriate implementation of public awareness raising activities. Better understanding of the traditional culture of ethnic minorities will create better relationship between project staff and the ethnic minorities in general and strengthen the understanding of the project in particular.

To achieve this goal, Vinh Long PPMU decides to further strengthen the communication and participation of ethnic minorities and related stakeholders in the province through the following activities:

***1. Activity 1: To establish the provincial-level community advisory group and district- and commune-level community participatory groups in areas with ethnic minorities communities***

***The provincial- and district-level community advisory group:*** The provincial-level community advisory group and the district-level community participatory groups will be established as a communication channel to provide information to land users, including the Khmer, and receive their feedback. Their role will be to support the PPMU in the communication or explanation of the State policies on land management, and reception and settlement of administrative procedures on land, reception of feedback from land users and organizations. These groups will include representatives of businesses and the Khmer people.

***The commune-level community participatory group:*** In communes with large Khmer populations, these groups will be established to directly conduct the communication and dissemination of information to the local community (villages, social groups) and people, to directly support the participation of the communities in the project activities, to receive feedback from the people, and to

be involved in monitoring project activities at the grassroots level. These groups will advise CPC in grievance redressal within the commune's jurisdiction, and help address concerns of the local community. These groups will include CPC leaders, cadastral officials, representatives of political and socio-political organizations (the Farmer's Union, the Women's Union, respected representatives of the local ethnic minorities groups, the Fatherland Front, and judiciary officials ...) and the village heads.

Tasks of the commune-level community participatory groups include:

- Communication, provision of general knowledge, raising awareness of survey, land registration, LURC issuance, sequences and procedures for the enforcement of such rights as transfer, conversion, inheritance, and grant of land, as well as procedures for dispute resolution;

- Introduction on project contents, including information delivery services, methods for access and usage, and agencies responsible for service delivery;

- Distribution of leaflets and brochures on legal documents and policies;

- Support and guidance for land users on understanding and usage of land information search tools;

- Synthesis of people's feedback for submission to PPMU in the process of land database exploitation.

- Other supports...

These groups will be trained by CPMU and PPMU, and then they will provide training for commune-level groups and monitor these groups' activities.

## ***2. Activity 2: To use modern and effective communication tools for ethnic minorities in the province***

PPMU shall conduct the following activities:

- To strengthen communication channels and available methods, as well as building and testing new models to raise awareness on land laws and access to the land information system. Special attention is given to specific methods applied to ethnic minorities groups in Vinh Long;

- To introduce websites for research on land information, land policies, the agencies providing land services, search tools in the Internet and other related regulations (service fees,...);

- To institutionalize and develop the project communication strategy so that the media activities become the requirements in regular plans of relevant authorities; to achieve the agreement among organizations in provinces, districts

and communes regarding the project communication plan which includes specific characteristics of ethnic minority groups in the province;

- To use effective communication tools in combination such as training materials (communication manual, books, materials,...); printed documents (flyers, billboards and posters); mass media: press (radio, TV, websites, social networks, loudspeakers,...); conferences and seminars; public meeting, and direct communication.

### ***3. Activity 3. To train village chiefs and leaders of population organizations in areas with ethnic minority populations***

PPMU shall conduct the following activities:

- To develop a communications team including land management officials, reporters, and key officials at grassroot-level to perform effective communication, including those for ethnic minorities even after the end of the project;

- Training sessions will be organized by PPMU to introduce the project, legal knowledge on registration, LURC renewal, and women's rights upon having their name on LURCs. Participants will be commune-level groups, Party Secretaries, youth union's secretaries, village chiefs, leaders of local population organizations at the grassroots levels and head monks in the Khmer temples so they can provide support during the project implementation.

District-level groups will train commune-level groups on land policies, EMDP, methods, skills in consultation and mobilization of community involvement, the grievance redressal mechanism so they can provide support during the project implementation.

- Training activities will support the sustainable development of the land management system through the communication of the heads of villages. They will create impacts and change the people perceptions and behavior in using land registration services, change the views of land management officials in providing services and create the demand for using the offered services, while promoting accessibility, information sharing and raising awareness for people, communities and the relevant agencies in order to:

+ provide adequate, accurate and timely land information to all interested parties and ensure that information access is easier and increase the effective information usage;

+ created the habit of using the legal and modern land information system by organizations and individuals for their activities in order to improve and enhance the quality of community livelihood;



#### ***4. Activity 4: To organize public meetings in villages and communes where ethnic minorities live***

Additional funding will be used for meetings, including Q&A sessions, translation from Vietnamese into ethnic languages in every commune and village. These activities will be started early from the beginning of the project and maintained during the project implementation. Land users from the local ethnic minorities groups will be introduced on the access to land services such as:

- LROs provide services on LURC issuance, cadastral surveys, procedures for transfer of land use rights and registration validation for changes of land use purpose;
- Land users have the right to request State agencies to provide public services on land as prescribed;
- LROs serve all customers that have the demand for access to land registration services;
- Methods for access to the land information system: through SMS, search on the Internet, and online land registration;
- The State tries to resolve administrative procedures for the public in simple, fast and low-cost manner.

