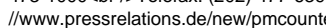




Government of Vietnam, World Bank Sign 390 million USD in Fight against Poverty

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The State Bank of Vietnam and the World Bank today signed credit agreements and related documents for three projects to support community infrastructure, agriculture and livelihoods in Vietnams poorest areas, and to strengthen the countrys social assistance system. "These projects respond to different drivers of poverty in Vietnam including limited livelihood opportunities, remoteness and lack of connectivity, low productivity agriculture and fragmented and ineffective social assistance programs," noted Victoria Kwakwa, Country Director for the World Bank in Vietnam. The funding will be used for the Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project (US\$ 150 million), the Irrigated Agriculture Improvement Project (US\$ 180 million), and the Social Assistance System Strengthening Project (US\$ 60 million). The Central Highlands Poverty Reduction Project aims to support the Government of Vietnam in addressing extreme poverty in this region, the second-poorest in the country. It will finance village and commune infrastructure; sustainable livelihoods; connective infrastructure, and provide trainings in livelihoods skills, project management, and more general public administration skills for the 26 poorest districts in the provinces of Dak Lak, Dak Nong, Kon Tum, Gia Lai, Quang Nam and Quang Ngai. The majority of target beneficiaries will be ethnic minority groups in the participating provinces. The Irrigated Agriculture Improvement Project will increase water and land-use efficiency; enhance agricultural productivity, and reduce vulnerability to adverse climatic events for farmers and rural households in the Central Coast Region (Thanh Hoa, Ha Tinh, Quang Tri, and Quang Nam provinces) and selected provinces in the Northern Mountainous Region (Ha Giang, Phu Tho, and Hoa Binh). The project will support farmers in adopting climate-smart farming techniques, including systems of rice intensification and crop diversification, use of bio-fertilizer, and integrated pest management. It is expected that when completed, the project will serve 83,400 ha of agricultural land with better and reliable irrigation services. The Social Assistance System Strengthening Project will put in place critical elements of a strengthened social assistance system nationwide, including a national database of poor and near-poor households and social assistance beneficiaries and a management information system. This will support the Governments objective of reducing fragmentation of social assistance programs by laying the foundation for program consolidation and improving the effectiveness of public spending on social assistance. In the four project provinces (Ha Giang, Quang Nam, Tra Vinh and Lam Dong), a consolidated social assistance program called the "Co h?i thoát nghèo truy?n ki?p" or "Opportunity to move out of inter-generational poverty program" will replace three existing programs. The project is a product of a partnership involving MOLISA, UNICEF, the United Kingdoms Department for International Development, and the World Bank. Funding for all three projects comes from the International Development Association, the World Bank Groups funding window for low-income countries. The World Bank 1818 H Street, NW DC 20433 Washington USA Telefon: (202) 473-1000 Telefax: (202) 477-6391 Mail: investigations_hotline@worldbank.org URL: <http://www.worldbank.org/> 

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