



IMPLEMENTING PARTICIPATORY IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT IN VIETNAM: ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

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ABSTRACT

In Vietnam, farmers and state have a long tradition of sharing responsibility for irrigation and today this state-farmer relationship remains strong. Recently IMT/PIM/WUOs have been emphasized, especially under donor projects, for improvement of water management. Despite the fact that in the rural area, on-farm water management is managed by various types of formal or informal organizations, as agricultural service cooperative, village, commune, little is analyzed of how to develop IMT/PIM/WUAs. Theoretically, WUAs by hydrological boundary are recommended with little consideration of why they are needed? And how the existing organizations should be utilized?

Passing the stage of insufficient food supply to the industrial stage, agriculture role in economy declines. Low farming income makes farmers unable to pay enough to meet irrigation expenditure. Confronting with economic and social/food security roles of agriculture, the State contradicts itself in its actions: on the one hand, encourages IMT, with the hope to turn over facilities with all related cost to farmers, on the other hand wants to reduce/waive water fee for farmers to reduce their burden. These actions would have profound impact on irrigation sector and should not be overlooked.

In this paper, using information on the past period of PIM/IMT in Vietnam, supplemented by field data, the author analyzes various issues/problems of IMT/PIM in Vietnam and proposes an alternative for successful water management.

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