To facilitate the implementation, besides the main target beneficiary - the head of household, the project will encourage household members with educational degrees/certificates in ethnic minority households to attend in community meetings to ensure that households receive adequate project information and also provide full and accurate information for the project as requested. The meeting schedule must be informed in advance to avoid cases that the ethnic minorities people are unable to participate because they cannot arrange their time due to short notice.

Besides, PPMU will cooperate with local mass media agencies (radio, television, newspaper) to communicate and disseminate information in the province, districts, and commune's media. In villages and hamlets, loudspeakers in ethnic minorities languages, whenever possible, will be used for communication and dissemination of information.

Documents used for public meetings and consultations at communes are provided by PPMU based on forms, legal documents or communication documents edited by CPMU. All documents are prepared in a simple way with clear messages and images. These documents will be translated into the Khmer language for dissemination in local ethnic communities.

Some arts shows will be prepared and performed at meetings and talks or in regular activities of the unions, based on the suggestions of the advisory and participatory groups at all levels, with concise contents and clear messages.

**5. Activity 5. LROs announce the processes and implement administrative procedures, and services for local ethnic minorities**

- LROs disclose administrative procedures on land, the processing time for each type of procedure, charges and fees;

- LROs announce agencies providing land information, delivery methods, information search tools on the Internet, SMS system or information provision at their offices. This disclosure is made at LROs and in public places such as CPC offices, the Cultural Centre, temples, markets and schools;

- LROs strengthen the local administrative reform in the land sector to settle administrative procedures for the public in simple, fast and low-cost manner;

- LROs develop the mechanism for receiving feedback.

**6. Activity 6. To train LROs staff and land administrators**

An orientation workshop for land management officials in communicating with ethnic minorities will focus on

(1) special needs of the groups facing language barriers;

(2) the importance of local consultations incorporated in training courses for land administrators and other courses on quality service improvement with considerations of cultural sensitivity, customs, habits, and characteristics of the Khmer people;

(3) some traditional characteristics and practices of the Khmer people are related to the issue of ownership, land use and management, the demand for land information, communication, and access and usage of land information;

- Training in communication skills, laws and land information system for land administrators, and communication officials at provincial and district levels; commune's cadastral officials; and some other beneficiaries such as representatives of commune's people's councils, key commune officials, village heads, elders, officials working in culture and information management, staff of the Fatherland Front, the Women's Union, the Farmers' Union, the Veterans' Association, and the Commune's Youth's Union.

- Technical seminars, exchange of experience, review meetings: a workshop is organized annually, with such participants as communication officials at the central and local level to exchange experience and practical problems through

implementation of project communication activities, particularly the issues related to the Khmer people in order to revise or adjust the plans.

To provide services to the Khmer people effectively, it is important to implement communication activities repeatedly, therefore, the project will train the Khmer staff for monitoring and support. Communes and villages will nominate participants for training on project implementation support at the grassroots level.

***7. Activity 7. To establish support services for information access and land registration in remote areas where the ethnic minorities live.***

- LRO branches at district level will perform support services for information access and land registration for ethnic minorities in remote areas through assigning officials to work in routine at CPCs and, at the same time, train commune staff on information search, and usage of the land information system through the Internet to provide land information for ethnic minorities groups and verify land transaction contracts.

LROs will consult commune authorities, and village and community participatory groups to develop plans and routine working schedules in accordance with local conditions. Commune and village cadres will widely publicize these plans and schedules to all citizens for their information and service usage.

The procedures for LURC issuance/renewal will be established in communes, and other land related procedures will also be performed in communes. Commune's cadastral officers will provide support to the people. Forms relating to LURC issuance will be publicized in CPCs and villages (culture centres or places of frequent visits by the people).

***8. Activity 8. Public consultation and implementation of recommendations for ethnic minorities related issues***

During the project implementation, in cases that ethnic minorities related issues arise, if needed, PPMU, with the support from the Community Participatory Groups, will hold consultation meetings with ethnic minorities to listen to their opinions and consult on orientations and measures. In case of necessity, PPMU will call for a consultation workshop with Community Consultative Groups at the provincial and district levels, and other stakeholders to advise the Provincial and District's People's Committee on decision making.

Each year, Vinh Long PPMU will organize a workshop with Community Consultative Groups at the provincial and district levels, and members will provide and exchange information and discuss, provide recommendations based on their views and experience, focusing on the following six issues:

- What land information do the Khmer people need? How are their cultural practices considered in the survey and information provision?
- How do land administrators consider traditional practices on land during the process of survey, LURC issuance/renewal, and land information provision?
- How to make issues relating to the customary use of land and land used for cultural purposes (the community, and the media channels on land information) among the Khmer a concern?
- What are the obstacles for the Khmer in understanding Vietnamese on the communication channels or in meetings? How to organize communication activities, and awareness raising to overcome such obstacles?
- How can the Khmer receive information on project most effectively? How can they use land most effectively and perform full registration procedures?
- Is the access to information easy and responsive to needs of land users? What are the obstacles so far? (how, fees and charges ...)

***9. Activity 9. To provide information on the grievance redressal mechanism***

Local cadastral officers are informed in the training courses that any land issues related to the ethnic minorities must be reported to the PPMU whether the local dispute settlement is successful or not.

To support for this mechanism, the PPMU, in combination with districts and communes, will assign direct officers to receive, monitor, urge related agencies on dispute settlement and results disclosure. All information related to the reception and decisions on complaints, land disputes will be fully documented and systematically managed. The project M&E agencies/units can access to this information for reference.

To redress grievances, a second channel will be established to receive information on land complaints and disputes beside the official channel established by the State. Especially, the ethnic minorities groups are encouraged to solve problems through informal but effective institutions, such as heads of villages, families, and master monks in the Khmer temples.

Specifically, each commune and village will set up a team to help the CPC in mediation when disputes occur. Master monks will also be involved in the mediation team to improve the efficiency of grievance redressal. The appointment of one person to monitor grievance redressal activities in communes, districts and the province. Training for improving dispute settlement

skills for land officers and mediation teams in villages will be maintained during the project implementation.

#### ***10. Activity 10. Monitoring and Evaluation***

If possible, PPMU will try to disaggregate the project's M&E data in the province by ethnic groups, poor/non-poor/no poor and gender.

#### ***11. Activities 11: Consideration of gender sensitivity***

It is essential to increase the participation of women, especially in the EM groups in the project sites, in various project activities and interventions, such as information dissemination and training, local facilitator work, and commune working groups. It is important to raise awareness for women of their rights and benefits in joint husband-and-wife titling and use of land-use rights certificates for bank loans, lease and contributions to joint business, their rights to access to the GRM system and how to lodge their complaints when needs arise.

It should be recognised that engagement of and awareness raising for women, especially EM women, is a time-consuming process which should be planned and phased effectively with clear and practical short-, medium- and long-term objectives to make various steps feasible, with lessons reviewed and learnt as well as plans revised after each phase. Importantly, women from various groups should be consulted in good faith throughout the project cycle, from the design to the evaluation steps to ensure their voices to be heard and paid due attention to.

There is a risk that female attendance at information workshops and meetings may be low. Specific measures may therefore be necessary to enhance women's current access to information and their associated engagement in VILG. Efforts will be needed to arrange a location and time suitable for the participation of women, and additional promotional activities may also be necessary to maximise attendance by female householders.

Training provided to local land administrators and facilitators as well as project staff should take into account gender sensitivity. The composition of a mobile support team, as suggested earlier in this report, may ideally include a female member to address issues that require gender sensitivity. For instance, some female clients may not feel comfortable in seeking information and advice from male staff as a result of certain cultural and customary barriers.

### **III. Disclosure of EMDP:**

The EMDP will be publicized in the World Bank Infoshop, at the People's Committees at the project districts and communes with ethnic minorities and by

many other channels to ensure that ethnic minorities can easily access and understand plan contents.

#### **IV. Implementation arrangement**

- DONRE and PPMU in collaboration with the district's people's committee shall be responsible for organizing the activities under the EMDP and Project Operation Manual (POM);

- PPMU assigns one officer to be the focal point on social issues. This staff is responsible for supervising the Project District Implementation Group in terms of full implementation of these EMDP activities;

- The periodical reports of PPMU (quarterly and monthly) will include reports on EMDP implementation which clearly state the EMDP activities already implemented in the project areas, feedback of ethnic minorities related to the project implementation and next activities;

- The Provincial Ethnic Minority Committee, provincial advisory group, and district participatory groups are responsible for review of and consultation on issues related to the project implementation and ethnic minorities; cooperation with PPMU to organize consultative meetings, supervise the levels of acceptance and satisfaction of the community towards land services in the participating districts, including for the Kinh group and other ethnic minorities.

During the implementation period, if any problem arises, group members should promptly report to the PPMU, and the Provincial Steering Committee for timely measures.